
Trafficking Histories: Women's Migration and Sexual Labor in the Early Twentieth Century

by

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Abstract: This article takes a historical approach to what we now call sex trafficking, exploring its roots in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century debates on “white slavery” and “the traffic in women”. Using digitized genealogical records along with French consular records from the United States, Argentina, and Uruguay — three important receiver nations of immigrants at this time — it examines how alleged cases of trafficking might be reframed as gendered migration histories. In particular, it shows how discussions surrounding the deportation and repatriation of foreign women involved in prostitution unearthed a number of enduring questions about sex work and trafficking: How do we distinguish between forced and free migrations? Is victimhood a necessary condition for receiving social assistance? Can humanitarian interventions, in the name of rescue and rehabilitation, enable restrictive or even punitive measures? In sum, a critical reading of historical documents points to women’s lives as laborers and migrants more than as trafficking victims.

In 1910, a twenty-year-old Frenchwoman named Renée Blanchard penned two desperate letters to the French Ambassador in Washington, DC. She wrote from her detention cell on Ellis Island, where she awaited deportation for practicing prostitution. She had spent the past five years in the sex industry, first in New York, and then in Los Angeles, Oakland, and Butte, Montana. Blanchard first entered the United States around 1905, at the age of fifteen. In France, she worked as a maid for a family with two young children and when they moved to the United States, she agreed to accompany them. For reasons Blanchard does not appear to understand, the head of household passed her off as one of his own children when they encountered US immigration officials at the border. After three months in New York, he announced his family’s return to France, but Blanchard refused to go with them.

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She explained in her letter to the embassy that because she did not speak much English, the only job available to her was prostitution¹.

Blanchard begged the Ambassador to arrange for her release and to have her repatriated to France. She wrote: “I never did anyone any harm. I didn’t steal. I didn’t kill anyone. I was working the whole time”. She promised that if he sent her back to France, she would no longer engage “in this sort of work”, and that she would “work like a good girl as she had before”. “Please monsieur, can you do something for me? I no longer want to do this work”. “Please, get me out of here as soon as possible”. “I am not a bad girl. I want to work like before”².

Blanchard’s pleas to the ambassador provide an illuminating perspective on contemporary questions about trafficking and prostitution. The context surrounding her letters demonstrates that in the past, like today, individuals and institutions struggled to reconcile women’s migration with their labor in the sex industry. French officials filed Blanchard’s letters among consular records pertaining to the “traffic in women” although evidence of coercion, deception, or fraud is entirely absent from her account. In her words, Blanchard consented to migrate and continued to work as a domestic servant and later, under constrained choices, she chose prostitution. Her fraudulent entry at the border, despite coming freely to the United States, exemplifies the nebulous distinction that often exists between licit and illicit migration. The line between licit and illicit labor appears equally hazy, given her easy transition from domestic service to prostitution. Most intriguing of all is Blanchard’s stubborn conviction that she should not be deported for *working*, even if “good girls” worked in trades other than prostitution.

This article takes a historical approach to what we now call sex trafficking, exploring its roots in earlier debates on “white slavery” and the “traffic in women”. Using French consular records from the United States, Argentina, and Uruguay – three important receiver nations of immigrants in the early twentieth century – it examines how alleged cases of trafficking might be reframed as gendered histories of migration between France and the Americas. In particular, it shows that discussions surrounding the deportation and repatriation of foreign women involved in prostitution unearth a number of enduring questions about sex work and trafficking. For example, how do we distinguish between forced and free migrations, or draw the line between coercion and agency? Is victimhood a necessary condition for receiving social assistance? Can humanitarian interventions, in the name of rescue and rehabilitation, enable restrictive or even punitive measures? And, in keeping with Blanchard’s plea to the ambassador, is prostitution a form of labor?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, state authorities, social reformers, and the popular press often construed foreign women employed in overseas brothels as the victims of traffickers who duped or coerced them into voyaging abroad (Edward Bristow 1982; Ruth Rosen 1982: 113-135; Donna Guy 1991; Alain Corbin 1992: 275-298; Judith R. Walkowitz 1992; Brian Donovan 2006; Elisa Camiscioli 2009: 99-128; Paul Knepper 2010: 98-127; Keely Stauter-Halsted 2015: 117-195). The term “white slavery” referred to the procurement of white

¹ Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (hereafter CADN), 737/PO/1, January 6, 1910.

² CADN, 737/PO/1, January 4, 1910.

women or girls, by force or deceit, for work in prostitution (Jo Doezema 2000). It foregrounded the unfree migration, corrupted innocence, and sexual – rather than labor – exploitation of young women. By the interwar years, social reformers generally replaced the term “white slavery” with “the traffic in women and children” in order to acknowledge that women of color were also trafficked within a global network of vice. What began as a grassroots movement of religious reformers and women’s rights activists in the nineteenth century became, after the First World War, an object of international cooperation in the halls of the League of Nations, where its Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children debated the entangled questions of state-regulated prostitution and sex work performed by foreign prostitutes overseas. The focus remained on identifying the *forced* migrations of women involved in prostitution, with the prostitute invariably understood to be female. Such efforts to distinguish between free and unfree migrations occurred globally, in a wide range of labor arrangements, in the post-abolitionist era (McKeown 2008; Amrith 2013; Zahra 2016). The traffic in women, however, garnered international attention because it invoked sexual respectability, gendered notions of vulnerability, and nativist fears about global migration.

Scholars have shown how individuals, discourses, and institutions invented the crime of *trafficking*, along with *trafficking victims*, in response to concerns about women’s mobility – particularly in the form of migratory prostitution (Stephanie Limoncelli 2010; Gunter Peck 2010; Philippa Hetherington 2014; Jessica Pliley 2014; Liat Kozma 2016; Julia Laite 2017; Eva Payne 2017). Historians have also explored women’s and men’s migrating experiences in the context of the discursive paradigm of trafficking (Stauter-Halsted 2015; Camiscioli 2019; Séquin 2019; Laite forthcoming). But as the historian Nicole Keusch explains, “it is extremely difficult to tell whether a migrant woman prostitutes herself or whether a woman in prostitution migrates” (2017: 714). This ambiguity galvanized anti-trafficking discourse, criminal provisions against sex workers, and nativist calls for immigration restrictions (Pliley forthcoming). In the first age of mass, international, long-distance migrations – between 1880 and the outbreak of the First World War, and then again in the interwar years although declining after 1930 for the Americas – state actors, international organizations, and social reformers easily equated the migration of young, working-class women with trafficking. Particularly during the interwar years, as Laite (2017: 41-42) has argued, “porous and faulty borders” separated sex work and women’s licit work, as well as women’s sexual and labor exploitation (see also Schettini 2012).

To return to the example of Renée Blanchard, what if we took her words at face value? What if we told her story to highlight her claim that, like other migrants, she was indeed “working the whole time”? The archival fragments remaining of her life raise as many questions as they answer. They testify more to a life of labor and migration than to her status as a victim of trafficking. As a French citizen facing deportation, Blanchard directed her letters to the head of the French diplomatic mission, as the incarnation of the state overseas. The expanding power of consulates around the turn of the twentieth century included the management of particular aspects of transnational migrations. US authorities, for example, recognized that an effective border control policy required both fortifying national ports of entry and

outsourcing some of the responsibility for vetting migrants to consulates (Adam McKeown 2008: 217-238). Consulates also coordinated the repatriation of impoverished migrants and provided other forms of social assistance.

In Blanchard's case, however, French consular agents ultimately decided that nothing could be done for her, perhaps in deference to US national sovereignty³. Or they may have cynically calculated the advantage of allowing the US government to pay for her return journey by deporting her, rather than straining the coffers of the French state. The US Immigration Act of 1903 explicitly provided for the expulsion of prostitutes, which probably explains Blanchard's incarceration at Ellis Island. US policymakers presented the law's anti-prostitution provision as a "humanitarian intervention" on behalf of female victims of the sex trade – both in cases of trafficking and for prostitution more generally. Deportation returned women to their communities of origin, where families or religious and social organization could "reform" them. In the period between the law's passage and the outbreak of the First World War, prostitution was the "second largest deportable category" (Torie Hester 2017: 83-84). The first was the "Likely to Become a Public Charge" (LPC) provision, which expelled foreign women and men who appeared to lack the financial resources to support themselves in the United States, therefore suggesting they would become dependent on philanthropy or government assistance. However, because it was easier for immigration officials to substantiate LPC charges than prostitution, they frequently deported sex workers through the LPC provision instead (Deirdre Moloney 2006: 98). Thus, anti-trafficking measures expressed as migration control have a long history in the United States. So too does providing humanitarian justifications for restrictive migration and prostitution policies.

We do not know precisely on what terms Blanchard left the United States. By searching digitized genealogical records, however, we learn that she returned to the United States from France in 1913, 1921, and again in 1926 (on the potential of the "mass digitized turn" for historians, see Laura Putnam 2016; Laite 2019). Each time she appeared on the "manifest of alien passengers" as a domestic servant, unmarried, and with family in the northern Pas-de-Calais region of France. The manifests also indicate that she was able to read and write in French – a fact we already surmised from her letters to the ambassador⁴. A forty-four-year-old Blanchard is listed on the US Census of 1930, as a cook residing in the household of a wealthy New York City banker⁵. Curiously, the census record marks her official arrival to the United States as 1913 rather than 1905, as she had attested in her letters. This change of date effaces the transcontinental odyssey of her teenage years, along with the sex work she performed in several US cities. As the historian Amy Stanley (2016: 460) has noted, itinerant domestic service "inspired a wider array of women to tell new kinds of stories about themselves" and to "imagine the possibility of disappearance and reinvention".

³ CADN, 737/PO/1, French consul of New York to Ambassador Jusserand, January 8, 1910.

⁴ *New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957* (database on-line), 1913, 1921, and 1926, Ancestry.com, accessed May 28, 2019.

⁵ *1930 United States Federal Census* (database on-line), Ancestry.com, accessed May 28, 2019.

Archival taxonomies thus categorized women like Blanchard as victims of the “traffic in women”. While their lives cannot be reduced to this label, consular archives serve as important repositories of their histories, due to the consulate’s responsibility for protecting the interests of migrants and mediating between the country of origin and expatriate community. For example, concerned family members directed inquiries about missing daughters and nieces to the French consulate. Letters from parents, aunts, and uncles expressed fear that white slave traders abducted female relatives and implored consular officials to locate them (see also Stauter-Halsted 2016: 175-177). Impecunious migrants regularly sought assistance at the consulate. Repatriation requests are scattered throughout consular records, along with the paper trails generated by state agents as they attempted to determine whether the shipping companies, families, French government, or expatriate benevolent societies should pay for the transportation of returning migrants. Sometimes requests for repatriation came directly from young women who claimed to be victims of trafficking. At other times consular personnel, deeply embedded in expatriate communities, initiated the repatriation process on behalf of female compatriots.

The consulate’s official role in the repatriation of trafficking victims stems from international agreements formalized in the first decade of the twentieth century. The 1904 International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, of which France was a signatory, “created the parameters for international cooperation” on this issue, including the establishment of a protocol for repatriating foreign prostitutes (Pliley forthcoming). In signatory countries, interviews determined whether foreign women working in commercial sex were coerced to migrate and, if their nationality was verified, they were to be sent home. In cases where the individual or her family could not pay for transportation, the country in which she resided assumed those expenses, up to the point of embarkation, and her country of origin thereafter⁶. The International Convention signed in Paris in 1910 reaffirmed the vision of the 1904 agreement, further emphasizing the role of consular agents in promoting repatriation.⁷ Moreover, in the 1920s, the repatriation of trafficked women – or foreign prostitutes, depending on the perspective – became a contentious topic for the League of Nations Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children (Barbara Metzger 2007: 64-66; Limoncelli 2010: 82-89).

Reading consular records on trafficking as evidence of women’s international migrations does not deny that poverty and violence often marked these young women’s lives, at home and abroad, nor does it romanticize the agency of female migrants. Coercion or deception may have occurred at any point in the migratory process: before departure, while traveling, upon arrival, or even much later. Migration brokers could inaccurately convey work conditions, remuneration, or even the precise nature of labor to be performed. After all, coercion consists of a range of experiences — even in legal labor migrations — with trafficking falling at one end of the spectrum (Julia O’Connell Davidson and Bridget Anderson 2006: 18). For all migrants, including women working in prostitution, agency and exploitation were

⁶ <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instreet/whiteslavetraffic1904.html>, accessed October 22, 2018.

⁷ <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instreet/whiteslavetraffic1910.html>, accessed October 22, 2018.

not mutually exclusive possibilities (Eileen Boris and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas 2015: 8). Historical studies also reveal that many women migrated with full knowledge they would be employed in the sex industry overseas (Pliley 2014; Kozma 2016; Stauter-Halsted 2017; Camiscioli 2019; Séquin 2019). Like workers in other sectors, prostitutes, pimps, brothel keepers, and brokers voyaged along established international networks of travel to cities with high demand for their services, in pursuit of new and lucrative economic opportunities (Keusch 2017). Some were successful, others floundered, while most experienced ups and downs in between these extremes.

Renée Blanchard relayed to the French ambassador that she was to be deported from the United States and begged him to repatriate her instead. Both administrative procedures would have sent her back to France, and both had benevolent pretensions. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, international voluntary organizations involved in the crusade against white slavery formulated the idea of repatriating purported trafficking victims. Repatriation conformed to the ideal of *rescuing* women involved in prostitution and *rehabilitating* them in nation-based settings. But, as Hetherington explains, it is possible to repatriate someone who did not want to leave; in fact, the *forced repatriation* of women working in prostitution occurred in a number of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century examples (2014: 157-158; 175). Voluntary associations and state officials cloaked repatriation proceedings in altruistic language, like the US Immigration Law of 1903 which provided for the deportation of prostitutes. Both demanded that women return to their home countries, regardless of their consent.

This key similarity between deportation and repatriation reveals the gendered premises of early anti-trafficking efforts that placed checks on women's mobility and implemented procedures to send them back to their national communities. Nonetheless, in the interwar years, a meaningful distinction between deportation and repatriation emerged at the League of Nations. Repatriation exemplified the League's humanitarian approach and fulfilled the Advisory Committee's mission to protect young women and girls (Metzger 2007; Magaly Rodríguez García 2012; Hetherington 2014; Kozma 2017: 7-9). From a national perspective, repatriation signified bringing daughters back home, perhaps even those who had gone astray. In contrast, a faction of the Advisory Committee construed deportation as a punitive measure that placed the blame on women rather than their traffickers. The choice between strategies of repatriation or deportation reflected the enduring conflict in League discussions about international humanitarian reform, on the one hand, and national sovereignty on the other.

It also pointed to an unresolved tension in the interwar anti-trafficking movement best expressed by Paulina Luisi, the Uruguayan representative on the League's Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Women and Children. Luisi strongly criticized the growing international trend of expelling foreign prostitutes, which in her mind strayed from the League's loftier aims. She provocatively asked fellow delegates whether their purpose was to rescue women and put an end to trafficking or instead to protect society from prostitutes (Limoncelli 2010: 84). Luisi's question underscores how in the early twentieth century, the figure of the prostitute – which symbolized an affront to public virtue and a menace to public health – haunted anti-

trafficking debates (see also Boris and Heather Berg 2014: 19). Her question continues to resonate today in anti-trafficking policies that allocate resources to “deserving” victims of trafficking but not to sex workers who migrated willingly, and that criminalize prostitution rather than targeting exploitative labor conditions in a broad range of industries and services.

Key delegates on the League’s Advisory Committee framed trafficking as a migration problem for which migration controls were the solution. This approach dovetailed with restrictive immigration policies in the United States, where an increasingly elaborate legal structure facilitated the deportation of women and men involved in the sex industry, along with and other “undesirable” migrants (Moloney 2006; Pliley 2014; Hester 2017). US immigration officials had little use for the distinction between “victims of white slavery” and ordinary women working in prostitution; in fact, according to the 1910 Mann Act, any woman who engaged in sex outside of marriage could fall under the same white slavery provisions that deported prostitutes (Pliley 2014). French government officials appear to have viewed this question with more nuance, surely a reflection of their long-standing toleration of the regulated brothel system (Corbin 1996). In the French government’s eyes, trafficking victims deserved formal repatriation as a means of social assistance.

For example, it was easy for consular agents to view the young Andrée Jouenne as a trafficking victim who warranted repatriation. In 1927, the French consulate in Rosario, Argentina received a letter from a distraught mother in Paris, demanding the repatriation of her daughter Andrée, whom she claimed was a “victim of white slavery”. The consulate discharged an industrious official named Henri Crampagne to locate the young woman, and when he did she relayed through her tears that at the age of eighteen, a man called Nik seduced her and promised she could make a lot of money as a dancer in “America”. Jouenne departed from Bordeaux stowed away in the coal bunker of a steamship – hence her travel and entry at the port of Buenos Aires were “illegal”. According to Jouenne, Nik changed the terms of their agreement once in Argentina, where he told her to forget about dancing and forced her to work in a brothel instead⁸. Many more details embellished Jouenne’s story, all of which conformed to the melodramatic script of white slavery that was common by the 1920s: one-dimensional female victims, deceitful men, and indeed male saviors like Crampagne (Walkowitz 1992; Carole S. Vance 2012; Gretchen Soderlund 2013; Rutavica Andrijasevic 2007; Helen Schwenken 2008).

Crampagne was so taken by Jouenne’s sensationalized account that he asked for her repatriation to be expedited. The official procedure required the approval of the French Ministry of Interior and typically took three months, but Crampagne feared that Nik, the young woman’s trafficker, would return soon to Argentina after serving time in a French prison. Thus, he urged his office to arrange her travel through the French expatriate benevolent society (*La Caisse française de rapatriement*) or

⁸ CADN, 132 PO/3 76, the French consul in Rosario to the French ministry in Buenos Aires, February 14, 1927.

forward her case directly to the Buenos Aires consulate, which had money earmarked for repatriations (*rapatriements d'office*)⁹.

In contrast, consular officials in Argentina deliberated extensively whether Marcelle Catus should be returned to France at French expense. A Syrian priest making rounds in a Cordoba hospital brought the young Frenchwoman to their attention. He described Catus as a “victim of trafficking” who wished to return to her father’s home in Paris after recuperating from an operation¹⁰. Crampagne, the same official who had arranged Andrée Jouenne’s repatriation, located Catus in the hospital and listened to the “details of her miserable life”. He extracted the name and address of her father, sent the French nuns to pay her a visit, and secured a bed in the Asile de Gran Paz so she could convalesce away from the nefarious influence of French pimps who controlled an important segment of the brothel industry in Argentina (Albert Londres 1927). Because Catus went to Argentina with fake papers, Crampagne set about regularizing her travel documents, which would allow her to return home through legalized channels. He wrote a “discrete” letter to her father asking for his daughter’s birth certificate so a passport could be issued in her real name¹¹.

At first glance, Catus’s story was compelling to consular personnel because she hit all the right notes: a misguided seduction, international travel from France to Spain to Argentina, beatings by pimps, and multiple brothel escapes. She was also valuable to the consulate because she appeared to have information on underage French girls working in Argentine brothels¹². But Mathiss, the French consul, realized rather quickly that “the life of this person is very different than what she first claimed”. He now believed that Catus had traveled “freely” to Barcelona to work in the sex industry and had no intention of leaving this line of work until poor health prompted her desire to return to France. Mathiss explained that he could not justify releasing funds for her repatriation unless she provided a “very serious indication that she would break with her past” and adopt a “life of honest work [*une vie de travail*]”¹³. Consular officials finally agreed to repatriate Catus three months later, in February 1927, a decision they made contingent on her sincerity about leaving prostitution behind.

It is entirely plausible that Catus only wanted to return to Paris because she had fallen ill and not because she regretted her work in prostitution. This required performing victimhood for the men at the consulate in exchange for a return ticket to France. While migration histories tend to focus on those who stayed, a substantial proportion of transoceanic migrants in the age of the “great departure” went back to their country of origin. According to the historian Tara Zahra, the untold story of European migration to the Americas from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century is that many migrants “came reluctantly, pushed by circumstances at home,

⁹ CADN, 132 PO/3 76, the French consul in Rosario to the French ministry in Buenos Aires, February 14, 1927.

¹⁰ CADN, 132 PO/3 76, Mathiss, French consul in Rosario, February 22, 1927.

¹¹ CADN, 132 PO/3 76, Henri Crampagne to the French consul in Rosario, November 5, 1926.

¹² CADN, 132 PO/3 76, Henri Crampagne to the French consul in Rosario, November 7, 1926.

¹³ CADN, 132 PO/3 76, Mathiss, French consul in Rosario, November 14, 1926.

feeling that they had no other options, and that many wished mightily to return home again” (2017: 5-6). The historian Mark Wyman estimates that before the US quota system of 1924, one-quarter to one-third of all European migrants who came to the United States permanently returned to their home countries (1993: 6). In some cases, the repatriation of trafficking victims might be understood as a form of *return migration* – or as female migrants’ savvy use of administrative procedures to secure funding for their voyage back. Surely many of these young women always planned to return to France, as selling sex overseas was only a stage in their working lives.

For example, Marie Ferrand and her cousin Carmen Dufort turned directly to the consulate when they wanted to leave Montevideo, Uruguay. Ferrand wrote from the hospital where the two young women had spent six weeks, admitted by the physicians responsible for conducting venereal examinations on prostitutes who worked in licensed brothels. We may safely assume that both women were symptomatic of syphilis. The parallel between Blanchard writing from a deportation cell and Ferrand from a lock hospital is not to be missed, as women working in prostitution increasingly found themselves in violation of the law, subject to criminal penalties, and enclosed in carceral sites. In misspelled French, Ferrand begged the consul to repatriate them: “If only you knew how we have suffered... If you would be so kind as to take care of us and repatriate us to Paris as soon as possible... I count on your goodness”¹⁴. Although official documentation classifies the cousins as trafficked, this looks more like an unsuccessful migration rectified by repatriation proceedings.

Above all else, for the women immortalized in archival files on trafficking, migration was or would become a way of life. Renée Blanchard made her way from New York to California, and spent time in Montana, before petitioning the ambassador to send her back to France. She traversed North America and crisscrossed the Atlantic, despite the increasingly stringent anti-vice provisions and powerful restrictions on mobility imposed by US immigration law. Another remarkable example is seventeen-year-old Marie Marguerite Broquedix, who in 1909 left on a Dutch steamship for Buenos Aires, ostensibly to work as a milliner. She wrote to her family that she was “horribly unhappy” and “could not say the type of life she was leading”¹⁵. Over the next four years, Broquedix moved several times within Argentina, from Chacabuco to Azul to Rosario. She was no stranger to the French consulate in Buenos Aires, where she collected money sent by her family.

Consular officials emphasized that Broquedix never claimed to have been brought to Argentina by force; in their words, she “practiced prostitution willingly” and did not “fall into the category of victims of white slavery”. Nevertheless, these officials urged Broquedix to return to France. The Consul General in Buenos Aires wrote: “Perhaps this young woman will agree to leave the milieu into which she has fallen. In any case, it would be possible to proceed with her repatriation, either by

¹⁴ CADN, 444 PO/1 123, September 23, 1912.

¹⁵ Archives Nationales de France (hereafter AN), F/7/14859, Memo, Troisième Bureau de la Direction de la Sûreté Générale, June 18, 1913.

soliciting the authorization of the Ministry of Interior or by alerting her aunt, Mme. Laffite, who surely would pay the transportation fees of her niece”¹⁶.

Toward the end of 1913, Broquedix could no longer be located by French authorities in Argentina and an investigation initiated by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not turn up any leads¹⁷. But if we turn once again to digitized genealogical records, we get a fresh perspective on Broquedix’s migrating life. After the consulate lost track of her, Broquedix voyaged across the Atlantic several times. In 1923, she entered the northeastern United States through the border with Canada¹⁸. Two years later she arrived in New York aboard a ship coming from Cherbourg, where the passenger list described her as a dressmaker heading to San Francisco¹⁹. Broquedix remained in San Francisco long enough to appear on the 1930 US census²⁰. That same year, she departed from New York en route to Le Havre, traveling as a second-class passenger aboard the celebrated S.S. Ile de France. The Art Deco-styled ocean liner — the crown jewel of the French Line shipping company — catered especially to wealthy and fashionable Americans²¹. The French police archives get the last word on Broquedix, who surfaced again in 1934. She was managing a brothel on the rue Bucharest in Paris, still working in the sex industry at the age of forty-two, twenty-five years after her initial voyage to Argentina²². Broquedix’s promotion from prostitute to brothel madame likely suggests that entrepreneurial calculations motivated her itinerant life.

These extremely mobile young women came in contact with state power at the border station and consulate and in deportation cells and lock hospitals. While they appear in official documentation as unwitting victims or undesirable migrants, their stories cannot be encapsulated by these terms. Gender powerfully shaped how French authorities construed migrant vulnerability and some women used this to their advantage. They appealed for assistance in the language of anti-trafficking discourse, or as women in need of rescue. In the end, proponents of both deportation and repatriation advocated for the moral protection of young female migrants and rehabilitation of women working in prostitution. The line between protecting women and preventing them from migrating was very thin indeed.

¹⁶ AN, F/7/14859, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Minister of Interior, n.d.

¹⁷ AN, F/7/14859, Memo from the Chef du Troisième Bureau to the Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires, November 15, 1913.

¹⁸ *U.S., Index to Alien Arrivals at Canadian Atlantic and Pacific Seaports* (database on-line), 1923, Ancestry.com, accessed May 28, 2019.

¹⁹ *New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957* (database on-line), 1925, Ancestry.com, accessed May 28, 2019.

²⁰ *1930 United States Federal Census* (database on-line), FamilySearch.org, accessed May 28, 2019.

²¹ *New York Book Indexes to Passenger Lists, 1906-1942* (database on-line), S.S. Ile de France, May 28, 1930, FamilySearch.org, accessed May 28, 2019. On the S.S. Ile de France, see *The Ocean Liner Virtual Museum*, http://www.oceanlinermuseum.co.uk/Ile_de_France.html

²² AN, F/7/14859, Memo from the Préfet de Police, le Directeur de l’Hygiène, de la Protection de l’Enfance et du Travail to the Direction de la Sûreté Général, Contrôle Général des Services de Recherches Judiciaires, June 28, 1934.

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