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An International Reformer: Jessie Ackermann and American Progressivism

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of History

East Tennessee State University

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Master of Arts in History

by

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Progressive Era

ABSTRACT

An International Reformer: Jessie Ackermann and American Progressivism

by

Michael Jonathan Sheffield

Jessie Ackermann traveled throughout the world representing numerous American reformist organizations during the Progressive Era. Over the course of her lifetime, she promoted progressive reforms in foreign lands. This study examines Ackermann's career a progressive in an international context. The Jessie Ackermann Collection in the Archives of Appalachia holds various records that document Ackermann's career. Ackermann also authored three books during her lifetime. This thesis employs these primary materials along with other appropriate primary and secondary sources dealing with Ackermann and the Progressive Era. Several historical studies have surveyed Ackermann's work as a reformer; however, none have sought exclusively to place her within the context of the Progressive Movement. Ackermann's experiences reveal that progressives not only sought to change society in America, but that some carried progressivism abroad to transform foreign societies. This study contributes to the understanding of Ackermann's work as a reformer and the international nature of progressivism.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1913, Cassell and Company of London published and released *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* to a global audience. Author Jessie A. Ackermann noted that Australia had been attracting a great deal of attention from the whole world “because of the process of social evolution through which it is passing, and the fact that it has called women into the councils of men in the capacity of citizens, to aid in the establishment of ‘New World conditions for the people.’”¹ Ackermann explained that because Australia was only the second country in the world to grant women the right to vote, no one had taken a firm look at the position of the women in Australia and how citizenship had transformed their gender and nation. Therefore, it was Ackermann’s intent to understand this aspect of Australia through a general outline of the country discussing “the natural, political, industrial, social, religious, and home settings in which the women of Australia ‘live, move, and have their being’ as equal citizens with men.”²

At first glance, this book appears to be what it claims to be: a study of Australia, focusing on women, through the eyes of a woman. Upon closer examination, however, it is clear that the central theme of Ackermann’s book is the potential Australia had in becoming the greatest, most developed, and progressive of nations. She argued that as a virgin nation Australia was the heir to all the experiences of every state that preceded it. Therefore, she asserted, Australia did not have to repeat the mistakes of the older nations and could forge ahead towards something new. “Here, if wisdom prevailed,” she explained, “there need be no brain-wrecking study upon

¹ Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* (London: Cassell and Company, 1913), vii.

² *Ibid.*, viii.

questions of how to undo what the men of to-day are hammering out. There need be no old-world problems to solve, no wholesale human destruction before the lifeboats of just laws are launched. No, Australia may be the Land of Promise for the people, if men, not consumed with self-interest, personal gain, and unholy ambitions, become the law-makers for the future of this great land.”³ Ackermann believed that newly enfranchised women with a well-developed civic duty would implement broad-based, social reform legislation that would ensure that Australia did not repeat the mistakes of older nations. Ackermann, an American, presented to both an Australian and global audience a view of how Australia could and should be. It was an American view of what constituted a developed, modern, and perfected society. More importantly, it was a view that if Australia adopted not only American values and principles but also progressive reform, it could become a bastion of human progress and achievement.

Ackermann’s argument is significant because it is a perfect representation of the work to which she had devoted most of her life. Ackermann (1857-1951)⁴ was a representative for the World’s Woman’s Christian Temperance Union during the late 1880s and the 1890s and traveled across the world to organize temperance unions and to promote the interests of the World’s WCTU. From 1904 to 1917, she worked as an activist, lecturer, and journalist for multiple organizations both abroad and in the United States, dealing with a wide variety of social reforms. After 1917, Ackermann focused almost wholly on lecturing within the US and undertook many speaking engagements on various topics, often relating to her past travels and experiences. By

³ Ibid, 300.

⁴ Jessie Ackerman, California Death Index, 1940-1997, Sacramento: State of California Department of Health Services (accessed in Ancestry.com); *Australian Dictionary of Biography - Online Edition*, s.v. “Ackermann, Jessie A.,” by Ian Tyrrell, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10003b.htm>. Ackermann’s year of birth varies in some newspaper articles and public records between 1857 and 1864.

the late 1920s, Ackermann claimed to have circumnavigated the globe eight times, to have visited all but three countries, and to have traveled an estimated 500,000 miles.⁵

Ackermann was not merely an activist for temperance, suffrage, or any other particular issue she supported, nor was she merely a world traveller. As so excellently demonstrated by *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, Ackermann, a progressive, carried and spread American ideas of reform, morality, and modernity to other countries in order to build a more perfected world. At the beginning of her career, she focused on moral reform, and eventually branched out into broader social, political, and economic reforms. Historians have thoroughly documented the varying aspects of the Progressive Era and of progressive reform within the US during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Relatively little, however, has been written on the international influence of American progressivism and its proponents like Ackermann who sought to extend American progressive reform to other parts of the world. Indeed, the development of Ackermann's career as both an activist and journalist mirrors the development of the Progressive Era in the US.

Beginning in the late 1880s, Ackermann's focus was primarily on moral and religious reforms such as temperance. She saw herself as an heir of the Woman's Crusade of 1877 and was part of the growth of moral and social organizations like the WCTU, the International Order of Good Templars, and the Young Men and Women's Christian Associations. By the turn of the century, however, a new social and political environment had developed in the United States. Rapid industrialization during the Gilded Age (roughly 1870-1895) had brought an urgent need for reforms dealing with urban poverty, labor relations, big business, international relations,

⁵ "Lincoln Visitor Has Received Diploma from Geographical Society for Being the Most Traveled Woman in the World," *Lincoln Star*, 15 July 1928, Jessie A. Ackermann Collection, acc. No. 73, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, box 1, folder 1.9. The Jessie A. Ackermann collection will be referred to as the "Ackermann Collection" in all subsequent citations.

political participation, and many other social, political, and economic issues. A new broad-based social and political spirit developed in the US that sought to solve the problems of a modern industrial society.⁶ At the same time, reformers and intellectuals in Europe, European colonies, and other parts of the world grappled with many of these same issues. It was during this period that Ackermann began to branch out into both more specific and broader reforms. Her focus shifted from moral reforms to reforms dealing with international cooperation and world peace, women's suffrage, Sunday School reform, alleviation of urban poverty, and the implementation of the Social Gospel. As progressivism grew and broadened, so did Ackermann's activities. The First World War marked a watershed for both the Progressive Era in the US and Ackermann's career. The war divided progressives within the US, and while Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points were in many ways a triumph of progressive internationalist aims, the Progressive Movement had splintered by the early 1920s.⁷ Following the war, progressivism radically shifted focus and transformed. Although America won the war, the nation lost the peace. With revolutions sparking across Europe, and social, racial, and political violence developing within the US in 1919, progressivism splintered from a national movement into smaller, more specific movements.⁸ Progressive editor William Allen White summed up the postwar atmosphere well by remarking that that after nearly twenty years of progressive idealism, Americans were "tired of issues, sick at heart of ideals, and weary of being noble."⁹ Like the Progressive Movement, Ackermann's focus dramatically shifted around 1920. She no longer extensively traveled abroad and began to lecture in the US on a wide variety of topics, especially her own experiences traveling abroad. Three broad shifts took place during Ackermann's career, and while she never

⁶ Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harland Davidson, 1983), 2-3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 105-107; Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 260.

⁸ Dawley, *Changing the World*, 335.

⁹ William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 597.

entirely gave up on any of the issues she advocated over the years, her ideas clearly transformed over time and often in concert with changing ideas within both the US and rest of the world.

It is the intent of this study to document Jessie Ackermann's reform efforts abroad and to place her experience within the context of the Progressive Era in the United States. Her career as a reformer demonstrates that some progressives not only sought to reform American society but worked to nudge the entire world toward a progressive vision of human progress. By analyzing Ackermann the progressive, this study not only forms a more complete understanding of Ackermann the woman but better understanding of the nature of progressive internationalism.

Ackermann was not alone in extending American-style reform internationally but was one of many Americans who took some form of progressive, moral, or social reform to other parts of the world from the 1880s through the 1920s. A diverse and varied group, she was joined not only by fellow WCTU activists but Christian missionaries, labor and urban reformers, internationalists in support of world peace, humanitarians, philanthropists, and American businessmen.¹⁰ Ackermann is a valuable example to study not only because her career parallels the Progressive Era so well but also because she was a woman. Women had always played a role in American social and political life prior to the Progressive Era, but it was during this period that women really began to assert their political will and earn the right to participate in the affairs of the nation. Ultimately, it is difficult ascertain the complete impact and influence of Ackermann's work outside of the US; nevertheless, the fact that Ackermann traveled to these places and attempted to extend these notions of reform is critically important in itself.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive study on the expansion and influence of American organizations and private individuals during the Progressive Era, see Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

While Ackermann was very much devoted to the causes she supported and most likely had honorable intentions, she was still a human being. She was subject to the prejudices and prevailing views of her day, positive or negative. It is also important to note that her ideas did not remain static but like progressive ideas transformed over time. For example, starting in the early 1910s, Ackermann began to distance herself from her work with the WCTU and by the 1920s virtually never spoke of about representing this organization. While the specifics of this will be explored later, it is important to remember that Ackermann was no holy, uncorrupted crusader who fought only for the progress of humanity, but that she was just as flawed as anyone else.

In addition to *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, Ackermann wrote two other books, *The World through a Woman's Eyes* (1896) and *What Women Have Done with the Vote* (1913). She wrote numerous articles for a plethora of newspapers and magazines over the course of her career. She left behind a substantial collection of personal papers that included numerous received letters and newspaper clippings reporting on Ackermann's activities over the course of her lifetime. This study relies on these primary sources while also incorporating other forms of primary documentation and appropriate secondary source material to document Ackermann's career before, during, and after the Progressive Era.

In order to place Ackermann within the context of the Progressive Movement, American progressivism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century must be adequately defined. While it is not the purpose of this study to provide a comprehensive historiographic analysis of progressivism and the Progressive Era, some important milestones in the interpretation of

progressivism can help to define progressivism for the purposes of this study.¹¹ The first real scholarship on American progressivism came from either progressives themselves or those who lived during the Progressive Era. Authors like Charles Beard, Harold Faulkner, and John D. Hicks all wrote histories during the 1920s and 1930s dealing with progressivism. Even before the era had actually ended, Benjamin Parke DeWitt wrote *The Progressive Era* in 1915. “These authors,” noted historian William Anderson, “saw the progressive era as the successful culmination of a long just struggle by ‘the people’ against big business.”¹² These early interpretations gave sympathy to “farmers, small businessmen, and laborers in their struggle against the selfish business interests and corrupt politicians.”¹³

After the Second World War, American historians began to reevaluate progressivism. A new “consensual” interpretation of progressivism developed, best characterized by Richard Hofstadter, that “approached the American past with a skeptical attitude toward the older faith that history progressed toward the realization of a democratic ideal through a cycle of conflicts along economic links.”¹⁴ Hofstadter’s major work, *The Age of Reform*, recast the previous conception of progressivism. He defined progressivism as a broad movement toward progress made up of many aspects of society, although primarily led by the middle-class, which lacked a clear direction. According to Hofstadter, the Progressive Movement’s “general theme was the effort to restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy that was widely

¹¹ For more comprehensive overviews of Progressive Era historiography, see Daniel T. Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982): 117-118, (accessed in JSTOR); Robert D. Johnston, “Re-Democratizing the Progressive Era: The Politics of Progressive Era Political Historiography,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no. 1 (Jan 2002). Few, if any, comprehensive historiographic essays on the Progressive Era have been written since Johnston’s essay; however, Walter Nugent provides a brief, yet thorough, bibliography of recent Progressive Era historical studies in his recent work on progressivism. See Walter Nugent, *Progressivism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). The Society of Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era H-Net Web site offers a number of Progressive Era bibliographic essays, as well. See “H-SHGAPE Bibliographic Essays,” H-SHGAPE H-Net (19 January 2006) <http://www.h-net.org/~shgape/bibessays/bibessay.html> (accessed 28 June 2011).

¹² William G. Anderson, “Progressivism: An Historiographical Essay,” *The History Teacher* 6, no. 3 (May 1973): 427, (accessed in JSTOR).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ David M. Kennedy, “Overview: The Progressive Era,” *The Historian* 37, no.3 (May 1975): 455.

believed to have existed earlier in America and to have been destroyed by the great corporations and the corrupt political machine.”¹⁵ Restoration of that democratic ideal and individualism would allow the nation to regain a level of morality that it had lost during the Gilded Age and industrialization. Hofstadter believed that the progressive movement was conservative, reactionary, and made up of elements of society such as the gentry or middle-class elites who had lost their status during the Gilded Age to up-start industrialists. These people, he argued, found themselves in an inferior position in society. This position “gave them more compassion for the oppressed; reform would be a way to regain status in their communities, while attacking their enemies.”¹⁶ According to Hofstadter, Protestant values and morality inspired progressives, and they often saw their efforts as part of a moralizing campaign in America.¹⁷

During the 1960s, however, Robert Wiebe reconceptualized progressivism in his work *The Search for Order*. Wiebe’s vision of progressives was not that they were conservatives reacting to the rise of industry or seeking to reestablish an older order, but that they were trying to build a new social order through professionalization and bureaucracy.¹⁸ Wiebe believed progressivism to be a middle-class movement aimed at social progress. “The heart of progressivism,” Wiebe argued, “was the ambition of the new middle-class to fulfill its destiny through bureaucratic means.”¹⁹ He also argued that progressivism was not a broad, disorganized movement made up of inconsistent parts of American society but was a centralized organization aimed at bureaucratic reform.²⁰

¹⁵ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 5.

¹⁶ Anderson, 429.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 429-430.

¹⁸ Kennedy, 460.

¹⁹ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 166.

²⁰ Daniel T. Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” 117-118.

The broad-based nature of the Progressive Era and the competing historical interpretations discussed above led Peter Filene in 1970 to question whether progressivism existed at all. In his article, “An Obituary for the Progressive Movement,” Filene argued that progressivism, as a movement and an era, had never existed because of the broad diversity and the conflicting aims of the movement. “Progressives there were,” Filene stressed, “but of many types – intellectuals, businessmen, farmers, labor, unionists” and “in explaining American responses to urbanization and industrialization, these socio-economic differences are more important than any collective identity as ‘progressives.’”²¹ This argument was further carried on in the 1970s by other historians such as John D. Buenker; however, Filene’s ideas were characteristic of this interpretation.

Historians from Hofstadter to Filene focused almost exclusively on defining who progressives actually were and pinpointing what type of movement progressivism constituted.²² These changing interpretations of progressivism often resulted in historians portraying progressive “reform rhetoric” as “naïve, archaic, and vague.”²³ Since the 1970s and early 1980s, however, historians have mostly accepted the arguments of all former interpretations of the Progressive Era and incorporated them into a broader and more comprehensive definition. Historians such as Alan Dawley, Michael McGerr, Shelton Stromquist, Maureen Flanagan, and Walter Nugent have all accepted the premise that the Progressive Movement could incorporate broad and diverse aspects of American society, often working towards radically different ends.

²¹ Peter Filene, “An Obituary for the Progressive Movement,” *American Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 33, (accessed in JSTOR).

²² Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing “the People”: The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 2-3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

Progressivism, according to more recent historical interpretations, arose in response to social, economic, and political crises caused by industrialization in the United States during the Gilded Age. Industrialization led to mass urbanization that pushed millions of foreign and rural migrants into urban poverty, dangerous working conditions, and unhealthy living environments. City centers became slums and cesspools of social ills such as poverty, prostitution, disease, and drunkenness.²⁴ While industrialization drove millions of Americans into urban poverty, owners and managers of successful industrial businesses amassed enormous wealth. The growing gap between rich and poor led to conflict between impoverished workers and business management in violent clashes like the Homestead Strike of 1892 and the Pullman Strike of 1894.²⁵ The chasm between capitalist businessmen and workers also manifested itself outside of cities. Farmers, especially in Mid-Western and Southern states, struggled against railroad companies over shipping rates and formed Farmers' Alliances from the late 1870s and 1880s to collectively combat big business.²⁶

Many middle-class Americans viewed the social imbalances wrought by industrialization with fear and dismay. Some blamed rampant laissez-fair liberalism, capitalist greed, and uninvolved government for the imbalances of the Gilded Age. A feeling of “fierce discontent,” as Teddy Roosevelt described it, with government, business, and society consumed Americans.²⁷ Many believed government had a responsibility to protect society from dislocation and disorder and to support the public interest.²⁸ Some in the middle-class, especially intellectuals, journalists, educated women, and evangelical Christians, began undertaking grass-roots reform

²⁴ Nugent, 2.

²⁵ Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), xiv.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

efforts in the 1880s and 1890s to solve the social problems that the national, as well as local, government failed to address. Reformers like Jane Addams set up local settlement houses and other institutions in American cities to provide social services like schools, nurseries, and low cost shelter to the urban poor.²⁹ Grass-roots activists like Addams, as well as organizations like the WCTU, worked to improve the lives of workers and slum dwellers by providing these social services and personal moral uplift.

By the late 1890s, a broad-based Progressive Movement emerged. Thousands of middle-class Americans worked not only as grass-roots activists but fought for the reform of local and national laws. According to historian Walter Nugent, Progressives carried and united under a common conviction that “a public interest and common good existed” and that government regulation of big business and social relations could solve the social ills of the late nineteenth century.³⁰ Progressives, however, remained divided on the specific means, forms, or ends of progressive reform.³¹ As a result, progressivism embraced a broad and diverse agenda. As historian Michael McGerr noted, the progressives agenda “ranged well beyond the control of big business, the elimination of poverty, and the purification of politics.” Progressives also embraced “the transformation of gender relations, the regeneration of the home, the disciplining of leisure and pleasure, and the establishment of segregation.”³² Indeed, progressive reform was so broad that some progressives worked against the reforms other progressives promoted and was full of inherent contradictions.³³ Specifically, issues over race, imperialism, and war divided progressives. Not all Americas embraced progressivism, either, and most progressives

²⁹ Stromquist, 115.

³⁰ Nugent, 3.

³¹ Flanagan, vii.

³² McGerr, xiv.

³³ Dawley, 336.

were solidly middle-class; nevertheless, most Americans desired some form of change by the early twentieth century.³⁴

The Progressive Movement, therefore, included labor activists, Christian fundamentalists, moral reformers, conservatives, socialists, eugenicists, bureaucratic reformers, imperialists, wealthy philanthropists, feminists, and many others, and they all worked toward particular ends. Yet, they were all attempting to make sense and cope with the changes presented by an industrial society. Despite a diverse and contradictory agenda, progressives succeeded in transforming much of American society. From the late 1890s to the late 1910s, the Progressive Movement moved American society away from an individualistic, laissez-faire ideal and toward public regulation of the economy and society in the interest of the public good by implanting substantial financial and economic regulations like the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, the Revenue Act of 1913, and Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914.³⁵ Progressives also changed the relationship between citizens and government by carrying out various political reforms including open primary laws, the direct election of US senators, and women's suffrage. These reforms allowed Americans to have more control over their government and for the government to protect the nation from social imbalances more effectively.³⁶

Therefore, contemporary interpretations of the Progressive Era, including Michael McGerr's *A Fierce Discontent*, Shelton Stromquist's *Reinventing "the People,"* Maureen Flanagan's *America Reformed*, and Walter Nugent's *Progressivism*, approach progressivism from a similar standpoint. These studies stress that progressivism was a primarily middle-class movement seeking to solve the social ills and imbalances caused by Gilded Age industrialization.

³⁴ Nugent, 4-5.

³⁵ Flanagan, vi.

³⁶ Ibid, vi-vii.

Progressives embraced a broad, and at times contradictory, set of reforms in the interest of the common good. “In sum,” notes Nugent, “there were many varieties of progressivism and progressives. They held in common, however, a conviction that society should be fair to its members (white, native-born ones, anyway), and that governments had to represent the people and to regulate ‘their interests.’”³⁷

Progressivism’s broad, eclectic nature led progressives to advocate different types of reform. This study discusses Ackermann’s work as a reformer within the context of both moral and social reform. During the Progressive Era, both moral and social reformers sought to improve the lives of everyday human beings by alleviating social ills like poverty. What differentiated social from moral reform, however, was how reformers approached and dealt with social problems. Joel Schwartz, author of *Fighting Poverty with Virtue: Moral Reform and America’s Urban Poor, 1825-2000*, defined moral reformers as Americans who “believed that the poor could conquer, or alleviate, their poverty by exercising virtues like diligence, sobriety, and thrift.”³⁸ According to this interpretation, moral reformers believed poverty, immoral behavior, and other social ills would cease to exist if the working poor adopted middle-class values. Schwartz contrasted moral reformers with social reformers like Jane Addams and Walter Rauschenbusch who attributed poverty and other social ills to larger economic, political, and institutional problems. Social reformers, according to Schwartz’s approach, believed it was the responsibility of society as a whole to find solutions to poverty and other social problems.³⁹ Alan Dawley adopted a similar interpretation in *Struggles for Justice* where he argued that in the “orthodox mind of the Gilded Age... poverty was a sign of” moral depravity on the part of the

³⁷ Nugent, 5.

³⁸ Joel Schwartz, *Fighting Poverty with Virtue: Moral Reform and America’s Urban Poor, 1825-2000* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), xiv.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, xx.

poor.⁴⁰ According to Dawley, moral reformers in the nineteenth century believed that the poor had to adopt a moral lifestyle and build a proper home life to escape poverty.⁴¹ Dawley regarded social reformers as those who attributed poverty and immorality to larger social and economic conditions and sought to reform government, economies, and other institutions. What distinguished progressive reformers from earlier reformers in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, Dawley stressed, was that progressives embraced social reform over moral reform.⁴²

For both Schwartz and Dawley, progressive reformers like Jane Addams embraced and implemented social reform. Nevertheless, the dynamic between moral and social reform is not as clear-cut as presented by Dawley and Schwartz. For historian Michael McGerr, progressivism represented both social and moral reforms. The broad progressive agenda, McGerr stressed, “ranged well beyond the control of big business” or “the elimination of poverty.”⁴³ Progressives also sought to “transform other Americans, to remake the nation’s feuding polyglot population in their own middle-class image.”⁴⁴ The progressive effort to remake society involved regulating adult behavior and pleasure by promoting proper middle-class, Protestant family values.⁴⁵ The temperance movement, and especially the WCTU, reflected McGerr’s argument. On the one hand, WCTU activists encouraged individuals to give up intoxicating substances, an act of moral reform. On the other, WCTU members all over the world urged both women and men to sign the union’s Polyglot Petition. The Polyglot petition, addressed to world leaders, implored national

⁴⁰ Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1991), 26.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴³ McGerr, xiv.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

governments to outlaw the consumption and trade of intoxicating substances.⁴⁶ The Polyglot Petition, therefore, represented a social reform. The WCTU also worked beyond the confines of temperance and fought for women's suffrage, labor regulations, and other social reforms. It is unclear where moral reform ended and social reform began in the case of the WCTU.

Schwartz's and Dawley's arguments also focused exclusively upon urban reform and poverty relief. Not all progressive reforms worked toward urban reform, such as the international peace movement or women's liberation movements, and Schwartz and Dawley's conclusions do not apply to all progressive efforts.

The line between moral reform and social reform, therefore, blurred substantially during the Progressive Era. Nevertheless, reformers like Ackermann and organizations like the WCTU gradually moved from a focus on changing individual behavior and moral uplift and toward broader social reforms. When Ackermann traveled for the WCTU in the 1880s and 1890s, she promoted both moral and social reforms; however, her rhetoric in lectures and writings centered heavily on moral reform. Beginning in the early twentieth century, her rhetoric focused more upon social reforms, especially legislative solutions to poverty and women's suffrage. Despite this rhetorical shift, she still encouraged individuals to change their behavior and to embrace certain reforms on a grass-roots level. Ackermann's transition from moral reformer to social reformer was by no means clear-cut but occurred gradually over her career. Progressivism, as a movement, also shifted gradually over the course of the Progressive Era. Schwartz's and Dawley's distinctions between moral and social reform hold true in many ways; however, to

⁴⁶ Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 39.

consider progressives wholly social reformers who rejected moral reform is inaccurate and simplifies a much more complicated situation.

Because this study focuses upon American progressive efforts internationally, some analysis of the historical scholarship dealing with the dual domestic and international aspects of the Progressive Era is necessary. Several historical studies have argued that American progressives drew inspiration and ideas from social reform movements in Great Britain, British colonies like Australia and New Zealand, and other nations in Europe in the late nineteenth century. Kenneth O. Morgan, in his essay “The Future at Work,” believed that British social reform efforts served as a model for progressive reform in the United States. “Britain,” he stressed, “provided much of the momentum for the American progressives,” especially in regard to settlement houses and municipal reform.⁴⁷ Bernard Aspinwall, in his book *Portable Utopia*, narrowed Morgan’s argument by focusing specifically on the role the Scottish industrial center Glasgow played in inspiring progressive reform. According to Aspinwall, Glasgow found creative and innovative ways to solve urban and industrial problems during the nineteenth century, especially relating to the gap between capital and labor. Glasgow found “a middle course between capital and labor” that American progressives sought to emulate.⁴⁸ Peter Coleman, however, tied American progressivism to New Zealand’s social reform movements. According to Coleman, American newspaper editors and social reformers like Henry Demarest Lloyd, Benjamin O. Flower, Frank Parsons, and William E. Smythe held up New Zealand, and to

⁴⁷ Kenneth O. Morgan, “The Future at Work: Anglo-American Progressivism, 1890-1917,” in *Contrast and Connection: Bicentennial Essays in Anglo-American History*, ed. H.C. Allen and Roger Thompson (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 264.

⁴⁸ Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States, 1820-1920* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), 184.

a lesser extent Australia and Tasmania, as an example “of what the United States could become if it only had the wit and the will to work along similar legislative lines.”⁴⁹

While Morgan, Aspinwall, and Coleman traced the origins of American progressivism to individual countries, Daniel T. Rodgers sought to situate progressivism into a larger international context. In *Atlantic Crossings*, Rodgers placed the US into an industrialized north Atlantic world tied by trade and economics and argued that progressivism resulted from European and American contact in the nineteenth century. Although many progressive reformers rhetorically separated the US from Europe, Rodgers explained, nations on both sides of the Atlantic faced similar experiences and challenges with industrialization and urbanization.⁵⁰ Rodgers stressed that Americans not only looked to Britain and British colonies for models of social reform but also to Germany, France, and other parts of Europe.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Rodgers’ study, like the previously discussed works, focused almost exclusively on how Americans emulated European models and argued that US reform efforts were indebted to European antecedents.

In contrast to Rodgers, Morgan, Coleman, and Aspinwall, other scholars have explored how Americans carried reform movements from the US to other parts of the world. In *Spreading the American Dream*, Emily Rosenberg focused on the expansion of American ideas of modernization abroad in terms of economics, culture, and morality. Rosenberg argued that in the 1890s Americans began to consider “their country’s economic and social history... a universal model” for development in other parts of the world.⁵² This idea coupled with a new sense of America’s mission in the world. According to Rosenberg, most Americans believed that

⁴⁹ Peter J. Coleman, *Progressivism and the World of Reform: New Zealand and the Origin of the American Welfare State* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987), xi.

⁵⁰ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 3-5.

⁵² Rosenberg, 7.

Protestant Christianity and Anglo-Saxon values were prerequisites for modernization, and that America should be “the vanguard of world progress.”⁵³ “As Americans looked beyond their shores,” Rosenberg stressed “they also refined their basic liberal beliefs to fit a global context. Traders, investors, missionaries, philanthropists, and entertainers: all contributed both to expansion and to the liberal-developmental paradigm that accompanied it.”⁵⁴

The American impulse to remake and modernize the world was also central to Alan Dawley’s *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*. Where Rosenberg focused upon this impulse broadly in American society, Dawley put it into the context of progressivism. Progressivism, argued Dawley, was not merely a domestic movement aimed at urban renewal and trust-busting but was a quest to improve the world both at home and abroad.⁵⁵ The movement had three overlapping goals: “winning social and economic justice, revitalizing public life, and improving the wider world.”⁵⁶ The interconnected and more industrialized world that drove the actors in Rosenberg’s study also drove progressives to take their reform agendas to other parts of the world. Dawley’s specific focus was the role progressives played in war and revolution, and the concept of redeeming the world of its failings was a major justification used by progressives for entry into the First World War, as well as involvement in conflicts such as the Mexican Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution.

If Dawley narrowed Rosenberg’s broader thesis to progressivism, Ian Tyrrell applied it specifically to moral reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire*, Tyrrell argued that moral reformers,

⁵³ Ibid, 8-9.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 15.

⁵⁵ Dawley, *Changing the World*, 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 3.

groups like the Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Protestant missionaries, and other Christian based international organizations were an essential part of America's informal empire.⁵⁷ Moral reformers were not only working to reform the world but to build "a kind of Christian moral empire that rose above 'nation.'"⁵⁸ The cultural and moral expansion efforts of these groups, Tyrrell argued, "enlarged what could be termed the external 'footprint' of the United States in the 1880s and 1890s, creating the conditions wherein a more vigorous economic and political expansion could be seriously considered."⁵⁹ Moral reforms did not just change America's place in the wider world but had great influence upon domestic changes in the United States. On this note, Tyrrell argues that "the evangelical moral reform groups shaped politics on manners and morals abroad that anticipated legal and administrative changes within the United States. Sometimes, as in their opposition to narcotic drugs, they bequeathed a policy to the American state that politicians maintained long after the high point of the moral expansionism of the Progressive Era."⁶⁰

A couple of studies have sought to bridge the gap between the international origins of American progressivism and the Progressive Movement's expansionist qualities. James Kloppenberg argued in his book *Uncertain Victory* that American progressives and European social democrats developed a similar approach to social problems in conjunction with one another. According to Kloppenberg, as European social democrats "tugged socialist theory away from its preoccupation with revolution, they found themselves backing into a group of

⁵⁷ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2-4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 236.

intellectuals pulling the theory of liberal individualism in the opposite direction.”⁶¹ For Kloppenberg, Americans inspired European social movements as much as Americans emulated European models. An anthology edited by David W. Gutzke took this argument further. In *Britain and Transnational Progressivism*, historians, including Tyrrell and Gutzke, demonstrated how American progressivism was part of a world-wide cultural exchange. Progressivism, Gutzke stressed, was not the heir of European or Australasian social reform movements but was a world-wide movement. Progressivism, he argued, “was not Anglo-centric. It was not simply a question of *Atlantic Crossings*.” Progressivism was a “cultural exchange of ideas, concepts, and people extended” from “Canada, Australasia, and Africa.”⁶² Therefore, Gutzke suggests, reform movements in the British Empire, mainland Europe, North America, and in certain parts of Africa and Asia should all be considered progressivism. Although progressive sentiment was strongest in Britain and America, Gutzke explained that “moral outrage, shame, guilt, and the need for social justice propelled thousands of individuals into political activism from the 1870s until the end of World War I” across the world.⁶³

This study, of course, focuses upon the progressive impulse to remake the world that led Americans to travel abroad to transmit American visions of morality, development, and reform. Ackermann was driven by this very impulse and was a part of the process described by Rosenberg, Dawley, and Tyrrell. Ackermann was joined by many other Americans in this period in expanding American of reform abroad. At the same time, Ackermann worked in and belonged to reform movements in Australasia, Great Britain, and elsewhere during her career.

⁶¹ James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 6-7.

⁶² David W. Gutzke, “Historians and Progressivism,” in *Britain and Transnational Progressivism*, ed. David W. Gutzke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17.

⁶³ David W. Gutzke, “Progressivism in Britain and Abroad,” in *Britain and Transnational Progressivism*, ed. David W. Gutzke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 23.

This thesis, therefore, contributes to the understanding of the American Progressive Movement's reform efforts abroad; however, Ackermann's experiences working within reform movements abroad also reinforces the conclusions put forward by Kloppenberg and Gutzke.

Finally, a short overview of works written about Jessie Ackermann deserves some attention. There are only a few studies that have dealt comprehensively with Ackermann: Ian Tyrrell's *Woman's World/Woman's Empire* and two master's thesis. Tyrrell's book, written prior to *Reforming the World*, took his broader thesis of the latter and applies it to the WCTU. He focused upon the missionary impulse of the WCTU to rid the whole world of alcohol and other intoxicants.⁶⁴ Tyrrell dealt with Ackermann, as she was one of the key agents of this mission, at length. However, because it focused exclusively on the WCTU, Tyrrell gave little attention to Ackermann's later reform efforts and activities after the 1890s. The first of the two master's thesis, Jenny Rushing's "Jessie Ackerman, 'The Original World Citizen': Temperance Leader, Suffrage Pioneer, Feminist, Humanitarian," documented Ackermann's work not only a temperance activist but also as a suffragist and feminist. In particular, Rushing discussed the role Ackermann played as a member of the broader women's movement, which she argues included Ackermann's work with the WCTU and later efforts. "Ackerman's life," Rushing argued, "is evidence that WCTU women were more than just prohibitionists. Working within the largest woman's organization in the world, she was able to reach thousands of women in dozens of different countries on a broad range of social issues."⁶⁵ The second thesis, Margaret Shipley Carr's "The Temperance Worker as Social Reformer and Ethnographer as Exemplified in the Life and Work of Jessie A. Ackermann," placed Ackermann's life within the context of

⁶⁴ Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, 1-3.

⁶⁵ Jenny Rushing, "Jessie Ackerman, 'The Original World Citizen': Temperance Leader, Suffrage Pioneer, Feminist, Humanitarian" (MA thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2003), <http://libraries.etsu.edu/record=b1585918~S12a> (accessed 15 October 2010), 3-4.

temperance and the WCTU while also giving great emphasis to her ethnographic observations of other countries and cultures. Carr also attempted to place Ackermann's experience into a broader context. According to Carr, "out of the temperance movement came a few women, including Jessie Ackermann, who found a voice that enabled them to expand their interests and influence beyond the temperance issue alone. Ackermann did not abandon her temperance work but frequently used it as a springboard to writing and lecturing about other issues such as labor, religion, pacifism, and the poor."⁶⁶

Patricia Grimshaw also dealt with Ackermann in her article "Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women's Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i 1888 to 1902." Grimshaw explored the success of women's suffrage in New Zealand and Australia and compared it to the failure of suffragists in Hawaii.⁶⁷ She looked at Ackermann's work with the WCTU in Australia and New Zealand. Although Ackermann features heavily in the article, Grimshaw drew evidence only from two of Ackermann's books, *The World through a Woman's Eyes* and *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, and was not a comprehensive approach. Another work on Australian suffrage, Kirsten Lees *Votes for Women: the Australian Story*, dealt with Ackermann.⁶⁸ Lees, however, was not a professional historian and provided only a limited discussion of Ackermann's work in Australia.

While this study reaches a number of the same conclusions found by Tyrrell, Rushing, and Carr, no other study has attempted to place Ackermann within the context of the Progressive Movement or address the role she played in a wider progressive internationalist effort.

⁶⁶ Margaret Shipley Carr, "The Temperance Worker as Social Reformer and Ethnographer as Exemplified in the Life and Work of Jessie A. Ackermann" (MA thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2009), <http://libraries.etsu.edu/record=b2246791~S12a> (accessed 15 October 2010), 6.

⁶⁷ Patricia Grimshaw, "Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women's Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i 1888 to 1902," *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (November 2000): 556 (accessed in JSTOR).

⁶⁸ Kirsten Lees, *Votes for Women: The Australian Story* (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1995), 31-33.

Ackermann's experience over the course of nearly five decades and involvement with many different reforms means that she must be understood in the broadest environment of her era. This thesis, therefore, arrives at a more complete understanding of the nature of progressive internationalism by surveying Ackermann's career.

CHAPTER 2

THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION AND EARLY INTERNATIONAL REFORM, 1888-1904

In January of 1889, Jessie Ackermann set out from San Francisco for Honolulu on a mission for the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union to spread the gospel of temperance to the inhabitants of the Pacific, Australasia, Asia, Africa, and anywhere else her work might take her. For Ackermann, her mission was a calling from God to promulgate not only the good news of temperance but also Christian principles and values. In a farewell letter to the *Union Signal* (the WCTU's newsmagazine) written on the eve of her voyage to Hawaii, Ackermann compared her impending journey to the Mediterranean voyages of the apostle Paul in the New Testament. "I often think of Paul and the perils of the sea he faced," she noted, "what dauntless courage he had, but withall he had much to make him strong."¹ In the darkest hours of her journey, she expected to hear the echo of God's message to Paul to "'be of good cheer,' and the way will never be so blocked, or the night so dark, but the presence of the Lord will be with me."²

In reality, Ackermann set out on a mission of reform. Her auspices may have been temperance, but the World's WCTU platform went far beyond fighting the spread of intoxicating substances. The World's WCTU, under the leadership of Frances Willard, adopted a "Do Everything Policy." According to Willard, "a one-sided movement makes one-sided advocates. Virtues, like hounds, hunt in packs.... An all-round movement can only be carried forward by

¹ Jessie Ackermann, "Farewell Letter from Miss Ackerman," *Union Signal*, 28 February 1889.

² *Ibid.*

all-round advocates; a scientific age requires the study of every subject in its correlations.”³ The social ills of the world resulted not merely from intemperance but were effects of numerous social and moral problems. The World’s WCTU, therefore, embraced broad-based social and moral reform to achieve its goal of building a pure and perfected world. Willard called for the WCTU members and activists, known as White Ribboners, to “stand bravely by that blessed trinity of movements, Prohibition, Woman’s Liberation, and Labor’s Uplift. Everything is not the Temperance Reform, but the Temperance Reform should be in everything.”⁴

January 1889 was not the beginning of Ackermann’s mission but was merely the launch of her official assignment on behalf of the World’s WCTU. Ackermann began work in the temperance movement in the mid-1880s, and only several months before her departure for Hawaii, Australia, and Asia she carried the WCTU’s message of temperance to Alaska and British Columbia. Nevertheless, January 1889 marked the beginning of five years of international travel and reform for Ackermann that carried her to five continents. The ideas and models of reform Ackermann sought to instill to thousands of people in other parts of the world were synonymous with many of the fundamental reforms of the early Progressive Era in the United States. In lectures, addresses, and writings, Ackermann promoted not only temperance but encouraged the active participation of women in civic life, advocated improved living conditions for workers, children, and women, and promoted the Social Gospel of applied Christian principles. Ackermann’s labors demonstrate that early efforts at progressive reform were not restricted to the continental US but were transmitted to other parts of the world by reformist organizations like the WCTU. This chapter outlines Ackermann’s activities from the

³ Frances E. Willard, *Do Everything: A Handbook for the World’s White Ribboners* (Chicago: Woman’s Temperance Publishing Association, 1895), 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

mid-1880s to the beginning of the twentieth century and places her reform efforts into the context of the grass-roots reform of the early Progressive Era.

In order to situate Ackermann within her own contemporary context, it is first necessary to provide a brief background of the late nineteenth century temperance movement and its international reform efforts. The temperance movement's origins lie almost one hundred years before Ackermann joined the WCTU. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed a growth in both alcohol consumption and production. Local elites in American towns began to regard drunkenness as a hindrance to business and production. These elites – businessmen, clergy, and civic officials – came together and formed the first temperance societies in the United States.⁵ By the 1820s, however, temperance had been co-opted by evangelical Protestantism. The Second Great Awakening of the early to mid-nineteenth century sought to reform the entire country on Christian principles through church activity and voluntary societies.⁶ Seeing intemperance as a threat to a Christian republic, evangelicals “sensed a divine compulsion to send out missionaries to preach the gospel of abstinence from the use of distilled spirits.”⁷ National temperance organizations such as the American Temperance Union and the Sons of Temperance began to form by the 1830s and spread substantially across the country. Prior to the 1850s, the movement had been led by men, but the involvement of women grew substantially from the 1860s.⁸ Many evangelical Americans considered women guardians of the home and the purveyors of familial values to future generations. Although public participation

⁵ *Dictionary of American History*, s.v. “Temperance Movement,” by Douglas W. Carlson, 78.

⁶ *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century*, s.v. “Temperance Movement,” by David M. Fahey, 266.

⁷ Carlson, 78.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 78-80.

was denied to them, women “were encouraged to use their roles as mothers, sisters, and daughters to exercise moral suasion and set a good example.”⁹

The involvement of women in the temperance movement was extended with the founding of the International Order of Good Templars. Initially formed in 1850, the Good Templars embraced the same evangelical focus of earlier temperance organizations.¹⁰ Unlike earlier groups, however, the Good Templars accepted women and the very poor as equal members.¹¹ Women were free to hold office and speak at Good Templar events. These activities became a gateway into civic life in the United States for many women.¹²

Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, women shifted the temperance movement away from the traditional focus on moral suasion as a solution to the drinking problem and toward more legal and legislative solutions. Although women could not vote or actively take part in the civic process in the US, many American women found temperance reform to be the “most congenial cause through which to increase their involvement in public life.”¹³ Women came to the forefront of the temperance movement in 1873-1874 as a result of the Woman’s Crusade. The crusade was “a movement of Midwestern Protestant women endeavoring to close down the saloons that they saw as threatening the religious and moral standards with which they identified.”¹⁴ The Woman’s Crusade led to the formation of the WCTU in 1874. Under the presidency of Frances Willard, elected in 1879, the WCTU espoused

⁹ Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), xxiv.

¹⁰ Alvin J. Schmidt, *Fraternal Organizations* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 146-147.

¹¹ *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Good Templars,” by David M. Fahey, 268.

¹² Ian Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire: The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 18.

¹³ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, xxiv.

¹⁴ Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 1.

a comprehensive reform program epitomized by Willard's "Do Everything Policy."¹⁵ Willard merged the notion of women as guardians of home values and the evangelical Protestantism of the Second Great Awakening with a broader social morality, of which temperance was only a unit.¹⁶ Women were no longer just guarding the home from alcoholism but now from all the ill-effects of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration in the US. Central to the WCTU program was the goal of woman's suffrage. Willard regarded suffrage as the most effective way to solve the social and moral ills of the age. As a result, the WCTU became for women "a base for their participation in reformist causes, as a sophisticated avenue for political actions, as a support for demanding the ballot, and as a vehicle for supporting charitable activities."¹⁷

Willard pushed the WCTU, and the temperance movement itself, to the center of reformist impulses in the US in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The temperance and prohibition movement was not only a vehicle to civic engagement for women but also became one of the central driving forces within the Progressive Movement from the 1890s onward. Indeed, the quest for prohibition during the Progressive Era "drew on the same moral idealism and sought to deal with the same basic problems" as other elements of the Progressive Movement.¹⁸ Many social activists who lobbied for child labor laws, tax reform, direct legislation, and woman's suffrage, "worked also for state dry laws and for the prohibition of the liquor traffic and the saloon."¹⁹ Therefore, over the course of the nineteenth century, thanks in part to an evangelical Protestant reforming impulse and the participation of women, the

¹⁵ Ruth Bordin, *Frances Willard* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 129.

¹⁶ Epstein, 1.

¹⁷ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, xxiv.

¹⁸ James H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 2.

¹⁹ Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), 11.

temperance movement expanded from promoting the suasion of the use of alcohol to political initiatives for broad-based social reform of an industrialized US.

As temperance reform expanded into progressive reform by the 1890s, the temperance movement became one of the pioneering internationalist reform movements in the US. Although Protestant churches and organizations had been sending American missionaries to India, Southeast Asia, China, Latin America, and elsewhere since the early nineteenth century, from the 1870s onward American religious and reform groups not only expanded their individual organizations abroad, but “enlarged what could be termed the external ‘footprint’ of the United States in the 1880s and 1890s.”²⁰

As had been the case with temperance reform, the involvement of women greatly expanded the foreign missionary movement in scope and scale. As wives of male missionaries, women had been involved in evangelization and education, especially to foreign women, since the early nineteenth century. From the 1860s onward, however, “a phalanx of unmarried women built upon the efforts of the missionary wives and carried out works of education, medicine, and evangelism.”²¹ By the end of the century, women became the majority within the missionary field and shifted the focus from strict evangelism to a focus on social and humanitarian issues.²² A common missiology was adopted within women’s missionary boards and publications which stressed “Woman’s Work for Women.” Evangelism was now mixed with “civilization,” and spreading Western education, Western cultural and social mores, and Western family values was to go hand-in-hand with the transmission of the Christian faith. It was an assumption of

²⁰ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4.

²¹ Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996), xvii.

²² *Ibid.*, xvii-xviii.

American missionaries that non-Western religion and society had degraded women and that only Western faith and Western society could bring social liberation. Therefore, “the Christian gospel was one piece with Western-style social progress.”²³ Missionaries developed the concept of the exportation of American values to other parts of the world. Moral reform organizations adopted the missionary idea that the US had a divine mission to transform the morality of the world.

The missionary impulse directly influenced the temperance movement. Temperance reformers envisioned a coordinated international effort against alcohol as early as the 1820s, but this vision was not realized until the founding of the Good Templars. By the 1870s, the Good Templars spread to Great Britain, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia and by 1900 was the largest international temperance organization in the world.²⁴ Although the WCTU never surpassed the Good Templars in global membership, it was the WCTU that wedded the internationalist missionary impulse to a broad-based social reform program during the 1880s. Inspired by Protestant ideas of mission, Willard argued that “we are one world of tempted humanity.... We must no longer be hedged about by the artificial boundaries of states and nations.”²⁵ Willard formed World’s WCTU in 1884 and aimed at spreading the WCTU’s vision of moral reform to other parts of the world. From 1884 to 1891, the WCTU sent Mary Clement Leavitt on a foreign missionary trip on behalf of the organization that took her to forty-three countries and colonies in the Pacific, Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America.²⁶ A widow and retired school teacher from Boston, Leavitt had won 500,000 converts to the temperance movement by 1891 through her organizing efforts. Leavitt and subsequent the WCTU activists set up forty national organizations, boasted 766,000 members by the 1927, and made the WCTU

²³ Ibid, 130.

²⁴ Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 18.

²⁵ Bordin, *Frances Willard*, 190.

²⁶ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 88.

the world's most influential women's organization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁷ Through lectures, speeches, and on-the-ground organizing, the WCTU missionaries transmitted Willard's "Do Everything Policy" of broad-based social reform and in the process exported American values and visions of society to every corner of the world.

It was thus within this tradition of comprehensive reform that Jesse Ackermann began her life-long labor. Ackermann was born on July 4, 1857, in Boston, Massachusetts. She grew up in Chicago, Illinois and lived there during the 1860s and 1870s.²⁸ She rarely, if ever, publically spoke about her childhood but claimed that it had been nothing but ordinary.²⁹ Therefore, relatively little information exists about her life prior to the 1880s. In 1880 Ackermann enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley. Although both Ackermann and the WCTU commented that she completed her university education, she did not graduate from Berkeley.³⁰ Despite her lack of a degree, Ackermann was very well educated for women of her day and she claimed that she attended university courses periodically throughout her life after her time at Berkeley.³¹

Ackermann began working with the Good Templars in Sacramento, California around 1885 as a lecturer and organizer.³² Leading members of the organization in California praised her work.³³ In 1888, Ackermann joined and began organizing with the WCTU in California.

²⁷ Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, 1-2.

²⁸ *Australian Dictionary of Biography - Online Edition*, s.v. "Ackermann, Jessie A.," by Ian Tyrrell, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10003b.htm>; Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, 317. Some sources list Frankfort, Illinois as an alternative place of birth for Ackermann.

²⁹ "The Woman with the Universal Interest," [ca. early 1920s], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

³⁰ Tyrrell, "Ackermann, Jessie A." A letter from the Berkeley Office of the Recorder from 1932 to Ackermann suggests that she was only enrolled for two academic years between 1880 and 1882. See J.T. Peterson to Ackermann, 31 March 1932, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.3. It is unclear why Ackermann regularly claimed to have graduated. She embraced a public persona of an educated, traveling reformer and journalist throughout her career. It is likely she believed that a university degree reinforced her preferred public persona.

³¹ "The Woman with the Universal Interest."

³² S.J. Churchill, "Miss Jessie A. Ackerman," *Union Signal*, 28 February 1889.

³³ George B. Katzenstein to Ackermann, 11 March 1887, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.2.

According to Frances Willard, “the wider scope and higher spiritual tone of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, with its special opportunities for work among women, won her heart, and she began to serve in its ranks.”³⁴ As she had with the Good Templars, Ackermann earned praise for her efforts with the WCTU. S.J. Churchill, a leading figure in the California WCTU, applauded Ackermann for her skill as both an organizer and a lecturer.³⁵ The pastor of Ackermann’s church, the First Baptist Church in Sacramento, also praised her skills and wrote in a letter of introduction for Ackermann that “she possesses gifts that eminently qualify her as a lecturer in the temperance cause, and her efforts in this direction have been productive of much good.”³⁶

The WCTU almost immediately afforded Ackermann opportunities to carry the message of the temperance movement beyond California. As early as February of 1888, Churchill personally recommended Ackermann to Frances Willard for a trip to Hawaii on behalf of the WCTU.³⁷ Over the course of the summer of 1888, Ackermann made her first journey beyond the continental United States on behalf of the California WCTU and traveled to organize temperance unions in Alaska and British Columbia. Ackermann’s first work as an international activist on behalf of the WCTU was, therefore, an outgrowth of her regional work for the California WCTU. This mission outgrowth was common in the WCTU. Mary Leavitt was an active organizer on the Pacific Coast before she became an international missionary for the WCTU.

³⁴ Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, ed., *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches* (Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 4.

³⁵ Churchill.

³⁶ H. Hopper, letter of introduction for Ackermann, 9 October 1888, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.2.

³⁷ Frances Willard to Ackermann, 15 February 1888, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

For both Leavitt and Ackermann, a trip beyond the continental US was a natural extension of temperance work.³⁸

Upon arriving in Alaska, Ackermann was disturbed by the state of social morality within the territory. She reported that there were twenty-three saloons in Juneau and eight in Sitka which were frequented by the miners and laborers employed in the territory. There were as many as a thousand miners in Juneau when she visited and alcoholism and drunkenness were rampant. “There was positively no place to spend an evening except in one of the twenty-three saloons that curse the place,” she complained to the *Union Signal*.³⁹ Nearly all of these men were separated from the domesticating influences of the home. The civilizing influence of the home and home life was a central theme within the temperance movement and was reflected in much of Ackermann’s early work and writings. Most of the miners, who had come from all over the world, were either single or had left their families behind to come work in Alaska. According to Ackermann, “away from home influence and the presence of women – which does so much to keep men from degenerating – they often sink into most immoral lives.”⁴⁰ Beyond drunkenness and alcoholism, miners were prone to take Alaskan-native women as mistresses – often purchasing them or renting them from Alaskan-native men – and starting a family with them. Some of these miners already had wives and children in their homelands, and it was not uncommon for these men to abandon their Alaskan wives and children when new opportunities became available elsewhere in Alaska or when they returned to their homes. Such actions were not only morally degrading to the miners, Ackermann argued, but also to the exploited native

³⁸ Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 84.

³⁹ Jessie Ackermann, “Another Alaska Message,” *Union Signal*, 6 September 1888. Ackermann’s name was originally spelled Ackerman, but in the 1890s she added the second “n” and continued to spell it as such for the rest of her life. Many of her early writings are authored under the original spelling, and in the case of the above article, “J. Armenia Ackerman” was the name used. For the sake of consistency, “Jessie Ackermann,” the spelling she used for most of her career, will be used for citations of all works authored by Ackermann.

⁴⁰ Jessie Ackermann, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes* (Chicago: n.p., 1896), 33 (accessed in Google Books).

women.⁴¹ The territorial and the United States government did not help the matter either and often facilitated the alcohol and saloon trade.⁴²

Although little temperance activism had been conducted in Alaska, Ackermann began organizing local unions. She gained permission in Sitka to use the local courthouse as a meeting place and held both temperance and a general prayer meeting. “I dispensed with all form and called on the governor’s wife,” Ackermann explained, “who was very willing to help and do all she could. So we were successful in organizing, first a union among the whites, with a small membership” of eighteen.⁴³ Central in her efforts among the white union in Sitka was the establishment of a reading room to provide educational opportunities to the local population. Ackermann undertook the same efforts in Juneau she had in Sitka, but the meetings became so large she moved them to a local opera house.⁴⁴ A reading room was founded with the purchase of a library from a local saloon-keeper who held a library of three hundred books. The newly established union hosted a musical and literary entertainment fundraiser to pay for the reading room. Where Ackermann’s work in Sitka was limited to a very small number of local women, the women in Juneau expressed greater interest in temperance. “The ladies of Juneau,” she explained, “deserve great credit for the resolute manner in which they entered the work.”⁴⁵ The reading room was well stocked, evangelistic work was established, including monthly temperance meetings, and plans for a coffee house were underway by the time Ackermann left Juneau. The women of Juneau “joined hands in the work and united their voices with ours in the cry for ‘God and Home and Native Land,’ that now ascends from every nook and corner of our

⁴¹ Ibid, 33-34.

⁴² Jessie Ackermann, “Work in Alaska,” *Union Signal*, 16 August 1888.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ackermann, “Another Alaska Message.”

⁴⁵ Ibid.

possessions.”⁴⁶ Ackermann’s influence was not merely upon the women of Juneau, either. She explained how she convinced five saloon-keepers to give up their businesses and she drew in three hundred miners to her meetings who “seemed glad of an opportunity to learn of the work” of temperance.⁴⁷

Ackermann also directed her interest at the native Alaskan community in both Sitka and Juneau. In particular, she was gravely concerned about the plight of native Alaskan women, as she would be about women in virtually all of the nations and territories to which she traveled. The women of Alaska, she argued, were more degraded than anywhere else in the world. She was disturbed by arranged marriages, the practice of, at least as she saw it, forced tattooing and piercing, and the wearing of excessive jewelry. Ackermann described the adornment of women with tattoos and jewelry as “barbarous” and that “if civilized women wish to be effectually cured of the barbarous custom of wearing jewelry, they should see hearten women bedecked and bespangled.”⁴⁸ It was the cruel treatment of women by men, however, that most disturbed Ackermann. She reported that Alaskan men regarded women to be the laborers of their society. Men sold and bought women like livestock and these women became the beasts of burden in farming and other labor-intensive activities. This is also how the non-native miners could purchase or rent native mistresses and wives.⁴⁹

She believed that the root cause of these problems was, like with the miners, a lack of a proper domestic life. “To my mind the most deplorable condition that surrounds them is the lack of home life. On the home life depends the development of the people....If we are ever to lead

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, 25.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 25-27.

these people to a higher civilization, the work must begin in improving the home.”⁵⁰ Ackermann praised the efforts of a missionary she met in Sitka, Dr. Sheldon Jackson, who worked to promote a proper domestic environment for native children. Jackson housed children in a mission school, taught the boys various industries, and taught the girls the domestic arts. For the young people who grew up and married within the school, the mission had set up a separate village for them apart from their home village. “It is the intention to keep them away from the village,” she explained, “and thus prevent a return to their former habits.”⁵¹ Ackermann did work directly, albeit on a limited scale, with natives in Sitka and Juneau. Relying on translators, Ackermann set up Loyal Temperance Legions – a WCTU children’s organization – in both towns and set up a WCTU union in Sitka among the native women. The work was to be led and carried on by missionaries in the towns who were already working with the native populations.⁵²

Ackermann’s work in Alaska formed a pattern of efforts she would take in most of the lands she visited for the WCTU. She held public meetings and lectures on temperance, as well as more general gospel meetings, organized local chapters of the WCTU, focused much of her attention on the plight of local women, and transmitted her thoughts and experiences back to the United States through publications such as the *Union Signal* and eventually her book *The World Through a Woman’s Eyes*. Beyond forming the model of her internationalist efforts with the WCTU, a number of aspects of her work are notable. Her work in Alaska demonstrates how, from the beginning, Ackermann’s efforts were not constricted merely to temperance reform but also dealt with broader issues, such as Christian evangelism, education, the condition of women, and the cultural transformation of both native and non-native communities. For Ackermann, the

⁵⁰ Ibid, 27.

⁵¹ Ibid, 28.

⁵² Ackermann, “Work in Alaska,”; Ackermann, “Another Alaska Message.”

root cause of all moral and social problems in Alaska was an absence of home life. This emphasis on domesticity was a central tenant of the temperance movement but also was a driving factor within the Progressive Movement. Many reformers believed the moral superiority of women in the sphere of domesticity could transform the whole of human society for the better.⁵³

Finally, Ackermann's views of native Alaskan culture are worthy of note. The use of terms by Ackermann such as heathen, barbarous, or uncivilized to describe Alaskan culture were not out of keeping with the cultural views of many Americans nor at all with the views of Americans who believed it was their mission to reform the moral values of the entire world.⁵⁴ Indeed, she would use such terms again for native populations in other parts of the world throughout her career. Nevertheless, it is important to keep these initial observations in mind for over the course of her life Ackermann's cultural, and indeed racial, views of foreign populations changed. These changes demonstrate not only the changing nature of Ackermann herself, but also the changing notions of culture and race before, during, and after the Progressive Era.

Ackermann's mission to Alaska also included a trip to British Columbia. This leg of her tour, her first beyond United States territory on behalf of the WCTU, was not extensively documented and the entirety of her efforts there are unknown. Nevertheless, she did hold meetings and presented lectures in Victoria, British Columbia.⁵⁵ After her return from Alaska and British Columbia, Frances Willard encouraged Ackermann to attend the WCTU national convention in October 1888 in New York in order for the rest of the union leaders to meet her.⁵⁶ Willard and the WCTU also considered sending Ackermann to Mexico and South America in

⁵³ John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 166.

⁵⁴ Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, 102.

⁵⁵ "By Gaslight: Miss Ackerman's Lecture on San Francisco," *The Daily Times*, 9 August 1888, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁵⁶ Frances Willard to Ackermann, 3 September 1888, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

September of 1888, but this trip never developed.⁵⁷ Ackermann attended the national convention in 1888 and was formally appointed the Second Round-the-World Missionary for the WCTU. Her mission was to sail across the Pacific to Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia, the continent of Asia, and wherever her work might take her. After the convention, she returned to California and sailed from San Francisco for Hawaii on January 29, 1889.⁵⁸

As noted, Ackermann's efforts in Alaska formed the pattern she followed in most of the lands she visited on behalf of the WCTU. Because this study aims to assess Ackermann's ideas and reform efforts, only a short note on when and where Ackermann traveled after leaving San Francisco in 1889 is necessary. From San Francisco, she sailed directly to Honolulu, Hawaii, and then on to New Zealand, Tasmania, Australia, China, Japan, and Siam (modern-day Thailand) all of which took place in 1889 and 1890. In early 1890, Ackermann traveled back to Australia where she carried out an extensive and systematic organizing campaign across all of the island's colonies, including Tasmania. She remained in Australia until late 1892 when she journeyed to Java and Singapore, and then on to Burma, India, and South Africa in late winter and early spring of 1893.⁵⁹ Ackermann returned to the United States in the summer of 1893 and lectured at the WCTU's exhibit at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition.⁶⁰ By the fall of 1893, Ackerman returned to Australia where she remained until the Australian WCTU national convention which was held in Sydney in early April, 1894.⁶¹ Although she returned to the United States in 1894, she traveled to Great Britain in early 1895 in order to recuperate from her

⁵⁷ Frances Willard to Ackermann, 3 September 1888, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

⁵⁸ Willard and Livermore, 4.

⁵⁹ These locations and dates are derived from Ackermann's letters to the *Union Signal* from 1889-1893.

⁶⁰ Jessie Ackermann, "A Letter from America," [ca. 1893], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁶¹ "Woman's Temperance Convention," *The Sydney Mail*, 14 April 1894, Ackermann Collection, oversize box 2; Flora B. Harris, "Australian W.C.T.U.: Second Triennial Convention," *Union Signal*, 31 May 1894.

years of travel.⁶² She did not remain in Britain for long and later in 1895 she traveled to Iceland, partly for pleasure, but also in the interest of the WCTU.⁶³ After 1895, Ackermann did not travel abroad again until 1904.

Ackermann's work did differ somewhat from place to place. For instance, temperance activity in many countries in Asia was limited by the reality that these nations did not have well-developed temperance movements and by other issues like the language barrier. Ackermann's efforts were met with more enthusiasm and success in British colonial possessions, especially Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, where temperance movements already existed. The Good Templars boasted 29,000 and the WCTU 4,000 members in Australia by 1887. In fact, "it was the Templars who hired the halls, paid the traveling bills, did the advertising, and provided the audiences" for Ackermann in Australia and New Zealand.⁶⁴ Therefore, considering the foundation of contacts and support that preceded Ackermann in Australasia, it is no surprise that she focused her efforts in that region so heavily. While she attempted to organize lectures and unions in most of the lands she visited, she also managed to secure meetings with high-profile leaders and heads-of-state in several countries. Ackermann met with King Kalakaua in Hawaii, and in Siam she held personal talks over temperance, education, and women's issues with King Chulalongkorn. In the South African Republic, she attended an event with foreign officials from Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Germany.⁶⁵

As discussed earlier, Ackermann believed social and moral decay in Alaska stemmed from a lack of an appropriate home life. For Ackermann, if an individual lacked a proper home

⁶² Willard to Ackermann, 9 February 1895, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

⁶³ Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, 87; Jenny Rushing, "Jessie Ackerman, 'The Original World Citizen': Temperance Leader, Suffrage Pioneer, Feminist, Humanitarian" (MA thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2003), <http://libraries.etsu.edu/record=b1585918~S12a> (accessed 15 October 2010), 32.

⁶⁴ Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire*, 18.

⁶⁵ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, 55-59, 190-193, 267.

life, then he or she was deficient of the moralizing influence of women, the subduing effect of Christianity, and more generally lacking Protestant American familial values. The concept of the home and a proper domestic life was a central tenant in the Progressive Movement. Many progressives saw the home as a microcosm for wider society. Jacob Riis, the muckraking journalist, certainly believed this and argued that “upon the home rests our moral character; our civic and political liberties are grounded there; virtue, manhood, citizenship grow there.... For American citizenship in the long run will be, must be, what the American home is.”⁶⁶ For progressives like Ackermann, the protection and reform of the home was synonymous with reform of the nation and world. As the historian Michael McGerr has argued, “progressives tended to wrap their worries about a host of problems in a consuming fear for the fate of the home.”⁶⁷

The progressive impulse for temperance reform stemmed from the same influences to protect domestic life. The role of women, Christianity, and broad notions of American home values were inseparable from temperance in Ackermann’s mind. Women around the world, she stressed, needed to work together in a coordinated effort to protect the home and defeat intemperance. She explicitly made this point in a lecture in New Zealand. When Ackermann introduced the mission and principles of the WCTU at the lecture, she explained that the women of the United States used to “stay at home to watch and pray. But this monster evil of strong drink has so desolated our homes that we find action is needed as well as prayer.”⁶⁸ American women stood up to confront intemperance and would never sit down again. The men of the US failed to deal properly with the alcohol problem, and as a result women “had to take the matter

⁶⁶ Jacob August Riis, *The Peril and Preservation of the Home* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company, 1903), 24.

⁶⁷ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 83.

⁶⁸ “Miss Ackerman: The Opening Meeting,” [ca. 1889], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

up. Some [men] have been like signposts at the cross roads, pointing the way to health, wealth, and temperance, but have refused to walk in it themselves.”⁶⁹ Ackermann then explained how American women took the lead in the temperance movement, outlining some of their specific efforts, methods, and successes. She put forward the American WCTU as a model for New Zealand’s temperance movement. In summation of the WCTU’s mission, she argued that: “no matter how low our sisters may have descended in the scale of society through strong drink, we go down to lift them up.”⁷⁰

Ackermann’s lecture aimed to inspire not only New Zealand women to join the WCTU but also to enter the civic world. In New Zealand, women tax payers had been able to vote in municipal elections since the 1860s, and laws had been passed that regulated female labor.⁷¹ Ackermann was aware of these developments and saw them as successes for women, but she believed New Zealand’s women were reluctant to be involved publically in reform efforts.⁷² In the *Union Signal*, she noted that public gatherings of New Zealand’s WCTU were few and mostly limited to an annual meeting.⁷³ For Ackermann, women were essential to the success of temperance, and she encouraged the women of New Zealand to take advantage of their liberties in order to defeat the social and moral evils caused by intemperance.

This particular lecture echoed a similar sentiment about the morality of women contained in a speech Ackermann delivered in British Columbia. The speech specifically focused on San Francisco and the city’s social and moral decay. Ackermann asserted that both the Chinese and white population of the city were ridden with the habits of vice and wickedness, particularly

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “Timeline,” New Zealand Ministry for Women’s Affairs (24 November 2009) <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/women-in-nz/timeline/timeline.pdf> (accessed 24 November 2010).

⁷² Jessie Ackermann, “Our Second Round-the-World Missionary: From New Zealand,” *Union Signal*, 12 September 1889.

⁷³ Ibid.

opium and alcohol abuse. These troubles were not being confronted because the men who governed both the city and the state of California refused. "Social reform was greatly needed and this would not be accomplished until the morals of men are as good as the morals of women. When men and women are weighed in the same social scale, the morals of the people would improve accordingly."⁷⁴ In the New Zealand speech, Ackermann used the WCTU's efforts in the United States as a model for New Zealand's temperance movement. The British Columbia lecture, although it focused on San Francisco, can be regarded in a similar light, with Ackermann's prescription for San Francisco's vice serving as a model for similar problems in British Columbia. Again, as with the New Zealand speech, only the moral influence of women could solve the social and moral problems of San Francisco.

In an 1892 article, Ackermann took these suggestions about women even further, demanding Australian women take up a more active role. On a journey to India from Australia, Ackermann's ship anchored off the northwest coast of Australia, a part of the island she had not visited previously. The moral and social condition of the inhabitants of the region appalled her. "Surprise does not express my feeling," she explained, "when I tell you that many of these people are beyond the pale of the Gospel, such a thing as a missionary or minister being quite unknown in many places."⁷⁵ Sin and vice was rampant, and because so few women lived in the area, Japanese women were imported to live immoral lives, presumably as concubines or prostitutes. "You all know the sins common to these isolated places," she asserted, "you all know how men degenerate when removed from home influence and the restraining influence of woman."⁷⁶ Ackermann explained how she had attended conferences in Australia where citizens

⁷⁴ "By Gaslight: Miss Ackerman's Lecture on San Francisco."

⁷⁵ Jessie Ackermann, "The Great North-West of Australia," 30 September 1892, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

had cried for the Christianization of China, India, and other parts of the world and knew missionary zeal was strong. “Now I want to put in a plea for your own land, I want to tell you of places up there where the Gospel is never heard where not the least effort is being put forth in any lines of Christian work.”⁷⁷ Again, the moralizing influence of women was the solution to moral degradation, and again Ackermann’s vision of what should be done was conveyed to foreign recipients.

The civilizing influence of women and a proper home life were not only central to ideas espoused by Ackermann, or even the WCTU, but can be seen in the ideas of many progressives, including those involved in the Settlement House Movement. Founders of early settlement houses in the United States sought to transmit social and cultural values to the urban poor, including domestic and familial values, through programs like clubs for working women, mothers, and children. According to Eleanor Stebner, “clubs were central to settlement houses because they represented the method whereby individuals socialized and learned from one another; they also became the way white Anglo-Saxon culture was to be transmitted to new immigrants.”⁷⁸ The Henry Street Settlement, founded in New York’s Lower East Side in 1893, specifically focused upon “the profession of home and community or public nursing,” while also offering educational, vocational, and social programs.⁷⁹

The Settlement House Movement, dominated by middle-class women in the United States, was part of a larger municipal housekeeping campaign where women extended their roles as mothers and wives beyond their homes and into their communities. Because the home was influenced by the community and problems in the community threatened their husbands and

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, s.v. “The Settlement House Movement,” by Eleanor J. Stebner, 1062.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

children, women worked “to clean and beautify their towns, improve school systems, eliminate juvenile delinquency, and ameliorate the public health.”⁸⁰ Jane Addams, greatly influential within both the Settlement House Movement and the Progressive Movement at large, saw municipal housekeeping as an opportunity for women “to do their own work and to take care of those affairs which naturally and historically belong to women.”⁸¹ Settlement houses and municipal housekeeping campaigns were both women led movements aimed at promoting a particular middle-class American vision of proper domestic and familial life. These are the same values Ackermann was promoting on her travels. Instead of seeking to reform her own community, Ackermann extended these ideas of reform to people in other lands.

Ackermann’s article on the northwest of Australia emphasized more directly than the previously discussed writings and lectures the importance of Christianity and Christian work in achieving moral and social reform. It is impossible to grasp Ackermann’s goals and underlying motives in her career as a reformer without understanding the context of her Christian faith. From the very beginning, Ackermann viewed her work for the WCTU as a Godly mission, as demonstrated by her comparison of her journey from California in 1889 to Paul’s Mediterranean missions in the New Testament. It is also clear that the WCTU considered her work an extension of Christian work not only because the union was, by name, a Christian organization but also because they consciously gave Ackermann and other international advocates the title of “missionary.” Ackermann, however, did not primarily seek to spread Christian belief. Her mission preached a social gospel, specifically the application of Christian principles to everyday life, private and public. In 1895, Ackermann wrote a series of articles on “The Twentieth

⁸⁰ Agnes Hooper Gottlieb, “Women and Expose: Reform and Housekeeping,” in *The Muckrakers: Evangelical Crusaders*, ed. Robert Miraldi (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000), 72.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

Century Woman” where she outlined what she believed would be the challenges women would face in the coming century. All of these articles reveal a great deal about Ackermann’s mode of thought in the 1890s. One article that focused on women and the church underscores the importance of Christianity to Ackermann’s reformist ambitions.

In the article, Ackermann not only assessed the role women would play within Christianity in the coming century but also the broader role of the church in society. The nineteenth century, she argued, had brought new forms of organization to all levels of life and new challenges to the world. She believed the sole reform needed to cope with these changes was an application of Christian principles to the daily and individual life. Every “moral, social, and political problem finds its solution in applied Christianity” and “the root of most evil in the world is the unchristian principles upon which general business is conducted.”⁸² Ackermann believed that churches had failed to apply Christianity to daily life, particularly because so many immoral businessmen funded and were involved in the affairs of churches. She hoped in the twentieth century that women, by their superior moral nature, would become ordained ministers and leaders within the church and seek to implement applied Christian principles to the world. Woman’s⁸³ “sense of justice is so keen that she will fearlessly use the opportunities and advantages of the pulpit in defending the oppressed against the oppressor, regardless of the form of tyranny or ‘standing’ of the tyrant.”⁸⁴ Once women reoriented the church, there would be no need for reformers or reform organizations for they would all be united under the church. The “ministry of women... will so change the attitude of the church to great moral questions that

⁸² Jessie Ackermann, “The Twentieth Century Woman: Her Place in the Church,” 1895, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.15.

⁸³ When Ackermann spoke of “woman” she referred to “womankind” as a collective entity, similar to the use of the word “man” to refer to “mankind” as collective entity.

⁸⁴ Ackermann, “The Twentieth Century Woman: Her Place in the Church.”

reform societies will be a matter of history and our children's children will read of them very much as we now read of the 'Divine rights of Kings.'"⁸⁵

Ackermann's Christian faith, therefore, was inseparable from reform. Indeed, her efforts, as well as the efforts of the WCTU and other groups, were considered to be the application of Christian principles to moral and social dilemmas, as well as everyday life. She believed that her work was the true work of the church and that the church had strayed. "Christian principles," of course, is extraordinarily vague and Ackermann offered few specifics in this article beyond the immorality of businessmen who profited from the losses of other men. Nevertheless, it seems likely that Ackermann regarded the WCTU's "Do Everything Policy," and other similar reform platforms, as an embodiment of Christian principles.

Ackermann's ideas of applied Christianity fall in line with the Social Gospel movement in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Josiah Strong, one of the leading members of the movement, promoted the application of Christianity to social and moral problems in America. Many of Strong's social ideas were typical of progressivism, particularly those concerning urban reform and renewal, political corruption, labor conditions, the concentration of wealth, and international responsibility. His writings were very influential among reformers of the Progressive Era.⁸⁶ Considering that Strong's most influential work, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, was published in 1885, it is likely that many of Strong's ideas inspired Ackermann, directly or indirectly.⁸⁷ Ackermann, at the very least, personally knew and corresponded with Strong. In 1900, Strong wrote to Ackermann

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Dorothea R. Muller, "The Social Philosophy of Josiah Strong: Social Christianity and American Progressivism," *Church History* 28, no. 2 (June 1959): 185 (accessed in JSTOR).

⁸⁷ Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963).

encouraging her to work for his organization, the League for Social Service. The specific context of the work Strong wished Ackermann to take up is unknown, but he noted that “you are the only woman that I know of into whose hands I should be willing to put the proposed work, and even if we should find another who seemed to possess all the requisite qualifications, the chances would be a thousand to one against her being available.”⁸⁸ Ackermann appears to have declined the work, but this correspondence demonstrates that Ackermann’s efforts toward applied Christianity, as well as broader reform, were in line with the Social Gospel movement and acceptable to reformers like Strong. If Ackermann’s notions of Christianity were, therefore, within the scope of the American Social Gospel movement, then Ackermann’s writings and lectures abroad can be regarded as an effort to implement the Social Gospel in foreign nations and colonies.

Ackermann demonstrated this in her call for Australians to carry the gospel to the underpopulated northwest of Australia. These ideas are also present in her assessment of China in *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*. She thought China had failed to embrace any of the spirit of reform that she believed had swept the rest of the world. China had “kept her feet on the rock of her fathers, refusing to enter upon the highway of human welfare, hewn out of new ideas and modern thought.”⁸⁹ Christian missionaries had not been very successful in the country, and many “heathen” and “barbaric” practices persisted, such as abandonment or infanticide of unwanted female children.⁹⁰ China was also plagued by the introduction of Western vice. “It is a fact that Western Civilization without the subduing effects of Christianity is the worst-known

⁸⁸ Josiah Strong to Ackermann, 20 June 1900, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.4.

⁸⁹ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, 140.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 140, 156-157.

civilization,” Ackermann asserted.⁹¹ Because the Chinese had adopted many of the West’s vices, primarily opium and alcohol abuse, and had failed to adopt any Western virtues, Ackermann believed China to be completely demoralized. She argued that the plague of Western vice in China not only impeded a spirit of progressive reform but contributed to China’s international difficulties, specifically its inability to form treaties with foreign powers.⁹² China’s lack of Christian virtue coupled with Western vice was reinforced by, predictably for Ackermann, “a lack of home life as we [Westerners] understand the term.”⁹³

In the case of China, Ackermann suggested that Christianity would never be accepted in China as long as the negative Western influences devastated Chinese life. In an article on the topic, Ackermann chastised British efforts to dominate China through the opium trade, referencing the Opium Wars between China and Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century.⁹⁴ For Ackermann, China’s greatest curse was Western vice and greed. Her solution to the problem was the virtue of Western society: applied Christianity. “Until the churches of England and America join to put down the liquor and the opium traffic,” Ackermann explained, the gospel would never find receptive ears in China.⁹⁵ This is precisely the kind of message she transmitted to a missionary conference held in Shanghai in 1890, where she was given a platform to speak to nearly five hundred missionaries who served all across China.⁹⁶ In places like Australia, New Zealand, and Alaska, Ackermann formed WCTU unions in an effort to convey American notions of social and moral reform. Nevertheless, in China, where virtually no temperance movement

⁹¹ Ibid, 164.

⁹² Ibid, 164.

⁹³ Ibid, 141.

⁹⁴ “Talks of a Traveler,” [late 1890s], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Jessie Ackermann, “Our Second Round the World Missionary,” *Union Signal*, 28 August 1890.

existed and where, in Ackermann's eyes, the entirety of the country was demoralized, she sought to embed reformist ideas within the preexisting missionary framework.

If China's "curse" could begin to be solved by disruption of the opium trade through applied Christianity, Ackermann regarded the nature of native culture and society as the inhibitor of progress for India. She was horrified by the scenes she witnessed upon arriving in India. She considered the religious rites of Hindus on the banks of the Hooghly River in Calcutta and the Ganges in Benares to be disturbing, native superstitions. In particular, she was troubled by acts of merit-making, such as laying on spikes and worshipers dragging chains from their bodies. "Of all the degrading influences that could be imagined, all superstitions indulged in by rational beings, all darkness that ever clouded the human mind," she asserted, "the sum total is centered in this city [Calcutta]." ⁹⁷ In Ackermann's opinion, if the influence of the British had, overall, been negative in China, British cultural influence in India had improved the status of many Indians, particularly women. Although progress had been made for women, "much more must be done before the women of that country" before they could be "elevated to the standard of womanhood." ⁹⁸

The solution to India's degradation was the extension of Christian influence. Ackermann urged the WCTU to send more activists to India not merely to promote the union's interests but to directly coordinate and carry out reform work among the population. ⁹⁹ Specifically, Ackermann promoted the need for education for women in India. After speaking at the World's Columbia Exposition in 1893, Ackermann managed to encourage an unnamed organization (perhaps the WCTU) to train and educate one hundred Christian girls "who are ultimately to go

⁹⁷ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, 228-231.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁹⁹ Jessie Ackermann, "Miss Ackermann in India," *Union Signal*, 18 May 1893.

as missionaries to the Zenanas”¹⁰⁰ in India.¹⁰¹ As was the case in China, Ackermann believed that Christian missionary work and applied Christianity was the answer to India’s immorality and lack of development.

Although Christian work and reform were one in the same for Ackermann, reform did not always proceed from Christianity. For instance, if Christianity was to spread in China, fundamental reform had to occur first. Ackermann’s conclusions about Japan followed this reasoning; however, Japan, unlike China, had taken up the spirit of reform. Unlike her perception of Alaska, China, or India, Ackermann found Japan to be inspiring. She believed that “the spirit of reform was born” in the Meiji Emperor of Japan (1852-1912), who had carried out substantial reforms in Japan since his accession in 1868 in what is known as the Meiji Restoration. The Meijis transformed Japan into a centralized state, and implemented both Western and Chinese inspired social, economic, and political reforms.¹⁰² In the eyes of many Western observers of the period, these reforms transformed Japan into a modern nation. Ackermann was certainly of this opinion, describing Meiji as a figure who stood “out among the brave, heroic, and progressive spirits... of the century.”¹⁰³ Meiji, she argued, moved away from the inherent conservatism that plagued East Asia and stepped “into the sunlight of progress.”¹⁰⁴ In particular, she praised the emperor for adopting Western forms of education, art, and science. Beyond implementing such changes, the emperor adopted a reform that, in Ackermann’s eyes, would ensure a progressive future in Japan: the education of women. “Realizing that much of real character-molding devolves upon the mother,” she explained, “it seemed to him that the

¹⁰⁰ Zenana was the name for South Asian Islamic harems or the location where the women of the Islamic household resided.

¹⁰¹ Ackermann, “A Letter from America.”

¹⁰² *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, s.v. “Meiji Restoration,” by Marius B. Jansen, 155.

¹⁰³ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, 101.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

better education of women would aid greatly in laying a sure foundation for the future of progress of the nation.”¹⁰⁵ She noted that both boys and girls in Japan attended primary schools, and that many women sought higher education. As a result, some women were involved in literary work and journalism.¹⁰⁶

Unlike China, a native temperance movement existed in Japan prior to Ackermann’s arrival. A number of Japanese enthusiastically supported temperance and sought to emulate the WCTU and other American institutions. By 1910, Japan had thousands of temperance activists.¹⁰⁷ Ackermann met success with her efforts in Japan and temperance advocates warmly welcomed her upon arrival in Tokyo.¹⁰⁸ She drew large crowds and her visit resulted, at least in Tokyo, in a boost in activism. The president of the Tokyo Temperance Society, Taro Ando, wrote to Ackermann after her visit and explained that membership had grown and exceeded 967 members.¹⁰⁹ Ando gave an account of his conversion to Christianity at one of Ackermann’s lectures, and apparently a number of the audience members were inspired to join the faith after his speech.¹¹⁰ This, coupled with the Meiji reforms and the growth of temperance in the country, led Ackermann to conclude that all of Japan was on the verge of embracing Christianity.¹¹¹ In India, Christianity would lead to progress. In China, reform would begin the process toward Christianity, and ultimately progress. Because Japan had already adopted reform and had already embraced the spirit of progress, Ackermann believed that Christianity was the next logical step for Japan. Her assessment of Japan again drew upon the view of the importance of women to social development.

¹⁰⁵ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, 102.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁰⁷ Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 62-63, 74-75.

¹⁰⁸ Jessie Ackermann, “Our Second Round-the-World Missionary in Japan,” *Union Signal*, 24 July 1890.

¹⁰⁹ Taro Ando to Ackermann, 21 April 1891, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.4.

¹¹⁰ Ackermann, “Our Second Round-the-World Missionary in Japan.”

¹¹¹ “Miss Ackermann’s Mission,” 6 April 1892, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

While Ackermann constantly emphasized the fundamental role women needed to play in society, her position on women's suffrage was ambiguous during the 1880s and 1890s. The WCTU certainly considered suffrage an overarching goal of its platform, but Ackermann avoided the topic in a couple of her speeches.¹¹² In Bangkok, she explicitly pointed out to her audience that suffrage was not a part of her program. "By making this avowal," reported the *Bangkok Times*, "we feel sure that the lady will claim the respect and attention of [the] Bangkok people."¹¹³ In Siam, where Ackermann believed the women to be "in the most enslaved condition of any women in the world," it is unlikely that a foreign, female speaker promoting women's suffrage would have been received well by either the authorities or the general population.¹¹⁴ It is possible Ackermann adjusted her comments on suffrage depending on her audience.

Ackermann, however, also avoided the topic of suffrage in a lecture she gave in Tasmania in 1892. One reporter noted that "she put aside the question of women's suffrage and rather sought to gently draw all her sisters present to look at their responsible position in life; to think of the manner in which they used their influence, and she firmly told them that their first duty was to their homes."¹¹⁵ Despite displaying this sentiment, the 1894 Australian WCTU convention, at which Ackermann headed as president, adopted a resolution that "affirmed the desirableness of women voting on equal terms with men."¹¹⁶ This demonstrates inconsistency within two years on the subject in the same part of the world. Of course, Ackermann merely presided over the convention and the resolution may not have represented her views.

¹¹² Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, xxiv.

¹¹³ *Bangkok Times*, 18 December 1889, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹¹⁴ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, 181.

¹¹⁵ "Miss Ackermann's Mission," 6 April 1892, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹¹⁶ "Woman's Temperance Convention," *The Sydney Mail*, 14 April 1894, Ackermann Collection, oversize box 2.

Nevertheless, in her 1895 series of articles on “The Twentieth Century Woman,” Ackermann strongly voiced her support for suffrage. In her article on women’s place in the state, she proclaimed that women had entered the political realm and women and politics could never be separated again. “From the standpoint of simple justice,” she argued, “the ballot belongs to woman, and when this argument is the basis for suffrage, well and good.”¹¹⁷ She outlined the reasons why women were as capable as men at political participation, critiquing a contemporary argument that women were incapable of judging the merits of political candidates. Women voters were required in order to lead much needed social and moral reform because the men of the world had failed to do so.¹¹⁸ Ackermann’s inconsistency on suffrage may be explained by a number of potential reasons. Nevertheless, she became a whole-hearted advocate for suffrage in the first two decades of the twentieth century and supported it not only in the United States but globally. This shift in emphasis followed a larger change in Ackermann’s thinking about reform. In the early twentieth century, as will become clear in the next chapter, she began to focus more upon legislative solutions to social and moral problems. In the 1880s and 1890s, however, she believed individual moral uplift through a social gospel could solve major problems like urban poverty and alcoholism.

The themes of Ackermann’s speeches, lectures, and writings are central to understanding the importance of her mission and efforts abroad; however, some consideration must also be given to the framework of some of her writings. Ackermann’s first book, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, published in 1896, documents many of her travels, experiences, and thoughts from the late 1880s to the mid-1890s. The book is the single most important source written by

¹¹⁷ Jessie Ackermann, “The Twentieth Century Woman: Her Place in the State,” 1895, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.15.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Ackermann dealing with her work during this period. Certain elements of the book reveal fundamental aspects about Ackermann's approach to travel, reform, and writing.

In *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, as noted earlier, Ackermann clearly articulated the purpose of the book in her introduction. In *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, however, Ackermann explains in her preface that the narrative of the book was essentially "a series of rambling notes, culled from many chapters in a rambling life."¹¹⁹ This was the case because many of the chapters had been taken from articles that had already been published in the women's magazine *Ladies' Home Companion* in 1895. Ackermann, therefore, did not intend, or at least expect, for her readers to find a centralized purpose or intent in the book. She did not explain either in the preface or in the text itself that the context of her travels was in the interest of the WCTU. Temperance as a topic or concept was not central to the book.

William Elroy Curtis' introduction to the book, though, described it as an illustration of "what a woman who wills can do," stressing the unique nature of Ackermann's travels.¹²⁰ "It marks an epoch," he stressed "in the science of travel, as well in the progress of womanhood when a girl like Miss Ackermann encircles the globe... to learn what other women are doing" with life.¹²¹ Curtis's assessment of the book honed in on the most important theme of Ackermann's book: the condition of women in the world. In the book, Ackermann described and assessed the condition of women in virtually all of the countries and colonies she visited. Indeed, before she even began to discuss her trip to Alaska in the first chapter, Ackermann examined the condition of English-speaking women in the world. She explained that English-speaking women were the best treated women in the world and were "recipients of more

¹¹⁹ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, 7.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

courtesy and greater civility than those of any other race or tongue.”¹²² Despite this treatment, English-speaking women generally felt discontented with their lives. “If every English-speaking woman could leave her country, and go throughout the lands where woman exists only as a slave, or, at most, as a ‘necessary evil,’ I am sure she would return contented with her lot.”¹²³ Therefore, it is clear that one of Ackermann’s central purposes was to demonstrate the poor condition of women around the world to a privileged Western audience.

If the overriding theme of *The World through a Woman’s Eyes* was the condition of women around the world, it was by no means the only focus or even the foundation of the stylistic approach. Some of the book was in the style of travel writing and was geared toward a general interest in a particular place. An article Ackermann wrote for a newspaper in late 1889 described her journey by boat from San Francisco to Honolulu. The article was in the style of travel writing and focused on the journey and the visual experience of the trip. It also paralleled a chapter that discussed the same journey in *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, and at times the two texts were identical.¹²⁴

Ackermann wrote articles in this style, along with articles focused on social and moral reform, for specific reasons. The WCTU sought to have their missionaries self-fund their travels if at all possible. In Ackermann’s case, the national WCTU did not contribute any money to her mission, and she was forced raise money from the local branches she visited abroad and to earn her own money by other means.¹²⁵ Frances Willard at times provided excuses to Ackermann as

¹²² Ibid, 18.

¹²³ Ibid, 22.

¹²⁴ Jessie Ackermann, “Around the World: San Francisco’s Harbor – Golden Gate – Old Ocean Rolling – Day-break at Honolulu, Etc.,” 2 April 1889, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹²⁵ Tyrrell, *Woman’s World/Woman’s Empire*, 57, 108.

to why the WCTU could not send her money during her journeys.¹²⁶ Also, in letters to the *Union Signal*, Ackermann occasionally pleaded for financial support from the organization.¹²⁷

Ackermann was, therefore, unpaid for her work for the WCTU. Writing and publishing articles and books proved to be her profession as much as social and moral activism.

Ackermann's work as a journalist explains many of the stylistic and thematic choices in her book. While temperance was her mission and the purpose of her travels, she had to make a living at least partly from journalism. This also gave her the freedom to pursue other topics and ideas and provided a career after she ended her work with the WCTU.

The World through a Woman's Eyes also fits into the context of the Progressive Era as a piece of investigative or muckraking journalism. In the late nineteenth century, journalism, along with other professions, became more accessible to women. Some women journalists framed their work around the vision of women as protectors of the home and family morality. Their journalism thus fell "within the province of the social housekeeper."¹²⁸ In this way, women journalists became promoters and agents of municipal housekeeping. Traditional muckraking focused on exposing political or economic corruption in American society, but these women journalists exposed social and moral ills and promoted reforms aimed at solving social problems.¹²⁹ Kathleen Endres has argued that the motivation behind this form of journalism was the same as the motivation behind muckraking and that municipal housekeeping journalism should be considered an extension of Progressive Era investigative journalism.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Frances Willard to Ackermann, 1 July 1889, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4; Frances Willard to Ackermann, 18 May 1892, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

¹²⁷ Jessie Ackermann, "Miss Ackermann in India," *Union Signal*, 30 April 1893.

¹²⁸ Gottlieb, 76.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

¹³⁰ Kathleen Endres, "Muckraking: A Term Worth Redefining," *American Journalism* 14, no. 3-4 (1997): 333-335.

This characterization of muckraking could easily be extended to many of Ackermann's writings. The condition of women abroad as a theme was also found in a number of her speeches and lectures and was also prominent in her other two books.¹³¹ By exposing the often horrible reality of life for women in Asia, Africa, Alaska, and the unsettled parts of Australasia, and by offering solutions, Ackermann sought to inspire Western women to do something about it. The term "muckraking" had yet to be coined in 1896, but American writers and photographers, such as Jacob Riis, had been involved in this style of reporting for a number of years. It would be incorrect to consider Ackermann a "muckraker," for she had a plethora of interests and pursuits over her career. Nevertheless, there was an investigative element in *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, and particularly in parts of her second book.

Not long after her book was published, Ackermann embarked upon a new, and ultimately brief, phase in her career. In January of 1897, Ackermann joined the Fourth Baptist Church in Chicago as an assistant minister. The purpose of her work, however, was to minister to the poor in the slum saloons of Chicago. In an incident that generated a great deal of press coverage in Chicago, Ackermann visited a number of saloons on Saturday, January 2, 1897. The next evening, Ackermann gave a public lecture at the Fourth Baptist Church on her new mission and the previous night's events.¹³² "Last night we went out, a party of us, and invited people in the saloons to come to this church tonight and I wish you could see some of the people we talked to," she explained to her audience.¹³³ Ackermann planned to visit saloons every Saturday night in order to win converts and save people from the ruin of alcohol.¹³⁴ In her lecture, she

¹³¹ An example of such a lecture can be found in "Miss Ackermann's Mission," 6 April 1892, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹³² "Women Visit the Saloons," 3 January 1897, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹³³ "Work in the Slums: Miss Ackermann Opens Her Mission for the Poor," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, 4 Jan 1897, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹³⁴ "Women Visit the Saloons."

encouraged the members of the church to join her work. If the members “were to pledge themselves tonight that in this New Year you will go personally into some such dark place when the New Year shall come again you may each have at least one trophy in the form of one man or women who has been rescued from dark enslavement.”¹³⁵

After years of circling the planet on behalf of temperance, Ackermann decided to return home to bring moral reform to the poor of Chicago. It is difficult to determine what specifically inspired her to turn to this work. Ackermann grew up in Chicago, and she may have just wanted to go home. She may have also been inspired to work for the good of her own country. Whatever the reason, Ackermann’s Sunday night lecture also included an anecdote that revealed her vision of reform work in the slums. She explained how she had been the guest of a wealthy woman on a visit to New York. When anyone said something regarding the poor, Ackermann’s host wrote checks for relief organizations and said: “Go and trouble me no more; buy her something.” Ackermann regarded this “a kind of philanthropy that is worse than misanthropy.”¹³⁶ She went out one evening alone and found a slum dweller who she asked to join her for coffee in a saloon. He took her to a place where 190 men and women sat at long tables and paid three cents for a glass of whisky and the privilege to have a place to stay the night. She sat up with the man the entire night. So many of these unfortunates “on the road to destruction would be men and women now if they ever had a fair chance in life,” but so many were born into poor conditions, or in non-Christian lands.¹³⁷ No one had ever laid their hands on these people and told them the Good News of Christ. Her solution to this problem was for Christians to go out into the slums and minister to the poor. “You must go so full of the Christ

¹³⁵ “Work in the Slums: Miss Ackermann Opens Her Mission for the Poor.”

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

spirit,” she explained, “that you will not see the repulsiveness of the outward appearance, because of the beauty of souls for whom Christ died. Among the greatest reprobates I have found lingering sparks of manhood and womanhood.”¹³⁸ Ackermann conceded that some might consider this line of work a “radical departure for a denominational church,” but that her efforts would “embrace not alone the saloons and haunts of wrong-doers, but I also intend to place the people behind the stone-front houses in the boulevards in closer touch with the needy.”¹³⁹

Ackermann’s work in the slums of Chicago was brief. On May 20, 1897, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that Ackermann resigned from the Fourth Baptist Church for unknown reasons.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, it is impossible to tell how much work she actually did in the slums after her initial visit on January 2. Nevertheless, this period is significant. Along with Ackermann’s early work with the Good Templars and WCTU in California, her work with the Fourth Baptist Church was one of her few efforts at grass-roots reform in the United States. Her work in the saloons of Chicago also mirrors social gospel and settlement house efforts in American cities during the Progressive Era. Many sectarian settlement groups embraced Social Gospel ideas and embraced the goal of “correcting both individual and social sins and viewed their work as the application of Christianity.”¹⁴¹ Ackermann’s efforts followed this logic, and she saw her efforts in the saloons as a Christian mission to save lost souls. Her work also paralleled with settlement activities in so far that Ackermann wanted to put the poor and the well-off into closer contact.

Although Ackermann did not stay with the Fourth Baptist Church for long, it appears that she genuinely meant what she said in her January 3 lecture and planned to carry out her ministry

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ “War on the Saloons: Miss Jessie Ackermann Will Lead a West Side Rum Crusade,” [ca. 1897], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

¹⁴⁰ “Miss Jessie Ackerman Resigns,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 May 1897 (accessed in Footnote.com).

¹⁴¹ Stebner, 1063.

in the saloons. Not only did the initial incident generate significant press attention, but Frances Willard personally wrote a letter of introduction for Ackermann to the Fourth Baptist Church.¹⁴² It is unlikely that Willard would write such a letter had Ackermann not planned on carrying out her work in Chicago. It is also clear that Ackermann had a potential future with the WCTU. Willard wrote to Ackermann only weeks after Ackermann began her work in Chicago and expressed a hope that Ackermann would carry out future travels for the WCTU. Specifically, Willard hoped Ackermann would travel to Europe.¹⁴³ Whatever the motivation for going to Chicago, or the ultimate reason she resigned her position, Ackermann's work with the Fourth Baptist Church was part of her diverse career of reform.

By the late 1890s, Ackermann's career with the WCTU was all but over. She did not travel on behalf of the organization abroad again after her trip to Great Britain and Iceland in 1895, and although Ackermann was still listed as a Round-the-World Missionary in the proceedings of the WCTU national convention in October of 1897, she did not carry out any more significant work for the union.¹⁴⁴ Ackermann continued to lecture in the United States in the latter years of the 1890s, focusing on her travels, women, and Christianity.¹⁴⁵ However, she did not travel abroad again until 1904.

A number of themes emerge from Ackermann's career in the temperance movement. For one, her experience reflects many of the changes within both the broadening temperance movement and the larger context of American reform. She began her work in the temperance movement locally with the Good Templars in California, but as the movement came under the

¹⁴² Frances Willard to the Fourth Baptist Church in Chicago, 30 December 1896, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

¹⁴³ Frances Willard to Ackermann, 12 January 1897, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.4.

¹⁴⁴ "W.C.T.U. Convention Begun," *New York Times*, 24 October 1897.

¹⁴⁵ "Miss Ackerman's Meetings," *Warren (Pennsylvania) Evening Democrat*, 15 May 1899 (accessed in Ancestry.org).

guardianship of women, she moved to an all-female organization under the WCTU. At a time when educated American women became evermore involved in reform politics in the US, Ackermann became a leading female reformer in the WCTU. Additionally, as American international missionary and moral reform organizations broadened their scale and scope of issues, Ackermann became an international advocate for the World's WCTU. Finally, as the WCTU embraced loftier goals and more fundamental reforms, Ackermann transmitted a progressive "Do Everything Policy" to people from Alaska to South Africa and Japan to Iceland. Whether her writings and lectures focused on temperance, applied Christianity, or the moralizing influence of women, Ackermann transmitted American values and models of social and moral reform to thousands of individuals across five continents from the mid-1880s to the beginning of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 3

BROADENING REFORM: PACIFISM, WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, AND PROGRESSIVE INTERNATIONALISM, 1904-1917

At end of the nineteenth century, Jessie Ackermann primarily supported temperance reform, the engagement of women in public life, and the Social Gospel. She embarked on a new phase of her career as an international progressive reformer in 1904. She traveled to Europe on behalf of the Universal Peace Union, an organization aimed at abolishing war, promoting international diplomacy, and negotiating settlements of conflicts. Over the course of the first two decades of the twentieth century, she expanded her pursuits to international peace, women's suffrage, slum eradication, Sunday School reform, and broad-based legislative reform. Representing numerous reform organizations, she wrote and lectured in countries across the world. As the Progressive Movement in the United States broadened its scope in the early twentieth century, Ackermann's progressivism matured and expanded. This chapter surveys Ackermann's efforts toward progressive reform internationally from 1904 to 1917. By the time the US entered the First World War, the internationalist progressive reform Ackermann had embraced since the 1880s not only expanded in scale at home and abroad, but was embodied in Woodrow Wilson's justification for war and plans for a postwar peace.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many people in the Europe and the United States predicted the new century would mark a genesis in human achievement, progress, and peace. Artists, writers, philosophers, politicians, and social activists imagined the new century in

this manner and optimistically looked forward to the fruits of a modern age.¹ William Allen White, the renowned American newspaper editor and progressive, recalled that the first decade of the new century brought a “Great Light” and a multitude of young people who took the lead in the quest for the modernization of the nation.² Progressivism became institutionalized in American politics with countless bureaucrats and politicians, from city councils to the White House, embracing a spirit of reform.³ At the same time, internationalism emerged as a central column within the Progressive Movement in the United States. Many progressives considered social progress and global peace to go hand-in-hand, and “after a long century of relative peace among the great powers, it was easy to believe that another century of even greater cooperation was in the offing.”⁴ Out of this hope and optimism for the future emerged a peace movement that shaded and influenced internationalism in the US in the early twentieth century.

Ackermann shared much of William Allen White’s progressive optimism for the twentieth century. As discussed in the first chapter, she imagined a progressive twentieth century in a series of articles written in 1895 on the nature of womanhood in the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, she embraced the growing international peace movement in order to try to build a peaceful and conflict free twentieth century. Ackermann joined the Universal Peace Union, a Pennsylvania based organization, in late 1903. Initially formed in 1866 by American Civil War pacifists, the Universal Peace Union sought to build a national and international peace organization.⁵ Like other late nineteenth and early

11. ¹ Jay Winter, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Movements in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006),

132. ² John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992),

³ *Ibid*, 132-133.

⁴ Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 13.

17. ⁵ C. Roland Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972),

twentieth century peace organizations, the Universal Peace Union “agitated for international peace by promoting arbitration for all international disputes; disarmament; and the establishment of an international court.”⁶ The union took these ideas even further by urging governments to divest themselves of the weapons and means of war and to conform to Christian principles of pacifism. Alfred H. Love, the union’s president for most of its existence, saw peace as something more than the end of war. True peace meant “harmony in all aspects in social affairs.”⁷ The union’s activism also focused on labor issues, social reform, and equality, especially in relation to ethnic minorities and women.⁸ The Universal Peace Union reflected many of Ackermann’s own reformist ambitions.

The union appointed Ackermann as a special peace envoy and sent her on an assignment “to visit the courts and influential bodies of Europe and Asia in the interest of peace.”⁹ In March 1904, she set out from Philadelphia for Europe. Ackermann received support not only from the Universal Peace Union but also from a number of influential American political figures, including Secretary of State John Hay and Pennsylvania Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker. Both men supplied Ackermann with letters of introduction which requested US diplomatic and consular services abroad to offer her assistance.¹⁰ The union also provided her with a number of letters for specific heads of state in Europe, including the Tsarist authorities in Russia, the king of Italy, and the Papacy in Rome.¹¹ Signed by Alfred Love, the short letters urged leaders to realize “the fearful waste of life and treasure, and the derangement of all economic conditions of

⁶ Thomas F. Curran, *Soldiers of Peace: Civil War Pacifism and the Postwar Radical Peace Movement* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), xiv.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Universal Peace Union certificate, 10 February 1904, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.2.

¹⁰ John Hay, letter of introduction for Ackermann, 18 February 1904, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.2; Samuel W. Pennypacker, letter of introduction for Ackermann, 11 February 1904, Ackermann Collection, oversized box 2.

¹¹ Letter from Universal Peace Union to the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia, 1904, Ackermann Collection, oversized box 2; Daniel Batchellor, “Reception to Miss Jessie Ackerman,” *Peacemaker and Court of Arbitration* 23, no. 1 (January 1904): 67 (accessed in Google Books).

prosperity, by war and the military system, because they strike at the very life of the home and the nation.” The union, therefore, asked leaders to “give your august influence in favor of arbitration and against a resort to deadly force in international difficulties and encourage the reduction of armaments among all nations.”¹²

At a farewell reception in her honor in February 1904, Ackermann reflected on her upcoming journey, noting that the people of the world had been longing for peace. “Especially is this true among the women,” she stressed “for war has always aimed a deadly blow at the home.”¹³ She believed that war not only brought the slaughter of fathers and sons but that military life fostered immoral, unchristian behavior. For Ackermann, it was impossible for men to live Christian lives in the service of war.¹⁴ From this point of view, it is clear that Ackermann’s advocacy for peace grew out of her advocacy for proper home life. War not only wrought death and destruction but removed men from the moralizing influence of women and the home and was therefore to be opposed. Many American female pacifists, both before the First World War and after, echoed Ackermann’s sentiments, including those in the Woman’s Peace Party. In a preamble to addresses at the inaugural party conference in January 1915, the party noted that women felt a moral passion against war. The party considered women to be the custodians of life and would not stand for any more “reckless destruction.... As women, we are particularly charged with the future of childhood and with the care of the helpless and the unfortunate. We will not longer [sic] endure without protest that added burden of maimed and

¹² Letter from Universal Peace Union to the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia, 1904, Ackermann Collection, oversize box 2.

¹³ Batchellor, 67.

¹⁴ Ibid, 67-68.

invalid men and poverty stricken widows and orphans which war places upon us.”¹⁵

Ackermann’s sentiment, therefore, fell within the context and keeping of the views of contemporaries in the American peace movement.

Ackermann not only lobbied for an end to war, but she also yearned for more international cooperation and understanding in the world. In an interview in England, most likely published in 1907 or 1908, Ackermann encouraged people to travel abroad in order to better understand foreign cultures. “If people traveled there would be no war,” she explained. “It is by traveling we get to know one another.” By traveling, people of different nations could begin to recognize themselves as “members of the one big world family” and work toward a “peaceful federation of nations.”¹⁶ In an Australian interview in May 1907, Ackermann elaborated upon how international cooperation could only be cemented by personal intercultural contact. “The great brotherhood of man,” she stressed, “is not to be attained by changing nations to the ideas formed by one or any nation, but by each accepting the other as an integral part of the stupendous whole, with its ethics and traditions compete in each.”¹⁷

Ironically, this quote followed a remark by Ackermann that Australian Aborigines needed to assimilate to Anglo-Australian culture. This comment also seems to conflict with Ackermann’s own reform efforts both during her time with the WCTU and subsequently. By 1907, Ackermann had spent nearly twenty years spreading American values and notions of reform to other parts of the world. Does this “brotherhood of men” attitude mean Ackermann had turned away from spreading American values?

¹⁵ Woman’s Peace Party, “Addresses Given at the Organization Conference of the Woman’s Peace Party,” in *The Eagle and the Dove: The American Peace Movement and United States Foreign Policy, 1900-1922*, ed. John Whiteclay Chambers (New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), 260.

¹⁶ “Big World Family: Federation of Nations,” [ca, 1905], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.10.

¹⁷ “A Chat With Miss Ackermann,” 13 May 1907, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

To answer this question, internationalism as a concept must be defined. Akira Iriye defined internationalism, in its broadest sense, as “an idea, a movement, or an institution that seeks to reformulate the nature of relations among nations through cross-national cooperation and interchange.”¹⁸ Internationalism, however, is not necessarily the opposite of nationalism. In his influential book, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson stressed that nationalism should not be considered an ideology in the same manner as liberalism, fascism, or Marxism. By Anderson’s definition, nationalism fell into the same category as religion, familial ties, kinship, and other culture-based systems.¹⁹ Progressivism and internationalism, unlike nationalism, are ideologies. Internationalism has also taken many forms throughout history. Ackermann’s vision of international human understanding and unity fit within a particular American vision of internationalism in the early twentieth century. Her comments corresponded to ideas put forward by peace advocates and internationalist thinkers like Jane Addams, Josiah Royce, and Thorstein Veblen.²⁰

By advocating this particular American, and indeed progressive, interpretation of world peace and international cooperation, Ackermann again carried American concepts to foreign lands. Ackermann, however, contradicted herself in interviews, writings, and lectures from time to time, and it is quite possible that she did not see a contradiction between her comments on internationalism and her own reformist efforts. It is also possible, and indeed very likely, that her ideas about foreign peoples and places were changing after years of international travel. As

¹⁸ Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso Books, 2006), 5.

²⁰ Sondra R. Herman, *Eleven Against War: Studies in American Internationalist Thought, 1898-1921* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1969), ix.

will become clear, in the 1920s and 1930s a number of Ackermann's conclusions on foreign cultures and customs radically departed from her impressions in the 1880s and 1890s.

The full extent of Ackermann's association with the Universal Peace Union unknown. She intended to visit many governments and royal courts in Europe, but it is unclear where she went and what kind of reception she received. There is also little evidence that she traveled to Asia for the union. Ackermann's work with the union did not appear to extend beyond 1905 or 1906. Although the union sought to build an international network of peace organizations, its influence in both American and global affairs was limited by a number of factors. Union efforts to avert the Spanish-American War in 1898 not only failed but were met with contempt by many critics. Also, the union found itself in a dire financial situation in the early 1900s. Other American peace organizations, such as the American Peace Society, regarded the union and Alfred Love as disruptive to the peace movement "because of its simultaneous efforts to reform industrial conditions, abolish capital punishment, and ban prize fighting."²¹ Rival peace organizations mocked the Universal Peace Union for its financial instability and condemned Love's desire to tie the peace movement to the labor movement and radical organizations in the US. As a result, the organization dissolved in 1913.²²

Nevertheless, Ackermann's association with the Universal Peace Union, however limited, allowed her to travel and live in Europe for a number of years. In addition, her involvement with the union enabled her to clearly articulate her vision of internationalism. Although Ackermann transmitted models of society, morality, and reform across national borders on behalf of the WCTU in the 1880s and 1890s, it is unclear whether she supported global peace or a community

²¹ Marchand, 17.

²² Ibid, 17-18.

of nations, or if she even conceived of internationalism as a concept prior to 1904. Her association with the Universal Peace Union revealed her commitment to a progressive internationalism. In sum, she, along with the Universal Peace Union, advocated international cooperation, arbitration for international disputes, disarmament, the establishment of a peaceful federation of nations, and the creation of an international court of justice. This internationalism shaped her reform efforts from the early 1900s through the First World War.

Peace advocacy, however, made up only one cause in a much larger internationalist movement during the Progressive Era. Internationalist movements and organizations became increasingly common in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Women, as they had in a number of social movements, became a major force in constructing international organizations.²³ The World's WCTU and other moral reform organizations certainly reflected the rise of an international women's movement; however, Ackermann was also involved with another manifestation of women's internationalism. Where the WCTU began in the US and spread across national borders, other organizations developed out of international women's conferences. These conferences developed new institutions and organizations that pursued any number of social, political, and moral issues.²⁴ Ackermann attended various international conferences in the early twentieth century.

In addition to her work for the Universal Peace Union, Ackermann advocated for reform in Sunday Schools. In April of 1904, Ackermann attended the Fourth World's Sunday School Convention in Jerusalem as a representative from Pennsylvania and subsequently attended other

²³ Ian Tyrrell, "Transatlantic Progressivism in Women's Temperance and Suffrage," in *Britain and Transnational Progressivism*, ed. David W. Gutzke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 133-135.

²⁴ Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1573 (accessed in JSTOR).

conventions, including a national convention in England around 1906.²⁵ These conventions were part of a larger international Sunday School reform movement during the Progressive Era. Protestants in the United States, Great Britain, the British Empire, and other European nations advocated new approaches to Sunday School curriculum and pedagogy in an effort to instill Christian values in the young. In the US, the movement drew ideas and approaches from the Social Gospel Movement and reformist evangelical societies.²⁶ Many reformers wanted Sunday Schools to promote Christian principles that would be applicable to daily life. As one reformer explained, it was not enough that children “should understand Christianity or be able to defend it,” but Christianity “should become their living possession.”²⁷ Ackermann, always a proponent of applied Christianity, shared this vision for Sunday Schools.

In an article written around 1906, Ackermann provided an example of a Detroit, Michigan Sunday School she believed should serve as a model for all other institutions. The school, formed in 1890, was led by W.C. Sprague. By cutting the “red tape of the Sunday School system,” Sprague founded a school of over eight hundred students that included both children and adults from a variety of social classes and backgrounds.²⁸ Ackermann argued that Sprague’s democratic spirit and ability to overcome prejudices allowed for such dynamic group of Christians. Although the size and make-up of the school impressed Ackermann, she found the school’s curriculum and social activism to be the most distinguishing aspect. Classes promoted

²⁵ A Peace Missioner,” *Advocate of Peace* 67, no. 1 (January 1905), 180 (accessed in Google Books); Jessie Ackermann, “England’s National Convention: A Glimpse,” [ca. 1906], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

²⁶ Gerald E. Knoff, *The World Sunday School Movement: The Story of a Broadening Mission* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 1-5. A few historians have surveyed the origins of Sunday Schools in England and the United States in late eighteenth century and the Sunday School Movement in the nineteenth century. For an example, see Ann M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Other than Knoff’s work, few scholars have studied the international Sunday School Movement during the Progressive Era. Numerous books and articles written by Americans on the subject of Sunday School reform during the Progressive Era exist, but few, if any, historians have sought to document this phenomenon. As a result, the broader influence and significance of this movement in US and world history is not entirely known.

²⁷ A.S. Peake, *Reform in Sunday School Teaching* (London: James Clark and Co., 1906), 12 (accessed in Archive.org).

²⁸ Jessie Ackermann, “A Remarkable Sunday School Class,” [ca. 1906], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

the idea of Christian citizenship and the school formed clubs that promoted charity to the poor and social activism. The school also founded and funded a hospital for sick members.

Ackermann suggested that the school, in one way or another, touched and improved the lives of thousands in Detroit. For her, Sprague's school was a bastion of Christian social work. She proposed that the school should be a model for Sunday Schools in all large cities around the world.²⁹

Ackermann made London her home and base for reform activities for much of the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century. While living in London, she worked for an organization called the Girl's Realm Guild of Service and Good Fellowship. The organization, initially formed in 1900 by the Bishop of London, sought to find "a useful sphere for social work on the part of 'girls-of-leisure.'"³⁰ Members of the organization – affluent middle-class girls and young women – were asked to serve the poor, sick, and suffering in local projects and by donating toys, books, and clothing to be disseminated among the urban poor.³¹ The goal of the Girl's Realm Guild, however, was not simply to encourage middle-class girls to provide charity to the poor. Ackermann, who served as the organization's World Organizing President, hoped members would seek careers in nursing and teaching that would help the poor in more fundamental ways. Ultimately, the organization sought to "bring all classes of girls into practical touch and intimate sympathy with each other."³² The Girl's Realm Guild had expanded to Australia and to other parts of the world by 1907. In a similar fashion to her role as a WCTU

²⁹ Ackermann, "A Remarkable Sunday School Class."

³⁰ "Miss Ackermann Interviewed," *Australian Christian World*, 2 August 1907, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

³¹ Flyer for the Girl's Realm Guild of Service and Good Fellowship, [ca. 1907], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.12.

³² "Miss Ackermann Interviewed," *Australian Christian World*, 2 August 1907, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

activist, Ackermann traveled to Australia in 1907 to rally support for the organization and to extend the work of the organization.³³

The Girl's Realm Guild shared a number of goals in common with the Settlement House movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The movement, originating in London in the 1880s before being emulated in the United States, not only sought to transmit cultural values to the poor but also aimed at cross-class interaction. Reformers like Jane Addams and Samuel A. Barnett – the founder of the original settlement house Toynbee Hall – considered settlements class rooms for the affluent as much as for the poor. In addition to serving the urban poor, members of the upper and middle-classes “had a civic obligation to educate themselves about the lives of the working poor in the industrial neighborhoods” of London, New York, and Chicago.³⁴ The Girl's Realm Guild shared this dual effort by serving the poor and fostering cross-class interaction.

Ackermann's involvement with international Sunday School reform and the Girl's Realm Guild illustrates how progressives not only sought to convey American visions of reform abroad but also drew from international examples. As previously discussed, the Settlement House movement originated in Great Britain and American reformers followed the British model. Jane Addams, for example, visited Samuel Barnett's Toynbee Hall in June of 1888. In 1889, when Addams set out to found a settlement house in Chicago, she used “every opportunity to set forth the meaning of the settlement as it had been embodied in Toynbee Hall.”³⁵ The Sunday School

³³ Flyer for the Girl's Realm Guild of Service and Good Fellowship.

³⁴ Louise W. Knight, “Jane Addams and the Settlement House Movement,” in *Against the Tide: Women Reformers in American Society*, ed. Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1997), 86.

³⁵ Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 89.

movement in the United States began in the late eighteenth century and was originally inspired by British Sunday Schools.³⁶

As discussed in the introduction of this project, Daniel Rodgers and a few other historians have argued that American progressives emulated European reform movements and were indebted to European antecedents.³⁷ This interpretation certainly holds some truth; nevertheless, Rodgers' approach underestimated the efforts of progressives like Ackermann who carried American visions, or at least versions, of reform to Europeans, European colonies, and other nations. In contrast to Rodgers, James Kloppenberg argued that American progressives and European social democrats developed a similar approach to social problems in conjunction with one another.³⁸ The two movements shared common goals and fed off of each other. Ackermann's experience of attending international conferences and interacting on the grass-roots level with British reformers supports both Rodgers' and Kloppenberg's interpretations on some level. Thus, while American progressives conveyed American values and influenced reform in other parts of the world, progressives were equally influenced by foreign reform movements.

Ackermann's involvement with the Girl's Realm Guild also revealed her renewed interest in slum relief and urban reform in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century. While living in London, Ackermann took her interest in urban reform to new heights. She became interested in London's slums after visiting a settlement house in the city. After "a great cry... from hundreds of thousands of unemployed... she determined to discover herself their condition

³⁶ *Encyclopedia of American Women and Religion*, s.v. "Sunday School Movement," 338.

³⁷ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 3.

³⁸ James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 6-7.

of life.”³⁹ When she went into the slums in New York and Chicago in the 1890s, she witnessed the quality of slum life firsthand. In London, however, she actually spent a number of weeks living in the slums. At some point in 1905, Ackermann and a secretary she employed rented a room in a tenement in London’s Whitechapel neighborhood.⁴⁰ Ackermann hoped that living in the slums would lead her to find a “social solution” for urban poverty. Over the course of several weeks, Ackermann and her secretary made their living by, among other things, selling flowers and newspapers and performing on the streets with a hand organ. Ackermann experienced price gouging at local markets, witnessed the toil and hardship of slum dwellers, and observed the terrible conditions of life for Whitechapel’s women and children.⁴¹

Where Ackermann “found lingering sparks of manhood and womanhood” in the slums of New York and Chicago in the 1890s, she found true humanity among the impoverished of London.⁴² “You need to hunger with them,” she explained, and “to be glad to divide and share your last crust. Then you come to see what humanity really is; and you come to find applied there more than in any other aspect of life the principles of Christianity.”⁴³ Ackermann’s experience changed her outlook on a number of things. Before she lived in the slums, she conceded that she had never loved children. One morning, however, a mother died in Ackermann’s tenement and left several orphans to fend for themselves. This experience, along with living among them in an overcrowded building in squalid conditions, inspired Ackermann to love and care for children in a way she never had previously.⁴⁴ This new sentiment may

³⁹ “Miss Ackermann Interviewed,” *Australian Christian World*, 2 August 1907, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁴⁰ “The Woman with the Universal Interest,” [ca. early 1920s] Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁴¹ “Miss Jessie Ackerman: Traveller, Lecturer, and Journalist: ‘In the Slums of London: How I Earned My Living,’” [ca. 1907], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁴² “Work in the Slums: Miss Ackermann Opens Her Mission for the Poor,” *The Daily Inter Ocean*, 4 Jan 1897, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁴³ “Miss Jessie Ackerman: Traveller, Lecturer, and Journalist: ‘In the Slums of London: How I Earned My Living.’”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

explain Ackermann's interest in a youth origination like the Girl's Realm Guild. Her reform efforts after 1905 began to involve children on a more fundamental level.

Ackermann's experience in the slums of Whitechapel also led her to rethink the basic causes of poverty. When she worked in the slums of Chicago, she sought to draw individuals away from alcohol and toward Christianity. Ackermann believed vice, immorality, and personal failure to be a major, if not the primary, cause of poverty not only in Chicago but in the whole world during the 1890s. After her experience in London, however, Ackermann admitted that alcoholism was only a single factor in causes of poverty and the direct action she and the WCTU took against it was not enough to clean up the slums.⁴⁵ She began to consider the role legislation could play in alleviating the suffering of the poor. Ackermann noted that this "is the question I must solve, and what effect has the form of government on the governed... for the basis of everything is in the manner of legislation."⁴⁶ Although many of her reform efforts in the past sought to encourage governments to adopt particular reforms, Ackermann's day-to-day work, rhetoric, and emphasis had focused on grass-roots activism and what individual activists could do to improve their societies. After her experiences in London, Ackermann began to emphasize more political and legislative solutions to social and moral problems. "The principle of good government," she stressed, "is to protect the weak against the strong; and the government which does not do this has failed."⁴⁷ She believed that if anything was to be done about the poverty of Whitechapel, it must be done through legislation. Philanthropy and charity could only assist the present generation. A long-term, governmental solution was necessary.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "The London Slums: Grinding Poverty of Whitechapel: The Drink Curse," [ca. 1907], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁴⁶ "A Chat with Miss Ackermann," 13 May 1907, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ "Miss Ackermann Interviewed," *Australian Christian World*, 2 August 1907, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

Ackermann's experience in Whitechapel represented a transition from moral reformer to progressive, social reformer. Ackermann's conversion to social reform corresponded with larger developments in the Progressive Movement in the United States. What made progressive social and political reform distinct from the moral reform Ackermann embraced in the 1880s and 1890s was what Alan Dawley has described as a "new social ethos."⁴⁹ By the beginning of the twentieth century, American reformers "discovered that poverty and slums were the result of unhealthy economic and social conditions, not individual moral failings, and that improvement, therefore, had to come through economic and social change, not individual uplift."⁵⁰ This shift in focus in American reform reflects the very change of thought Ackermann underwent following her experiences in the slums of London. Therefore, Ackermann again represents a microcosm of the Progressive Movement. This transition within American reform, of course, had been taking place gradually for decades. The WCTU and the "Do Everything Policy" pushed moral reform beyond grass-roots attempts to change individual behavior and towards broad-based social reforms.⁵¹ The dividing line between social and moral reform during the Progressive Era, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, was not clear cut. Ackermann did not appear to have seen the distinction between grass-roots moral reform and comprehensive top-down legislative social reform until she spent time in the slums of Whitechapel.

One solution to urban poverty that Ackermann promoted in the early twentieth century was immigration to Australia. While visiting Australia in 1907, she lectured and toured, in addition to the Girl's Realm Guild, on behalf of the *Westminster Gazette* in order "to gather information concerning the social and industrial conditions of the commonwealth" with "the

⁴⁹ Dawley, 43.

⁵⁰ Dawley, 43.

⁵¹ Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), xxiv.

purpose being to understand thoroughly the possibilities for immigration and land settlement.”⁵²

Ackermann encouraged her Australian audiences to “make the country so inviting and taxes so light that people will flee the city, and make happy and prosperous homes on the land.”⁵³ The impoverished millions of Europe, she hoped, could find refuge in Australia. This theme played a significant role in her 1913 book, *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View*.

Ackermann’s lectures in Australia focused heavily upon her experiences in London. She also lectured on the topic in Great Britain and, albeit years later, in the United States. On a certain level, Ackermann investigated and exposed the horrid conditions of Whitechapel to educated, middle-class audiences in an effort to inspire action. Her lectures on London’s slums fell into the same style of municipal housekeeping and muckraking journalism as *The World through a Woman’s Eyes* and other earlier writings. However, unlike *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, Ackermann directed these lectures specifically toward an Australian and British audience. In this capacity, Ackermann not only promoted American-style progressive reforms in Britain and Australia but did so through American-style journalism.

Along with a newfound faith in legislative reform, Ackermann increasingly supported women’s suffrage in the early twentieth century. She attended the International Council of Women’s convention in Berlin in 1904.⁵⁴ Initially formed in 1888, the ICW tended to avoid controversial social issues and remained apolitical. By the early twentieth century, however, the ICW became more involved in suffrage, pacifism, public health, and other overtly political

⁵² “A Chat with Miss Ackermann.”

⁵³ “The London Slums: Grinding Poverty of Whitechapel: The Drink Curse,” [ca. 1907], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

⁵⁴ Certificate for the “Internationaler Frauen-Congrek 1904,” 1904, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.3.

issues.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the organization remained inherently conservative. At the 1904 convention, “women impatient with the ICW's position came... to form the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, composed originally of ten national suffrage associations and growing to twenty-five by 1914.”⁵⁶ The convention illustrated the growing momentum of the suffrage movement both in the United States and globally in the first years of the twentieth century. It is unknown whether Ackermann supported the ICW’s cautionary approach to suffrage or the more proactive attitude of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Regardless of her position at the convention, after 1904 Ackermann became increasingly involved in suffrage politics, which would suggest that she was negatively affected by the more conservative approach and was beginning to move toward progressive activism in this area as well.

As discussed in first chapter, Ackermann made a number of contradictory comments in regard to her support for suffrage during the 1890s. This ambiguity persisted into the early twentieth century. In the late 1910s, Ackermann recalled her arrival in London in 1904 and remarked how she initially was not convinced by the arguments and methods of English suffragists. After witnessing the poverty of Whitechapel firsthand, however, she recognized the absolute necessity for women’s suffrage.⁵⁷ Her experience in Whitechapel convinced her that government legislation was the only solution to poverty. That legislation, however, could only result from female voters. “My experiences there,” she explained, “increased my conviction that there were conditions in the social order of our day that would never be removed until the women of the country wherein the evils exist had the power to help put them down.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ “International Council of Women Records, 1888-1959: Biographical and Historical Note,” Five College Archives and Manuscript Collections http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/sophiasmith/mnsss96_bioghist.html (accessed 15 April 2011).

⁵⁶ Rupp, 1575.

⁵⁷ “Girl Traveler Talks Suffrage,” [ca. 1917], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.12.

⁵⁸ Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* (London: Cassell and Company, 1913), 218.

Therefore, the slums of Whitechapel could not exist if women had the vote.⁵⁹ Ackermann often emphasized the fundamental role women served in society in bringing about moral reform, applied Christianity, and social progress. For Ackermann, women in all countries had a civic duty to obtain and use the vote to protect their nation from moral corruption and social decay.⁶⁰ She believed only women's suffrage could fully achieve progressive reform.

Ackermann's conversion to women's suffrage was not instantaneous. When she lived in the slums of London, she had yet to witness the real effects of women's suffrage in action in any national context. New Zealand, however, granted women suffrage in 1893. Between 1895 and 1908, Australian states gradually enfranchised women.⁶¹ Ackermann's visit to Australia in 1907, and subsequently to New Zealand later in the year, afforded her the chance to witness the results of female suffrage in these two countries. Over the next six years, Ackermann traveled to other countries where women gained the vote.

After leaving New Zealand in the fall of 1907, Ackermann briefly visited South America before she returned to London. She did not write very much or give many lectures between 1908 and 1913; however, she returned to Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania in 1909 and then again in 1911. Ackermann resided in Australia for much of 1911 and 1912 before traveling to places such as China, Finland, Denmark, and Norway in 1913.⁶² Her six years of travel resulted in two books published in 1913: *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* and *What Women Have Done with the Vote*.

⁵⁹ "Girl Traveler Talks Suffrage," [ca. 1917], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.12.

⁶⁰ Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, 225.

⁶¹ Jone Johnson Lewis, "International Woman Suffrage Timeline: Winning the Vote for Women Around the World," Women's History (2011) http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage/a/intl_timeline.htm (accessed 15 April 2011).

⁶² These dates and locations can be determined from telegrams Ackermann received between 1907 and 1913. See folders 2.6 and 2.7 in the Ackermann Collection.

What Women Have Done with the Vote dealt strictly with women's suffrage. In the book, however, Ackermann did not focus upon the "justice" of extending voting rights to women. "This," she explained, "is now accepted by leaders of thought among both men and women."⁶³ Instead, Ackermann surveyed how women obtained suffrage in New Zealand, Australia, Finland, and Norway and what reforms women voters accomplished with suffrage. The book also discussed how women became citizens, albeit without voting rights, in the Republic of China in 1911 and 1912. At the core of the book, Ackermann set up a dynamic between the successful and unsuccessful ways women gained and used the vote. She argued that "in all places where women have truly desired citizenship, they have made wholesome use of it when granted."⁶⁴ In places where "unscrupulous men" had made women a "political doormat... to secure party measures," women did not take full advantage of the vote.⁶⁵ For Ackermann, New Zealand and Australia illustrated these two different outcomes.

Ackermann believed that favorable conditions allowed for democratic innovation in New Zealand. The county, she explained, was a new land where European settlers could overcome the obstacles of the Old World. Women, therefore, gained an advantage in New Zealand that their sisters in Europe never had.⁶⁶ The formation of local clubs and organizations like the WCTU allowed New Zealander women to become more politically active. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, a national suffrage union formed in New Zealand. Because the social limitations of Europe held little sway in New Zealand, Ackermann argued that women were able to organize and agitate for women's rights with ease. Through hard work and determination, Ackermann

⁶³ Jessie Ackermann, *What Women Have Done with the Vote* (New York: William B. Feakins, 1913), 7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

explained, “they bombarded every citadel of conservatism.”⁶⁷ The women were able to convince two members of New Zealand’s parliament to support suffrage. The two men belonged to opposing parties and therefore depoliticized the issue. New Zealand’s women, with their supporters in parliament, forced through a bill for universal suffrage and it became law in 1893.

With the franchise, Ackermann explained, thousands of women in New Zealand realized “the highest ideals of national life, and that it would leave an imprint upon every phase of human existence.”⁶⁸ A new sense of patriotism, civic duty, and obligation developed within the minds of women. More importantly, New Zealander women took advantage of their new position in politics and implemented numerous social and moral reforms. According to Ackermann, a major reason women in New Zealand sought suffrage was to deal with alcoholism and the liquor trade. Using their political influence, women brought prohibition laws to sixteen of New Zealand’s seventy-six electoral districts and pushed forward other restrictions on the sale of alcohol.⁶⁹ In addition to temperance reform, New Zealand’s women brought other reforms, including an equal divorce and inheritance law, labor laws that improved working conditions for women, a limit on working hours, a minimum wage, pensions for the elderly poor, regulations for legal adoption, and laws to protect children from abuse.⁷⁰ In short, Ackermann credited universal suffrage with the passage of the very laws and reforms in New Zealand that American progressives battled for in their own country. New Zealand did manage to produce a substantial amount of social legislation from 1891 to 1906. A Liberal Party-labor alliance passed a “sweeping program of progressive land taxes, public land leases for small holders, comprehensive factory regulation, stigma-free old-age pensions for the (morally respectable) poor” and organized an arbitration law

⁶⁷ Ibid, 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 13.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 14-16.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 18-19.

for contested industrial wages.⁷¹ As will be discussed later, a number of American progressives looked to New Zealand as a model for social reform efforts.

Suffrage in New Zealand, however, did not cause the plethora of social problems opponents of suffrage claimed it would. According to Ackermann, opponents claimed suffrage would lead to higher infant mortality rates, lower birth rates, and higher crime rates. These arguments, she stressed, were not factual and conditions in New Zealand had in fact improved because of the enfranchisement of women. The vote did not cause women to be less domestic, motherly, or feminine, either.⁷² For Ackermann, New Zealand's experience disproved all arguments against granting women voting rights.

Ackermann also regarded women's suffrage in Norway and Finland a success. In 1905, Norway and Sweden separated after a ninety-one-year monarchical union. The newly independent Norway, in response to significant support from women, granted women the right to vote in 1907.⁷³ The Grand Duchy of Finland fell under Russian imperial rule from 1809 to 1917; however, as a result of the 1905 revolution in Russia, Finland achieved greater autonomy. The Parliament Act of 1906 formed a new legislature for Finland and granted universal suffrage to all Finns over the age of twenty-four.⁷⁴ In both Norway and Finland, Ackermann believed suffrage was "the natural outgrowth of a national situation."⁷⁵ She argued that women in Norway participated in the push for disunion and managed to gain national support for suffrage. In Finland, the majority of Finns, men and women, fought for greater independence from Russia. As a result, Ackermann explained, women gained equal political status with men in the

⁷¹ Rodgers, 55.

⁷² Ackermann, *What Women Have Done with the Vote*, 16-17, 19.

⁷³ T.K. Derry, *A History of Modern Norway, 1814-1972* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 169-173.

⁷⁴ David Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 142-147.

⁷⁵ Ackermann, *What Women Have Done with the Vote*, 74.

Parliament Act of 1906.⁷⁶ In both countries, women wanted and seized the opportunity for citizenship. Ackermann argued that as a result both Norway and Finland passed numerous progressive social and moral reforms.

In contrast to New Zealand's success, Ackermann believed women did not demand and seize the vote in Australia, but that male politicians forced suffrage upon women. Before the WCTU arrived in Australia, she explained, no organized group sought universal suffrage. Although the WCTU spread some public sentiment for suffrage across the country, a widespread public demand for women's suffrage never developed.⁷⁷ Australia's male politicians did not grant women the franchise because of overwhelming public support but because political party bosses hoped to use female votes to win elections. Individual Australian states first granted women the vote and the process spread across the country. "In different states," Ackermann explained, "the possibility of making party use of woman's vote has been regarded as a legitimate reason for granting female suffrage; while in others the time-eaten, hoary-with-age motive 'expediency' has proved a nondescript garb which would excuse the brain-fag⁷⁸ of explanation."⁷⁹ Because the majority of Australian women did not seek voting rights, Australia's women did not fully comprehend their civic obligations or understand how to use the vote. "Nothing short of education" in politics and civic duty, Ackermann stressed, would lead women "to a sense of their obligations."⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid, 74.

⁷⁷ Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, 209-210. Ackermann outlined Australia's experience with suffrage in both *What Women Have Done with the Vote* and *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*. The two books differ very little on this topic and several chapters are identical.

⁷⁸ "Brain fag" is an antiquated term for prolonged mental fatigue.

⁷⁹ Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, 216.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 216.

Ackermann, therefore, set up a dynamic between successful and unsuccessful examples of women's suffrage. In countries where women really wanted suffrage, they earned the right and used the vote to achieve social and moral reform. Where women received voting rights but did not actively seek the vote, such as Australia, women did not understand their civic responsibilities and achieved little reform. This dynamic stemmed from Ackermann's perception that New Zealand, Norway, and Finland all achieved some level of progressive reform. Australia, however, had not enacted the substantial reform she hoped to see. From a twenty-first century perspective, it is clear that Ackermann's dynamic sought to justify why Australia did not follow the model she found in New Zealand, Norway, and Finland. Her interpretation, therefore, did not reflect the complex nature of each individual country's political and social experience. Nevertheless, the dynamic appeared logical to Ackermann and remained central to her thinking on women's suffrage.

In both New Zealand and Australia, Ackermann credited the activism of the WCTU with creating public sentiment for suffrage. The WCTU, in fact, did greatly invigorate women's suffrage movements in both New Zealand and Australia. Although Ackermann's position on suffrage remained inconsistent in the 1880s and 1890s, the WCTU as an organization agitated for women's suffrage. The WCTU was indispensable to the suffrage movement in these nations because it "had the broadest spread of local organizations, which meant that it could reach so many more women than suffrage workers, who were usually restricted to the larger towns."⁸¹ The WCTU provided a grass-roots network that disseminated suffrage literature and thought and greatly furthered the suffrage movement in both nations. If the result of women's suffrage was

⁸¹ Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 225.

progressive social reform, then Ackermann must have felt the internationalist progressive effort she had embraced since the 1880s had yielded significant results.

By examining how and why suffrage failed to live up to its potential in Australia, Ackermann did more than provide an example of an unsuccessful suffrage movement to American, British, and other international readers. Her discussion of the alleged failures of Australian suffrage in *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* sought to encourage Australian women to become involved in politics and civic life.⁸² Social and moral ills, after all, could not be eradicated and progress could not be achieved if women did not engage in active citizenship. As discussed at the beginning of this study, Ackermann believed Australia had the potential to become something great. “If wisdom prevailed” and “if men, not consumed with self-interest, personal gain, and unholy ambitions, become the law-makers” in Australia, then the country could be a land of promise for humanity with “no old-world⁸³ problems to solve [and] no wholesale human destruction before the lifeboats of just laws are launched.”⁸⁴ For Ackermann, human progress could be achieved in Australia. Nevertheless, in order to build a progressive civilization, Australia’s women needed “to stand together in their demand for legal enactment which will deliver the oppressed and make the strong weak.”⁸⁵

Ackermann argued that many of Australian women did not understand citizenship.

Although some wanted and used the vote properly, she believed many women did not take the

⁸² *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* reflected Ackermann’s personal take on Australia’s history, society, and culture. For a more recent scholarly approach to Australian history, see Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For an innovative and groundbreaking study on the spacial history of Australia, see Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (New York: Knopf, 1988).

⁸³ When Ackermann spoke of the Old World, she normally meant Europe. By old-world problems, she referred to the negative results of industrialization and urbanization, as well as class disputes. These were also problems in the United States during the early twentieth century; however, Ackermann and other Americans tended to perceive the US differently from Europe. America inherited many of the old-world problems, but the US – by virtue of being a separate and newer nation – solved some of the endemic problems in Europe. This subject is illustrated more clearly below.

⁸⁴ Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, 300.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 239.

vote seriously. This viewpoint, she explained, was especially common among wealthy women in Australia. They, and their children, were well provided for and they did not know of need or want. These women did not know the hard work, poverty, and scarcity of the world's poor.⁸⁶ Ackermann considered Australian women to generally be delightful, admirable, and full of common sense. She noted, however, that "knowledge of their supreme selfishness in their political relation to the interests of women who do need something almost discounts their many virtues and good qualities."⁸⁷ For Ackermann, a woman's role was in the interests of the home, in the protection of the family and children, and to the general welfare of society at large. The women of Australia's leisured class, ultimately the very women who had the ability, education, and capacity to become involved in civic and reform organizations, were selfish and did not care about other women's families, children, or welfare.⁸⁸ Unprecedented prosperity, wealth, and power, Ackermann argued, proved fatal to citizenship in not only Australia but everywhere else in the world.⁸⁹

Australia's working women, in contrast, often supported and made use of the vote. Ackermann believed they had a clearer understanding of the power of the vote and knew what reforms needed to be accomplished in Australian society. Although working women comprehended the value of suffrage, they did not always make the wisest choices in elections.⁹⁰ Working women did not have the education, ability, or capacity to use their vote and citizenship

⁸⁶ Ibid, 218-219.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 219.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 224.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 220.

in its entirety. Only when women were united or “until some great national calamity” arrested the “attention of the best people” would Australia’s progressive potential be realized.⁹¹

As a result of this failure on the part of Australia’s leisured women, Ackermann outlined in Chapter 23 of *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View* “Reforms Which Women Citizens Could Accomplish.” She believed the kind of reforms women voters enacted in New Zealand, Norway, and Finland could, and ultimately should, be carried out in Australia. Because Australia was a new nation, it adopted many of the outdated laws of the older countries like Great Britain. Men, Ackermann explained, were too busy building infrastructure and growing the economy to give attention to new social and moral reforms.⁹² Women had to take the lead to bring meaningful reform to Australia. Women, as guardians of the family and home, could reform laws that influenced women, children, and home life. Ackermann believed women could change laws that dealt with the licensing and location of public houses, gambling halls, and transportation facilities. Women could also improve worker’s rights, establish fair wages, improve education, and abolish child labor.⁹³ As in New Zealand, Norway, and Finland, Australia’s women, if only they understood their civic obligations, could transform Australia into a progressive nation.

If women in New Zealand, Norway, and Finland, however, already led their nations down the road of progressivism, why did Ackermann desperately need Australia to follow suit? From her point of view, a constellation of factors made Australia the location for a new model society. First, Australia offered plentiful land, resources, and opportunity for settlers. Although Australia’s population was only around 4.5 million in 1913, Ackermann estimated that the island

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 224.

⁹² *Ibid*, 238-239.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 243-248.

could easily support 150 million inhabitants.⁹⁴ Australia, she argued, provided great weather, plentiful crops, room for settlement, and industrial capacity. The country, in its short existence, had grown substantially in prosperity and efficiency by 1913.⁹⁵

In addition to Australia's bountiful natural resources, Ackermann saw the inhabitants as innovative, socially conscious, and fundamentally democratic. Because Australia was a new nation, Australian's could exceed the limitations of European society. Parentage, ancestry, and origin of birth, Ackermann argued, meant little in Australia. As a result, Australia became exceptionally democratic, "verging so closely upon socialism."⁹⁶ In regard to religion, Ackermann argued that the Church, broadly defined, lacked authority and influence in Australia. This allowed Australians to move away from dogma, doctrine, and ritual toward personal knowledge of God and the true principles of Christianity. Australian Christianity, Ackermann stressed, was free from the greed and corruption of European Christianity. Australians, therefore, increasingly applied the principles of Christianity to relationships, politics, economics, and daily life.⁹⁷ Ultimately, Ackermann believed Australians were a people in transition from an "old-world temperament into a state of local coloring of both mind and body."⁹⁸ Australians were unique, thinking people and set out to form a government and society that "would make it impossible for the usual evils which oppress, grind down, blight, and curse humanity in the Old World to take rootage in a new land."⁹⁹ Although many of these efforts had fallen short by 1913,

⁹⁴ Ibid, 16.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 293.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 37.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 101-108.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 38.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 2.

Ackermann considered the future of Australia to be hopeful and moving in the direction of progress.¹⁰⁰

For Ackermann, Australia represented a potential progressive utopia where all the victims of the poverty, corruption, and industrialization of Europe, as well as refugees from other parts of the undeveloped world, could start life anew. Anyone looking for work in Australia could easily find employment and a living wage. “If a thousand immigrants landed in Australia next week,” Ackermann remarked, “they would very soon give employment to another thousand, and so the consumption would outrun the production of the average family.”¹⁰¹ Australia’s economic prosperity, inviting and bountiful natural resources, and the nature of the Australian people all laid the foundation for a bright, progressive future.

Ackermann, however, based her vision on American antecedents. Like the United States, Australia was a New World, distinct and separate from the Old World, where innovation and experimentation could result in a perfected society. According to Ackermann, the US built a superior society to that of Europe because it avoided many of the mistakes of Europe. America’s experience, however, was costly. “Blunders and unsuccessful experiments,” Ackerman explained, “will long constitute a menace to future generations [of the US] which will have to make good those mistakes.”¹⁰² Australia, in contrast, could learn from the failures of both Europe and America.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 297.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 300.

For Australia to realize Ackermann's vision, "wisdom," as she put it, needed to prevail.¹⁰³ Women had to understand their civic responsibilities and make use of the vote. Australians, led by women citizens, had to embrace fundamental reform. *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* aimed directly toward Ackermann's vision and how to achieve that utopia. In addition to her discussion of suffrage and reforms women could accomplish, Ackermann also focused on Australia in relation to gambling, vice, economics, religion, education, and politics. Ackermann outlined how Australia successfully or unsuccessfully experienced nearly all of these topics. On each subject, she also explained what needed to improve or change in Australia to achieve the nation's potential. *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* also reflected Ackermann's thinking in regard to all of these topics not only within the Australian, but in general. For example, her discussion of suffrage paralleled her thinking in *What Women Have Done with the Vote* and her chapters on applied Christianity corresponded to lectures and writings in the 1890s. Ackermann carried the progressivism of *The World through a Woman's Eyes* to new heights in *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*.

Ackermann's vision and interpretation of Australia, let alone New Zealand, Norway, and Finland in *What Women Have Done with the Vote*, did not necessarily reflect reality. Australia, a largely arid continent, has consistently suffered from water crises over the course of its history. The island's water reserves can scarcely support a population of 20 million in the twenty-first century, let alone the 150 million Ackermann looked forward to in 1913.¹⁰⁴ In the end, this was Australia from Ackermann's point of view. Nevertheless, it is imperative to understand her

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ "Australia Needs Water," *New York Times*, December 23, 1890; Phil Mercer, "Australia in Grip of Water Crisis," BBC News, (8 November 2004) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3992231.stm> (accessed 25 April 2011).

mind-set, realistic or not, to comprehend her writings and the broader progressive effort toward reform outside of the United States.

The image of a potential utopia Ackermann formed in *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* raises questions about the nature of progressivism in the United States. Historians have traditionally not regarded American progressivism as utopian or aimed at some form of utopia. Richard Hofstadter's classic interpretation considered progressivism an effort to reclaim a lost democratic past that ran counter to a utopian vision.¹⁰⁵ A few studies, including Michael McGerr's *A Fierce Discontent* and Bernard Aspinwall's *Portable Utopia*, have discussed the utopian nature of progressivism, but most interpretations have not viewed progressivism in the spectrum of utopian movements.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Ackermann envisioned in Australia – if Australians embraced comprehensive reform – a nation where all social and moral problems were solved. This, undoubtedly, was a vision of utopia. Ackermann's utopian vision was by no means as comprehensive or defined as utopian ideologies like Marxism but was what the historian Jay Winter has termed a “minor utopia.”¹⁰⁷ Along advocates of the major utopias of Marxism or National Socialism, there were many “minor utopians, people who configured limited and much less sanguinary plans for partial transformations of the world” during the twentieth century.¹⁰⁸ Ackermann, and indeed other American progressives, sought to create a partial transformation of the world both at home and abroad. Therefore, more historical studies of the Progressive Era in the United States should give more attention to the minor utopianism of progressive reformers.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 5.

¹⁰⁶ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003); Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States, 1820-1920* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984).

¹⁰⁷ Winter, 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

Although Ackermann perceived a utopian future for Australia, that utopia had to serve as an antecedent for other nations in the world. If Australia could develop a means of solving all the social and moral defects of the Old World, then other nations could look to Australia as a blueprint for success. This was also a major theme in *What Women Have Done with the Vote*. Ackermann believed that women in New Zealand, for instance, proved what women could achieve with the vote. Equally as important, the success of women's suffrage in New Zealand disproved the fears and arguments of suffrage critics.¹⁰⁹ For Ackermann, New Zealand proved to be a successful model for suffragists in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. The failure of Australia's women to fully embrace the vote also represented what suffragists in other countries should avoid. In sum, if Australia embraced comprehensive reform, Ackermann hoped other nations would pattern reform after Australia.

Ackermann was not the only American progressive who considered Australia and New Zealand archetypes for successful reform. Peter J. Coleman, in *Progressives and the World of Reform*, argued that several progressive reformers and thinkers – including Henry Demarest Lloyd, Frank Parsons, William E. Smythe, and Julius Wayland – looked to New Zealand and its pioneering social legislation of the 1890s for inspiration in reform. Many progressives believed that American reformers needed to “New Zealandize the United States.”¹¹⁰ In the 1890s, Lloyd, an investigative journalist and reformer, traveled to New Zealand in order to observe social legislation in action. New Zealand, he explained, had carried out “reforms that others have only been talking about” and that the nation had anticipated the need for new reforms that other

¹⁰⁹ Ackermann, *What Women Have Done with the Vote*, 13-17.

¹¹⁰ Peter J. Coleman, *Progressives and the World of Reform: New Zealand and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987), 76.

countries had not even considered.¹¹¹ As a result of social reform, Lloyd argued, New Zealand had perfected European society. The United States, he believed, essentially replicated Old World society and inherited its defects. However, New Zealand, partially thanks to luck and geographic isolation, formed a “Newest England – what the Puritans and Pilgrims planned; the kind of country these Englishmen, Washington, Jefferson, and Adams, expected would carry on their constitution.”¹¹² For Lloyd, New Zealand had led the world in social reform; therefore, the whole world should follow New Zealand’s lead.¹¹³

Other American reformers looked to Australia for models of reform. Florence Kelley and the National Consumers’ League patterned minimum wage legislation on Australian antecedents. In contrast to the US’s present-day flat minimum wage, Kelley advocated for an Australian style minimum wage that “authorized the appointment of special wage boards in those ‘sweated’ trades where employers were suspected to have driven wages below the minimum necessary for health or physical survival.”¹¹⁴ Elwood Mead, an American engineer involved in state rural management and reclamation, drew on his personal experience of building irrigation canals in Victoria, Australia in the early 1900s to formulate rural development programs in the US. Mead was inspired by the effectiveness of state rural planning and public-works programs in Victoria. When he returned to the US in 1915, he advocated for Australian-style state planning of rural development in progressive circles. Mead convinced business progressives in California to

¹¹¹ Henry Demarest Lloyd, *Newest England: Notes of a Democratic Traveller in New Zealand, with Some Australian Comparisons* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 1 (accessed in Open Library).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 377.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Rodgers, 238.

subscribe to state planning and state infrastructure projects in California's Central Valley and he was instrumental in creating California's State Land Settlement Board.¹¹⁵

Ackermann, therefore, was not alone among Americans or progressives in regarding Australia and New Zealand as pioneers in social reform. Nevertheless, Ackermann may be distinct in her approach to Australia. Unlike Lloyd who sought to persuade the US and other nations to imitate New Zealand's social reform or Mead and Kelley who actively emulated Australian models, Ackermann wrote *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* primarily to persuade Australians to live up to their utopian potential.

After living and writing about Australia for several years, Ackermann shifted her focus to China, which she had written about in the concluding chapter of *What Women Have Done with the Vote*. China had undergone drastic transformation since she visited in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Especially in coastal cities where Western influence was strong, a rising merchant class, substantial emigration, and education and military reforms all led to social changes and new political movements.¹¹⁶ A nationalist republican movement led by Sun Yat-sen eventually fostered public support for a revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China in late 1911.¹¹⁷

The final chapter of *What Women Have Done with the Vote* surveyed the effects of the 1911 Chinese nationalist revolution on women in China. Although women did not have the same voting rights as women in New Zealand, Australia, Norway, or Finland, China's women were deemed citizens by Sun Yat-sen, who was the first president of China, but only served for a

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 346-348.

¹¹⁶ J.A.G. Roberts, *A Concise History of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 207-208.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 209-214.

few months. In the wake of the revolution, Ackermann explained, women began to see themselves as individuals, think for themselves, and demanded equal rights and education with men.¹¹⁸ Ackermann credited this transformation among China's women to Sun Yat-sen's establishment of a national press, the prohibition of foot binding, and the lasting influence of foreign missionaries. Sun Yat-sen had allowed the formation of a national press in China and new newspapers and publications began to inform the whole of China. New publications aimed at women, Ackermann explained, revealed to Chinese women the freedoms other women had around the world and the success of women's reform movements.¹¹⁹ In addition to this, the ban on the practice of foot binding helped to free Chinese women from male oppression both physically and mentally. Women, Ackermann argued, were free to envision themselves as human beings.¹²⁰ Finally, she believed that foreign missionary influence, more so than the previous two factors, allowed Chinese women to re-imagine their place in society.

Ackermann noted that a common belief in China was that women were unprepared to be citizens following the nationalist revolution. One hundred years of Christian missionary influence, however, "qualified women for so great a change" and prepared men to accept it.¹²¹ Missionaries formed the first schools for girls in China and this changed the perception of women in Chinese culture. Ackermann explained that the Chinese gradually saw the public benefit of educating girls, leading to a decline in the myth of female ignorance and brainlessness. Therefore, "whatever individual opinion may be concerning the value of missionary teaching in the Far East," Ackermann argued, "it must be recognized that through their girls' schools they

¹¹⁸ Ackermann, *What Women Have Done with the Vote*, 84-86.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

laid the foundation of all progress for womankind throughout the Empire.”¹²² Ackermann believed this progress was not so much the result of their actual education but from missionaries demonstrating that Chinese women could actually be taught. Such a revelation liberated the female psyche and contributed to a new vision of womanhood in China.¹²³

For Ackermann, the future for women in China appeared exceptionally bright. The liberation of the female mind and the new perception of women would eventually lead to the full participation of China’s women in civic life. She also asserted that when a “complete revolution in every relation of life” took place in China’s future, then women would “quickly adjust themselves to the responsibility of citizenship as a part of the changed environment in which they now find themselves.”¹²⁴

By arguing that Western missionary influence had led Chinese women toward psychological and social awakening, Ackermann essentially justified her own efforts on behalf of the WCTU and other organizations. In effect, she argued that American and European cultural influence and education methods transformed China and began a reformatory process throughout the nation. She made this point several times in the 1910s and clearly believed Western influence had revolutionized China.¹²⁵ She also believed that China was heading toward the kind of progressive reform Japan experienced in the second half of the nineteenth century. These revelations may have convinced Ackermann that the work she had carried out since the 1880s had yielded significant results. In reality, social changes in China resulted from a plethora of factors. Ackermann’s work for the WCTU, Western missionaries, and other reform

¹²² Ibid, 80.

¹²³ Ibid, 80-81.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 86.

¹²⁵ “Woman’s Voice: Sees Wide Advance of All Womankind,” *Australian Christian World*, 19 March 1915, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9; “Girl Traveler Talks Suffrage,” [ca. 1917], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.12.

organizations were, more than likely, not the primary stimuli for change. In Ackermann's eyes, however, these social changes in China, as had been the case in Australia and New Zealand, justified years of progressive internationalism.

China consumed Ackermann's attention for the next several years. While her exact whereabouts between 1913 and 1915 are unclear, she moved back to the United States at some point after 1913 and settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by 1915.¹²⁶ In August of 1916, she departed for China and lived in the country until 1917.¹²⁷ The political situation in the Republic of China changed after 1913 and much of the republican spirit Ackermann had lauded vanished. Yuan Shikai, a powerful military leader and former prime minister at the imperial court, succeeded Sun Yat-sen's short presidency in 1912. Yuan Shikai did not respect the new republic's constitution and in 1913 became authoritarian in his rule of China. In 1916, Yuan Shikai proclaimed himself emperor of China and abolished the republic.¹²⁸ Following his death, the Chinese restored republican rule, but the central government in Beijing never fully gained authority across the nation. From 1916 into the 1920s, power tended to be fluid and much of China fell under the provincial control of military governors and warlords.¹²⁹ Although some reform continued, republican China had not lived up to the promise Ackermann expected in 1913.

Despite the political conditions, Ackermann traveled to China in 1916 "to carry the goodwill of the American people to China," and "to study China's industrial and educational

¹²⁶ George W. Hunt to Ackermann, 8 November 1915, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.2.

¹²⁷ Telegram to Ackermann, 7 August 1916, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.7; "Interview with Miss Ackermann," *China Illustrated Weekly*, 13 January 1917, Ackermann Collection, oversize box 2.

¹²⁸ Roberts, 214-216.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 217-218.

conditions.”¹³⁰ Ackermann, who represented the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* in China, noted that she believed that “the time had come for America to take a more definite part in China’s inevitable development” and explained that Americans were well aware of the opportunities China offered for investment.¹³¹ The United States, she explained, had no need for territorial expansion and that China did not have to fear the US. She hoped that more Chinese-American cooperation in business and finance would come in the future. She visited various public institutions, factories, cotton mills, and other industrial enterprises to assess China’s industrial development.¹³²

China was not the first country Ackermann visited in order to study economic development. In *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View*, Ackermann had discussed her personal impressions of Australia’s industrial and economic capacity after visiting numerous factories and businesses.¹³³ American missionaries and reformers often worked in tandem with US business interests throughout the world.¹³⁴ The efforts of reformers like Ackermann in foreign nations often created the “conditions wherein a more vigorous economic and political expansion [of the United States] could be seriously considered.”¹³⁵ There is no evidence that Ackermann ever worked on behalf of American business interests in China or anywhere else. Nevertheless, many Americans in the Progressive Era equated social progress with industrialization. Businessmen, reformers, and missionaries hoped that the expansion American style business and capital throughout the world would ultimately lead to the social, moral, and

¹³⁰ “Lady Lecturer in Peking: To Study Education and Industrial Developments in China,” [ca. 1916], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.12.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View*, 16-34.

¹³⁴ Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 32-33.

¹³⁵ Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4.

economic improvement of other nations.¹³⁶ Of course, industrialization created many of the social ills progressives sought to eliminate. Therefore, this desire to spread business, while at the same time combating its social harms, represented one of the many contradictions inherent in the Progressive Era in the US. Nevertheless, Ackermann perceived American business and industrial models as modern and progressive. If the US could help China develop economically, then America would help China progress socially.

In addition to surveying China's economic and industrial development, Ackermann also investigated China's education system. She personally met with China's Minister of Education, Minister of the Interior, and the republic's President Li Yuanhong in early 1917.¹³⁷ Ackermann supported free public schools for all of China's children and urged these officials to provide public education for the nation. She proposed that the US's public education system should be used as a model for China; however, she hoped in China education would be more free from political interference than in the US.¹³⁸

Therefore, despite the republic's political division, Ackermann did not lose faith in China's potential. Because missionaries had aided China's progress toward a higher level of society, she sought to continue these efforts by encouraging the Chinese to adopt American models of education and industrialization. Her overall impression of China's future remained positive and contrasted greatly with her characterization of China in the 1890s. For Ackermann, China at the end of the nineteenth century appeared backward, barbaric, and anti-modern.¹³⁹ The

¹³⁶ Rosenberg, 17.

¹³⁷ See letters from the United States Envoy for China to Ackermann for January 10, 12, 19, and February 1 of 1917 in folder 2.4 of the Ackermann Collection.

¹³⁸ "Lady Lecturer in Peking: To Study Education and Industrial Developments in China."

¹³⁹ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, 140.

influence of Western missionaries and the success of the nationalist revolution convinced Ackermann that China was “on the high road to progress and constructive reform.”¹⁴⁰

China proved to be the last country in which Ackermann actively worked to spread American progressive reform. While she met Chinese ministers and toured China’s schools, factories, and public institutions, however, Europe entered its third year of war. The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 challenged progressivism in the United States and marked a watershed moment in the movement. For many progressives, “Europe’s descent into barbarism involved not merely death and physical destruction on a massive scale; it marked a halt to the moral progress and social reform that they believed had characterized the past half century.”¹⁴¹ Some progressives supported strict American neutrality and opposed any military preparedness. In late 1915, a number of prominent progressives, including Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, Paul Kellogg, and Crystal Eastman, formed the American Union Against Militarism. The AUAM sought to persuade the American public to oppose militarism and military preparedness and to promote pacifism.¹⁴² Progressives feared that American intervention or support for belligerent nations in the war would stifle reform. According to Frederic Howe, a member of the AUAM, “the progress [in the United States] that has been going on during the last ten years is likely to be checked” by the war and other foreign interventions.¹⁴³ For Randolph Bourne, the renowned pacifist progressive, the US had to choose between involvement in the war or American progress. “One cannot be in both,” he argued, “for the effect of the war will be to impoverish

¹⁴⁰ “Interview with Miss Ackermann.”

¹⁴¹ Robert H. Zieger, *America’s Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 15.

¹⁴² Dawley, 117-118; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 33-34.

¹⁴³ Frederic C. Howe, “Democracy or Imperialism – The Alternative That Confronts Us,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 66 (July 1916): 252 (accessed in JSTOR).

American promise. It cannot advance it, however liberals may choose to identify American promise with a league of nations to enforce peace.”¹⁴⁴

Woodrow Wilson shared Bourne and Howe’s fears. “Every reform we have won,” Wilson noted, “will be lost if we go into this war.”¹⁴⁵ The United States officially professed neutrality in the First World War and traded openly with all belligerent nations. However, US economic and cultural ties favored Great Britain and France over Germany and Austria-Hungry, as did Wilson personally. Over the course of the war, the US found itself increasingly pulled toward support for Britain and France. By late 1916, the US had a clear vested economic interest – mostly due to millions of dollars in war loans – in an allied victory.¹⁴⁶ It appeared obvious to many Americans in early 1917 that the US was going to be forced into the war in one way or another. Progressives became divided in late 1916 and early 1917 over the potential American entry into the war. Progressives like Paul Kellogg and Walter Lippmann began to argue that American involvement in the war could benefit and accelerate reform in the nation and abroad.¹⁴⁷ Wilson certainly adopted this viewpoint and formulated a progressive rationale for American intervention in the First World War. According to Wilson, the US entry into the war would “make the world safe for democracy” and ensure a free and democratic postwar order based on collective security, popular sovereignty, and freedom of the seas.¹⁴⁸ When the US declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, the bulk of progressives accepted Wilson’s rationale for the war and embraced an American messianic mission for Europe. America set out on a

¹⁴⁴ Randolph Bourne, “A War Diary,” *Randolph Bourne’s America* (11 October 2004) www.randolphbourne.columbia.edu/bourne_a_war_diary.pdf (accessed 11 May 2011). This article was originally published in September, 1917.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Kennedy, 11.

¹⁴⁶ Kennedy, 10-14.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 34-35.

¹⁴⁸ Link and McCormick, *Progressivism*, 106; Dawley, 132.

“God-given mission of redemption” to save Europe and spread progressive values across the world.¹⁴⁹

Ackermann and other reformers already had been carrying out Wilson’s messianic mission of redemption throughout the world since the 1880s. In many ways, Wilson’s justification for entry into the war was the culmination of Ackermann’s internationalist reform efforts. Indeed, Wilson’s Fourteen Point Peace Plan adopted many of the tenets supported by progressive internationalist organizations like the Universal Peace Union and the Women’s Peace Party. Therefore, where did Ackermann stand in regard to the war? Did she embrace Wilson’s mission or remain faithful to pacifism and non-intervention? Did the destruction, mass death, and barbarism of the war shake her faith in human civilization and progress? Unfortunately, few of these questions can be answered. Ackermann wrote or spoke little about the war either before or after American intervention in 1917. For much of the war, her interest centered on China and its development.

In January of 1917, however, Ackermann gave an interview in China that revealed many of her opinions of the First World War. Sadly, Ackermann’s opinions about the US entry into the war or US domestic policy during the war remain unclear. Nevertheless, the interview – presented virtually in a question and answer format – asked direct questions about the nature of war, civilization, Christianity, and social progress.¹⁵⁰ As a result, the interview provided an excellent indicator of Ackermann’s progressive thought as of 1917, particularly in regard to war and peace.

¹⁴⁹ Dawley, 109.

¹⁵⁰ “Interview with Miss Ackermann.”

The interviewer asked Ackermann if the war would lead to a devaluation of human life, demonstrate that the human beings were not civilized, and prove that Christianity failed as a civilizing force in the world. In regard to the valuation of human life, Ackermann believed that the war would cause Europeans to treasure life more than before the war. Because the belligerent nations were so depopulated by the conflict, the natural result would be the emphasis on life. She believed that the war would prove to be a civilizing process. “Nothing in human history,” she explained, “could so effectively tend to pushing [sic] us towards higher ideals and higher civilization than the very diabolical methods that have been practiced in the present war.”¹⁵¹ The interviewer insinuated that the war suggested that Christianity failed as a civilizing force. Ackermann, however, completely rejected this suggestion. Christianity, she asserted, had never been tried by states or individuals. For two thousand years, Christians had focused on dogmas and creeds and very little on the actual teachings of Christ. “At the end of the war,” she argued, “the world will just begin to practice Christianity instead of merely preaching it.”¹⁵² In sum, Christians would finally adopt the Social Gospel that would apply the principles of Christianity to daily life.

The interviewer also asked Ackermann about the nature of war and international peace. Could war, the interviewer inquired, ever effectively settle international disputes? For Ackermann, war could never settle any international quarrel. History demonstrated that previous wars were never effective, and the concessions the victors placed upon the defeated opponents normally sowed the seeds of future wars.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, she believed that the only way war would ever be abolished was when power finally rested in “the hands of the masses instead of

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

the rulers.”¹⁵⁴ The people of a nation must devise plans for peace. “Salvation will come not from the top,” Ackerman noted, “but from the common people who will make themselves heard as they have never been heard before... because it is they who have borne the burdens of this war.”¹⁵⁵ Therefore, she argued that the war would not only prove to be a civilizing progressive force but also an agent of democratization. Ackermann suggested that if women could vote in all nations, then war would cease to exist. She credited the female vote with the rejection of federal conscription for the war in Australia and argued that women would always stand against war.¹⁵⁶ Finally, Ackermann voiced her support for internationalism and collective security measures. “A great movement has been started in the United States,” she explained, that sought to establish a “standing army and, in the event of any scapegrace nation or nations overstepping the bounds, this standing army will immediately come down upon them.”¹⁵⁷

For Ackermann, the First World War did not represent a threat to progress but further demonstrated the urgent need for social reform, democratization, internationalism, and the implementation of the Social Gospel. Similar to Wilson, Lippmann, and Kellogg, Ackermann hoped the war would further social progress and civilization. At the beginning of 1917, she advocated an internationalist peace plan in line with what would become Wilson’s Fourteen Points. Did Ackermann’s optimism persist throughout the war or did her opinions change after the United States entered the conflict? Not enough historical evidence has been found to answer these questions satisfactorily. Nevertheless, it is clear that Ackermann’s faith in human progress survived the war. As will become apparent in the following chapter, Ackermann’s career shifted

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Australian Prime Minister William Hughes sought national approval for conscription during the First World War through two national referendums in 1916 and 1917. In both referendums, the Australian public voted against conscription; however, it is unclear whether this was the result of women voters or merely reflected Australian public opinion. See Margaret Levi, “The Institution of Conscription,” *Social Science History* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 152 (accessed in JSTOR).

¹⁵⁷ “Interview with Miss Ackermann.”

during the 1920s, but she continued to advocate progressive themes in speeches, lectures, and writings.

On the eve of American entry into the First World War, Ackermann continued to advocate the internationalist idealism she carried to European governments on behalf of the Universal Peace Union in 1904. Her January 1917 interview also revealed many of the core progressive ideals she had advocated or embraced since 1904: legislative reform, women's suffrage, democratization, and the Social Gospel. At the end of the nineteenth century, Ackermann was a moral reformer who had begun to support broader social reforms in the United States and abroad. From 1904 to 1917, Ackermann expanded her progressivism in terms of social reform and internationalism. She began to advocate for specific, legislative reforms aimed at alleviating the root causes of the moral and social decay that she previously combated. In *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, her progressivism reached a level where she outlined plans for achieving a utopian dream. Finally, in 1917, the internationalist ambitions of Woodrow Wilson and many other progressives echoed the internationalist vision she had advocated for nearly two decades. Ackermann's experiences outlined in this chapter, therefore, reflected many of the changes in the American reform movement in the early twentieth century. Progressivism became the leading political movement in the nation, with support from numerous political leaders and successive US presidents. In the First World War, Wilson sought to extend progressive idealism to Europe to establish a new, American-led world order. Both Jessie Ackermann's career as a reformer and the American Progressive Movement had reached their apex by 1917.

CHAPTER 4

A PROGRESSIVE IN A POST-PROGRESSIVE WORLD, 1917-1936

Many progressives in the United States hoped American entry into the First World War in 1917 would result in the expansion of democracy both abroad and at home. Walter Lippmann articulated this sentiment in an article titled “The World Conflict in Its Relation to American Democracy.” The war would not only defeat German imperial autocracy in Europe, he argued, but would also lead “to the realization of democracy in America.”¹ He explained that a war for democracy abroad would raise the expectation for perfecting democracy in the US. Therefore, “we shall turn with fresh interest to our own tyrannies – to our Colorado mines, our autocratic steel industries, our sweatshops and our slums. We shall call that man un-American and no patriot who prates of liberty in Europe and resists it at home.”² Lippmann, as did many other progressives, trusted that the war would accelerate progressive reform in the US and establish a new progressive world order. American society, however, erupted into conflict and disorder in 1919 and early 1920. The demobilization of the wartime economy, rampant labor unrest, mass inflation, and a nation-wide Red Scare all contributed to social, political, and economic upheaval. For many Americans, Woodrow Wilson’s progressive crusade to make democracy safe in the world had torn the fabric of American society apart. The progressive commentator Randolph Bourne commented in 1918 that “the war has run into the sand that fine movement for progressive democracy in which so many of us found hope.... We find a liberal war undertaken which could not fail to do far more damage to American democracy at home than it could ever

¹ Walter Lippmann, “The World Conflict in Its Relation to American Democracy,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 72 (July 1917): 10 (accessed in JSTOR).

² *Ibid.*

do to the enemy abroad.”³ Although progressives won a couple of major legislative victories in the first years after the war, by the early 1920s, numerous Republican and Democratic politicians abandoned progressive reform and internationalism. The postwar period, therefore, saw the decline of the Progressive Movement.

Progressivism, nevertheless, struggled on in the US. Although the national, big-tent movement of the early twentieth century had declined, numerous Americans continued to advocate for progressive reform and continued to believe in the inevitable progress of humanity. Jessie Ackermann represents one of the progressives who lived and worked on in a post-progressive America. This chapter outlines the social, political, and economic upheaval of the postwar period, the decline of the Progressive Movement, and then demonstrate how Jessie Ackermann retained her progressive and internationalist sentiment in the 1920s and 1930s.

Walter Lippmann and other high profile progressives were not the only Americans who expected the war to lead to an improved United States. Indeed, many groups in America expected the war to improve social relations and democracy in the nation. African-American migrants who traveled north during the war to work in wartime industries hoped Wilson’s crusade would lead to improved race relations. Women reformers anticipated that the fight for democracy abroad would result in women’s suffrage at home. Industrial workers gained a new enthusiasm for labor unions during the war and expected the wartime economy to lead to better relations between labor and management.⁴

³ Randolph Bourne to Van Wyck Brooks, 27 March 1918, in *Civil Liberties and the Arts: Selections from Twice A Year, 1938-1948*, ed. William Wasserstrom (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1964), 5.

⁴ David J. Goldberg, *Discontented America: The United States in the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 9-10.

These dreams, however, failed to become reality after the war. During the war, the Wilson Administration nationalized some major industries, including railroad companies, to coordinate the wartime economy. Instead of using the wartime economy to expand progressive economic reform, as many progressives wished, Wilson demobilized and denationalized the economy after the war.⁵ Also, the US government fostered anti-foreign, and especially anti-German, sentiment in America during the war through the propaganda of the Committee on Public Information. The Wilson Administration cracked down on dissent through the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 and arrested scores of anti-war activists, socialists, and other radicals during and after the war.⁶ Finally, the success of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, along with anti-radical and anti-foreign government policy, led to a wide-spread Red Scare in the US after the war.⁷ The failure of the Wilson Administration to use the wartime economy to further the progressive agenda and the government's repression of dissent during the war disillusioned and alienated many in the Progressive Movement.⁸

The Red Scare, the demobilization of the wartime economy, and the return of millions of soldiers from the war led to an outbreak of labor unrest and strikes in 1919. Business leaders, frightened by the Red Scare, often fostered labor unrest by adopting anti-radical and anti-communist policies.⁹ The turmoil that gripped the United States in 1919 decimated progressivism at the national level and many national political leaders abandoned reform. The Progressive Movement, as has been discussed, never constituted a unified, coherent ideological movement. Progressivism “hopped back and forth across all sorts of boundaries, grabbing political ideas

⁵ Ibid, 40.

⁶ Ibid, 10-11.

⁷ Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 268-269.

⁸ Goldberg, 10-11, 40-41.

⁹ Ibid, 42-43.

here and there, and connecting diverse peoples across lines of class and culture.”¹⁰ The movement often included socialists and radicals as well as traditional liberals. Progressivism, therefore, never clearly defined the boundary between social and political reform and outright revolution. Many progressives, including Florence Kelley, Walter Lippmann, and Jane Addams, identified themselves with socialism or socialist policy at one point or another.¹¹ In the postwar period, however, labor unrest and the Red Scare hardened the lines between American reform and revolutionary radicalism.¹² Progressivism appeared far too aligned with radicalism to many Americans in the postwar period. As a result, many former progressive politicians abandoned the reform movement. For example, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, a one-time pacifist and reformer, embraced and led the anti-communist crusade in 1919 and 1920, persecuting progressives and radicals alike.¹³

In sum, Americans generally felt disillusioned with the results of the First World War. The progressive effort to make the world safe for democracy had let loose radicalism as well as outbreaks of ethnic, racial, and class violence. The demobilization of the wartime economy also led to rampant postwar inflation across the United States.¹⁴ On top of all the domestic turmoil, the one “goal which most progressives supported – American membership in Wilson’s League of Nations – fell victim to personal and partisan rivalries” in the US Senate.¹⁵ The failure of the US to join the League of Nations and the postwar social and economic disruption splintered the Progressive Movement. Finally, in September of 1919, Woodrow Wilson suffered a stroke that virtually ended his presidency. As historian Alan Dawley noted, “the collapse of the nation’s

¹⁰ Dawley, 42.

¹¹ Ibid, 48.

¹² Ibid, 270-273.

¹³ Goldberg, 43.

¹⁴ Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1983), 109.

¹⁵ Ibid.

preeminent progressive was an apt symbol of the collapse” of the Progressive Movement in 1919.¹⁶

The 1920s, however, did not mark the death of progressivism in the United States. While most national politicians and the leadership of both the Republican and Democratic parties abandoned progressive reform and internationalism, progressivism was reforged at the grass-roots level. Progressives continued to agitate throughout the 1920s on behalf of organized labor, in a postwar peace movement, and for farmers. The progressivism of the 1920s, however, did not consist of a broad-based, centrist, national movement but was diffuse and often associated with the left in politics.¹⁷ Progressivism and progressives, such as Ackermann, lived on after the First World War and held faith in reform and social progress, but a Progressivism Movement ceased to exist.

Ackermann’s career, appropriately enough, slowed down considerably after 1917. Where she had constantly traveled both outside and inside the United States for over three decades before 1917, Ackermann only traveled outside of the US a couple of times after 1917, and only for short periods.¹⁸ She turned sixty in 1917 and it is likely that she could not maintain continuous international travel. In the early 1920s, however, she traveled throughout the US on regular lecture tours. It is unclear where she lived in the early 1920s, but she moved to Johnson City, Tennessee in the mid-1920s.¹⁹ Ackermann ended up in Johnson City almost by chance. She was traveling by train to a friend’s wedding at some point in the early-to-mid 1920s but

¹⁶ Dawley, 268.

¹⁷ Goldberg, 57-59; Dawley, 298.

¹⁸ Ackermann visited Great Britain sometime around 1922 and again in the spring of 1927. No other evidence has been found to suggest she traveled anywhere else. See Telegram from Helen Bern Briggs to Ackermann, 19 March 1927, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.7; “World’s Most Travelled Woman Visits North Shobury,” [ca. 1922], Archives of Appalachia. This article was found on the inside cover of a copy of *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View* inside the Archives of Appalachia’s collection. There are two copies of this book in the archive. This copy’s call number is DU107.A2 C.2.

¹⁹ “Jessie A. Ackermann Collection,” Finding aid in the Archives of Appalachia, <http://www.etsu.edu/cass/Archives/Collections/afindaid/a73.html> (accessed 25 May 2011).

decided she was too tired from a recent lecture tour to attend the wedding. Instead, she asked the conductor of the train to drop her off “at some cool and pleasant spot in Tennessee.”²⁰ When she arrived in Johnson City, “she slept two days, rose and looked the town over, bought a lot, called a contractor, and arranged for a house.”²¹ She built a house in the city in order to store her books and items she had collected over years of travel and to have a place to rest.²² She continued to lecture in various locations in the US from time-to-time in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Relatively few sources survive, at least in comparison to her career before 1917, that document Ackermann’s career during this period. She did not write another book after *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View* and *What Women Have Done with the Vote* were published. She also wrote fewer articles in the 1920s and 1930s. Nevertheless, a few of her writings and numerous newspaper reports and interviews that document her lectures have survived and give insight into the latter years of her career. Despite the limited source material, these documents reveal that Ackermann continued to embrace a progressive sentiment, internationalism, and reform.

While 1919 represented a year of chronic social and economic conflict in the United States, the nation also ratified the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution to prohibit the consumption and sale of alcohol. This amendment embodied a crowning achievement for the Progressive Movement and especially for the WCTU. Although Ackermann had not actively worked within the temperance movement for nearly twenty years, she celebrated the passage of prohibition. In an August 1919 article titled “Oh, Ye of Little Faith,” she explained that she had been surprised and amazed by the ratification of prohibition. The passage forced her to reflect upon her work on behalf of the WCTU. She remembered how difficult her journeys in the 1880s

²⁰ “Lincoln Visitor Has Received Diploma from Geographical Society for Being the Most Traveled Woman in the World,” 15 July 1928, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

and 1890s had been. Only her youth and “the zeal of a holy purpose” allowed her to endure homesickness, fear, discomfort, and prejudice against her gender.²³ For Ackermann, the faith and enthusiasm she put into the temperance cause was finally realized in 1919, albeit nearly thirty years after she began her activist work. She also explained that “in common with others, I really believed the whole world would be redeemed from drunkenness through the power of moral suasion.”²⁴ Prohibition, however, resulted not from grass-roots suasion efforts but through Constitutional legislation. While the passage of prohibition vindicated Ackermann’s WCTU activism, she realized only a legislative solution fulfilled the temperance dream in the US. The ratification of prohibition, therefore, demonstrated to Ackermann that progressive reform had succeeded, at least in regard to temperance, but that the reform had come from the top down and not from the bottom up.

Ackermann, of course, had not actively represented the WCTU for nearly twenty years when prohibition passed. In fact, she distanced herself considerably from the WCTU in the early twentieth century. For example, in *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View*, Ackermann recalled her first visit to Australia for the WCTU. She characterized her work for the organization not as her profession, but as philanthropic, honorary service aside from her profession, which she defined as “literary work.”²⁵ “All work undertaken in the interests of philanthropic or moral reforms has been done quite aside from my profession,” she explained, “and it is most gratifying to be able to record the fact that I have never drawn a farthing from the treasury of any such an organization.”²⁶ Although she did not deny representing the WCTU or that she advocated temperance, she characterized her calling in life as quite apart from moral

²³ Jessie Ackermann, “Oh, Ye of Little Faith,” *The Club Messenger*, August 1919, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View* (London: Cassell and Company, 1913), 302.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 302-303.

reform. In her 1919 article, she did not make this distinction in her profession. By the early 1920s, however, she again distanced herself from the WCTU. When she recalled her first international journey for one interview, titled “The Woman with the Universal Interest,” she did not even mention the WCTU or temperance. The article explained that on each trip Ackermann had represented some institution but had been “sent for the purpose of studying conditions and also for gaining lecture material.”²⁷ According to this interview, her first trip was not taken on behalf of the WCTU, but for the *Woman’s Home Companion* and for journalistic pursuits.

Ackermann’s disassociation with the WCTU could have been due to a number of reasons. She may have been disillusioned with the moral reform movement of the late nineteenth century. Her recognition that progressivism demanded legislative, top-down reform may have caused her to consider her, grass-roots, moral reform work with the WCTU to be naïve. She also likely downplayed her links with the WCTU in order to reflect her preferred public image. Ackermann’s writings, and especially her books, corresponded to the style of Progressive Era investigative journalism and other forms of reformist literature. In addition, numerous articles and interviews referred to her as “The World’s Most Traveled Woman,” and many, including the previously cited interview, characterized her as a woman with a “universal interest.”²⁸ The public persona Ackermann cultivated during the twentieth century was that of an international traveler, journalist, reformer, student of the human condition, and social commentator. She may have believed that defining her early work as temperance activism limited her public image to a single issue and overlooked her other reformist pursuits. Indeed, she never distanced herself from progressive reform in general. In “The Woman with the

²⁷ “The Woman with the Universal Interest,” [ca. early 1920s], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Universal Interest,” in which she neglected to mention the WCTU, she avidly discussed her work in the slums of London. Ackermann presented herself, first and foremost, as a cosmopolitan writer and activist. The social, political, and economic changes of the postwar period did not cause Ackermann to abandon this persona and she continued to present herself and her work in this guise throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. Her disassociation with the WCTU, therefore, appears to have stemmed from a number of factors, including her preferred public persona and disillusionment with grass-roots, moral reform.

Another major progressive reform – women’s suffrage – was enshrined as a Constitutional amendment in 1920. As the United States entered the First World War to protect and expand democracy, suffragists used Woodrow Wilson’s rhetoric against him. Wilson, who did not support women’s suffrage before the war, acquiesced to the suffrage agenda after activists staged protests in front of the White House in 1918. Congress passed a women’s suffrage bill in 1919 and the states ratified the legislation in 1920.²⁹ The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment marked the crowning achievement for suffragists across the country. Many, including Ackermann, believed that women would instinctively vote as a bloc on issues of particular interest to women and that suffrage would lead to substantial progressive reform. Suffrage, however, did not result in a renewed push for progressive reform. Female voter turnout remained low throughout the 1920s and most wives voted in tandem with their husbands.³⁰ By the mid-1920s, some social reformers began to concede that suffrage had failed to produce results.³¹ Although women’s suffrage did not result in a unified female voting bloc,

²⁹ Goldberg, 51-52.

³⁰ Ibid, 52-53.

³¹ Kristi Anderson, *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics before the New Deal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

some women reformers kept faith in progressivism and continued to push for reform well into the 1930s, including Alice Hamilton, Grace Abbott, and Lillian Wald.³²

Ackermann did not write an article or speak about the success of the women's suffrage in the United States. Neither did she comment upon the perceived failure of suffrage in regard to reform. Similar to the absence of any commentary about the US involvement in the First World War, Ackermann's silence about the Nineteenth Amendment represented an anomaly. Nevertheless, she did believe that women were progressing in American society during the 1920s. She gave lectures to women's clubs over the course of the decade and encouraged women to engage in business and public life. At one lecture, Ackermann pointed toward the way in which women had progressed in society. "The great gain that women are making," she explained, "is that in the eyes of the world woman has become a necessity to the things that are."³³ She asserted that men believed women to be socially unnecessary in the past. Both men and women, however, understood the value and necessity of women in society by the early twentieth century. Ackermann pointed to Florence Ellinwood Allen, the first female justice on the Ohio Supreme Court, as evidence of women's progress in American society and public life. She also addressed criticisms made by some that women's involvement in public life led them to abandon their devotion to the home and their Christian faith. She laughed at this suggestion and noted that a woman's love for home was instinctive and would be impossible to lose. In regard to religion, she believed that women were not losing their faith, but that they were thinking more for themselves. She urged her female audience to "scrap the mental junk" in their minds.³⁴ She made a similar point in another lecture, where she explained that "mental junk" formed by social

³² Goldberg, 65; Anderson, 7-8.

³³ "Business Women Urged to 'Scrap the Mental Junk,'" *Lincoln Star*, 25 November 1922 (accessed in Ancestry.org).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

conventions corrupted thinking and that women needed to think freely for themselves.³⁵ In sum, Ackermann continued to believe that women were progressing all over the world and that women must cooperate and work with men in public life to build a better future.³⁶

For Ackermann, not only were women progressing in the 1920s, but the entire world continued to progress. Sometime around 1922, Ackermann again journeyed Great Britain. In an interview she gave in the town of Shoeburyness, she alluded to postwar social and economic upheaval. “At the present moment,” she explained, “the world is full of unrest and the greatest possible confusion, but I believe that all this is tending to make the world better and better.”³⁷ She discussed the results of the Russian Revolution and the ongoing Russian Civil War. She explained that the revolution “was a thing that had to come” and that a “great republic will be born of it in time to come, although it will take fifty or more years to do it.”³⁸ Ackermann made a similar point about China a few years earlier, noting that a stable and prosperous republic would emerge, although it could take half a century.³⁹ Both China and Russia, she believed, were moving toward modernity and advancing socially. She noted that all the negative talk about the political conflict and violence in both nations did not recognize that progress in virtually all nations had stemmed from revolution or revolutionary war. “It is part of the great highway of human history,” she explained, and “the wilder systems of government will vanish and out of this will come order.”⁴⁰ Therefore, the postwar social, political, and economic upheaval in the United States and abroad did not adversely affect Ackermann’s optimistic, progressive sentiment. As late as 1928, she continued to view the future positively. An

³⁵ “Psychology Applied,” *Ironwood (Michigan) Daily Globe*, 11 May 1921 (accessed in Ancestry.org).

³⁶ “Women Make Big Advance,” *Lincoln State Journal*, 25 November 1922 (accessed in Ancestry.org); “Lincoln Visitor Has Received Diploma from Geographical Society for Being the Most Traveled Woman in the World.”

³⁷ “World’s Most Travelled Woman Visits North Shoebury.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “China on the Way to the Light,” [ca. 1918], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.14.

⁴⁰ “World’s Most Travelled Woman Visits North Shoebury.”

interviewer asked her if she had become disillusioned with the human race after decades of international travel. She responded that she longed to live for a thousand years. She believed the world was a wonderful place and that things were constantly moving toward improvement.⁴¹

In her discussion of revolution, civil war, and political conflict in China and Russia, Ackermann revealed an interesting dynamic in both her thinking and in American progressivism. As discussed earlier, the line between reform and revolution, and liberalism and radicalism often blurred in the Progressive Movement before the First World War. For example, when Mexico erupted into revolution in 1910, American radicals and reformers alike supported the revolution and looked to revolutionaries for inspiration. American Federation of Labor leader Samuel Gompers, United Mine Workers organizer Mother Jones, Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs, and the radical journalist John Reed all considered the revolution a struggle for social progress between laborers and elite capitalists. They instinctively supported revolutionaries like Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata who they believed fought on behalf of Mexico's workers and peasants.⁴² Before the First World War, therefore, progressives could at times support and sympathize with revolution abroad and promote institutional, democratic reforms at home.

In the postwar period, however, the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Red Scare, and labor unrest in the United States drew a bold line between American reform and revolutionary radicalism.⁴³ Indeed, this new line between reform and revolution was a primary reason the Progressive Movement splintered after the war.⁴⁴ Reformers were widely divided over the Russian Revolution in 1917. Many progressives, including Woodrow Wilson, viewed

⁴¹ "Lincoln Visitor Has Received Diploma from Geographical Society for Being the Most Traveled Woman in the World."

⁴² Dan La Botz, "American 'Slackers' in the Mexican Revolution: International Proletarian Politics in the Midst of a National Revolution," *The Americas* 62, no. 4 (April 2006): 567-569 (accessed in Project Muse).

⁴³ Dawley, 270-273.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 336.

the Russian Revolution as deplorable and anti-democratic.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, some progressives, including Lincoln Steffens, Raymond Robins, Herbert Croly, and Walter Weyl, believed and hoped the Russian Revolution would eventually lead to democracy. Historian Christopher Lasch described these progressives as anti-imperialist liberals who initially considered Bolshevism a form of economic democracy.⁴⁶ Although Bolshevism did not reflect “old-fashioned Jeffersonian” democracy, progressives like Steffens and Robins “expected democracy eventually to take root in Russia – but in strange new forms.”⁴⁷ The optimism these progressives held for Russia’s future proved to be temporary, but their interpretation of the Russian Revolution demonstrates the ambiguous relationship between reform and revolution in American progressivism before and after the First World War.

Ackermann’s hope that Russia and China would both eventually form republics in many ways reflected the expectations of other reformers. She also based this belief, or at least rationalized it, on American and Western European precedents. She believed that “most of the progression in every country has come in a like manner” to the civil wars in China and Russia.⁴⁸ America, France, and even Great Britain experienced civil wars and revolutions in their history and they had formed liberal-democracies. She expected, given time, China and Russia would follow suit. Also, her views on these revolutions may indicate that Ackermann, like many progressives in the postwar period, moved to the left politically. While certainly not advocating a communist-style, international, proletarian revolution, her language became less moderate and more radical after 1917, especially in the context of revolutions abroad and the need for women

⁴⁵ Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), xi-xii.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, xi, 132-133.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 133-134.

⁴⁸ “World’s Most Travelled Woman Visits North Shoebury.”

to shed social conventions at home. As progressivism became increasingly associated with the left after First World War,⁴⁹ Ackermann's rhetoric, at least partially, reflected this political shift.

Ackermann also believed that the First World War would result in a democracy for Jews and the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine. She explained that Ottoman imperial control of Palestine had oppressed, overtaxed, and restricted the rights of the Jews living there before the First World War. She hoped that the British conquest and administration of Palestine during and after the war would soon lead to a new Jewish state.⁵⁰ She explained that "if the war has done nothing more than to make democracy safe for the Jews, great has been the achievement."⁵¹ Ackermann thought that the Jews needed a nation in order to be afforded legal protections and to be recognized as a people and race in the world. She believed the results of the First World War, in Palestine at least, could lead to progress and justice for the world's Jews.⁵² As was the case with many issues Ackermann supported, her hopes were not realized. A Jewish state did not emerge until 1948 and only after Nazi Germany exterminated millions of Europe's Jews. Nevertheless, Ackermann's hope for democracy for the Jews, her positive optimism for China and Russia's future, her belief in a continuing advancement for women, and her general faith in human progress all demonstrate a common point. Ackermann did not abandon her faith in social progress or her optimistic progressive sentiment in the face of social, economic, and political upheaval at home and abroad during the postwar period. She continued to believe that global society would continue to progress and develop in the future.

⁴⁹ Goldberg, 57-59; Dawley, 298.

⁵⁰ Great Britain captured Palestine from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 during the First World War. See *Dictionary of the First World War*, s.v. "Palestine Front," 352-354.

⁵¹ Jessie Ackermann, "The New Jerusalem," *The Club Messenger*, December 1919, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.15.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Ackermann did not abandon support for internationalism either. Her lectures across the US during the 1920s and early 1930s often focused upon her previous international travels. In the early 1920s, for example, Ackermann spoke to her audiences on “current world events,” discussed the status of women around the world, and recalled many of her personal experiences traveling.⁵³ She provided her own personal impressions on the nature of foreign societies and cultures in articles, interviews, and lectures. In two separate articles, one written in 1920 and the other in 1936, she recounted a journey to the tomb of Confucius in Qufu, China. Ackermann revealed a number of local customs and practices, including religion, to her readers in both articles.⁵⁴ From a certain perspective, her lectures and writings in the 1920s and early 1930s reversed her career. For three decades, Ackermann traveled abroad and sought to instill her American cultural and moral values and models of social reform in foreign nations. In the latter years of her career, she exposed American audiences to foreign ideas, social norms, and culture. Where she had served as an American ambassador to the world on behalf of the WCTU and other organizations, Ackermann very much became an envoy of the world to the US late in her career.

In some ways, her writings and lectures in the 1920s and 1930s were reminiscent of the style of travel writing found in *The World through a Woman's Eyes*. These later writings and lectures, however, reflected an international cooperation and understanding that was absent in *The World through a Woman's Eyes*. At one lecture, for example, Ackermann explained that

⁵³ “Business Women Urged to ‘Scrap the Mental Junk;’” “Famous Traveller to Lecture Here,” *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, 4 October 1920 (accessed in Ancestry.org); “World’s Most Travelled Woman Visits North Shoebury.”

⁵⁴ Jessie Ackermann, “Visiting the Tomb of Confucius, Mecca of the Orient,” *San Mateo Times*, 29 August 1936 (accessed in Ancestry.org); Jessie Ackermann, “A Chicago Woman in Shantung,” *The Club Messenger*, January and February 1920, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.15. The 1920 article appeared in *The Club Messenger* in two parts in January and February. The articles are located in the same folder of the Ackermann Collection and are attached.

“the people in all the countries of the world are essentially alike.”⁵⁵ She asserted that the United States could learn much from other nations, especially China.⁵⁶ Her lectures, especially those in the early 1930s, also continued to promote international peace. In an address before First World War veterans, Ackermann recalled her work for the Universal Peace Union and asserted that “if we spent as much money on peace as we do on war, we couldn’t hire a man to fight.”⁵⁷ She echoed this sentiment in a 1935 speech on Ethiopia and closed her remarks with a plea for universal peace.⁵⁸ If America could learn from other nations, Ackerman also believed that the US had a large role to play in the world. In a late 1921 lecture, she strongly echoed a Wilsonian sentiment when she declared that “the American people had been called upon to rise and build, and that it was up to the peoples of the world to bring the world out of the state of chaos that it has been in so long a time.”⁵⁹ Ackermann, therefore, continued to embrace international cooperation and peace after the First World War and believed that America could lead in building a better world.

Ackermann did not stand alone in her faith in internationalism during the 1920s and 1930s. Although many politicians in the United States abandoned Wilsonian internationalism for isolationism, many internationalists continued to advocate for disarmament, collective security, international arbitration, and the formation of world court in the 1920s. One organization, the National Council for the Prevention of War, lobbied for nations to outlaw war as a foreign policy device. The idea gained popularity in the US and abroad and in 1928 numerous governments, including the US, signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact that renounced “the

⁵⁵ “Business Women Urged to ‘Scrap the Mental Junk.’”

⁵⁶ “U.S. May Learn Much from China, Opinion of ‘Most Traveled Woman,’” [ca. 1920], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.10.

⁵⁷ “Jessie Ackermann Addresses Men, Soldiers Home,” 19 January 1933, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁵⁸ “Ethiopia is Topic at Meet,” 21 November 1935, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁵⁹ “Woman Traveler Lectures Before Women’s Club,” 2 December 1921, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

use of force as an instrument of foreign policy.”⁶⁰ Women’s pacifist organizations also flourished after the First World War with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War, the Women’s Peace Society, and the Women’s Peace Union all being female led. Women reformers believed the First World War, which was led and conducted primarily by men, illustrated the need for women to lead the call to resist war in the world.⁶¹

While Ackermann’s progressive sentiment and internationalism remained strong in the 1920s and 1930s, some of her thoughts and beliefs continued to evolve. Some of the writings and lectures of her later career reveal how decades of international travel transformed a number of her basic assumptions on the nature of culture, religion, and race. Ackermann’s visit to the tomb of Confucius in Qufu, China, for instance, transformed her basic assumptions about the nature of religion. While approaching Qufu, Ackermann and her guide met an older man on the side of the road. They stopped and spoke with the man and he told them an old Chinese folk legend. According to the legend, a Chinese emperor climbed a sacred mountain and met a mystical dragon. The dragon imparted scientific knowledge, a philosophy of life, and the Chinese language to the emperor. According to the legend, the wisdom the dragon gave to the emperor formed the foundation of the Chinese civilization.⁶²

Ackermann asked the man if he actually believed the story. The man explained that the legend occurred fifteen-hundred years before Moses, according to the Biblical account, received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. He asked, rhetorically, if Ackermann actually believed

⁶⁰ Dawley, 298.

⁶¹ *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, s.v. “Women and Peace Movements in North America,” by Valarie Ziegler, 1054.

⁶² Ackermann, “Visiting the Tomb of Confucius, Mecca of the Orient.”

the Garden of Eden existed and that a snake spoke to Eve. He believed the story of Eden originated from his Chinese legend. “We hold this tradition to be sacred in the same manner in which your copied tradition is held sacred in the Western world,” he explained.⁶³ When Ackermann wrote about this experience in early 1920, she noted that “I am still thinking the matter over.”⁶⁴ When she told the story in 1936, however, she gave credence to the old man’s story. “There I stood,” she explained “chatting with an unknown sage – with an ancient whose interpretations of tradition and legend were at least as wise as our own.”⁶⁵ This comment represents a complete reversal from religious convictions Ackermann held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In *The World through a Woman’s Eyes*, she characterized Chinese culture and society as archaic, heathen, anti-modern, and anti-progressive. For Ackermann, China desperately needed to embrace modern Western culture and to adopt Christianity.⁶⁶ More importantly, she believed the entire world needed to be evangelized. Nevertheless, after decades of international travel, and particularly after her visit to the tomb of Confucius, Ackermann conceded that Confuciansim was as valid as Christianity or any other faith. This sentiment stood out in a 1928 interview where she elaborated on her religious conviction. Specifically, an interviewer asked what her interpretation of religion was after seeing different faiths around the world. She said that she had her own interpretation of God, but explained that “the future of religion of the world will be an individual religion in which every person will worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.”⁶⁷ She personally followed the teachings and

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ackermann, “A Chicago Woman in Shantung.”

⁶⁵ Ackermann, “Visiting the Tomb of Confucius, Mecca of the Orient.”

⁶⁶ Jessie Ackermann, *The World through a Woman’s Eyes* (Chicago: n.p., 1896), 138-40, 156-166 (accessed in Google Books).

⁶⁷ “Lincoln Visitor Has Received Diploma From Geographical Society for Being the Most Traveled Woman in the World.”

principles of Jesus Christ, but believed that “we all know the same God, only we know him in a different way.”⁶⁸

This change of heart appeared to be gradual and occurred sometime after her trip to China in 1916 and 1917. In early 1917, she told an interviewer that the greatest improvement to China since the 1890s had been the decline of Confucianism.⁶⁹ At a lecture she held around 1920, however, she asserted that Americans could learn a great deal from China and Confucian beliefs. She argued that Confucius “taught applied Christianity in the principles of the Golden Rule” nearly five-hundred years before the birth of Christ and that Christians held no monopoly on truth.⁷⁰

If Ackermann’s basic assumptions about the nature of religion changed by the 1920s, so did her views on race. The first two chapters of this project dealt little with the topic of race. Nevertheless, Ackermann made a number of comments over the course of her career on the nature of different ethnic groups and racial communities throughout the world. She perceived some non-European groups, such as the Japanese, as civilized, progressive, and modern; however, she made very negative comments about some native communities. In particular, she regarded Australian Aborigines as savage, heathen, and backward. After visiting a Catholic mission for Aborigines in Western Australia while researching *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View*, she concluded that little social progress could be fostered in Aborigines. Only after three generations of Aborigines had been exposed to missionaries, she explained, had some Aborigines become useful members of society.⁷¹ She believed that Aborigines were “by nature

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ “Interview with Miss Ackermann,” *The China Illustrated Weekly*, 13 January 1917, Ackermann Collection, oversize box 2.

⁷⁰ “U.S. May Learn Much From China, Opinion of ‘Most Traveled Woman.’”

⁷¹ Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman’s Point of View*, 118.

lazy, lack application, and must be superintended. For servants they may do, but as masters they are impossible.”⁷² Although Ackermann often spoke about the progress of the human race or humanity, she certainly held specific racial views for much of her career.

The Progressive Movement, and American society at large during the Progressive Era, had an uneasy relationship with race. Some progressives, especially those associated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples, supported greater racial equality in American society. Many, including Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, did not embrace racial equality and perceived race as part of a strict social hierarchy in the United States.⁷³ In the American South, progressives reinforced segregation and advocated, at the best of times, “biracial social progress.”⁷⁴ American progressivism had a very real race problem and this reflected a basic contradiction within the movement. Race relations often fell outside the limits of progressive reform in America. In Walter Lippmann’s rationale for the entry of the US into the First World War, for example, he proclaimed that “we shall call that man un-American and no patriot who prates of liberty in Europe and resists it at home.”⁷⁵ This resistance to liberty at home, however, did not include Jim Crow laws, lynching of African-Americans, or segregation in the South. As historian Maureen A. Flanagan has suggested, “with all the very real desire of many progressives to create a more socially just democratic society, one of the era’s true failures was not to overcome racial prejudice and establish racial justice.”⁷⁶

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing 'The People': The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 135-138.

⁷⁴ Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 52.

⁷⁵ Lippmann, 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 54.

Ackermann's racial views in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corresponded to common racial assumptions in the United States during the Progressive Era. Nevertheless, her racial perceptions shifted in the 1920s. Her characterization of Chinese culture and religion in the 1920s and 1930s demonstrated this on one level. Ackermann was specifically asked if about her views on race in a 1928 interview. She explained that she felt no racial distinctions between people and that "variations of color and temperament are nothing in her estimation."⁷⁷ "Even among the Aborigines of Australia," the article noted, "she found qualities which might adorn the most civilized race."⁷⁸ If Ackermann could be taken at her word, then her views on race drastically reversed in the 1920s.

What, then, is the significance of these shifts in Ackermann's thinking on culture, religion, and race? From one perspective, it is possible that her ideas on faith and race did not actually change at all. She may have moderated her opinions on matters of faith and religion when directly questioned in interviews so as to reflect a more cosmopolitan public persona. It is also possible that she tailored her comments in interviews, lectures, and writings depending on her audience. It would be difficult to prove or disprove these scenarios because the documentation of this period of Ackermann's life is so limited. Ackermann, however, never shied away from her Christian conviction between 1888 and 1920. She never attempted to hide her racial views, either, and she made racial comments in both *The World through a Woman's Eyes* and *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*.

Ackermann's change in thinking in regard to race and religion, therefore, most likely resulted from her personal experiences traveling, such as her trip to the tomb of Confucius. Her

⁷⁷ "Lincoln Visitor Has Received Diploma from Geographical Society for Being the Most Traveled Woman in the World."

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

work as a reformer also introduced her to many different cultures, faiths, and ethnic backgrounds on multiple continents. It is also likely that social, economic, and political changes, especially in the wake of the First World War, contributed to her shift in thought. As demonstrated in the second chapter, Ackermann changed her mind on certain issues during the early twentieth century. In the 1880s and 1890s, for example, she attributed poverty and economic hardship mostly to moral failings and believed only individual uplift could improve the lives of the impoverished. She abandoned this thinking after her work in the slums of London and decided that poverty resulted from larger economic, political, and social factors. Moral uplift, she determined, could only accomplish so much and legislative solutions were required. In sum, Ackermann's life – her international travels, progressive reform efforts, and day-to-day experiences – affected how she perceived the nature of the world over the course of her career.

The transitory nature of a person's life may seem to some as self-evident in history. All too often, however, historical memory portrays individuals in history as static and one-dimensional. The context of an individual's life is complicated and complex, to say the least, and it is common for an individual to change his or her mind frequently on various topics. One benefit of studying a single person in history over the course of his or her life is that change, as well as continuity, in thought can be charted. A study strictly on Jessie Ackermann, the temperance reformer, during the 1880s and 1890s would reveal a different person from the Jessie Ackermann who advocated building a progressive utopia in Australia in the 1910s or the Jessie Ackermann who believed Confucianism to be equal with Christianity in 1920s and 1930s. These three periods in her career – roughly 1888 to 1903, 1904 to 1917, and 1918 to 1936 – not only reflect changes in professional activity and focus, but also shifts in thought.

Throughout her career, however, her faith in human progress remained constant. In many ways, Ackermann was a progressive before the Progressive Era in the 1880s and early 1890s, a progressive while progressivism took American politics by storm in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and a progressive after the movement dissipated in the 1920s. Her lectures, interviews, and writings from 1918 to 1936 demonstrate how some progressives, despite the decline of the Progressive Movement, continued to believe and work toward a progressive future. Ackermann's faith in internationalism, even after the United States failed to join the League of Nations, also reveals that internationalism persisted within the US well into the 1920s and 1930s.

Virtually no evidence remains about Ackermann's life after the mid-1930s. By 1934, she had moved from Johnson City, Tennessee to San Jose, California.⁷⁹ She relocated to southern California at some point before her death. After nearly fifty years in the public eye, she spent the final fifteen years of her life in relative obscurity. She died on March 31, 1951 at the Sierra Lodge Sanitarium in Pomona, California.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ See mailing address on Andrew G. Lynch to Ackermann, 15 September, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.2; Pretoria Publicity Association to Ackermann, 28 September 1934, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.1.

⁸⁰ Jessie Ackerman, California Death Index, 1940-1997, Sacramento: State of California Department of Health Services (accessed in Ancestry.com); *Australian Dictionary of Biography - Online Edition*, s.v. "Ackermann, Jessie A.," by Ian Tyrrell, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10003b.htm>.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Jessie Ackermann's life was extraordinary, to say the least. For the better part of four decades she traveled hundreds of thousands of miles across the world for various causes and organizations. In the late 1880s and early 1890s alone, she "traveled over 100,000 miles, visited 502 cities, held 1,417 meetings, delivered 870 lectures, 447 addresses, spoke on 41 warships and steamers, visited 144 Sunday schools, 176 day schools, 897 saloons" and initiated thousands of members into the World's WCTU.¹ Although she was part of a wider Progressive Movement and other American reformers traveled abroad during the Progressive Era, Ackermann's experiences were unique for her time. The US State Department filed 369,844 passport applications between 1877 and 1909.² Considering that the national population was around 76,000,000 in 1900, less than one-half of one percent of Americans held passports in the late nineteenth century.³ It was uncommon, therefore, for any American to travel abroad during the Progressive Era, let alone travel continuously as Ackermann did. Her experience was even more remarkable because she was a single woman. Men made up ninety-five percent of all American travelers during the nineteenth century.⁴ Ackermann, an unmarried female with apparently few family connections, managed to support herself and to circumnavigate the entire globe multiple times in a period when the vast majority of women in the world fell under significant legal,

¹ "Woman's Temperance Convention," *The Sydney Mail*, 14 April 1894, Ackermann Collection, oversize box 2.

² "Passport Applications," National Archives <http://www.archives.gov/research/passport/index.html> (accessed 6 June 2011).

³ "Historical National Population Estimates: July 1, 1900 to July 1, 1999," US Census Bureau (28 June 2000) <http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/popclockest.txt> (accessed 6 June 2011).

⁴ "Passport Applications."

financial, and cultural restrictions. Her achievements were phenomenal and her determination, perseverance, and resilience were incredible.

Ackermann's story certainly demonstrates how much a self-motivated woman could achieve during the Progressive Era. Nevertheless, her story also reflects something larger about the nature of the Progressive Movement in US history. This project has sought to demonstrate two aspects of Ackermann's career. First, her work as a reformer, activist, lecturer, and writer fell within the context of the wider Progressive Movement in American politics and society. Second, she carried American progressive ideas and reforms abroad in an effort to transform foreign societies. Ackermann's story, therefore, reveals that progressivism not only sought to reform American society, politics, and economics, but that some Americans traveled outside of the US in an effort to remake the world according to a progressive model. The progressive impulse that guided thousands of reformers to clean up the slums of Chicago, to fight for temperance laws in San Francisco, and to demand women's suffrage across the nation led individuals like Ackermann to journey abroad to battle for these very reforms in foreign lands.

By examining Ackermann's career as a reformer in places like Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Great Britain, and elsewhere, this study has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of American progressivism. This project, therefore, fits within the current historiography of American progressivism and supplements studies by scholars such as Ian Tyrrell, Alan Dawley, and Emily S. Rosenberg that center on American reform efforts abroad.⁵ In addition, this project also contributes to subject of transnational reform. Ackermann's travels brought her into to contact with various foreign reform movements. Her

⁵ Refer to the introduction of this thesis for a detailed assessment of recent historiographical trends.

career also illustrates how American progressives worked along and shared ideas with reformers in other nations. Ackermann, as an international progressive reformer, fell not only within the context of the American Progressive Movement but belonged to a wider, transnational reform movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This project, due to constraints on time and space, only dealt with transnational reform movements peripherally. Nevertheless, historians should expand the scholarship on transnational reform during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries along the lines of David W. Gutzke's anthology *Britain and Transnational Progressivism*.

This thesis has provided extensive documentation and analysis of Ackermann's career as an international progressive reformer. Nevertheless, this project has not completely answered certain questions about the nature of Ackermann's labors. The remainder of this section will seek to fill in some the gaps within the previous chapters. First, while it is clear that Ackermann worked to reform foreign societies, how successful were her efforts and what was her lasting influence? Although incomplete, it is possible to trace Ackermann's influence on certain places and people. She certainly encountered thousands of people across the globe. She lectured frequently from the late 1880s to the 1930s and, according to many contemporary news reports, her speaking engagements often drew crowds into the hundreds. Ackermann also received many letters throughout her career from well-wishers who had attended and were inspired by her speeches. As an organizer for the World's WCTU, she successfully galvanized support for the union and increased its membership in many of the places she visited. On her first trip to Australia in 1889, for example, she set up twenty-two new chapters of the WCTU in the

Adelaide region alone and recruited over one thousand new members.⁶ Although the WCTU found greatest support in places like Australia and New Zealand, Ackermann succeeded in attracting new members in non-European countries as well. She recruited hundreds of new members to the Japanese WCTU on her visit to Japan in 1890.⁷ Her work in Tokyo led to the formation of the Tokyo Temperance Society and the organization boasted 967 members by April of 1891.⁸

As an organization, the WCTU directly influenced a number of social and political changes throughout the world. The organization officially advocated women's suffrage globally and galvanized suffrage movements in many places. In South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia, "it was the WCTU that began the organized push for voting rights among women."⁹ The WCTU also influenced and led peace movements in different places, including Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and Scandinavia.¹⁰ Finally, the WCTU succeeded in getting temperance legislation and prohibition passed in a number of countries, including Norway, Finland, Iceland, and the United States in from the in the early twentieth century.¹¹ Although the union ultimately fell short of its long-term goal of making the whole world alcohol free – the US and most other dry nations repealed prohibition during the 1930s – the WCTU inspired and influenced a number of social movements across the world in the late ninetieth and early twentieth centuries.

⁶ "Women's Christian Temperance Union," *The Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal*, 16 August 1889, Ackermann Collection, folder 1.9.

⁷ *Proceedings of the General Conference of Protestant Missionaries in Japan* (Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House, 1901), 934 (accessed in Google Books).

⁸ Ibid, 938; Letter from Tokio Temperance Society to Ackermann, 21 April 1891, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.4.

⁹ Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 223.

¹⁰ Ibid, 170-171.

¹¹ Ibid, 278-280.

Therefore, as a chief organizer for the World's WCTU, Ackermann's influence both upon individuals and upon certain social movements appeared to be considerable. The WCTU, of course, was a large, international organization that historians have thoroughly explored and documented. The influence of the smaller organizations Ackermann represented in the early twentieth century is far less clear. Very few historians have explored either the Universal Peace Union or the Girl's Realm Guild of Service and Good Fellowship. It is likely Ackermann's work for the Universal Peace Union did not yield much success, especially because the union broke-up in 1913.¹² The greater impact of Ackermann's literary work, especially her three books, also remains uncertain. It is unknown how many copies of her books existed or how many people read the books. At least two academic geographical journals, however, reviewed *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*.¹³ This suggests a fair number of people read her writings; however, it is impossible to know her wider influence as a writer. As of 2011, of course, all three of her books are freely available to anyone through open-access Web sites like Google Books and Archive.org.

Ackermann, as an American who actively sought to expand progressive reform, worked to spread US cultural influence throughout the world. Some historians have argued that international progressive reformers like Ackermann helped expand America's informal empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁴ Emily Rosenberg and Ian Tyrrell have

¹² C. Roland Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 17-18.

¹³ B.C.W., review of *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, by Jessie Ackermann, *The Geographical Journal* 43, no. 4 (April 1914): 436-437 (accessed in JSTOR); Review of *Australia from a Woman's Point of View*, by Jessie Ackermann, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 47, no. 9 (1915): 711-712 (accessed in JSTOR).

¹⁴ Historians have often referred to the United States as an informal empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unlike Great Britain, the US possessed few colonial possessions; however, America exerted substantial economic, cultural, political, and military power across the world, often through private individuals and organizations. For more information on America's informal empire, see Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4. For a general survey of US imperialism, see Paul T. McCartney, *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

both considered reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to be agents of American imperialism. Moral reformers and missionaries, Tyrrell noted in *Reforming the World*, often considered their work to be part of an effort to build a moral empire united under Christianity. According to Tyrrell, the cultural influence of American reformers and missionaries in foreign lands paved the way for further American economic and political expansion throughout the world during the Progressive Era.¹⁵ Tyrrell echoed the major theme in Rosenberg's *Spreading the American Dream* where she concluded that American private expansion abroad by missionaries, reformers, tourists, and businesses all led to an expansion of US political imperial influence. The US government, Rosenberg stressed, "gradually came to assist much of this private expansion, not so much because special interests demanded government support... but because policy makers began to accept expansion as a fundamental condition of 'national interest' and international betterment."¹⁶ For Tyrrell and Rosenberg, Americans like Ackermann who traveled abroad to spread social and moral reform were, whether they indented to or not, agents of American imperialism.

Ackermann, of course, was not only a reformer, but a travel writer and journalist who exposed American and European audiences to life in other parts in the world. Mary Louise Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes*, argued that travel writers made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable to citizens in Europe and the United States by instilling a sense of ownership and familiarity with distant colonies. Travel writers, Pratt asserted, portrayed subjected peoples and places as vulnerable, rich in resources, and open to exploitation. Ultimately, this interpretation suggests that travel writers helped Europeans and Americans to identify themselves as imperial overlords

¹⁵ Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 4.

¹⁶ Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 229-230.

of a colonized world.¹⁷ Ackermann, according to Pratt's argument, would also be an agent of American imperialism through her travel writing.

Was Ackermann, then, an agent of American imperialism? She certainly helped pave the way for increased American economic, political, and cultural expansion by working and spreading the influence of organizations like the WCTU. Also, through her travel writing, Ackermann gave readers in the US and Europe knowledge of foreign lands and may have encouraged some readers to visit and invest in these places. Nevertheless, Ackermann's role as an agent of US imperialism was not clear-cut and, at times, she both furthered and combated imperial expansion. In Alaska, for example, she praised and supported the efforts of Christian missionaries who removed native Alaskans from indigenous society and socialized them in American culture during the late 1880s.¹⁸ She supported the same type of work by missionaries in Australia among the Aboriginal communities in the early twentieth century.¹⁹ At the same time she supported missionary work in Alaska, however, she condemned the way American miners treated native Alaskan women and proclaimed that "wherever the white man has planted his foot, his tracks may be traced in the greater degradation of the native women."²⁰ When she visited China for the WCTU, she hoped missionaries could spread the faith in the country, but actively lobbied against the British-led opium trade in China due to its negative effects on Chinese society.²¹ Therefore, she often supported American and European influence that she believed benefited other societies, but combated the spread of what she perceived as negative cultural influences.

¹⁷ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, second ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 3-4.

¹⁸ Jessie Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes* (Chicago: n.p., 1896), 28 (accessed in Google Books).

¹⁹ Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* (London: Cassell and Company, 1913), 116-119.

²⁰ Ackermann, *The World through a Woman's Eyes*, 34.

²¹ "Talks of a Traveler," [ca. late 1890s], Ackermann Collection, folder 1.13.

If Ackermann and the WCTU sought to create a Christian moral empire founded on Western cultural values in the late nineteenth century, they also worked to liberate women, improve conditions for workers, and achieve public education in places like India, China, and across Africa. The world vision Ackermann embraced in the first two decades of the twentieth century was not that of a moral empire, but of a progressive international order that stressed international cooperation, disarmament, and popular sovereignty. Her internationalism was similar to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points or to Walter Lippmann's vision of a post-World War I order.²² Her relationship to American imperial expansion, therefore, remained complex and contradictory throughout her career. It is incorrect, therefore, to characterize international progressive reformers as simply proxy imperialists.

Ultimately, Ackermann did not conceive of herself as an agent of imperialism. She believed her work to be positive and beneficial to many. Frances Willard best expressed this sentiment in a biographical sketch Willard wrote about Ackermann in 1896. "Best of all," Willard explained, "Miss Ackermann did not travel from New Zealand to Iceland... as a mere sight seer, but she went to introduce ideas that she believed would make better and happier every person she met and every community in which she tarried."²³ The faith that guided progressive reformers in the United States – a belief that society could be improved through direct-action and various social, political, and economic reforms – led Jessie Ackermann to travel internationally for decades in order to construct a progressive world.

²² Walter Lippmann, "The World Conflict in Its Relation to American Democracy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 72 (July 1917): 10.

²³ Frances Willard, "Miss Jessie A. Ackermann: Round the World Missionary of the World's W.C.T.U.," 14 December 1896, Ackermann Collection, folder 2.3.

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