

General Introduction

What Do Women Want?

“What do women want?” The pioneering Austrian physician and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (who translated Harriet Taylor Mill’s 1851 essay on the enfranchisement of women into German and lived in Paris in the 1880s) was not the first to pose this celebrated question, nor was he the first to offer answers. Had he been in Paris from 1869 to 1878, he would have easily encountered the debates on the woman question. Certainly when he did reside there, in 1885–1886, these debates were in full swing. Indeed, Maria Deraismes (1828–1894) had already posed – and responded to – this very question in the first issue (10 April 1869) of *Le Droit des Femmes*.¹ She provided some explicit answers: equal rights, liberty, a choice of social roles and responsibilities, educational opportunities to develop women’s intellect and skills, the right to work and equal pay for equal work – and, in particular, a single standard of morality for both sexes.

Had Freud followed the discussions in *Le Droit des Femmes*, or in its successor *L’Avenir des Femmes*, or read Léon Richer’s subsequent publications on the disabilities of married women in the law during the 1870s and from late 1879 on in the restored *Le Droit des Femmes*, or had he attended (or even read about) the international women’s rights congresses held in Paris in 1878 and 1889, he – like most other publicly aware individuals – would have known exactly what French women wanted, along with the broader goals women’s rights advocates pursued. These more general goals included: (1) the freedom for women to assume and carry out their responsibilities as fully accredited *citoyennes*; (2) to channel the significant influence and power they knew they already possessed as embodied women into positive accomplishments; and (3) joint governance, in the family and in society, with men. The achievement of any and all of these goals required

¹ Maria Deraismes, “Ce que veulent les femmes,” *Le Droit des Femmes*, n° 1 (10 April 1869), 1–2. This article is reprinted in Maria Deraismes, *Ce que veulent les femmes: Articles et discours de 1869 à 1894*, ed. O[dile] Krakovitch (Paris: Syros, 1980).

government intervention – a change in the rules – that would grant adult women, especially wives, decision-making authority.

Would a major change in regimes in France bring with it progress toward these goals? Could a secular Republic, which since the French Revolution signified a regime that should – and must – act on its professed principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, apply its concept of justice and the “rights of man” to women – “*la moitié de l’humanité*” [half of humanity] in Deraismes’s terminology (as in that of the French Revolution) – by enacting major changes in married women’s legal status and providing educational and economic opportunities for all girls and women? Could the French, living under a Republic, ensure a happy ending to the debates on the woman question by dismantling what Deraismes had, like her revolutionary predecessors, called “masculine aristocracy”? Could they agree to extend equal citizenship to the other half of humankind?

Such questions had already confronted the male proponents of a Third Republic as they attempted to construct a new, more liberal regime in response to what they saw as the authoritarianism of the Second Empire. In 1869 in her tract *La Femme et les mœurs: Liberté ou Monarchie* [Women and Morals: Liberty or Monarchy] André Léo invoked the principles of the French Revolution, framed women’s rights as human rights, and called for women’s complete independence. That same year Jenny P. d’Héricourt challenged the republican opposition (to the empire) by remarking that the Second Empire (despite its flaws) had done far more for women than republicans ever had. In 1870, months before the abrupt end of the Second Empire, Maria Deraismes also called on the history of the French Revolution and pointed to its universalist principles; the French Revolution, she claimed, *was* the universal revolution; its logic clearly meant to include women – yet both in 1792 and again in 1848, the democrats had cut women out. How so? “The democrats created a universal of their own, a universal without precedent, a pocket-sized universal, leaving half of humankind aside.” The political lesson was this: “When you want to attract someone into your camp, the most elementary tactic is to offer that person some advantages. Woman will not appreciate the justice of democracy until that justice extends to her.”²

² Maria Deraismes, “La Femme dans la démocratie,” *Le Droit des Femmes*, n° 41 (5 February 1870) & n° 43 (19 February 1870); reprod. in Deraismes, *Ce que veulent les femmes*, pp. 82–89. This was a speech that Deraismes gave at a benefit to found a girls’ primary school that would prepare them by age 12 to enter vocational (professional) training schools.

The Third Republic was a very much a work in progress in 1870–1871. In October 1871, Deraismes reminded her readers that the term “republic” [*res publica*] signified “the government of all, the will of all, the interests of all. . . . Only the Republic conforms to nature, reason, and truth.”³ To her it seemed logical and obvious that women were included in the notion of “all” – and she would make this point repeatedly. Although most earlier histories of the regime ignore it, the woman question was the “elephant in the room” in the 1870s as the republicans clamored to seize the ring of state power. Most committed republicans, both male and female, did believe that a republican government must address demands for change in the sociopolitical relations between the sexes – demands that were in fact far from “conservative” in character.

Just what the republicans could or would be able to do for women’s cause in the short term, as they worked their way toward consolidating power and crafting the new regime, remained to be seen. By 1875 the National Assembly (elected in 1871) would put in place a constitutional parliamentary government with a weak presidency, but only in the 1880s would the republicans take control over the administrative machinery of the French state. Creating an inclusive participatory democracy on the foundations of an inherited top-down authoritarian structure, still staffed by often resistant personnel left over from the imperial regime, was no easy task. Moreover, the extent of the opposition to the Republic and the republicans, from a coalition of monarchist authoritarian men – legitimists, orleanists, and bonapartists – must not to be underestimated. Most of them viewed the republic as lacking authority and the republicans as impertinent scum.⁴ They affirmed as foundational the male-headed hierarchical form of “the family” (based on vesting authority in husbands and the subordination of wives) that France had inherited from Greco-Roman antiquity, Roman law, and Roman Catholicism, abetted by centuries of absolutist monarchy and reconfirmed in even stronger terms by the Napoleonic Code. Debates about the form of the state and the form of the family were inseparable. During the late Second Empire and

³ Maria Deraismes, “Liberté et autorité,” *L’Avenir des Femmes*, n° 73 (22 October 1871).

⁴ On the politics of the monarchist right during the 1870s, see John Rothney, *Bonapartism after Sedan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969); Robert R. Locke, *French Legitimists and the Politics of Moral Order in the Early Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Karen Offen, *Paul de Cassagnac and the Authoritarian Tradition in France* (New York: Garland, 1991); Steven D. Kale, *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of French Society, 1852–1883* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992). None of these earlier works, including my own, took the “woman question” debates into account.

early Third Republic, the followers of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Frédéric Le Play were retooling such arguments for a more secular audience.

In face of this multipronged Catholic monarchist resurgence, prominent republican men would maintain that women's support was essential to the success of the secular republic as well as in their own interest. They had long viewed efforts to wrest control of female education from the Roman Catholic Church as central to their strategy. But more was needed; they had to win women's hearts as well as their minds. Already during the revolutionary months of 1848, Ernest Legouvé (who was elected to the *Académie Française* in the 1850s and who wrote for *Le Droit des Femmes* in the late 1860s) had charged that the first French revolution had failed because it was unjust to women; he insisted that the "virile principles of liberty and equality must, in order to be realized, be complemented by the feminine virtue of fraternity," which "grew out of women's love." No republic, Legouvé intimated, would succeed except at this price.⁵ This message remained pertinent in the early 1870s, as the remarks of Maria Deraismes indicate. Other committed republicans would similarly underscore the notion that under a newly minted republic women had a special contribution to make to political and societal life. The historian Edgar Quinet, for instance, argued in 1872 (in his book *La République: Conditions de la régénération de la France*):⁶

What would a republic, a democracy be, that lacked the genius of woman. All those who, in the past, have worked for the revival of a society have called girls, wives, [and] mothers, to their aid. Can we accomplish our work today without them? . . .

Above all else, instead of that false and frivolous idea of the *ancien régime* that men alone make progress, let us reestablish in people's minds the true and new idea, which is this: women cooperate with men in giving birth to societies. They hold not only children but entire peoples in their laps.

⁵ The quotations are from the first edition of Legouvé's *Histoire morale des femmes* (Paris: Gustave Sandré, 1849), pp. 5, 13. On the impact of this book, see Karen Offen, "Ernest Legouvé and the Doctrine of 'Equality in Difference' for Women: A Case Study of Male Feminism in Nineteenth-Century French Thought," *Journal of Modern History*, 58:2 (June 1986), 452–484, esp. 453. The 6th ed. (1874) of the *Histoire morale* has been digitized by Google. Legouvé's preface to this 1874 edition mirrors his remarks in his lead article, "A. M. Léon Richet," in the inaugural issue of *Le Droit de Femmes*, n° 1 (10 April 1869), 1.

⁶ Edgar Quinet, *La République: Conditions de la régénération de la France* (Paris: Dentu, 1872), in *Oeuvres complètes de Edgar Quinet*, vol. 26 (Paris: Librairie Germer-Baillière, n.d.), p. 190. On the woman question, chapters 36–40 are relevant. Thirty years later, Françoise Benassis applauded Quinet's contribution, "Le 'Féminisme' d'Edgar Quinet," *La Fronde*, n° 1918 (11 March 1903), even though she remarked that his arguments could be seen as somewhat old-fashioned in comparison with those of early twentieth-century male-feminists.

Quinet, like many other pro-democratic men, adhered without reservation to the deeply entrenched notion of women's influence and promoted the necessity of attaching its force to the new republic as a means of "regeneration." Yet, as the clear-sighted Maria Deraismes argued in late 1871, the route to regeneration lay in improving moral behavior, and for that France was not ready. What the republicans particularly needed to pursue, in her view, was a single standard of morality for both sexes.⁷ Building out her earlier assertions, Deraismes called on her fellow republicans to address four major legal changes: *recherche de la paternité* (legalizing paternity suits); separation or divorce to be obtained by a wife in case of her husband's adultery (without the Code's current stipulation that a separation could only be justified if the husband's concubine was lodged under his own roof); recognition of the civil rights of married women; and equal pay for equal work and admission of women to all the liberal professions for which they are qualified. Enactment of these laws, she insisted, would bring about a 100 percent improvement in morality, thereby achieving a big step toward the regeneration of France.⁸

Some republican men did take such observations seriously, and many leading figures (egged on by Richer and Deraismes) openly courted women's support for the new regime. They first insisted that the Third Republic, as an ostensibly anti-authoritarian mode of governance based on the principles, must necessarily apply its principles to individuals of *both sexes*. Some did prioritize major legal changes in the institution of secular marriage that Deraismes had laid out. Some did call for advances in the formal education of girls. A few advocated civil divorce. Their support for women's "right" to work and equal pay for equal work became more energetic as hundreds of thousands of women joined the work force, or failing that, fell into poverty, which in turn produced a rash of illegitimate births, infanticides, abortions, prostitution, and suicide. Acknowledgment of all these so-called social problems reanimated republican men's concern about the falling birth rates and the threat of "depopulation" in an era when calculations of national military and industrial strength would count more than ever before in the international political arena. The press hotly debated these pressing claims, both pro and con. Expeditiously, and for a

⁷ Deraismes had already made a sharp critique of the double standard in the late 1860s. See the second lecture in her 1868–1869 conference series, "La femme et les mœurs," reprinted in *Ève dans l'humanité* [1868], orig. published in 1891 (Paris: Librairie Générale de L. Sauvaire), and then as vol. 2 of Deraismes, *Oeuvres complètes de Maria Deraismes*, 4 vols. (Paris: Alcan, 1895–1898). This volume was reprinted in 1990 (Paris: côté-femmes) with an introduction by Laurence Klejman.

⁸ Maria Deraismes, "La Régénération de la France," *L'Avenir des Femmes*, n° 75 (5 November 1871).

short time, women's rights leaders would place the quest for political citizenship for all women on the back burner, arguing that resolving all these many other sociopolitical issues must take precedence, via a *politique de la brèche*, that is to say, piece by piece. As historian Arianne Chernock reminds us, "Feminists worked out their arguments in real time, in response to contingencies and conflicts."⁹ So, of course, did their opponents. One must understand how these contingencies and conflicts inflected the French debates on the woman question in the short term as well as in the long term. It is equally important to appreciate the earnestness of the reformers and the complexity of the problems they addressed, not only in regard to the law and education but particularly in relation to socioeconomic issues and questions of public morality. It is necessary to recognize that access to political rights for women was but one of many significant reforms being proposed and debated in the 1870s and 1880s. The demand for votes for women would nevertheless reemerge in the late 1870s, when Hubertine Auclert, disgusted with the lack of progress to date, would spearhead a new campaign.

In my earlier book, *The Woman Question in France, 1400–1870*, I laid out five factors or themes in the debates on the woman question that, from the fourteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century seem specifically French. Let me reiterate them briefly here: first, the intensity with which advocates (of both sexes) for women's emancipation attributed immense power and influence to French women (despite the legal incapacities of wives); second, the injustice of men's peremptory exclusion of women from positions of political authority; third, the continuing strategic political importance male opponents of women's emancipation accorded to biomedical thinking; fourth, the political, ideological, and practical emphasis both women and men placed on *civic* motherhood; and, finally, the peculiar character of French republican nationalism – a regime that professed democratic ideals confronted by the distasteful requirements of *realpolitik* in a still-monarchical Europe.

To these one can add another factor that become increasingly visible after 1871: the close relationships that existed between women's rights advocates (of both sexes, who will become known in the 1890s by the neologism "feminists") and a number of important republican political figures. Historian Florence Rochefort has rightly argued that "what was particularly French about French feminism were its ties to the Republic. . . .

⁹ Arianne Chernock, *Men and the Making of British Feminism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 26.

Before feminism allied itself with what proved to be the enduring force of republicanism, the history of French mobilization for women's rights was a discontinuous one, tied to moments of revolution."¹⁰ Rochefort also underscores that, during the early years of the Third Republic, "the movement for women's rights was characterized by the joint participation of women and men."¹¹ One reason for these connections was, as historian Sylvia Schafer has reminded us, "the new republic's deep investment in civil law as a means of institutionalizing the authority of the state and reconfiguring the moral life of the nation."¹² As the republicans took power, the fact that feminists appealed to the power of the state by turning to legislative remedies (particularly to those that might compel improvements in moral behavior) should hardly come as a surprise, but it also meant that progress would be slow – and that these remedies would be misconstrued by some later historians as "conservative."¹³ Realization of

¹⁰ See Florence Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism, 1868–1914," in *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek & Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 77–101; quote 78–79. See also Florence Rochefort, "Du droit des femmes au féminisme en Europe 1860–1914," in *Encyclopédie politique et historique des femmes*, ed. Christine Fauré (Paris: Presses universitaires de France [PUF], 1997), pp. 551–570, and her earlier authoritative study with Laurence Klejman, *L'Égalité en marche: Le Féminisme sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques [FNPS] & des femmes, 1989).

¹¹ Rochefort, "French Feminist Movement and Republicanism," quote p. 77.

¹² Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 10.

¹³ Much of the 1970s historiography on French feminism and women, read retrospectively, is marked by liberationist values of the era, including marked antipathy for the polemical category "bourgeois feminism," "conventional" ideas about femininity and the family, motherhood, etc. The authors' sympathy for socialist solutions, reproductive freedom, androgynous sex roles, individualism, women's right to work, and their objections to equality-in-difference arguments, plus their repugnance for what they called "purity crusades" made it difficult for them to evaluate the sources and issues within the context of the early Third Republic. The interpretation of Jean Rabaut, *Histoire des féminismes français* (Paris: Stock, 1978), chapters 7–10, is particularly flawed in this respect. In the 1980s the study by Patrick Kay Bidelman, *Pariahs Stand Up! The Founding of the Liberal Feminist Movement in France, 1858–1889* (Westport, CT: Garland Publishers, 1982) captures the anticlerical political context. James F. McMillan responds to Bidelman's dissertation and to Charles Sowerwine's detailed study of *Women and Socialism* in chapter 4 of his book *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of Women in French Society, 1870–1940* (London & New York: St. Martin's, 1981). The most balanced early account is that of Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1984), chapters 8–9. Also in 1984, Karen Offen introduced two additional elements into the contextual mix with "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France," *American Historical Review*, 89:3 (June 1984), 648–676. The "most comprehensive and balanced study to date" is the joint work of Klejman & Rochefort, *L'Égalité en marche* (cited in n. 9), though their emphasis is on the period after 1889, as is also the case with the contributions of Anne Cova on the importance of motherhood issues in French feminisms, notably *Maternité et droits des femmes en France (XIXe – XXe siècles)* (Paris: Economica, 1997), and "Au Service de l'église, de la patrie et de la famille": *Femmes catholiques et maternité sous la IIIe République* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000). See also Anne Cova, *Féminisme et néomalthusianisme*

feminist legal and economic reforms would require the support of a majority of male legislators (not all of whom were convinced republicans in these years). Highly visible republican men did, in fact, support the cause of women's rights, not only promoting demands for radical changes in the Civil Code for married women and initiating major educational institutions for girls but also, as the regime became more stable, supporting campaigns for women's admission to the vote.

One historian of feminism in France, Joan Wallach Scott, has dramatically asserted that republican "universalism" created "paradoxes" for feminists,¹⁴ while another, Charles Sowerwine, has alleged that "the Republic" was unfriendly, even hostile, to women – that it was unrepentantly "gendered" male from the outset.¹⁵ This latter argument focuses specifically

sous la IIIe République (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011). The significant contributions of Steven C. Hause focus particularly on the politics of woman suffrage, with his study (with Anne Kenney), *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984) and his unrivaled biography, *Hubertine Auclert, the French Suffragette* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹⁴ See Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). What Scott does not acknowledge is the extent to which most French feminists under the republics assertively articulated claims for an expansion and redeployment of women's power and influence "as women," and promoted the sharing of authority with men. Their opponents, on the other hand, continued to think in terms of a topsy-turvy world model, and feared "women on top." Scott's interpretation appears to draw inspiration from the overly emphatic criticism of the masculinism of the French Revolution by Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). Indeed, Landes argues (pp. 203–204) that "the structures of modern republican politics can be construed as part of an elaborate defense against women's power and public presence." But this judgment, with respect to the early Third Republic, lacks traction. Landes views the "private," or domestic, sphere as necessarily a disempowered space, but evidence of French women's historic invocations of women's power and influence along with their demands to value motherhood and to extend it to civil and political space contradict such assumptions. Both Scott and Landes have been influenced by Carole Pateman's broad argument that in the development of political theory, a sexual contract in fact preceded the "social contract." See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988; originally publ. by Polity Press). In fact, Pateman's evidence for this theory comes primarily from British sources.

¹⁵ See Charles Sowerwine's chapter, "Revising the Sexual Contract: Women's Citizenship and Republicanism in France, 1789–1944," in *Confronting Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle France: Bodies, Minds and Gender*, ed. Christopher E. Forth & Elinor Accampo (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 19–42, and his earlier articles, "The Sexual Contract(s) of the Third Republic," in *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar*, ed. Ian Coller, Helen Davies, & Julie Kalman, vol. 1 (Melbourne: The George Rudé Society, 2005), pp. 245–253 (available online at www.h-france.net/rude/rudepapers.html) and "La politique, cet élément dans lequel j'aurais voulu vivre: l'exclusion des femmes est-elle inhérente au républicanisme de la Troisième République?" *Clio: Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés*, n° 24 (2006), 171–194. Sowerwine grounds his interpretation of republican hostility to women's "citizenship" (which he equates exclusively with suffrage) in the theoretical analyses of Landes, Pateman, and Michel Foucault, but he ignores the abundant evidence of some republican men's conciliatory, even supportive approach to other aspects of women's rights dating from the late Second Empire and the Third Republic (both before and after 1880). He neither "sees" or acknowledges the extent of French women's activity in "civil society" throughout the

on the absence of male republican support for the single issue of woman suffrage, drawing primarily on evidence from the early 1870s during the immediate backlash against women's activism in the Paris Commune. It does not acknowledge the support that a number of highly visible and influential liberal republicans did bring to other aspects of the debates on the woman question, both during the late Second Empire and in the early years of the Third Republic, recognition of which fundamentally undercuts such assertions. To gain a more valid appreciation of the views of republican men, it seems vital to examine the full range of issues addressed by those women and men who advocated equal rights for women during the early Third Republic, rather than jumping to conclusions on the basis of a single issue, or scrutinizing only the arguments of a few, though admittedly significant individuals (as does Scott with her selection of Hubertine Auclert and Madeleine Pelletier as sites of analysis).

In the chapters of Part I, I will examine the published arguments and political efforts of a number of leading republican men and women who were deeply concerned about one or more aspects of women's status, recuperating the arguments they actually used, in the time in which they used them. This is not to argue either that the Third Republic was a perfect regime that always lived up to its principles, or that all republican men were enthusiastic male-feminists, especially in the years immediately following the Commune. To be sure, there would be some republican men who, even as anticlericals and positivists, were committed to the model of male breadwinner/domestic wives, or who would sympathize either with Jules Michelet's thesis that women were necessarily eternal invalids requiring masculine protection (even as they needed to be liberated from the influence of Catholic priests) or with Auguste Comte's "religion of woman," which required French women to remain on their pedestals – to incarnate virtue – so that men could worship them. Other well-known writers, notably Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893), would issue threats to those who would emancipate women:¹⁶

nineteenth century, especially during the Third Republic – even though women did not have the vote or the right to hold elective office. Does he then mistake Habermas's "Öffentlichkeit" (so poorly translated in English as the "public sphere") for the political arena, when in fact the term indicates the opening space for public activism (freedom of the press, assembly, and association, the making of public opinion, etc.) that lies between government and household. For a diametrically different perspective on this issue, see Karen Offen, "Feminists Campaign in 'Public Space': Civil Society, Gender Justice, and the History of European Feminisms," in *Civil Society, Public Space, and Gender Justice*, ed. Karen Hagemann, Sonya Michel, & Gunilla Budde (New York: Berghahn, 2008), pp. 97–116, and Karen Offen, "Is the 'Woman Question' Really the 'Man Problem'?" in *Confronting Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle France*, pp. 43–62.

¹⁶ Guy de Maupassant, "La Lysistrata moderne," *Le Gaulois* (30 December 1880).

Let us demand of woman that she be the charm and luxury of [our] existence. Seeing that woman demands her rights, let us recognize only one: the right to please. . . . Today when she is mistress of the world, she calls for her rights! Well then, we, whom she has lulled to sleep, enslaved, subdued by love and for love, we are going to judge her coldly with our reason and good sense instead of considering her only as a flower that perfumes life. Our sovereign is going to become our equal. Too bad for her!

During the formative years of the Republic, the woman question was clearly on the minds of men of all political stripes, including committed republicans. Old '48ers or former Saint-Simonians as well as the great playwright, poet, and novelist Victor Hugo continued to support women's rights to a remarkable degree, as did the venerable press lord Émile de Girardin. Younger men on the republican left – and many socialists – endorsed, attended, and subsequently provided government support for women's rights congresses and events; they even invited advocates of women's rights to publish their articles and petitions in organs of the male-controlled mainstream and working-class press.

The following chapters present a series of significant debates on the woman question by allies and enemies of women's emancipation in the singular time frame provided by the early French Third Republic. Readers, having examined earlier phases of these debates in my companion volume on 1400–1870 will recognize many familiar themes. Many of the issues raised about women's citizenship during the monarchies of the Old Regime and the early years of the French Revolution, but especially in 1848, would be rehearsed again during the Third Republic, as would the controversies about “free love” and “immorality” that had swirled around the Saint-Simonians in the 1830s and 1840s. The ties of women's rights advocates to the republican idea and to the Third Republic itself, with all the possibilities it provided to invoke its principles on behalf of women's emancipation, constituted a huge exception in the European context which, apart from the neighboring federal republic of Switzerland, remained assertively monarchical and class-bound. Even in the Swiss republic, democratically enfranchised men in the German-speaking cantons proved far more resistant to contemplating women's equality than did most male proponents of the French Third Republic. Men and women in the French-speaking cantons were far more supportive; Geneva, Lausanne, and Neuchâtel all provided important allies in the course of the French campaigns for women's equal rights – Marie Pouchoulin Goegg, Charles Secrétan, Aimé Humbert, August de Morsier, and Louis Bridel, to name just a few. Likewise, francophone Belgium, though still a parliamentary monarchy, would contribute allies such as

Marie Popelin, Louis Frank, and Isabelle Gatti de Gamond, Isala van Diest, and Julia Van Marcke de Lummen, all of whom participated in the debates on the woman question.

Many Francophone feminists would engage with the transnational campaigns to stop the traffic in women and children (known as the White Slave Trade until well after 1900) and to urge the French government to end the government licensing of prostitutes and brothels. After 1900 and the founding of the *Conseil National des Femmes Françaises* (CNFF) and its affiliation with the International Council of Women, the Francophone debates on the woman question, particularly as concerned the Napoleonic Code's strictures on the subordination of wives in marriage that had spread throughout Europe, would influence transnational action on marriage law and the nationality of married women as well as the seemingly interminable debates on women's employment and campaigns for equal pay for equal work. Finally, Francophone feminists would contribute vigorously to campaigns for peace and international arbitration of disputes between countries, only to see their efforts torpedoed by the outbreak of war in 1914.

