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'La nouvelle activité des trafiquants de femmes':[1] France, Le Havre and the Politics of Trafficking, 1919–39

On 12 April 1927 Dame Rachel Crowdy, Chief of the Social Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, gave a speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London on the humanitarian activities of the League. Identifying the suppression of both the traffic in opium and the traffic in women and children as being among the 'most difficult [problems] with which the League deals', she chose to focus particularly on the recently published experts' report on the extent of the traffic in women and children, observing that:

> the Press of every country has been full of it during the last three weeks, and the Report has, I am told, established a League record for sales. It was made available to the public only a few weeks ago, yet already five thousand copies have been issued and another edition is being prepared.[2]

The report in question, *Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children: Enquiry into the International Organisation of, and Certain Routes Followed by, the Traffic between Various Countries of Europe, North Africa, North America, South America and Central America*, was published in 1927. The outcome of a three-year investigation funded by the Rockefeller Foundation's Bureau of Social Hygiene involving field visits and interviews with *procureurs*, madams and prostitutes, as well as the use of official sources, it had come about following a suggestion by the US delegate Grace Abbot to the League of Nations' Advisory Committee on the Traffic of Women and Children in 1923 that vagaries be avoided and that the Committee seek 'to obtain official and accurate information regarding the existence and nature of the traffic in women and children'.[3] Defining what the report understood by 'trafficking', *viz.*, 'the direct or indirect procuration and

transportation for gain to a foreign country of women and girls for the sexual gratification of one or more other persons' (a wide definition that included girls who became 'mistresses of wealthy men'),[4] the report stressed the role played by state-regulated prostitution in global trafficking. The popular currency of the campaign against trafficking — a high-profile cause adopted by feminist groups, social reformers, internationalists and the press during the interwar years — was demonstrated not only by the rapidity with which the League of Nations report sold but by its mobilisation in other publications: in Britain, H. Wilson Harris's *Human Merchandise: A Study of the International Traffic in Women* (1928), a somewhat sentimentalised *compte-rendu* of the key findings, was a best-seller, while in France the campaign featured in Albert Londres's investigative journalist reportage, *Le Chemin de Buenos-Aires (La Traite des Blanches)*.[5]

The 1927 report, which was followed in 1932 by the *Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East*, was the high point of the work of the Advisory Committee on the Traffic of Women and Children (TWC).[6] In 1919 the newly formed League of Nations declared that it would take over the anti-sex trafficking movement which had been gathering momentum before World War One, with article 23 (c) of its Covenant entrusting the League 'with the General supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children'.[7] With this, and under the auspices of the TWC during its fifteen years of existence (1921–36), the League sought to construct an apparatus that would bring together pre-1914 conventions, laws and agreements and promote a new way of thinking about trafficking, brothels and prostitution.[8]

The historiography of the League of Nations tends to divide, broadly speaking, along two axes: one, a teleological narrative of international cooperation in which the successful humanitarian missions accomplished by the Union of Nations are seen to have their antecedents in the limited work of the League of Nations; the other, a narrative of failure and confusion, emphasising the lack of cooperation between member states, and the resulting impasse.[9] This notwithstanding, in recent years there has been a growing scholarly consensus that within the history of the short-lived League the work of the TWC provides a limited example of success,

outlining, as Stephen Legg has argued, 'the possibilities for international, consensual, regulation in an increasingly globalized world.'[10] The internationalism of the League, however, clashed with imperial and national interests; and the attempts by the League through the TWC to encourage the abolition of tolerated brothels generated debates about what constituted 'international' issues, into which the League could legitimately intervene, and domestic issues, which were viewed by individual nation states as beyond the purview of the League.[11] Nowhere was this debate more marked than in France. The persistence of regulated prostitution in France meant that during negotiations within the TWC French delegates felt the need to stress the distinction between the traffic in women across borders (an international issue) and regulated prostitution (which, they argued, was a national issue).[12] For all the work on the campaign against the traffic in women and children, be it on intersections between internationalism and empire in the interwar years (Philippa Levine (2003) and Stephen Legg (2009)), transnational public movements (Daniel Gorman (2005), Barbara Metzger (2007) and Paul Knepper (2011)), and the influence of feminist abolitionists in the work of the TWC (Jessica Pliley (2010)), work which has examined the issue from a French perspective has been somewhat limited, either yoking it to French imperial and racial discourses (Elisa Camiscioli (2009)) or to the development of French feminism (Karen Offen (2008)).[13] Given how far the proposal by France's delegates of the 'French formula' to address the vexed issue of whether the age limit in the 1921 Convention should be removed had a detrimental effect on backing for the TWC after 1931,[14] splitting its feminist abolitionist supporters, such an absence of research on France is surprising.

The purpose of this article is to examine how the issue of trafficking manifested itself in Le Havre, a French port which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, had become synonymous with the illegal trade.[15] The choice of a northern French port, rather than the Mediterranean port of Marseille, notorious for prostitution and organized crime (the *milieu*) in the interwar years, is deliberate.[16] Le Havre was the home of the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*, a leading French shipping company which ran regular Atlantic crossings (out of

the ports of Le Havre, Saint-Nazaire and Bordeaux) to the US, the Caribbean and South America, the location that was widely perceived as a hotbed of sexual corruption.[17] Using reports written by French police officials who were tasked with carrying out surveillance of potential traffickers and their victims in the port itself, the article will show how local policies evolved in response to national and international pressures. Local reports, examined in relation to the work of the League of Nations and the campaigns by various social and feminist movements, both French and international, which sought to combat the trade, allow more than a simple corrective to hysterical claims about an issue that *Le Journal de Rouen* in 1931 described as 'Une association mondiale de trafiquants, cotée d'un budget fabuleux'.[18] The meta-view provided by discourse analysis has revealed how the problem of the traffic in women was used as means of articulating anxieties about changes to the social, racial and gendered order following the upheaval of the Great War in France as in many Western countries;[19] a more empirical treatment of hitherto-neglected material in departmental archives shows what was at stake in everyday lives, how the conceptualisation of the problem of *la traite des femmes* differed after 1919 from its conceptualisation before the Great War, how *la traite* was understood socially, politically and in terms of gender and race, and how processes engendered by the impulse to take humanitarian action could be used to bolster imperial interests.

I.

International political interest in trafficking after 1919 was a legacy of activities pre-1914. On 21 June 1899 the first International Congress for the Suppression of White Slavery opened in London. Reporting on the event, *Le Temps*, the most influential newspaper in the French Third Republic, commented:

> The white slave trade is a new development — no equivocations, please. Fifty years ago, the trafficking of these unfortunates, who are sent from one country to another to serve as instruments of pleasure, did not exist. Or at least we were unaware of it. As the Congress continues it will examine a planned agreement between all nations to reach these miserable wretches who deliver themselves to the white slave trade.[20]

This short report offers a condensed insight into a phenomenon that became a *cause célèbre* among social reformers and feminist groupings in Victorian Britain, Europe more widely and the US during the second half of the nineteenth century. Posited as a new criminal activity, 'the white slave trade' — or, to be more specific, the moral panic which was provoked surrounding it — was indelibly linked to the population movements which went hand-in-hand with industrialisation in Western Europe and increasing urbanisation in Eastern Europe. Campaigns against 'white slavery', a term which reflected a culturally specific view of prostitution as commercialised vice, which trapped or forced young women into prostitution, became commonplace in the US and Europe in the nineteenth century.[21] Concern about the sexual corruption of women greatly exercised social reformers in Victorian Britain during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the campaign led by Josephine Butler against the enactment of the Contagious Diseases Act in garrison and port towns (1864–69) discovered that many of the young girls whom the campaign sought to 'rescue' were not to be found in Britain. In 1880 the British Home Office investigated reports of trafficking to the continent and found evidence of 'a small international traffic in English girls' to Belgium, France and Holland for the purpose of prostitution.[22] The publication of W. T. Stead's highly controversial and sensationalist series of articles on child prostitution, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885), exacerbated public outrage and concern.[23] This concern was not limited to Britain. As Keely Stauter-Halsted's research into the 1892 L'viv White Slavery Trial has demonstrated, in Eastern Europe, and Galicia specifically, the 'various perils of modernity' found an ideal scapegoat in the stereotypical

figure of the malicious Jew entrapping Polish women into a life of vice,[24] while in the US in the decades before 1914, crusades against white slavery were linked to structural changes and a construction of white womanhood which linked racial and sexual purity.[25] In June 1899, the first International Congress for the Suppression of White Slavery was held in London; three years later, the French government, in response to the efforts of voluntary organisations, took the initiative and convened an international conference on the subject in Paris. Delegates from sixteen European nations attended, drawing up an 'International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic', which in 1904 was ratified by twelve states.[26] The issue was also being taken up by women's groups (the International Abolitionist Federation in Britain and Le Conseil National des Femmes Françaises (CNFF) in France) and by social hygiene activists (the French Association pour la répression de la Traite des Blanches et la préservation de la jeune fille and the American National Vigilance Association (NVA)), and had gained significant public prominence by 1913. International cooperation was abruptly halted by the outbreak of the Great War, but pressure from international women's organisations in Paris in 1919 ensured that the issue was addressed by the newly formed League of Nations and included in its covenant. Although in 1910 at the Women's Christian Temperance Union world convention the organisation had declared a wish to change the name 'White Slave Traffic' to 'Women's Slave Traffic' to recognise that women of all races were implicated, and Avril de Sainte-Croix had succeeded in changing the wording from 'White Slave Trade' to the 'Traffic in Women' within the International Council of Women,[27] the collocation had not been widely adopted and it was only with the use of the phrase by the League of Nations in 1921 that official discourses more widely acknowledged officially the existence of a trade in women of all races.[28]

In recent years, these campaigns against regulated prostitution and the traffic in women and children have generated a range of historical research.[29] The absence of reliable evidence about the extent of the trade, and the ways in which it provided a malleable metaphor to express concern about other domestic issues — such as the crisis of the 'new woman', natalism, anti-

Semitism, immigration, and imperial anxieties in the *métropoles* of both Britain and France — have offered the ideal locus for research from various perspectives: transnationalism (Barbara Metzger), feminism (Molly McGregor Watson), internationalism (Paul Knepper), and imperial and racial discourses (Elisa Camiscioli with reference to France, and Philippa Levine with reference to the British Empire). A common feature of such research is an acknowledgement of the nebulous and approximate nature of the crime under consideration, an ambiguity compounded by the dearth of archival traces of those actually involved.[30] The most obvious questions cannot be readily answered. What exactly was the trade in women? How far were women willing participants? As Stephanie A. Limoncelli has pointed out, 'trafficking' was used to refer to a range of activities.[31] For opponents of the system of state-regulated prostitution in France, such as René Bérenger, *la traite des blanches* was simply prostitution itself, that infamous traffic which tore a girl from her family, a definition reliant on a model of prostitutes as victims.[32] For representatives who attended the series of international conferences convened before the Great War to combat the traffic (the first being held in 1899), the central problem was the movement of women across borders for the purposes of sex; the women might or might not be prostitutes, and were frequently presumed to be victims of entrapment.[33] For Alain Corbin, writing in the late twentieth century, the very concept of *la traite des femmes* was suspect, with, he argued, the trade being better understood as an inevitable feature of state-regulated prostitution within imperial nation states.[34] The complexity of definition with which the modern historian is presented is compounded by the fact that those involved in the anti-trafficking movement had a range of political agendas, not least concerning the vexed question of state-regulated prostitution.[35] In the absence of clear answers, there is a general consensus that *la traite des blanches* was a construct, a 'moral panic' in a way which is seen to approximate to Stanley Cohen's model; historians and historical sociologists may not deny that women migrated (willingly or otherwise) as part of the sex trade, but choose to focus instead on what Cohen terms the 'fantasy, hysteria, delusion and illusion' which was generated, and how this was exploited

politically and socially.[36] The sociologist Jean-Michel Chaumont, in his provocative *Le mythe de la traite des blanches: Enquête sur la fabrication d'un fléau* (2009), takes this notion further, adopting a *longue durée* approach and contending that the sexual enslavement of innocent young women has been a myth that persists to this day, a result of the methodology adopted by the League of Nations in its two investigations into the traffic.[37] However, Chaumont's argument is reliant upon his postulation that both investigations carried out by the League adopted the same methodology — when they did not. The 1927 *Report of the Special Body of Experts* caused protests in South America, New York and France against its findings, with the Préfet de Police de Paris, Alfred Morain, dismissing its claims that Frenchwomen were lured to South America: 'The average Frenchwoman is too intelligent and well-educated to allow herself to be easily duped by the marvellous promises of remunerative employment which form the usual bait of the white-slave merchant.'[38] But it was the flawed methodology of 'undercover' investigations that provoked the most indignation, with representatives in the League of Nations from Italy, France, Poland, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay arguing that the investigators sent to their nations could speak only English and therefore any findings were inaccurate and incomplete. Paulina Luisi, the Uruguayan representative on the TWC and a member of the panel of experts, accused its chair, William Snow, of ethnocentrism and publically distanced herself from the findings.[39] Accordingly, the 1932 Report, which was anxious to stress its focus on international aspects of the traffic, gathered information from local social hygiene groups and interviews with the local police.[40]

Examining how incidents of trafficking, with or without coercion, could be transformed into the stuff of myth or hysteria has done much to elucidate how debates about slavery, gender roles and race were understood by the public, be it French or in the international community. Such analyses, however, by focussing on the constructivist and discursive nature of the phenomenon, neglect the impact on everyday life of this concern with trafficking. For travelling men and women, encounters were shaped by national and international agendas — agendas

which illuminate how humanitarian actions in the interwar period were often predicated on imperial rivalry. For men and women travelling through the port of Le Havre between 1919 and 1939 these agendas manifested themselves in the monitoring and controls carried out by the police municipale. Adam McKeown in his exploration of the enforcement of Chinese exclusion in the US by border agents has cogently argued that 'The discretionary opinions of individual agents were all formulated within bureaucratically constructed categories of race, nationality, and class', with the production of this categorisation reliant upon the 'ritualized activity' of the border crossing.[41] A similar process is observable in the context of French ports. Investigating how the officials who were assigned with the task of monitoring suspected cases of trafficking out of Le Havre, France's principal transatlantic port, reveals how trafficking was interpreted and regulated locally. In doing so, this article challenges a teleological interpretation of the League's activities as instituting a change in attitudes towards prostitution and trafficking,[42] by showing how local practices were inflected by international, national and regional agendas as well as culturally received ideas — in other words, what people *believed* constituted trafficking.

II.

In the interwar period, and particularly during the 1920s, a decade that Pamela Haag has caustically referred to as 'the heyday of white slavery',[43] concern about the trafficking of women was at its height. In France in the popular press and wider cultural production, the issue of trafficking was used to foster suspicion of immigrants and foreigners, with traffickers invariably portrayed as Jewish (particularly Eastern European Jewish), Mediterranean (especially Corsican) or black.[44] Anti-Semitism was imbricated with the pan-European campaigns against the traffic, while the belief in an international organisation behind it fed into belief in a Jewish conspiracy.[45] (It is worth nothing that, of the twenty-three cases recorded by the police in Le Havre, there is no evidence of organised Jewish involvement in the traffic in women; as with the total 304

arrests for trafficking reported to the League of Nations by the Bureau de la Traite des Blanches — the French central authority on the trade in women, established in 1913 and part of the Ministère de l'Intérieur — the majority were clearly 'national', involving internal trafficking within French borders: 264 cases.[46]) It is axiomatic to state that, as with all 'moral panics', the issue was malleable and could be used to explore a range of anxieties; in France, *la traite des femmes*, linked with the increasingly fractious debate about regulated prostitution, was, as Elise Camiscioli has argued, associated with debates about the health of the nation (population decline and degeneracy), racial hygiene, and gendered notions of respectability, during a period when ethnic divisions had softened in the wake of the Great War and its resultant mass immigration.[47]

In some respects, the story of trafficking in the interwar period in France resonates with wider European anxieties. As in Britain, French opposition to the trade in women was led both by feminist groups (to whom regulated prostitution appeared to be the source of the problem) and by social hygienists; both groups articulated their opposition in a manner quite different from their counterparts in other European countries and in the Americas. France's position, however, was different. France, after 1919, was one of the few countries to retain a system of regulated prostitution, and it did not apply the 1921 anti-trafficking convention to its colonies, protectorates or mandates.[48] As a result, the French debates became muddled and divisive; the primary aim of the Union Temporaire, for example, was the ending of the French system of regulation, with condemnation of the system in the colonies being framed as a means of bolstering imperial concerns. Such condemnation was not limited to those who sought to end prostitution. In 1933 the journalist Henry Champly, author of *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*, an investigative account of the traffic of women to the Far East, reported that a French *procureur* in Indochina objected to the regulated system which saw European prostitutes having sex with 'native' men; according to the *procureur*, such a system 'does colonisation too much harm. How can the natives respect us, afterwards?'[49]

Champly's account of the Far East was composed as a complement to that of his colleague, Londres, on South America (1927). Both emphasised the Jewish element that was believed to be behind the trade. French newspapers in 1931 contained a series of stories about the sinister machinations of the Zwy Mygdal conspiracy, which, according to *La Volonté* (29 January 1931), operated under the front of an 'Association de Secours mutuels' but was, in reality, exploiting women in the sex trade. Claiming that the sinister influence of this international organisation reached as far as the French *métropole*, it added: 'Several newspapers in Buenos-Aires note as the departure points for this trade certain restaurants in Montmartre, from where women are taken to Marseille and embarked for Buenos-Aires via Montevideo.'[50] Whereas Londres mentions only in passing that the Zwy Mygdal was a Jewish organisation,[51] Champly's account is more obviously anti-Semitic, emphasising Jewish intermediaries in the trade; his reportage is, in a more general sense, explicitly racist. Positing the preference of all men for *white* women, and establishing a racial hierarchy, he peddles a hackneyed colonial discourse that purveys the fear of miscegenation and racial mixing.[52]

Although his claims about the scale of white female traffic to the Far East were contradicted in 1932 by the second report of the League of Nations, *Enquiry Into Traffic in Women and Children in the East*,[53] Champly's sensationalist reportage served as a vehicle for wider colonial anxieties about the disruption of former racial hierarchies, including an undisguised fear of *métissage* in metropolitan France:

> In France herself, the appearance of native suburbs; cross-breeding to be found even in the depths of the provinces; the astonishing vogue of Negro cabarets, copied from Harlem….
>
> Everywhere, in short, racial mixture, racial conflict, perhaps racial war, *on account of the White woman, through the White woman*.[54]

While McGregor Watson and Camiscioli emphasise how the racialised discourse on the trade in France revealed specifically Gallocentric concerns about the porous ethnic boundaries of the interwar period, it is clear that there was a wider, shared imperial anxiety about the integrity of 'white' civilisation.[55] For Champly, as for MacKirdy and Willis in their *The White Slave Market* (1912) before him,[56] the fate of the white European female was a means of advancing a European imperialist agenda. But if the campaign against 'White Slavery' provided a site for a shared notion of 'Europeanness', it could be used simultaneously to privilege national imperialisms. This was the case with Champly, who could claim to 'admire chaste England' and 'like her always to be in agreement in the Colonies with my own France', while criticising British tolerance of the *mui-tsai* system in Hong-Kong, and the concomitant British failure (in contrast with French colonies) to ensure that 'virtue' be 'triumphant'. [57]

As Gorman has demonstrated, the campaign against the traffic in women shows how consciousness of social, political and economic problems transcended national borders;[58] yet, while the moral impetus may provide evidence of an international awareness, discussion of the issue was frequently couched in the language of national prestige. This disjuncture was not confined to the diplomatic context. International cooperation between voluntary organisations frequently broke down because of national agendas; for example, the determination of the Union temporaire to end regulated prostitution led to a split with its counterpart British organisation.[59] Discourses about national identity could thus be used both to advance a French agenda (in the case of the delegates at the League of Nations) and to criticise French practices (as did the Union Temporaire contre la Prostitution réglementée et la traite des femmes). In the November 1930 issue of the abolitionist journal *La Race et les Mœurs*, for example, the reality of French republicanism was critically juxtaposed with an idealised republicanism as a means of advancing the cause of abolition with France, held up unfavourably in comparison with other states, including the 'Eastern' Turkey.[60]

From the beginning of the dialogue between France and the League of Nations, the French government considered the issue of regulation to be a national one. As Maurice Maunory (Ministre de l'Intérieur) reported in a circular to all *préfets* written in 1923:

> This French delegate had, in fact, considered that the Commission should concentrate its activity on the general control of international agreements and not involve itself in the question of regulating prostitution which is a matter of internal legislation for each state.[61]

Given this determination to ensure that the issue of regulation was excluded from discussions of the traffic in women, why did the French government show such willingness to monitor traffic through its ports? The archives suggest that a key reason was that France, the birthplace of the *déclaration des droits de l'homme*, the country which had abolished slavery under the Second Republic and made citizens of former slaves, and which had led the way in the pre-Great War fight against *la traite des blanches*, had to maintain its reputation. In the 1927 report by the League of Nations, the emphasis on the number of French women involved in the sex trade in South America, an issue which resurfaced in Londres's sensationalist *exposé*, was a source of national consternation which tapped into a fear that was already widespread. A letter issued by the Ministre de l'Intérieur in 1919 expressed regret that the traffic in French women to Argentina and Uruguay discredited France's reputation abroad. In response, the ministry called for the attentive and efficacious surveillance of steamships departing for the Americas.[62] The importance of maintaining national prestige through assiduous monitoring was impressed upon the officials in Le Havre. In a letter sent to all *préfets* on 2 September 1929, the Ministre de l'Intérieur made this clear:

> This information, of which the importance from an international perspective will not escape you, should be sent to me before 1 February 1930 under the stamp 'Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires (Service de la traite des femmes)'.[63]

The yearly reports produced between 1929 and 1939 by the police in Le Havre were in response to requests from the Ministère de l'Intérieur, which were in turn at the behest of the TWC. Interrogating these reports, as this article now will, exposes how local and national dynamics interplayed with the international in controlling movement in terms of gender and race.

III.

In the decade before the First World War, when the issue of the traffic of women first became headline news and something of a *cause célèbre* in Western Europe, the Normandy port of Le Havre, in the *département* of Seine-Inférieure, earned itself a dubious reputation as a main exit point for women shipped overseas to work as prostitutes. In an article published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1910, reporting on the work of the international conferences held in Paris in 1902 and 1910 on the 'White Slave Trade', Senator René Bérenger, an anti-regulationist member of the *La ligue de la moralité publique*, and a campaigner against the traffic in women, made the claim:

> The Transvaal was, during the war with Britain, the most productive field of exploitation. The needs of an entire army had to be met. For a long time, on a weekly basis, a delegation of girls or women used to leave Le Havre, the majority of them often hired as performers or waitresses in cabarets.[64]

This charge was not new. At the international conference on the 'White Slave Traffic' held in Paris in October 1906, the German delegate, Major Waegner, had provoked animated debate when he had reported that his personal investigation into prostitution in South America had revealed that, although the majority of imported women were of German nationality, they were not of German *origin*, and that 'large numbers of them were shipped from Havre via Southampton to South America from different places on the continent'.[65] The claim that Le Havre was some sort of depot for the traffic of women was roundly contested by M. Hennequin, the Directeur de l'Office Central de la Traite des Blanches, but, as Bérenger's 1910 article published in the influential periodical *Revue des Deux Mondes* demonstrates, the charge stuck and Le Havre became synonymous with the illegal trade in women.[66] This reputation persisted after the Great War and into the period when the politics of the 'white slave trade' fell under the purview of the League of Nations. In the sensationalist and highly popular 'true crime' book of 1930, the decorated French detective, René Cassellari, peddling the erroneous and anti-Semitic claim that the traffic of women in France was run entirely by Jews, once more asserted that Le Havre was the main export port for women to South America.[67] Given that the growth of Le Havre was due to its Atlantic trade, a trade which, prior to its definitive abolition by the French in 1848, had been based on slavery, it is unsurprising that it should have functioned as an ideal focal point for the increasingly hysterical reports which emerged concerning the so-called 'white slave trade'. Over the course of the nineteenth century it developed as the most important French port for transatlantic travel, with the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*, which had originated in Granville in 1862, launching its first transatlantic steamboat service between Le Havre and New York in 1865.[68] The ships of the *CGT* line, along with those belonging to the *Chargeurs Réunis* and to the British, German and American companies which also operated through Le Havre, transported Europeans to a new life in the Americas and earned the city the soubriquet 'la New York française'.[69] By the turn of the century, the tonnage of goods passing through the port was greater than that of any other French port except for Marseille.[70] As early

as 1881, with a population of 100,000, Le Havre was the largest city in Normandy, exceeding the *préfecture* of Rouen;[71] six hours from Paris by train, thanks to the expansion of the line to Le Havre in 1847, the cosmopolitan and rapidly expanding port provided the perfect locus for sensational press stories about what Bérenger called 'ce nouveau fléau'.[72]

Le Havre's notoriety had considerable currency both in popular culture (newspapers, novels and plays) and at international conventions organised against the trade. Yet a study of the port archives suggests that *la traite des blanches* as a systematically organised international conspiracy was largely unsubstantiated — a finding postulated with reference to the phenomenon more widely by the 1927 *Report of the Special Body of Experts* which dismissed such claims as stories 'which still linger in the popular imagination in a highly-coloured form',[73] and instead focussed upon mapping the geography of regional networks of traffickers. The number of identified cases which have left an archival trace is small, and even those cases do not provide evidence of an established transcontinental network methodically abducting young girls and forcing them into prostitution. This notwithstanding, the archival traces do more than provide a simple corrective to the sensationalist claims propagated by Union Temporaire contre la Prostitution réglementée et la traite des femmes, whose Camille Benassy (*député* for Creuse) asserted in 1933 that 'The victims of this organisation of real-life modern slave drivers number in the thousands each year.'[74] While the records contain no evidence to support Benassy's vague claim of 'thousands' of trafficked women, recording instead evidence of twenty-three suspected cases between 1929 and 1939, they do reveal how officers in the local police established systems to monitor international travel, imposing checks upon single women passing through the port. *La traite des femmes* in France, as in the US and Eastern Europe, may have contained elements of a moral panic, and with it the means by which a diverse range of interest groups could implement social control and or instil fear.[75] But examining how border officials classified travelling individuals, notably the vast waves of female migrants from Eastern Europe who travelled through Le Havre, reveals how such myths can and did develop. Indeed, interrogating how cases

of suspected trafficking were reported, examining what Edgar Morin has called the 'mélange entre la fiction romanesque et l'information réelle' in urban myths, shows how the influence of the myth of white slaving, which had been established and propagated in the nineteenth century, inflected interpretations of trafficking after 1919.[76] Moreover, the administrative consequences are suggestive of how humanitarian and other ideological agendas (involving notions of freewill, victimhood, gender or race) could influence behaviours in everyday life and how an episode in female migration from Eastern Europe interacted with French political agendas to magnify and, in some cases, generate a problem.

If the reputation of Le Havre as an important node in an international trafficking system developed before the Great War, the archives contain no trace of shipments of women heading out to South America or South Africa. Systematic monitoring was not implemented until 1923 in France. Following discussions by the TWC, the Ministre de l'Intérieur, Maurice Maunoury, sent a request on 23 May 1923 to all *préfets* for specific statistics about the traffic; since the Advisory Committee had raised the *bête noire* of the question of regulated prostitution in France, national pride appeared to be a significant motivating factor behind the request.[77] International agreements from before the Great War, however, had established the issue of women migrating to work in the sex trade as a transnational one; as a result, along with monitoring being carried out by voluntary organisations (in France by the Association pour la répression de la Traite des Blanches et la Préservation de la Jeune fille and L'œuvre des gares),[78] police officials had investigated several cases.[79] Following the first official conference, convened by the French government in 1902, an international agreement had been signed by fifteen nations in May 1904 with the intention of centralising information about the trafficking of women. Article two envisaged a system of mutual cooperation between nations, with a general surveillance of ports and train stations.[80] This was implemented swiftly in Le Havre. Two telegrams, both from 1905, show bilateral cooperation between Britain and France in the monitoring of ports and stations. The first telegram, sent from the Commissaire spécial à intérieur Sûreté générale in Le Havre to

the préfet de police Commissaire spécial gare St Lazare Paris, warned the station authorities to be on the lookout for a sixteen-year-old girl of Irish origin who was feared by both the British authorities and the corresponding French ones to be a victim of 'la traite des blanches'.[81] The second, dated 14 November 1905, and also sent from the Commissaire spécial à intérieur Sûreté générale in Le Havre to the préfet de police Commissaire spécial gare St Lazare Paris, asked the police commission at the Gare St Lazare to be on the lookout for a thirty-year-old woman, slightly taller than average height, and her accomplice, a moustached man of thirty-eight, whom the British police believed 'to be possibly engaged in white slaving'.[82] The first telegram crystallises the essential elements of what campaigners against the *traite des blanches* feared so much: a young, naive girl, travelling by herself and, as a consequence, prey to the predations of men. As such, she had raised suspicions, and the authorities in both Britain and France had intervened, even if she was not actually stopped in Paris and thus the purposes of her journey cannot be known. As with all such reports, the women who are the focus of these concerns are silent; here the only archival traces see them narrativised — as victim in the case of the first telegram, and, in the case of the second, as criminal perpetrator.

Monitoring in the Normandy port of Le Havre, and to a much lesser extent Dieppe (which chiefly offered passenger sailings for Newhaven, Britain, and the Canary Islands), belies the lurid narrative of virginal girls trapped into a life of prostitution, a narrative which was propagated by the Union Temporaire contre la Prostitution réglementée et la traite des femmes and which was the stock ingredient of popular films such as *La Traite des Femmes* (1931) and *Danseuses pour Buenos-Aires* (1931).[83] A key feature of these reports, and an exception given the mutabilities of the French administrative system, is that they are all written by one *Commissaire spécial*, François-Joël Chauvineau, an officer who was commended by the Ministre de l'Intérieur, Albert Sarrault, in 1934 for the longevity and consistency of his service.[84] Reading all the reports together produces a clear sense of what this official viewed as trafficking, and his definition is markedly different to that established by the 1927 *Report of the Special Body of Experts*.

Almost invariably it transpired that the women involved were travelling in the full knowledge that they were going to work as prostitutes, as in the case of two French women of twenty-nine and twenty-two who were stopped en route from Dieppe to the Canary Islands on 29 August 1929.[85] As the *Commissaire spécial* noted on this occasion, these two women had not been forced abroad and there could consequently be no prosecution under article 334 § 4 of the Code Pénal; they were, nevertheless, prevented from travelling and were sent back to Paris, from where they had come. In this respect, the port records support the conclusions of Albert Londres's investigative journalism in *Le Chemin de Buenos-Aires (La Traite des Blanches)* (1927), which emphasised the economic push factors behind prostitution and offered a partial explanation for the traffic in women as an active decision taken by some of them to travel to South America where the brothels were perceived as more lucrative.[86] The 1927 report of the Body of Experts of the League of Nations similarly stressed that kidnapping was a rarity and that it 'did not wish to give the impression that all or most of these were unsuspecting and defenceless women who had been decoyed to a foreign country in ignorance of the real purpose of their journey.'[87] If the assiduous reports produced by *Commissaire* Chauvineau for the *préfet* (and ultimately for transmission to the Ministre de l'Intérieur) between 1929 and 1939 disprove the fiction of innocent girls trapped into foreign prostitution, they do, however, reveal the international connections for which Le Havre acted as a nexus during the interwar years. Moreover, the reports produced during this period show that while the campaigns against the traffic in women may have been motivated by racial preoccupations — specifically, as argued by Donna Guy and by Elisa Camiscioli, the fear of French women engaging in interracial sex — suspected victims and traffickers identified at the port of Le Havre came from a range of destinations and only a minority were of French origin.

What emerges from these reports is the high proportion of Eastern Europeans being identified either as criminals trafficking women, or as women suspected of being trafficked themselves. A report of 30 November 1929, sent by *Commissaire spécial* Chauvineau in Le Havre

to the Directeur de la Sûreté Général (Contrôle Recherches Judiciaires), Paris, reports that a Lithuanian named Abe Moussa Keselis, claiming to be shopkeeper, had boarded the SS Krakus on 5 September, destined for South America, in the company of two women who were 'destinées à des maisons de prostitution'. It is noted of the women that one was a twenty-six-year-old Lithuanian named Noma Slapoenikaite who had arrived with Keselis on 29 August 1929 on the SS Virginie from Riga, while the other was a twenty-six-year-old Latvian named Freida Segal who had travelled to Le Havre by rail from Riga.[88] Although the movements of all three continued to be tracked, allowing the *Commissaire spécial* in Le Havre to report that Frieda Segal had been placed in a brothel in São Paulo while Noma Slapoenikaite had been placed in a brothel in the Polish quarter in Buenos Aires, the suspected procurer was not arrested. Whether the women had actively consented to travel abroad and work as prostitutes is not recorded, although the *Commissaire* does use a passive construction in his report, noting that the women had been placed by Keselis in specific brothels ['Keselis devait placer cette jeune fille à Saint-Paul (Sao-Paulo)'].

In his detailed report to the Ministère de l'Intérieur Direction de la Sûreté Générale of 9 January 1931, Chauvineau offers a more considered account of the role of Le Havre as a transit point for Europeans involved in the international sex trade. He notes that, while his service had not identified any clear cases as such over the course of 1930, nevertheless 'traffic by sea with foreign countries, notably the republics of South America and the USA, as well as Canada, has allowed a number of individuals of both sexes to be identified, with some quite precise suspicions regarding their trafficking, suspicions based upon what is known about their usual activities'.[89] He then goes on to detail individuals who had been repatriated via Le Havre following alleged involvement in the sex trade in South America: a Frenchman, Marcel Louis Berruyer, on 5 February 1930 following his expulsion from Brazil for the *traite des femmes*; an Italian woman, Virginie Mancini, following her expulsion from Mexico for running a brothel; and a French couple who had raised suspicions on board ship and thus also found themselves

expelled. Two further French nationals were returned to France on 5 July 1930 following actions by the authorities in Buenos Aires.[90] The monitoring carried out at Le Havre reveals that, although many of the women travelling out to South America were of Eastern European origin, a substantial proportion of those coming back (both women and men) who had been accused of involvement in the sex trade were French nationals. The report of the League of Nations in 1927 discussed at length the high proportion of French women working in South American brothels;[91] Londres, too, emphasised the presence of what he called 'Franchuchas' working in Buenos Aires.[92] A source of embarrassment to French officials in the League of Nations, and seized upon by anti-regulationists in France as further evidence for their cause, the prominence of France in the trade may be borne out to a limited extent by the monitoring in Le Havre; what perhaps is more striking in retrospect, however, is evidence which the local documents provide of the globalised nature of the sex trade and migration routes. What also emerges is how ineffectual criminal proceedings against supposed traffickers appeared to be. For example, Chauvineau includes in his report of January 1931 information about another repatriation, that of Philippe Bartoli, who had been expelled from both Egypt and Brazil for engaging in the trade in women, having already received 'une mention spéciale' on the lists of the Rouen Intelligence Service in 1917.[93]

Article 7 of the League of Nations Convention on the Traffic of Women and Children (1921) called for the surveillance of all unaccompanied women and children travelling by sea. Signatories to the convention were encouraged to post notices in port and train stations warning women of the potential dangers of the trade, and providing information on housing and other forms of assistance to those perceived as vulnerable.[94] The series of reports produced by Chauvineau demonstrates how this construction of gendered behaviour, reliant upon paternalistic notions of protection, affected the circulation of all women across French borders. In his report of 9 January 1931, Chauvineau states that on 25 November 1930 an eighteen-year-

old Parisian girl had boarded the steamship 'Kerguelen', headed for Buenos Aires in the company of a woman who claimed to be a primary school teacher in Argentina. He notes:

> Melle CHARRIAS, an eighteen-year-old minor who had not been provided with parental permission to travel, was advised that at Bordeaux, where the steamer would call, she would have to produce such authorisation or run the risk of seeing her journey disrupted by the port's Commissaire Spécial, duly advised by me.[95]

The TWC had talked about restricting women's travel, with women under the age of twenty-one, the age of majority, being prevented from travelling without written parental consent; but this stipulation was not officially adopted by the League. Paulina Luisi, the delegate of the Uruguayan Government on TWC, presciently warned in an article published in 1924 that any legislation to protect young women travelling alone risked limiting the freedom of movement of all women.[96] A trend of 'paternalist abolition', which opposed all forms of prostitution and envisaged achieving this through the careful management of women's movement between nations, had, as Jessica Pliley has demonstrated, been one of the distinct groupings which had emerged in the international anti-sex trafficking movement with the launch of the TWC and it came to the fore again when F. A. R. Sempkins of the British National Vigilance Association replaced Annie Baker on the TWC in 1927.[97] The reports produced by the police monitoring the port in Le Havre suggest, however, that travelling single women were in any case viewed with suspicion and that administrative interventions were implemented accordingly. Later in his report of January 1931, Chauvineau, detailing the measures put in place to monitor emigration and immigration, refers the *Ministre* back to his report on the case of Mlle Charrias to demonstrate how the documentation of all children is scrupulously checked to ensure that they are not lying about their age and have parental consent to travel. He adds, however, that all female minors are subject to a 'surveillance discrète mais attentive' during the journey by the steamer's Etats-

Major.[98] In an earlier report of 30 November 1929, Chauvineau had described a regional monitoring system in operation in the fishing port of Fécamp and in the Channel port of Dieppe. He added: 'As soon as a woman or child travelling alone arrives in a hotel in the locality, the owner of the said hotel immediately informs the Commissariat. In addition, a surveillance team operates for people staying in the station at Fécamp.'[99]

Such assiduous surveillance and intervention by the port authorities seems to have been as a result of the particular attentiveness of the police in Le Havre under the leadership of Chauvineau. Similar reports from the Loire-Inférieure port of Saint-Nazaire, out of which the *CGT* also operated steamers, do not detail such interventions, even if they express unease at the number of Polish single girls travelling to South America. In May 1931, for example, the *préfet* of Loire-Inférieure contacted the Ministre de l'Intérieur, Pierre Laval, copying in the Ministre des Affaires Etrangères and claiming to have uncovered a trafficking ring.[100] He reported:

> On 15 May, on the steamer 'Espagne' headed for Mexico and Cuba, it was noticed that seven young girls had embarked, travelling alone under particularly suspect conditions: there were four Polish girls and three Greeks who, when interrogated, explained the reasons for their journey in an absolutely identical fashion (saying that they were going to South America to conclude a marriage pact which had been arranged by correspondence and on the sighting of a photograph), which effectively connotes that we were dealing with a particularly special traffic.[101]

The report was sent again on 8 January 1932, containing additional information regarding the *CGT* which operated between Saint-Nazaire and Mexico; this company was identified as particularly suspect, and the report pointed out that it also operated a passenger steamship service out of Le Havre.[102] A central concern underpinning both reports is that, whatever suspicions the officials harboured, the police and port officials were not in a position to prevent

the women from travelling. On 27 May, the *préfet* asked the Ministre de l'Intérieur if it would be possible to prevent boarding in such instances, or at the very least to delay embarkation. It transpired that because the women were not of French nationality, nothing could be done other than notifying the Polish government of French fears. While the *préfet* hypothesised that what had been identified in Saint-Nazaire was an international organisation designed to avoid national safeguards, with Frenchwomen who befell the same fate as these Polish and Greek women being exported via some foreign port,[103] action fell short of outright intervention, being limited to expressions of anxiety and notifying the Ministre de l'Intérieur of all scheduled sailings for South America operated by the *CGT* during 1932.[104]

This report of 'shameful trafficking' through Saint-Nazaire reveals not only the limited possibilities of intervening in suspected cases of trafficking but also the variant readings to which migrating Polish women were subjected, readings which in both cases denied female agency in migration and diverted attention from economic push factors such as poverty.[105] After the second warning of 8 January 1932, the incoming Ministre de l'Intérieur, Pierre Cathala, instituted enquiries with the Polish and Mexican authorities who reported back that all single women had indeed married on their arrival in South America; this revelation provoked an outraged demand from Cathala for an explanation as to why the women had raised suspicions.[106] The defence offered by the *Commissaire spécial* in Saint-Nazaire is illuminating. Denying ever having *confirmed* that trafficking existed, he justified his suspicions in three ways: first, by reference to the country of origin of the women, adding that his enquiries among sailors had confirmed that there was a large number of Polish women working in brothels in Havana as well as in Buenos Aires;[107] second, by citing their intended destination, South America, which was notorious for prostitution; and third, by adumbrating the detail, or, to be more precise, the lack of detail, which they could provide for their reasons for travel.[108] All claimed that they were going to marry men whom they either had not seen for a long time or had never seen before; none had had any correspondence with her supposed fiancé, who, it appeared, had financed the trip.[109] The

justification offered for his raising of the alarm, which he stresses is based on 'observation et constatation',[110] is predicated on the familiar trope of female passivity in entering prostitution, with innocent women tricked into selling sex through false offers of marriage, an accusation that had developed a certain currency in European popular culture before 1914.[111] In contrast, the explanation offered by the Polish authorities, who denied that any such cases of entrapment or trafficking existed, relies on national sentiment and accusations of international meddling on the part of the French. What this instance demonstrates is how post-war diplomatic and international conventions offered a new way of articulating a pre-existing fear about womanhood and an explanation for prostitution; at the same time, trafficking could be interpreted as not including marriage. The *Report of the Special Body of Experts* in 1927 had carefully defined trafficking — *viz.*, as 'the direct or indirect procuration and transportation for gain to a foreign country of women and girls for the sexual gratification of one or more other persons' — so that bogus or enforced marriages, a legally binding contract that involved the loss of a woman's citizenship at this time, was included within its remit.[112] For Polish diplomats and their French counterparts, such a definition was not to be enforced.

On the two occasions when the authorities in Le Havre did uncover cases of entrapment and enforced prostitution between 1919 and 1939, these were articulated to the *préfet* and the Ministère de l'Intérieur using all the familiar devices and discursive techniques employed in the prurient and sensationalist campaigns against the traffic. This is not to suggest that these were not genuine cases of entrapment; it is worth noting that the accounts were derived from the testimonies of the women themselves. Together, however, they provide telling examples of what Morin terms the 'mélange entre la fiction romanesque et l'information réelle' and how this can generate the psychologically powerful aspects of belief.[113] On 9 January 1936, Chauvineau reported that one Berthe Toulotte had returned to France via Le Havre on 18 July 1934, having worked as a prostitute in Buenos Aires:

She announced that in 1932, regularly attending the dance hall Le Petit Jardin near the Place Clichy in Paris, she had made the acquaintance of an individual called 'Marcel' who, some time after, had offered her a trip to Bordeaux.

In this town, they visited a steamer about to sail, the 'Massilia', and it was during their promenade on board that she was pushed by her friend into a cabin and locked in.

During the crossing she was kept captive and watched by a ship's surgeon called Henri JOSSE. A young girl called Suzanne was also in this cabin and she was subject to the same surveillance.

On the arrival of the Massilia in Buenos-Aires, the surgeon JOSSE disembarked them secretly and gave them to someone named André LEBIGOT, resident in the Pueblo de San Miguel, 'Villa Les Acacias', near to Buenos-Aires.

Mlle Toulotte, then aged 16, was placed in a brothel belonging to Rosario, known as 'Sapho', and a year later, in another brothel, by the same Lebigot.

She was forced to continue this work until she met a young Italian who became her lover, giving her the necessary money to escape and to embark for France.

The young woman in question declared herself on disembarking and returned to the home of her mother, Mme Ve Toulotte, 5, impasse Havy Pierrefitte (Seine). (Report no. 3525, July 1934).[114]

Outside this police report, there is little archival evidence to substantiate the claims. Was she a victim of a trafficker? Did she travel out to Buenos Aires of her own volition? These questions cannot be answered, although it is worth noting that there is a second reference to André LeBigot in the files of the *Bureau central de la traite des blanches*.[115] Perhaps what is most significant here is how the assiduous Chauvineau narrated her testimony. The brief narrative has all the elements of the classic entrapment tale which had been the fare of the sensationalist press from the 1880s onwards.[116] From the outset, Berthe Toulotte appears to have no agency of her own,

and is portrayed throughout as the passive object of masculine forces. She is picked up in a part of Paris, the Place Clichy, notorious for prostitution and vice, and offered an implausibly generous holiday in Bordeaux, where she is kidnapped and imprisoned ('enfermée à clef'). She is watched during the ocean crossing, and on arrival in Buenos Aires she is smuggled ashore and 'delivered' to a brothel. Chauvineau's narrativisation of her ordeal uses the same discursive markers as the scaremongering tales propagated by campaigners against the trade; indeed, there is little difference between his narrative and the plotline of the melodrama *Danseuses pour Buenos-Aires*.[117]

A briefer report from 20 January 1933, about the repatriation of one Louise Moreau on 26 February 1932, similarly gives the strong impression that the 'victim' was exploited because of her *naïveté*. The young girl, returned to the care of her mother, is reported as having been accosted by a woman in Paris and introduced to an individual called 'Henri', who decided that she and the woman should go to Rotterdam. Joined by another 'jeune fille', and furnished with false passports, the party boarded a German ship at Anvers before Moreau managed to escape after docking in Port-au-Prince.[118] The report concludes by noting that although the 'Henri' in question could not be identified, the twenty-eight-year-old woman travelling under the name of Germaine Ceyrolles bore a strong resemblance to a Carla Piva, about whom the *commissaire* had previously lodged a report on 28 September 1931.[119]

The discursive consequences of the 'moral panic' about the traffic in women pervade the reports produced by Chauvineau. In his extensive five-page report directed to the Ministère de l'Intérieur and dated 9 January 1931, he makes reference to the case of a forced repatriation from Canada, as a consequence of her lack of an appropriate visa, of a twenty-five-year-old Frenchwoman, born in Berk-sur-Mer. Noting that she had originally travelled out to Canada from Cherbourg on 1 November 1930 to work as a primary schoolteacher, and that she had been supposed to meet up with an agency in Montreal before being transported to her post, Chauvineau adds that this young woman declared herself completely ignorant of the address of

her intended place of work. He concluded his report with the observation: 'The naivety of this beautiful-looking young girl with a nice physique makes one think that she must have been the victim of traffickers.'[120] The facts of the case are emplotted according to a readily identifiable narrative: a young, innocent and beautiful French girl entrapped into a life of vice.

While the extent of the traffic may have been exaggerated at the national and international levels, and could be manipulated for political ends, the 'moral panic' it created had the potential to influence perceptions and behaviour in a local context. At stake was not only the discursive construct of victims and perpetrators, but also a requirement to be seen to act. This took the form of official constraints on the movement of people, particularly women, as the narrative of enforced prostitution was projected upon all single young females travelling alone through the port of Le Havre. A concern for the moral welfare of white European women generally, rather than French women exclusively, may be seen in the monitoring initiatives implemented by the police both in Le Havre and in Saint-Nazaire. Surveillance was not limited to French women; Chauvineau in Le Havre displayed a zealous attention to detail regarding all single women travelling alone, regardless of nationality, while Mairort, the *Commissaire spécial* in Saint- Nazaire, was particularly exercised by fears that Polish and Greek women travelling to South America were victims of *la traite des femmes*.[121] Following the sharp rebuke from the Ministre de l'Intérieur about his revelations about a possible trafficking ring operating out of Saint-Nazaire in May 1931, Mairort continued to note attentively the numbers of single Polish women emigrating to South America via Saint-Nazaire.[122] This notwithstanding, the persistence of the collocation *la traite des blanches*, used six times in Chauvineau's official reports between 1919 and 1939, and once in those produced at Saint-Nazaire, despite the official nomenclature of *la traite des femmes*,[123] suggests that, although the France of the Third Republic was officially 'colour blind', for the officials in Le Havre and, to a lesser extent, Saint-Nazaire, monitoring was racialised and predicated upon the need to protect white women.

IV.

The League of Nations and the work of the TWC has been praised by historians for its legacy, establishing what Pliley terms 'international norms on the issue [of trafficking] that were incorporated into the charter of the United Nations',[124] but how far did these new norms permeate national discourses and the impact on travelling women who passed through the French port of Le Havre? The final circular on the issue of *la traite des blanches* before the end of Third Republic, from the Ministre de l'Intérieur on 9 September 1939, sought to harden and to nationalise the definition of who could, in social, political, gendered and racial terms, be considered a victim of trafficking.[125] Anxious that, following France's declaration of war and the ensuing migration, there would be an increase in trafficking, the Préfet of Seine-Inférieure urged Chauvineau and his officers to exercise diligent protection of Frenchwomen, 'whose fathers, brothers or fiancés have been mobilised and who therefore find themselves, sometimes, deprived of all support and are thus susceptible to machinations to corrupt them'.[126] The recurrence of the old fear of 'white slaving' at a time of national crisis in 1939 is unsurprising, and France did not constitute an exception — such narratives were employed in many countries for similar reasons — but as the country which had established the system of regulated prostitution and exported this system to other parts of the world, France's somewhat vexed negotiation of the issue of trafficking after 1919 contradicts any glib claims of normalisation. Moreover, reporting on the issue of *la traite des femmes* by officials in the police in Le Havre reveals how international and national agendas could shape encounters on border crossings. Yet it also reveals how far the tenor of local action was contingent upon the ways in which individual officials interpreted and contextualised trafficking: who was perceived as a victim, who could be saved. What is clear is that while the conceptualisation of trafficking, as it was defined by the international apparatus, differed after 1919 from its conceptualisation before the Great War, border officials who monitored travelling women employed their own interpretations of what

constituted trafficking, and these interpretations were often at odds with the international definitions. The 1927 *Report* may have declared that 'the prostitute has also her claim to protection from open and shameless exploitation',[127] but in Le Havre and Saint-Nazaire the officials' socio-political view of trafficking resulted in a particular focus on young, white, unmarried women, who had not previously worked as prostitutes, as being in need of especial protection.

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[1] Le Préfet de la Seine-Inférieure to Messieurs les Maires, le commandant de la Gendarmerie, les Commissaires Centraux de Police du département, 16 Sep. 1939, 4 M 608, Archives départementales, Seine-Maritime, Rouen.

[2] Rachel E. Crowdy, 'The Humanitarian Activities of the League of Nations', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 6 (1927), 153–69 (154 and 156).

[3] League of Nations, *Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children: Minutes of the Second Session* (Geneva: LNP, 1923), 27.

[4] *Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children: Enquiry into the International Organisation of, and Certain Routes Followed by, the Traffic between Various Countries of Europe, North Africa, North America, South America and Central America* (Geneva: LNP, 1927), 8–9.

[5] Daniel Gorman, 'Empire, Internationalism, and the Campaign against the Traffic in Women and Children in the 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 19 (2008), 186–216 (211); and Albert Londres, *Le Chemin de Buenos-Aires (La Traite des Blanches)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1927), 245–52.

[6] *Enquiry into traffic in women and children in the east* (Geneva: LNP, 1932); Barbara Metzger, 'Towards an International Human Rights Regime during the Inter-War Years: *The League of Nations' Combat of Traffic in Women and Children*', in *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism,* c.*1880–1950*, ed. by Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 54–79 (65).

[7] Quoted in Metzger, 'Towards an International', 54.

[8] Stephen Legg, '"The Life of Individuals as well as of Nations": International Law and the League of Nations' Anti-Trafficking Governmentalities', *The Leiden Journal of International Law*, 25 (2012), 647–64 (654).

[9] See, for example, Daniel Gorman, 'Liberal Internationalism, the League of Nations Union, and the Mandates System', *Canadian Journal of History*, 40 (2005), 449–77, *passim*.

[10] Legg, 'Individuals', 648.

[11] See Stephen Legg, 'Of scales, networks and assemblages: the League of Nations apparatus and the scalar sovereignty of the Government of India', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 34 (2009), 234–53.

[12] Hennequin to Clauzel, 5 Feb. 1924, FR/MAE SDN 1755, fol. 25, Archives diplomatiques, Nantes.

[13] Legg, 'Of scales, networks and assemblages'; Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 245–50; Metzger, 'Towards an International'; Daniel Gorman, 'Empire, Internationalism', and Paul Knepper, *International Crime in the Twentieth Century: The League of Nations Era, 1919–1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Jessica Pliley, 'Claims to Protection: The Rise and Fall of Feminist Abolitionism in the League of Nations' Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children, 1919–1936', *Journal of Women's History*, 22 (2010), 90–113; Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 99–128; and Karen Offen, 'Madame Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix, the Josephine Butler of France', *Women's History Review*, 17 (2008), 239–55.

[14] The 1921 Convention stipulated that it was illegal to transport a prostitute from one country to another if the prostitute was under the age of twenty-one; LN, 'International Conventions for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children', 30 September 1921 (Geneva: LNP, 1921), 3; see Pliley, 'Claims to Protection', 101–02.

[15] A claim made by, among others, Madame Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix writing under her pen name, Savioz: Savioz, 'La traite des blanches', *La Grande Revue*, August 1902, 281–94.

[16] See Marie Paoleschi, *Marie la jolie*, récit présenté et recueilli par Jean Bazel (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1979), and Harry J. Greenwall, *The Underworld of Paris* (London: Stanley Paul & Co., 1921), 56.

[17] Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 5–7.

[18] [Anon.], 'A la Ligue rouennais pour le relèvement de la moralité publique: Une conférence de Mme Legrand-Falco sur "L'Esclave Blanche"', *Le Journal de Rouen*, 31 Jan. 1931, 3.

[19] Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1994), 5; and Pamela Haag, *Consent: Sexual Rights and the Transformation of American Liberalism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 63–89.

[20] 'La traite des blanches, en effet, est un fait nouveau — pas d'allusion, je vous prie. — Il y a cinquante ans, le trafic des malheureuses qui sont envoyées d'un pays dans l'autre, pour servir d'instrument de plaisir, n'existait pas. Du moins, on ne le connaissait pas. […] Le congrès aura dans la suite à examiner un projet d'entente entre toutes les

nations pour atteindre les misérables qui se livrent au trafic des blanches.' 'Congrès International pour la répression de la traite des blanches (De notre correspondant particulier)', *Le Temps*, 23 June 1899, 1.

[21] London-based physician and reformer Dr Michael Ryan is posited as being the first to coin the collocation 'white slavery' in 1839; Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: Jewish Fight against White Slavery, 1870–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 35 .

[22] Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 87.

[23] W. T. Stead, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (The Report of the 'Pall Mall Gazette's' Secret Commission) (London: [Pall Mall Gazette], 1885).

[24] Keely Stauter-Halsted, '"A Generation of Monsters": Jews, Prostitution, and Racial Purity in the 1892 L'viv White Slavery Trial', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 38 (2007), 25–35.

[25] Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-Vice Activism, 1887–1917* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 89–95.

[26] Metzger, 'Towards an International', 57.

[27] Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, 51; Offen, 'Madame Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix', 240.

[28] Knepper, *International Crime*, 87. Resonances with the Atlantic Slave Trade were deliberate and ensured that campaigns mobilised abolitionists and other social reformers; see Guy, *Sex and Danger*, 25.

[29] In addition to the above cited works see, among others, Marion Kaplan, 'Prostitution, Morality Crusades, and Feminism: German-Jewish Feminists and the Campaign against White Slavery', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5 (1982), 619–27; Stephanie A. Limoncelli, *The Politics of Trafficking: The First International Movement to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Women* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Nancy M. Wingfield, 'Destination: Alexandria, Buenos Aires, Constantinople; "White Slavers" in Late Imperial Austria', 291–311.

[30] Chaumont discusses at length the dearth of archival traces; see Jean-Michel Chaumont, *Le mythe de la traite des blanches: Enquête sur la fabrication d'un fléau* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009), 28–33.

[31] Limoncelli, *The Politics of Trafficking*, 14.

[32] René Bérenger, 'La traite des Blanches et le commerce de l'obscénité: Conférences diplomatiques internationales du 15 juillet 1902 et du 18 avril 1910', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1910, 75–111 (77).

[33] See Paul Knepper, *The Invention of International Crime: A Global Issue in the Making 1881–1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 98–127 (119–22).

[34] Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1990), 275.

[35] Mary Ann Irwin, '"White Slavery" as Metaphor: Anatomy of a Moral Panic', *The History Journal*, 5 (1996), 2.

[36] Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, 3rd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002; first publ. MacGibbon and Kee, 1972), vii. See, for example, Stauter-Halsted, 'Generation of Monsters', 558.

[37] Chaumont, *Le mythe*, 28–33.

[38] Alfred Morain, *The Underworld of Paris: Secrets of the Sûreté* (London: Jarrolds, 1928), 255; Londres also contradicted the claims of the 1927 report, 187–88.

[39] Knepper, *International Crime*, 102.

[40] *Enquiry into traffic*, 11 and 14.

[41] Adam McKeown, 'Ritualization of Regulation: The Enforcement of Chinese Exclusion in the United States and China', *American Historical Review*, 2003, 377– 403 (391).

[42] Legg, 'Individuals', 648.

[43] Haag, *Consent*, 89.

[44] Cassellari makes use of contemporaneous press reports to substantiate his anti-Semitic claims in his 1930 book *Dramas of French Crime*, 167; see also Camiscioli, *Reproducing*, 106.

[45] Knepper, *International Crime*, 34.

[46] League of Nations, Traffic in Women and Children Committee, *Central Authorities* (Geneva: [n. p.], 1932), 6.

[47] Camiscioli, *Reproducing*, 99.

[48] Limoncelli, *Politics*, 12 and 112–16.

[49] Henry Champly, *The Road to Shanghai: White Slave Traffic in Asia*, trans. by Warre B. Wells (London: John Long, [n.d.]), p. 101.

[50] 'Plusieurs journaux de Buenos-Ayres indiquent comme point de départ de cette traite certains restaurants de Montmartre, d'où partent les femmes qui dirigées sur Marseille, y sont embarquées pour Buenos-Ayres par Montevideo.' Fonds Legrand-Falco, IV, 2: Articles de Presse de 1928 à 1940, [Anon.], 'Le Scandale de Buenos-Ayres', *La Volonté*, 29 January 1931 [u.p.], Paris, CEDIAS.

[51] Londres, 167–71. McGregor Watson and Camiscioli have both stressed what they view as the virulent anti-Semitism underpinning Londres' representation of Jewish traffickers. See Watson, 'Trade', 167; and Camiscioli, *Reproducing*, 107.

[52] Champly, *Shanghai*, 73–74.

[53] For a discussion of these findings, see Katarina Leppänen, 'Movement of women: Trafficking in the interwar era', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30 (2007), 523–33 (530).

[54] Champly, *Shanghai*, 247–48.

[55] A point which supports Stanard's central contention; Matthew G. Stanard, 'Interwar Pro-Empire Propaganda and European Colonial Culture: Toward a Comparative Research Agenda', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44 (2009), 27–48 (27).

[56] Mrs Archibald MacKirdy and W. N. Willis, *The White Slave Market* (London: Stanley Paul & Co., [n.d.]), 32.

[57] Champly, *Shanghai*, 65 and 131. As Cooper and Stoler have noted, colonial historiography has been so 'nationally bound' that it has 'blinded us to those circuits of knowledge and communication that took other routes than those shaped by the metropole-colony axis alone'. International congresses provide ideal case studies for interrogating shared notions of "Europeanness" and, as in this case, heightened nationalism. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 1–56 (29).

[58] Gorman, 'Empire, Internationalism', 189 and 215.

[59] On 31 May 1931 Johannes Reelfs, president of the Fédération Abolitionniste Internationale, contacted Mme Legrand Falco of the Union Temporaire reporting that Alison Neilans, General Secretary of the The Association for Moral & Social Hygiene in Britain did not understand French objections to a recent proposal by the League of Nations Special Advisory Committee. On 2 June 1933, Mme Legrand Falco responded angrily explaining that the proposal allowed the system of regulated prostitution to contain without impunity in France. Fonds Legrand Falco, V, 8.

[60] 'Nous ne pouvons donc que déplorer davantage de ne voir ni la *République* Française ni la *République* Argentine figurer au nombre de ces nations un peu plus civilisées qui ont aboli le lupanar, ce qui eût pourtant dû être fait en tout premier lieu dans des pays qui, se baptisant des républiques, pourraient au moins se comporter en vraies démocraties! La Turquie elle-même donne une leçon à la France'. [Anon.], 'La Société des Nations contre les maisons de tolérance', *La Race et les Mœurs*, 1 November 1930, 52–53.

[61] 'Ce Délégué français, avait en effet considéré que la Commission ne devait concentrer son activité que sur le Contrôle Général des Accords Internationaux, et non pas s'immiscer dans la question de la règlementation de la prostitution qui est une question de législation intérieure regardant uniquement chaque Etat.' Le Ministre de l'Intérieur to Messieurs les Préfets, 26 May 1923, 4 M 608, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[62] Police générale: 'Trafiquants professionnels (1912–25); circulaires (1912–40)'; Le Ministre de l'Intérieur to Messieurs les Préfets, 1919, F/7/14854, Archives Nationales, Paris.

[63] 'Ces renseignements, dont l'importance au point de vue international ne saurait vous échapper, devront m'être transmis avant le 1er février 1930 sous le timbre: "Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires (Service de la traite des femmes)".' Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires, Circulaire no 92, Le Ministre de l'Intérieur to Messieurs les Préfets, 2 Sept. 1929, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[64] 'Le Transvaal a été pendant la durée de la guerre avec l'Angleterre le champ le plus fructueux d'exploitation. Il fallait pourvoir aux passions de toute une armée. Pendant longtemps, un envoi de filles ou femmes, embauchées le plus souvent comme artistes ou servantes de cafés-concerts, partait du Havre chaque semaine.' Bérenger, 'La traite', 86.

[65] Parliamentary Papers, 1907 [Cd. 3453] Miscellaneous, No. 2 (1907), Correspondence respecting the International Conference on the White Slave Traffic, held in Paris, October 1906, 5.

[66] The Office Central de la Traite des Blanches was created following the signing of the Convention (18 May 1904) establishing international arrangements for the repression of the trade and an 'arrangement administratif organisant la défense des victimes du trafic et leur renvoi dans leur pays d'origine' with parallel offices in Germany, the USA, Great Britain, Austria-Hungry, Belgium and Switzerland. See Monique Constant, 'Combats contre la traite des femmes à la Société des Nations (1920–1940)', *Relations internationales*, 2007/3 n° 131, 39–47 (41).

[67] René Cassellari, *Dramas of French Crime: Being the Exploits of the Celebrated Detective René Cassellari* (London: Hutchinson, 1930), 161–71 (167).

[68] Hugh Clout, 'Popular Geographies in a French Port City: The Experience of Le Havre Society of Commercial Geography, 1884–1948', *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 124 (2008), 53–77 (54).

[69] Frédéric Carbonnel, 'Origines et développement de l'Institut Havrais de 1937 à 1980', *Annales de Normandie*, 57 (2007), 25–61 (28)

[70] Clout, 'Popular Geographies', 54.

[71] Alain Leménorel, *Nouvelle histoire de la Normandie* (Toulouse: Privat, 2004), 244.

[72] Bérenger, 'La traite', 77.

[73] *Report of the Special Body of Experts*, 18.

[74] 'C'est par milliers que l'on compte chaque année les victimes de cette organisation de véritables négriers modernes.' Fonds Legrand Falco, IV, 7: 'Exposé de Mr. Camille Benassy, Député de la Creuse', 1933 [?],3–4.

[75] See, for example, on the US, Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, 129–30, and on Germany, Kaplan, 'Prostitution, Morality Crusades', 621–23.

[76] Edgar Morin, *La Rumeur d'Orléans* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1969), 54 and 64.

[77] Ministère de l'Intérieur, Direction de la Sûreté Générale, to Messieurs les Préfets, 23 May 1923, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[78] Emily Machen, 'Travelling with Faith: The Creation of Women's Immigrant Aid Associations in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century France', *Journal of Women's History*, 23 (2011), 89–112, *passim*; Céline Leglaive-Perani, 'Les Juifs français dans la lutte contre la traite des Blanches (1880–1930)', *Les Belles lettres, Archives Juives*, 44 (2011/12), 59–76, *passim*; and McGregor Watson, 'Trade', 65.

[79] Bureau International de l'Association pour la Répression de la Traite des Blanches et la Préservation de la Jeune Fille, *La Traite des blanches: Bulletin du Bureau international*, 10 (1904), 1.

[80] Knepper, *The Invention*, 113.

[81] Telegram, Commissaire spécial à Intérieur Sûreté Générale préfet et de police to le Commissaire spécial gare Saint Lazare Paris, 18 Oct. 1905, AD, SM, 4 M 603.

[82] 'comme pouvant pratiquer la traite des blanches'; Telegram, Commissaire spécial à Intérieur Sûreté Générale préfet et de police to le Commissaire spécial gare Saint Lazare Paris, 14 Nov. 1905, AD, SM, 4 M 603.

[83] *La Traite des Femmes* (*Der Weg nach Rio*). Dir. Manfred Noa. International Film. 1931; and *Danseuses pour Buenos-Aires*. Dir. Joap Splyer. International Film. 1931. Both of these German films were very popular in France in 1932 with the Union Temporaire contre la Prostitution réglementée et la traite des femmes using screenings of the films to advertise their campaign; Fonds Legrand Falco, IV, 7.

[84] *Journal officiel de la République française. Lois et décrets*, 66, 166: 17 July 1934, 7215.

[85] Le Commissaire spécial de Dieppe to Monsieur le Préfet de la Seine-Inférieure Première Division–Premier Bureau, 5 Jan. 1930, AD, SM, 4 M 603.

[86] Londres, *Le Chemin*, 249.

[87] Quoted in Magaly Rodríguez García, 'The League of Nations and the Moral Recruitment of Women', *International Review of Social History*, 57 (2012), 97–128 (107).

[88] Le Commissaire spécial to Monsieur le Directeur de la Sûreté Général (Contrôle Recherches Judiciaires), Paris, 30 Nov. 1929, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[89] 'le trafic par mer avec les pays étrangers, notamment les Républiques Sud-Américaines et les Etats-Unis, ainsi que le Canada, a permis de relever à la charge d'un certain nombre d'individus des deux sexes, des soupçons assez précis

sur leur trafics, soupçons basés sur leurs occupations habituelles connues.' Le Commissaire spécial Chauvineau to Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, Le Havre, 9 Jan. 1931, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[90] Chauvineau to the Sous-Préfet, 9 Jan. 1931, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[91] For a discussion of overrepresentation of French prostitutes working abroad in the findings of the League of Nations, see Chaumont, 144–47. H. Wilson Harris's account of the report, *Human Merchandise*, emphasised at length the high numbers of French prostitutes working in South America (74–78 and 215–19).

[92] Londres, *Chemin*, 93–100.

[93] Chauvineau to the Sous-Préfet, 9 Jan. 1931, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[94] International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, concluded at Geneva on 30 September 1921: http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/Legislation+and+Case+Law/International+Legislation/United+Nations/1921+International+Convention;jsessionid=l6pJSklWdGXs8rGL6GTQHXKlXJGpPcJn2HswdHtqh4hLJ2zlYBLL!1747977758 [last visited 15 Nov. 2013].

[95] 'Mademoiselle CHARRIAS, mineure de 18 ans, qui n'était pas nantie de l'autorisation paternelle pour voyager, a été avisée qu'à Bordeaux, ou le navire ferait escale, elle aurait à produire cette autorisation sous peine de se voir interrompre son voyage par le Commissaire Spécial de ce Port, avisé par mes soins.' Chauvineau to the Sous-Préfet, 9 Jan. 1931, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[96] Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 152–53.

[97] Pliley, 'Claims to Protection', 97 and 100.

[98] Chauvineau to the Sous-Préfet, 9 Jan. 1931, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[99] 'Dès qu'une femme ou un enfant voyageant seuls descendent dans un hôtel de la localité, le tenancier du dit hôtel en informe immédiatement le Commissariat. Un service de surveillance fonctionne en ce qui concerne les personnes séjournant dans la gare de Fécamp.' Le Commissaire spécial à Monsieur le Directeur de la Sûreté Général (Contrôle Recherches Judiciaires), Paris, 30 Nov. 1929, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[100] 'A n'en pas douter et après une enquête très sérieuses de la part des services de police spéciale placés sous mes ordres, nous nous trouvons en présence d'une affaire de trafic des femmes'. Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Président du Conseil, Ministre de l'Intérieur Sûreté Général, 27 May 1931, Archives Départementales, Loire-Atlantique, Nantes, 4 M 229.

[101] 'Le 13 Mai courant, sur le Paquebot "Espagne"' se dirigeant vers le Mexique et Cuba, il a été constaté que 7 jeunes filles voyageant seules, dans des conditions particulièrement suspects, ont été embarquées: il y avait 4 polonaises et 3 grecques qui, interrogées, ont expliqué les raisons de leur voyage d'une manière absolument identique (disant qu'elles se rendaient en Amérique du Sud pour conclure un mariage qui avait été décidé par correspondance et sur le vu d'une photographe), ce qui dénote bien qu'il s'agissait là d'un trafic tout à fait spécial.' Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Président du Conseil, Ministre de l'Intérieur Sûreté Général, 27 May 1931, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[102] Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Président du Conseil, Ministre de l'Intérieur Sûreté, 8 Jan. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[103] Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Président du Conseil, Ministre de l'Intérieur Sûreté Général, 27 May 1931, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[104] Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Président du Conseil, Ministre de l'Intérieur Sûreté, 8 Jan. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[105] In this respect, reports are not dissimilar to those which appeared pre-1914; see Stauter-Halsted, 25–35.

[106] Le Président du conseil, Ministre de l'intérieur to Monsieur le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure, 13 Jan. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[107] Le Commissaire Spécial de Saint-Nazaire à Monsieur le Sous-préfet à Saint-Nazaire, 3 Feb. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[108] Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Ministre de l'Intérieur (Direction de la Sûreté Générale – Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires, 5 Feb. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[109] Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Monsieur le Ministre de l'Intérieur (Direction de la Sûreté Générale – Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires, 5 Feb. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[110] Le Commissaire Spécial de Saint-Nazaire à Monsieur le Sous-préfet à Saint-Nazaire, 3 Feb. 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[111] See Stauter-Halsted, 'Generation of Monsters', 30; and James Joyce, 'Eveline', in *Dubliners* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007 [1914]), 29–34.

[112] *Report of the special body of experts on traffic in women and children: Enquiry into the international organisation of and certain routes followed by, the traffic between various countries of Europe, North Africa, North America, South America and Central America* (Geneva: LNP, 1927), 8–9; Dame Rachel Crowdy particularly emphasised the 'contraction of bogus marriages' as a 'fertile source of traffic'; see Crowdy, 168. The issue of women's nationality was problematic during the interwar

period, frequently determined by their fathers or their husbands, and, in many countries, with women losing their birth nationality after marriage to a foreign national. Rupp, *Worlds of Women,* 146–50.

[113] Morin, *La rumeur*, 54.

[114] 'Elle a déclaré qu'en en 1932, fréquentant le bal "Le Petit Jardin", près de la Place Clichy à Paris, elle avait fait connaissance d'un individu prénommé "Marcel" qui, quelque temps après, lui offrit un voyage à Bordeaux.

Dans cette ville ils visitèrent un paquebot en partance, le "Massilia" et c'est au cours de leur promenade à bord qu'elle fut poussée par son ami dans une cabine et enfermée à clef.

Pendant toute la traversée elle reste enfermée et fut surveillée par un matelot infirmier du nom Henri JOSSE. Une jeune femme, prénommée Suzanne, se trouvait également dans cette cabine et était l'objet de la même surveillance.

A l'arrivée du Massilia à Buenos-Aires, l'infirmier JOSSE les fit débarquer en cachette et les remit à un nommé André LEBIGOT, demeurant à Pueblo de San Miguel, "Villa Les Acacias", près de Buenos-Aires.

Melle TOULOTTE, alors âgée de 16 ans, fut placée dans une maison de prostitution de Rosario, connue sous le nom de "Sapho" et un an plus tard "en casita" par le même Lebigot. Elle dut continuer ce métier jusqu'à un moment un jeune italien, qui était devenu son amant, lui donna l'argent nécessaire pour s'évader et s'embarquer pour la France.

L'intéressée a déclaré à son débarquement au Havre, se rendre chez sa mère, Mme Ve Toulotte, 5, impasse Havy Pierrefitte (Seine). (rapport no. 3.525 du juillet 1934).' Commissaire Divisionnaire de Police Spéciale Chauvineau to Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, 9 Jan. 1936, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[115] Police générale: Dossiers personnels et dossiers d'affaires se rapportant à la traite des femmes en Argentine (1910–34), Archives nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, F/7/14859.

[116] Corbin, *Women*, 291.

[117] A succinct summary of the plot appears in the advertising flyer, *Danseuses pour Buenos-Aires* (1931); Fonds Legrand Falco, IV, 7.

[118] Le Commissaire spécial Chauvineau to Monsieur le Préfet de la Seine-Inférieure, 20 Jan. 1933, 4 M 608, AD, SM.

[119] Le Commissaire spécial Chauvineau to Monsieur le Préfet de la Seine-Inférieure, 20 Jan. 1933, 4 M 608, AD, SM.

[120] 'La naïveté de cette jeune femme de belle allure et de physique agréable a fait penser qu'elle avait dû être victime de trafiquants.' Le Commissaire spécial Chauvineau to Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, 9 Jan. 1931, 4 M 608, AD, SM.

[121] Le Commissaire Spécial Mairort to la Sûreté générale C. R. J., 21 May 1931, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[122] Le Commissaire Spécial Mairort to the Préfet de Loire-Inférieure, 15 Apr. 1932; and le Commissaire Spécial Mairort to the Préfet de Loire-Inférieure, 14 May 1932, 4 M 229, AD, LA.

[123] AD, SM; 4 M 608: reports written by Chauvineau on 9 January 1931, 8 January 1932 (where the phrase is used twice), 20 January 1933, 13 January 1938, and 28 October 1938; and AD, LA; 4 M 229: Le Préfet de la Loire-Inférieure to Messieurs les: Sous-Préfets de Saint-Nazaire et Châteaubriant, Commissaire Central de Police à Nantes, Commissaire Divisionnaire spécial à Nantes, Commandant de Gendarmerie de la Loire Inférieure, 14 Sept. 1939.

[124] Pliley, 'Claims to Protection', 106.

[125] Circulaire n° 267, Le Ministre de l'Intérieur à Messieurs les Préfets, 9 Sept. 1939, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[126] 'dont le père, les frères ou le fiancé ont été mobilisés, et qui se trouvent ainsi, quelquefois, privées de tout soutien, ont en effet été l'objet de manœuvres tendant à les détourner en vue de la débauche'. The Préfet de Seine-Inférieure to Chauvineau, 16 Sept. 1939, AD, SM, 4 M 608.

[127] *Report of the Special Body of Experts*, 18–19.