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WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD IN FRANCE, 1920-1940

Karen Offen

In 1920 the government of the victorious but badly battered French Third Republic, under premier Alexandre Millerand, celebrated Mother's Day by establishing medals to honor mothers of large families. These medals — bronze for mothers of five living children, silver for mothers of eight, and gold for mothers of ten — were intended to encourage natality by publicly rewarding those women who had demonstrated, in the words of Alexandre Dumas fils, that "maternity was women's brand of patriotism." At the behest of the newly-instituted Conseil supérieure de natalité, the government subsequently changed the juridical status of abortion (in order to remove it from the leniency of jury trial), instituted heavy penalties for convicted abortionists as well as for their clients, and outlawed contraceptive propaganda likely to influence and provide information to women. In the next twenty years these measures were followed by repeated defeats by the French Senate of woman suffrage measures passed by heavy majorities in the Chamber of Deputies, and by the proposal and defeat of measures that threatened severely to restrict married women's employment. The 1939 Code de la famille strengthened the penalties against abortion, and a Vichy law of 1942 declared abortion a crime against society, the state and the race. In 1940 Maréchal Pétain blamed France's capitulation to the Germans not only on a lack of weapons and allies but on "too few children."

This bleak picture of official policy and attitudes toward women must be qualified by considering certain other developments, which will be referred to

here as the "politics of motherhood." The Third Republic governments also fostered the development of paid maternity leaves, family allowances, birth allocations, premiums to mothers who nursed, and enacted subsidies to mothers who stayed at home (all of which became cornerstones of the post-war welfare state); by 1939 they had also achieved substantive progress in realizing the long-demanded reform of the Civil Code to improve women's legal status in marriage.5 These important measures have just begun to be reevaluated by historians of French women.

Prior to 1980 historians focused only on two issues of the interwar period: woman suffrage and reproductive freedom. This seems curious, considering that concern over the demographic crisis had become so basic to French political discourse by the 1930s that one author, writing about the inadequacy of France's merchant marine, could entitle his article, "La Crise de natalité des navires."6 [See attached graph for comparative birthrates]

The record on woman suffrage in France was, of course, dismal. Although the Chamber of Deputies repeatedly passed measures to grant unrestricted suffrage to women, the Senate as repeatedly and ungraciously defeated these proposals, thanks in no small part to the innate conservatism of a new generation of Radical senators. The Senate pattern repeated itself with persistence and women only acquired the vote in France in 1944, not by legislative action but by decree.7 It was not without significance for this result that women outnumbered men by several million in post-war France, a little-remembered fact but one of obvious importance in a situation where anticlerical men not only considered political life as their particular domain but feared that as electors women would support en bloc the dictates of the Catholic church.

The pronatalist legislation has been interpreted by historians of the 1970's exclusively from the standpoint of reproductive freedom and campaigns to repeal the very legislation that originated in this period.8 But no one
has examined the development of the Third Republic's family policies from the perspective of a contextual women's history; the sole French investigator who has looked at the period [Huguette Bouchardeau] seemed perplexed by the attitudes she discovered; she makes no mention whatsoever of the family legislation. Another recent historian [Angus McLaren] has simply dismissed all family-oriented thinking as "conservative," or worse, "reactionary," thereby excluding the resulting policies from further analysis. To proceed in this fashion, however, is to refuse to consider seriously the shape women's issues took in France during the interwar period, or to listen for women's voices. French feminist demands must be measured against what women believed their interests were and what they thought French society was capable of providing.

Worse still, the politics of motherhood have until recently been subsumed by other French historians under the politics of the family; here the triumphs for the family were considered to be the enactment in 1938 of the Code de la Famille, the establishment of a Ministry of the family by the Daladier cabinet in 1939, and ultimately under the Fourth Republic, the establishment of an official national policy on the family. But from its inception the familial movement was quintessentially a men's movement, closely associated with (though sometimes at odds with) the secular pronatalist movement, and was so treated by its historian Robert Talmy. Central to this familial movement was an assertively neo-traditional patriarchal (or authoritarian) vision of the family institution as a hierarchy in which fathers and sons were the central characters and women, as wives and mothers, figure primarily as instruments for the realization of male-defined ends. The crucial issue for this movement was to encourage paternity, not maternity. This was as true for the family movement's secular branches as for its Catholic branches.

Thus, the historiographical problématique for the near future seems clear: women's voices across party lines must be recaptured and their demands
and ambitions with regard to the politics of motherhood must be carefully analyzed. This short study cannot respond in full to the range of issues raised above; it seeks only to pose questions for future work by exploring the responses and contributions to the elaboration of these national family policies by the women who led the French women's movement in the interwar period. I will insist here (as in a forthcoming study of the pre-1914 period) on the context in which women's movement leaders of all political persuasions had to wield influence, in order provide a contextually-sensitive answer to the oft-posed question: what happened to feminism in France during the Third Republic? It should be clear from what I have said above that all factions of the French feminist movement were in a defensive, indeed a beleaguered position throughout this period, though one could never guess this from Louise Weiss's caustic comments about the timidity of women's rights leaders in pressing for the vote. Indeed, French interwar history offers an excruciating case study of how nasty the politics of gender and women's rights could become in a time of demographic crisis, compounded by severe economic and political crises.

In what follows I will examine briefly the arguments of women's rights advocates across a political spectrum ranging from religious to secular, from social Catholic to communist. This survey reveals that the strategies and tactics of virtually all sectors of the French women's movement during the interwar period turned on what I have called elsewhere "familial" or "relational" feminism. Briefly, this approach, conditioned by decades of French nationalist and corporate thinking, insisted on the family as the basic socio-political unit of the nation-state and stressed the rights of women within a framework of male-female complementarity, not individualism; a "natural" sexual division of social labor predicated on physiological differences between the sexes remained central to its vision. These relational feminists sought state intervention to improve women's situation as
wives and mothers, even as they fought to defend women’s right to work outside the home and attempted to obtain the vote. Their actions and attitudes can best be understood as political responses by actors who held no formal political power, except insofar as they could sway public opinion, within a pervasive pronatalist, nationalist, and anti-individualist climate of opinion, hostile to and apprehensive about the "egotism" that seemed intrinsic to demands for enhanced legal, political, and economic rights for women as individuals. This climate of opinion had already affected French political life well before the first World War, but it became even stronger and more pervasive — and, it appears, placed even more psychological constraints on women’s options (and on those men who were in a position to grant women’s demands) — following the disastrous bloodletting of the first World War.

THE SECULAR FEMINISTS

Let us begin by examining the position taken on both these issues by secular women’s rights groups, beginning with the Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (UFSF), founded in 1909. At the height of the war, in 1916, at the same time they continued to press for the vote, UFSF leaders were underscoring "the duty of women in the struggle against depopulation," i.e., to reproduce. In so doing, they pointed out that in countries where women had already gained the vote, the women’s rights leaders were the ones who were spearheading campaigns for measures to improve conditions for maternity. At their 1917 congress, UFSF delegates called on the state to recognize maternity as a national service, and by 1920 Marguerite de Witt-Schlumberger, mother of six, ardent suffragist, pronatalist, and the only female member of the newly established Conseil supérieure de la natalité, questioned publicly whether Frenchwomen would become "mothers of the fatherland or traitors to the fatherland." Such reproduction was not to be indiscriminate, but the conscious choice of the women, and as a conscientious eugenicist, Witt-
Schlumberger also demanded women's right to refuse unhealthy or diseased men as fathers. The criticism that there might be some dangers for women in such a pronatalist position was not one UFSF leaders saw fit to confront during the war years.

La Française, the official publication of the Conseil national des femmes françaises (CNFF), which equally sought the vote for women, celebrated the publication of Witt-Schlumberger's provocative tract with an editorial asserting that the fight against depopulation was indeed women's business: "the entire feminist question," wrote the editorialist, "is intimately connected with the population question." Both the attorney Maria Vérone and the young Andrée Lehmann, leading activists in the Ligue française pour le droit des femmes, also expressed their concern over the population issue; taking their distance from pre-war neomalthusian feminists, they argued that the state had an obligation to provide mothers with substantive financial assistance.

Indeed, when the Senate defeated woman suffrage in 1923, a seemingly paradoxical alliance emerged between leaders of the secular French women's movement and the family and pronatalist movements in pursuit of a new approach to suffrage that, in providing multiple representation to families, would include the vote for women. The terms of the bargain here appear to have included a tacit agreement by the spokeswomen for the secular republican women's movement not to challenge the government or the pro-natalist lobby over the severe repression of abortion and contraception effected in the later months of 1920.

What united this disparate groups was their common accord on the necessity to fight for major improvements in women's situation as wives and mothers. A program of family allowances funded through business establishments for their workers, originally introduced in France in 1913, was elaborated in the interwar years into a system that would ultimately provide...
state-funded maternity allowances, bonuses for babies, and subsidies for women who stayed at home to raise children. This latter issue is singularly interesting from the standpoint of women's history. Art. 2 of the 1913 law stipulated that a monthly allowance would be granted to families in which there were already at least 3 children under 13 years of age, to provide for each additional child born into the family. This allocation would be paid to fathers or to single mothers (in the absence of a male head-of-household); additional aid was provided by a supplemental law enacted in June 1918.22

During the 1920's and 30's women's movement leaders, secular and Catholic alike, sought to amend this legislation so as to direct the payments to the mothers themselves, rather than to the wageearner, i.e. usually the husband/father. In a 1932 measure that extended coverage, it was stipulated that the money must be paid to the husband as head of the family, but that wives could receive the payments as their husband's delegates.23 By late 1938 a complementary system of grants, known as "mère au foyer" were established on behalf of mothers who chose not to take paid jobs but to stay home to raise children. The 1939 Code de la famille decreed that baby bonuses, family allocations, and the "mère au foyer" payments would be paid directly to the mother.24 Following the war, in August 1946, a full-scale system of state-supported maternity allowances was enacted, again payable in cash to the mothers themselves.

SOCIAL CATHOLIC WOMEN:

This ultimate result was due, in no small part to the political efforts of social Catholic women, notably Andrée Butillard and her co-workers in the Union féminine civique et sociale, founded in 1926. In 1930 Butillard's group undertook a survey of 30,000 working mothers concerning the problem posed by the double burden. As an alternative to proposals emanating in many countries to effect state intervention eliminating married women from the labor force,
as an ostensible solution to the vast unemployment problems posed by the worldwide depression, Butillard's group pressed for direct subsidies to married women who opted against outside employment to stay at home and raise families.25

These efforts capped years of effort by social Catholics to propose their own solutions to the "woman question" and to the population question. In 1921 French Catholics had received Rome's authorization to enter the French pro-natalist movement (which was then dominated by secular republicans). In 1923 (during his Easter week address) Cardinal archbishop Dubois (of Paris) took up the population topic; that year's Semaine sociale likewise addressed the subject. In 1927 the issue of woman in society was addressed at the yearly Semaine sociale. In accordance with Catholic doctrine as articulated by Pius IX and Leo XIII (especially in Leo XIII's Re rum Novarum, 1892), the proceedings reveal clearly Catholic insistence on a family-centered life for wives, and their social role as the able auxiliaries of men, a position little modified in the papal encyclicals of the early thirties.26 At that meeting Eugène Duthoit (who worked closely with Andrée Butillard) spelled out the relationship of social Catholicism to [secular] feminism in these terms:

In the light of Catholic teaching we can clearly define our position with regard to feminism. To the partisans of feminism we say, if by this word you mean to affirm woman's personality and ... her feminine personality, with all the rights and obligations that follow, then we are with you; we are not only permitted but commanded to be feminists. If, on the contrary, you lose sight of the fact that man and woman are two complementary beings, together called upon to multiply the human species, if you deny that this proportioned and reciprocal assistance ought to be
deployed in the family, then we are not feminists; then we are not only permitted but commanded to combat you.

Duthoit went on to insist on the development and deployment of women's talents in the interest of both temporal and spiritual maternity, and to express regret about employment that took married women out of the home.27

To listen to partisans of the Catholic women's movement, one might believe that all secular feminists were of one mind in denying motherhood, destroying the French family, and with it, the foundation of all social morality. That this was far from being the case is attested looking at the opinions expressed on the Left -- by Socialist and Communist women -- during this same period.

SOCIALIST WOMEN:

Among socialist women, especially after the SFIO's break with the Communist Party in 1920, conflicting points of view on the woman question could be found. The long-standing socialist commitment to the establishment of motherhood as a paid social function, originating in the 1890's, found its contradictors, as did the sexual liberationist perspective espoused most eloquently by Dr. Madeleine Pelletier (though in the 1930s even she advocated motherhood as a paid social function of the state).28 Madeleine Vernet, the editor of a small socialist monthly review, devoted her efforts to spreading mother-educator ideology and advice on hygiene to the "mères du peuple." Vernet's collaborators included Nelly Roussel, Louise Bodin, and Hélène Brion, all of whom were publicly-known as women with a radical feminist (and even neo-Malthusian) perspective. Vernet early raised the question as to "why woman's greatest contribution [e.g., motherhood] should also be the keystone of her servitude?"29 Capitalism, she argued, denied the grandeur of the maternal task; but in contrast to Ellen Key and the German Mutterschutz
radicals, who called for the endowment of motherhood (for the unmarried as well as the married) by the state, Vernet argued that to pay women for being mothers was immoral. Separating the issue of men's financial support for the children they fathered from that of supporting the mothers, Vernet suggested that all women be "endowed" by the state at the age of 20; she insisted, however, on the necessity of men continuing to work to support the children they created. "Free love," she later argued in reply to Madeleine Pelletier (and no doubt also to the arguments of the Russian communist women's movement leader Alexandra Kollontai), "is not liberating for women."30

Within a decade after the split with the Communists at Tours, women of the French socialist party had raised the problem of women's feeble participation in party activities. As before the war, they felt a need to take the initiative in order to counter the appeal of "bourgeois" feminism.31 Suzanne Lacore, later one of Léon Blum's three women undersecretaries of state in the Popular Front ministry, repeatedly addressed the problem of "socialism and the family." According to her view, which echoed Michelet more than Marx, capitalism had snatched women from their homes and children, abandoning babies to mercenary care, abandoning husbands to foyers where sweetness no longer prevailed, and generally breaking the bonds of the family. In her view, which bore a strong resemblance to the "sexualisme" advocated by Aline Valette in the 1890s, socialism would restore woman to her rightful place in the foyer.32

At the 1933 congress of the Parti socialiste, French socialist women held their first national conference. They reaffirmed women's right to work, but also called for strict application of protective legislation. At the same time they urged the passage of measures designed to "conciliate and facilitate for women their functions as mothers, salaried workers, and housekeepers (menagères); they called for increases in the existing programs of primes d'allaitement and the extension of these programs to all mothers; they supported maternity leave programs. And, like Léonie Rouzade and Paul
Lafargue in the late nineteenth century, the women's delegates reiterated the party's long-standing demand that maternity be established (pace M. Vernet) as a paid social function.

COMMUNIST PARTY WOMEN:

The PCF position on the woman question, which in the 1920's had followed the new Soviet Russian line on women's liberation, switched abruptly in 1934 to a focus on "bonheur familial et maternel." This has been read by some as reactionary Stalinization, pure and simple. In view of the emerging PCF alliance with the socialists and radicals that produced the Popular Front, coupled with the pronatalist concerns of the period, however, it could also be viewed as simply expedient. It is noteworthy that in 1936 Jacques Duclos publicly chastized the militant women of the PCF for their reluctance to appeal to other women where the latter's "real interests" lay. However judged, it is clear that from that time forth, the French Communist line on the woman question — like that of their erstwhile allies — stressed motherhood and advocated that it be given governmental support.

MOTHERHOOD AND THE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

What forced the politics of motherhood toward resolution in France during the interwar period was the onslaught made on women's employment as the worldwide economic depression hit France in the early 1930's. In no industrializing country had women constituted so great a percentage of the labor force [see attached chart], yet in no country did [male] prescriptive rhetoric insist so strongly on the necessity of achieving the ideal of a sexual division of labor, with the husband as breadwinner and the wife as maîtresse de maison and mother-educator. This vision, which had become a staple of the Third Republic's pre-war educational curriculum, especially in the primary schools, seemed to be shared by French Catholics, secular
republicans, socialists, and communists alike.\textsuperscript{36}

During the war, ideological resisters to women's labor force participation had strained to accommodate the requirements of women's war-time labor in the face of the demographic crisis.\textsuperscript{37} By 1917 under the aegis of the War Ministry, government armaments plants were even instituting crèches for the infants of women employees.\textsuperscript{38} When the war ended and hundreds of thousands of women were released from the French labor force to make room for returning men, attention shifted to countering the still-falling birthrate; the pro-natalists and familial movement men focused obsessively on the "problem" of the working wife, and on the hope of returning these women to the foyer to make more babies, who would then guarantee France's future industrial and military strength. Here economics, demographics, and nationalist ideology combined to dictate the shape of reforms in the status of French women.\textsuperscript{39}

Issues concerning the protection of women workers as well as equal pay for equal work had been debated at great length before the war. Both radical republican and socialist feminists had made their views on these subjects clear in 1919, and had influenced the charter of the newly-founded International Labour Organization, based in Geneva.\textsuperscript{40} But as the world economic situation deteriorated and the depression brought massive unemployment to Europe, the issue of working wives and mothers once again drew the fire of pro-natalists and their defense by the women's movement. After a short upsurge in natality in the early 1920's, the birthrate once again fell off toward pre-war levels. Then, in the wake of the papal encyclicals Quadrissimo Anno and Casti Connubi, and as unemployment increased dramatically in France during 1931, secular pro-natalists such as the venerable physician Charles Richet called for the forcible eviction of all women from the workforce as the solution to both the birthrate crisis and unemployment.\textsuperscript{41}

With this women of all political persuasions leaped to the defense of
women's right to work. Women's groups from all points in the political
spectrum quickly perceived the dangers in Richet's this so-called solution to
the economic crisis and adamantly resisted becoming the scapegoats. Various
organizations mobilized information and arguments to blunt the attack. Unions
such as the Fédération des Transports and the Fédération des Tabacs took steps
to protect the many women who were employed in economic sectors such as public
transport and in the tobacco shops. Even Butillard, head of the social
Catholic Union féminine civique et sociale, argued in 1933 — against highly-
placed male Catholic spokesmen — that in current economic circumstances,
women married or single must retain the choice of employment. Their
emphasis on choice stretched to its limits Catholic doctrine on the role of
wives and the fiscal responsibilities of men.

Academically trained Frenchwomen such as the economist Fernande Dauriac
and the social historian Marguerite Thibert (now at the International Labour
Office) countered with facts about women's employment in France, such as that
the level of women's employment had remained remarkably stable overall since
1906. Contrary to popular opinion, there had been a slight decline (from 39%
of the labor force in 1906, to a high of 42.2% in 1921, and 36.6% in 1926) in
women's labor force participation, even though their occupational distribution
had changed markedly. Statistics showed that the number of women employed in
industry had decreased, but that they were more numerous in the tertiary
sector, especially in teaching and white-collar jobs. To allay the spectre
of women's economic competition with men, Thibert pointed out that women and
men were not, in the vast majority of cases, competing for the same jobs;
indeed, she observed that most women were employed in jobs that no man would
want. An important exception, however, was in the civil service; here
educated women felt vulnerable. In contrast to other western nations where
more severe measures were enacted, married women employees in the French civil
service were never required to resign, although the concours for admittance
were closed to women for several years. A 1936 book on career advice recommended to young women a variety of career opportunities, especially in the social services, that would not place them in open competition for those jobs men considered their own.46

All factions were agreed, however, that if motherhood was to be encouraged and women's rights as women were to be promoted in France, the state must take action to restructure women's legal and economic position in the family, to improve housing, and to make motherhood worth their while. Much more needs to be known about the "politics of motherhood" involved in enacting all the measures that I have referred to so briefly earlier in this paper. What seems clear from the evidence I have gathered to date is that French women, scattered over the full range of political persuasions represented in the French women's movement, all pressed for their enactment.

The cumulative impact of this ensemble of measures is striking in retrospect, even though these women did not achieve all the goals that we might now view, in retrospect, as equally important. Overall, the reforms enacted on women's behalf between 1920 and 1940 did satisfy a sizeable number of the legal and economic demands made by various branches of the French women's movement since the early nineteenth century. They represent the logical conclusion to a movement that, for historic reasons, did not openly contest the familial base of the French socio-political structure but attempted to reorganize it radically, by changing the laws that defined women's and men's relationships in marriage, by emphasizing women's role as mothers in the republican nation-state and seeking state support for that role, by defending women's right to work, and by continuing to argue for "equality in difference," promoting women's rights as women in French society rather than (in more recent Anglo-American fashion) for women's rights as individuals irrespective of gender considerations. Even as we cast a critical eye on the politics of motherhood, we must acknowledge the women's voices and
open our minds to encompass the context from which these women spoke. To do otherwise will result in a partial and incomplete history of French women and their concerns in the later Third Republic.
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE WOMEN
AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION
IN FRANCE, 1856-1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Econ. Active Pop. (in thousands)</th>
<th>Percent Women</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>14,123</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>14,786</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871 [1872]</td>
<td>14,686</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>16,629</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>16,343</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>19,736</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>20,931</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>21,718</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21,615</td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>20,792</td>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>19,602</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 [1962]</td>
<td>19,711</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
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</table>

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Sixth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Smith College, June 1, 1984. I am grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for a Humanities Fellowship in 1985-86 that allowed me to round out earlier research on the interwar period, and to Gisela Bock for inviting me to present these findings at the European University Institute in Florence.

1 Letter from Millerand's Minister of Hygiène, Jules-Louis Breton, to the President of the Republic, 26 May 1920, accompanying the decree establishing medals for mothers, in translation as doct. 84 in Susan Groag Bell and Karen Offen, Women, the Family, and Freedom: The Debate in Documents, II (Stanford, Calif., 1983), 308-309. Dumas quote from his 1889 play, Françillon.

2 Law of 21 July 1920, in Bell & Offen, Women, the Family, and Freedom, II, doct. 85, 309-10. Significantly, the advertisement and availability of male methods of contraception, e.g. condoms, were never affected by these or subsequent laws. Decriminalization of abortion, which transferred jurisdiction from lenient juries to stern judges, was effected in 1923. On these laws and subsequent developments, see Paul Paillat and Jacques Houdaille, "Legislation directly or indirectly influencing fertility in France," Law and Fertility in Europe, ed. M. Kirk, M. Livi-Bacci, E. Szabady (Dolhain, Belgium, 1975), 240-73.


France," L’Echo de Paris, between early May and August 1922.

5 E.g., the laws of 17 July 1927, giving the mother right to express her consent on the marriage of a child; the decree-law of 30 Oct. 1935, associating mothers to the puissance paternelle in educational decisions concerning children; 22 Sept. 1942, equalization of the mother's advice with that of the father in all matters concerning children. Also the laws of 18 Feb. and 18 June 1938, totally redrafting the notorious Art. 213 of the Civil Code, and the decree-law of 29 July 1939, known as the "Code de la famille" (see note __ below). For an example of the continuing interpretation of the history of French family law as a regrettable movement toward the disaggregation of the patriarchal, authoritarian family, see Jean Derruppé, "L'Evolution du droit français de la famille, de début du siècle à la guerre de 1939," Renouveau des idées sur la famille, ed. Robert Prigent (Paris, 1954), 149-60. Earlier interpretations more sympathetic to the notion of affirming the rights of women be found in the studies by Julien Bonnecase, Mariage et régimes matrimoniaux; leur réforme récente (Paris, 1938); Suzanne Grinberg and Odette Simon, Les Droits nouveaux de la femme mariée, commentaire théorique et pratique de la loi du 18 février 1938 (Paris, 1938); Charlotte Billion, La Capacité civile de la femme mariée d'après la loi du 18 février 1938 ... (Paris, 1939); and Jane Cerez, La Condition sociale de la femme de 1804 à l'heure présente: le problème féministe et la guerre (Paris, 1940). See also Paule Nancel-Pénard, L'Evolution de la jurisprudence relativement à la femme depuis 1804 (Bordeaux, 1940).


7 On the general issue of woman suffrage in France, see especially Steven C. Hause, with Anne R. Kenney, women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the Third Republic (Princeton, N.J., 1984); on the interwar period, see Virginia Cox, "Le Mouvement pour le suffrage féminin pendant l'entre-deux-guerres," mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris X (Nanterre), 1982.

8 Recent studies focusing on reproductive freedom are Roger Guerrand, La Libre maternité, 1896-1969 (Tournai, 1971), and Angus McLaren, Sexuality and
Social Order: The Debate over the Fertility of Women and Workers in France, 1770-1930 (New York, 1983).

9 Huguette Bouchardeau, Pas d'histoire, les femmes; 50 ans d'histoire des femmes, 1918-1968 (Paris, 1977); McLaren, Sexuality and Social Order, ch. 10.

10 For recent work on women's experience as mothers and housewives in the 1920s and 1930s, see Françoise Thébaud, Quand nos grand-mères donnaient la vie; la Maternité en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres (Lyon, 1986), based on her 1982 thesis at the University of Paris VII (Jussieu), and Martine Martin, "Femmes et société: le Travail ménager (1919-1939)," thèse de doctorat, troisième cycle, University of Paris VII (Jussieu), 1984. See also Françoise Werner, "Du Ménage à l'art ménager: l'évolution du travail ménager et son écho dans la presse féminine française de 1919 à 1939," Le Mouvement social, no. 129 (Oct.-Dec. 1984), 61-87.


14 For the 1890-1914 period, see Karen Offen, "Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France," American Historical Review, 89 (June


Mlle Clement, "Le Devoir des femmes dans la lutte contre la dépopulation," UFSF Bulletin 1914–1916, pp. 22–26. See also the account of the mass meeting sponsored by UFSF on 19 March 1916, where feminists and natalists joined forces; "L'Action social et moral en faveur de la maternité," La Française, 25 March 1916, the police report in carton F/7 13266, Archives Nationales, and Dr. Clotilde Mulon, "La Maternité et le travail; rapport présenté le 19 Mai 1917 à M. Roden, sous-secrétair e d'Etat au Travail, au nom de la Section d'Hygiène du Conseil National des Femmes Françaises," La Française, 14 July 1917.


A.B., in La Française, 15 May 1920.

Maria Verone, "Natalité et mortalité infantile," L'Oeuvre (May 1924[?]; date to be verified), in BMD Dos. 312 NAT., "Pas d'argent pour les mères," L'Oeuvre, 27 Feb. 1932, and "Quand un pays veut des enfants," L'Oeuvre, 30 May 1934; Andrée Lehmann, De la Réglementation légale du travail féminin (étude de législation comparée (Paris, 1924), pp. 58–67. See also

21 The alliance was fostered by the secular pro-natalists, including Jacques Bertillon, since it would give married women the vote but without giving women a possible majority! See Bertillon, "Le Vote des femmes," *La Femme et l'enfant*, nos. 10, 11 (1 March, 15 March 1919). The case for tying the women's vote to the family vote was elaborated by the social Catholic André Toulemon, *Le Suffrage familial, ou suffrage universel intégral: Le Vote des femmes* (Paris, 1933). See also the editorials of Maria Verone in *L'Œuvre* during the late 1920s and 30s. Despite the alliance, the family vote measure was definitively defeated in 1935.


23 Clark, *Position of Women*, p. 169. In his *Population Policies and Movements in Europe* (London, 1940), p. 107, D. V. Glass concluded that in practice the mothers did receive payment in the majority of cases, though only a minority of the family allocation funds (which also happened to be the largest funds) distributed the money directly to the mothers.

24 Articles 6, 11, and 23 of the 1938 law, in *Le Code de la famille; décret-loi du 29 juillet 1939, modifié et complété par les décrets-lois des 16 décembre 1939 et 24 avril 1940, les lois du 18 novembre 1940, du 15 février, du 29 mars, du 17 novembre 1941, et 3 février 1942. Précédé d'un commentaire*
détaillé et suivi des textes interprétatifs, 5th ed. (Lille, 1942).

25 On Butillard's efforts, see Henry Rollet, André Butillard et le féminisme chrétien (Paris, 1960). The pertinent publications of the UFCS during this period include: La Femme dans la société actuelle; guide d'action sociale (Paris, 1928); Eve Baudouin, La mère au travail et le retour au foyer (Paris, 1931); A. Butillard et al., Le Travail de la mère hors de son foyer et sa répercussion sur la natalité. Commission catholique du 14e Congrès de la natalité, Dijon, 22-23 Sept. 1932 (Paris, 1933); Baudouin, Comment envisager le retour de la mère au foyer (Paris, 1933); and Le Travail industriel de la mère et le foyer ouvrier. Documents d'études, extraits du Congrès international de juin 1933 (Paris, 1934).

26 Fénelon Gibon, La Crise de la natalité et la croisade pour la répopulation: Oeuvre de salut national (Paris, 1923), esp. pp. 110ff.; Semaine sociale de France, 19e session, Nancy 1927, La Femme dans la société; compte rendu in extenso des cours et conférences (Lyon, 1928).

27 Eugène Duthoit, "La Famille: donnée essentielle du problème de la femme," La Femme dans la société, p. 31-66; quote p. 58.


29 See Vernet's articles in La Mère éducatrice, Oct.-Dec. 1919; Jan.-April 1920. A different line of argument came from the women of the Groupes féministes de l'enseignement laïque, who asserted: "Nous voulons que la société comprenne enfin le rôle qui lui incombe: qu'au budget de la guerre elle substitue le budget de la mère; au budget de la mort le budget de la vie." Bulletin des Groupes féministes de l'enseignement, no. 23 (Oct. 1925), p. 3. Another contribution from this group was Henriette Alquier's "La Maternité, fonction sociale," Bulletin des Groupes féministes, no. 36 (Feb.
1927), 13-20, which the government prosecuted for neomalthusian propaganda, though this was not Alquier's major message.

30 Vernet, series of articles in La Mère éducatrice, May through August 1920. Quote, [add exact date].


35 See, among others, the articles by Cécile Vassart in Cahiers du Bolshevisme, 1 Oct. 1936 and 1 Jan. 1937. Two recent French studies, highly critical of the PCF's "abandonment" of woman-as-worker in favor of woman-as-mother are: Michel Garbez, "La Question féminine dans le discours du parti communiste français (1920-1978)," thèse du 3e cycle, Université de Picardie, 1979; and Sandra Dab, "La Politique du parti communiste français en direction des femmes entre les deux guerres: ses conceptions sur le rôle historique de
la famille, la place et les droits des femmes," mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Paris VII (Jussieu), 1980.

36 On the sex-role prescriptive messages in French secular education, see Linda L. Clark, various articles and forthcoming book, Schooling the Daughters of Marianne: Textbooks and the Socialization of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools (Albany, N.Y., 1984).


40 On the founding of the ILO and its interest in women's work, see Lehmann, De la Réglementation, esp. pp. 177-97. See also Magdeleine Boy, Les Associations internationales féminines (Lyon, 1936).

41 See Charles Richet in Le Matin, 5 Nov. 1931, and subsequent letters. See also the ensuing discussion in La Française, 14, 21, and 28 Nov. 1931.
On the union actions in 1934, see Evelyne Sullerot, "Condition de la femme," in A. Sauvy, Histoire économique de la France entre les deux guerres, III (Paris, 1972), 429. Clearly the threat did not go away; the formation of a "Comité de liaison pour la défense du travail féminin" was announced in La Française, 28 Dec. 1935.

See Rollet, Andrée Butillard, p. 107. The UFCS survey of 1931 revealed that of 30,000 women workers surveyed in 73 departments, over 80% were working because they had to for economic survival.

Figures quoted by Thibert, p. 449, from Dauriac article. See especially Thibert's firm repudiation of proposals to outlaw women's employment, in her 1933 article, part II. See also Sullerot, "Condition de la femme," 422-23. These figures, based on official statistics, do not entirely coincide with those provided later by Bairoch [see chart], which have been adjusted to accommodate comparative analysis.


See Suzanne F. Cordelier, Femmes au travail; étude pratique sur dix-sept carrières féminines (Paris, 1935) and Marcel Schulz, La Femme dans les professions libérales et les carrières sociales (Paris, 1936).
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