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Angela Davis on
Understandings of 'home'
in the memoirs of
Vera Weizmann

**Susan McPherson and
Angela McPherson** on
Norah Dacre Fox, a suffragette
turned fascist

Sheena Evans on
Janet Vaughan and Spanish
medical aid

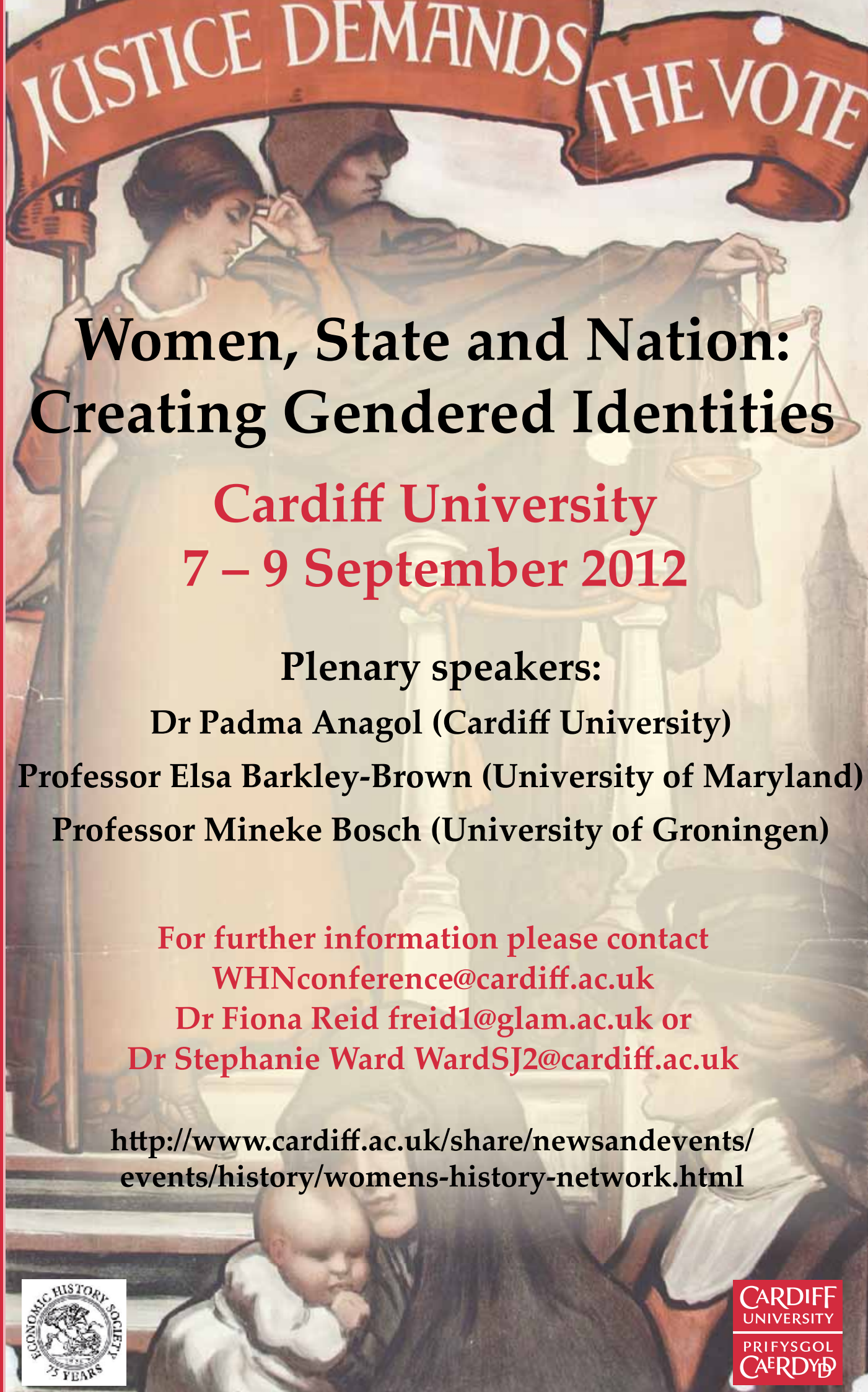
Karen Flynn on
Caribbean nurses in Britain
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Plus
Seven book reviews
Committee news
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Getting to know each other

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Women, State and Nation: Creating Gendered Identities

Cardiff University
7 – 9 September 2012

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Editorial

As we look forward to some warmer weather, we welcome you to the Summer 2012 issue of the *Women's History Magazine*! This season's issue features accounts of migration and nation, women's work and politics, and questions of female identity. These multiple strands run across our articles as we move across Britain to Spain, Russia, Israel, the Caribbean and Canada, and over the course of the twentieth century.

Angela and Susan McPherson offer a fascinating discussion of why the former suffragette Norah Dacre Fox became a fascist, whilst simultaneously exploring their own investment in Fox's identities as her descendants. They admit to the competing emotions of shame and pride that they felt when conducting the research, but try to stand back and give us a balanced discussion of what motivated Fox's politics, and intriguingly the things that tied her seemingly contradictory beliefs together. In doing so, they highlight Fox's own identity as an Irish migrant in the UK and also her interaction with other migrant groups, such as Germans, during the World Wars.

Sheena Evans contributes an interesting biography of the medical doctor Janet Vaughan, focusing on her involvement in the Spanish Medical Aid movement during the Spanish Civil War. Evans paints a picture of a passionate woman, deeply invested in providing aid during the war and active in a variety of committees and charitable actions to support the movement, but also reflects on the significance of her professional, class and personal identities in offering her the opportunity to take a leading role. Like Fox, Vaughan's investment and interaction with another nation (that she spent little time in) are central in her shaping of selfhood at this time in her life.

This idea is explored explicitly in Angela Davis' discussion of the Zionist activist and medical doctor Vera Weizman's account of home. Weizman moved with her husband from Russia to the UK, where she had to requalify as a doctor before being able to practice, and then again to Israel after successful campaigning for the establishment of a Jewish state. Weizman's accounts of her experience highlight her sense of dislocation at following her husband to both the UK and Israel, and the way in which she attempted to make a 'home' for herself both through her professional identity as a doctor and through her 'home-making' within the 'domestic'. Once more, work, politics and nation intertwine in the making of the female self.

In our last article, Karen Flynn takes up these themes in her exploration of Caribbean women who came to the UK to train as nurses in the mid-twentieth century, before migrating onwards to Canada. The women that provided the oral histories at the heart of this article discuss their motivations for migrating to the UK and Canada, why they chose nursing, and finally the way that their profession shaped their responses to settling in Canada, where they felt that nursing was treated with less respect than in the UK. She ties these narratives into a wider discussion about emigration, race and professional identity, highlighting the way that the profession of nursing for black women could

counter, but never remove, the casual racism that shaped these women's lives. In a positive finish, Flynn allows her interviewees to speak to what changes they would ask from the nursing profession to enable black women to work without experiencing racism – highlighting the lessons that we should learn from these experiences of work, race, nation and migration in the shaping of female identities.

In addition, this issue has two 'Getting to Know Each Other' features with the Women's History Network committee's new 'media team', Tanya Cheadle and Kate Murphy. With backgrounds in television and radio, they have been giving the committee, and soon the network, advice on how to market women's history to a broader audience. Here we learn why they chose to become women's historians. We also welcome Kate to the editorial team here at the *Magazine*, while at the same time saying a sad goodbye and thank you to Juliette Pattinson. Juliette has been with us for three years and resigns to move onwards and upwards as newly appointed Subject Leader in History at Strathclyde. Juliette's resignation from the committee as well as the *Magazine*, in addition to our new four-year terms for the editorial team at the *Magazine*, means that new recruits are needed! If you are interested in getting involved in the committee or the *Magazine*, please get in touch with our convenor, Barbara Bush, at convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org. As ever, we also have book reviews and committee news to keep you informed about the field and the network!

Remember, this is your space, and we welcome suggestions for how it could be improved or extended. Finally, we welcome articles, both long and short, that help us to explore women's history.

Editorial Team: Katie Barclay, Sue Hawkins, Ann Kettle, Anne Logan, Kate Murphy, Juliette Pattinson and Emma Robertson.

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Understandings of 'home' in the memoirs of Vera Weizmann

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This article investigates the complex presentation of home in *The Impossible Takes Longer*, the memoirs of the doctor and Zionist activist Vera Weizmann. The memoirs were produced in collaboration with the writer, translator and historian David Tutaev towards the end of her life and were published posthumously in 1967. Her narrative chronicles the fight for a Jewish homeland – 'the great adventure which brought the Jewish people home after almost two thousand years'.¹ However within this overarching theme of the homecoming, it is clear that her understandings of home were rather more complex and it is this ambiguity which I endeavour to consider in this paper.

A gendered approach to migration studies is now well established. Reflecting upon the field in the early 2000s, Umut Erel, Mirijana Morokvasic and Kyoko Shinozaki concluded that 'under the influence of feminist inquiry about the position of women in society and in gender hierarchies, migration scholarship has slowly moved away from male centred universalism'.² As Marlou Schrover and Eileen Janes Yeo note, however, the preoccupation of much of this research with women and the family has seemed to suggest that gender is somehow enclosed within the domestic or private domain.³ They argue, instead, there is a need to focus on gender constraint and agency in the public sphere. Following Yeo, then, this article seeks to examine how ideas of homemaking relate to public and communal, but also multiple and shifting, understandings of home and homeland. As Yeo states: 'although it may be a geographical place, the true home is also an imagined terrain, a symbolic landscape filled with desire, a place to which are attached deep feelings of longing as well as belonging'. This homeland can be imagined in a mythic past or projected into the future and it is built on several levels in which men and women have different roles to play.⁴ A number of different understandings of home circulated amongst the Jewish Diaspora in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, including a theological idea of homeland (Orthodox Judaism believed that the Jewish people were in exile from Jerusalem, the homeland that would come into being once the Messiah had appeared) and a political, Zionist understanding of homeland with Jerusalem at the heart of a Jewish nation state.⁵ In her discussion of working- and lower-middle-class Jews in Britain and the United States at the turn of the century, Yeo argues that the Jewish home itself was also a 'travelling homeland', necessary to produce and preserve the Jewish people in exile until the ultimate destination could be reached; and that women played a central role in this home.⁶ Indeed Lara Marks has gone so far as to argue that this association of Jewish women with home in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Britain has meant that Jewish communal history has tended to present an idealised view of the hardworking

housewife and devoted mother and downplayed women's economic contribution and organised activism.⁷

However, while Vera Weizmann's experiences shared some commonalities with the Eastern European Jewish migrants described by Yeo, Marks and others, she was also in a different position due to her status as a member of a social and cultural elite.⁸ Therefore, inspired by the work of the anthropologist Anne-Meike Fechter on gender and privileged migration, I will examine Vera Weizmann's account of migration within this framework. As Fechter has argued, despite the wealth of scholarship on gender and migration there remains a lack of a gendered perspective on the experience of privileged migrants. This absence has facilitated the representation of the lives of transnational elites as fluid, moving with ease and without boundaries. In contrast, in her study of the wives of corporate expatriates in Indonesia carried out in the early 2000s, Fechter found a less celebratory picture.⁹ The women she studied responded to their difficulties in two different ways: 'while some women cast themselves as victims, others accept this framework and exploit it within its limits'.¹⁰ I wish to apply this dichotomy to Vera Weizmann's account of her experiences of migration. I will show that at different points of her narrative she employed each of these models, namely of victim and active determiner of her experiences of migration, and these then influenced how she portrayed her different 'homes'.

The first home: Russia

Fechter's approach is particularly appropriate for an analysis of Vera Weizmann's account of migration because Vera was indeed a 'privileged' migrant. Born Vera Chatzman on 27 November 1881 in Rostov, Russia, she enjoyed a comfortable, middle-class childhood. Her father had been pressed in his youth into a twenty-five-year term of military service and had fought in the Crimean War. This military service granted him the privilege of living beyond the Pale of Settlement.¹¹ Therefore, unlike most Jews in Russia during these years, Vera had the advantages of life as the daughter of a prosperous and assimilated clothing merchant.¹² At the age of five, she was sent to a French-speaking kindergarten and four years later she began to study at the Marinskaya Imperial Gymnasium. She then went on to study music at the Rostov-on-Don conservatory before, at the age of fourteen, choosing medicine as her profession. Vera's family were not Orthodox. While Jewish holidays were observed, only the two sons received a Jewish education, while the five daughters, including Vera, were not given any religious instruction.¹³ In part, the narrative of Vera's memoirs is constructed around her discovery of Zionism and recognition of her own Jewishness, which is then finally realised in her migration to Palestine. In order to

stress this journey of self-discovery, she contrasts her present self with her childish naivety. She tells her readers that, growing up in Russia, 'My own knowledge ... did not stretch much further than that Jews went to Synagogue and Christians went to Church. Of Palestine I knew next to nothing.'¹⁴ However it is also important to note that she felt her childhood home remained influential upon her.¹⁵ While she was somewhat ambivalent in her descriptions of return visits to Russia, she nonetheless retained a deep affinity with the country and an 'innate feeling of being Russian, which has never entirely left me'.¹⁶

Moving to England

When she turned eighteen, Vera went to Geneva to study medicine. It was in Geneva in 1900 that she met the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann (later the first President of Israel) at the Zionist club, which acted as a meeting place for Jewish students. However Vera presents herself as still being politically ignorant at this time: 'Zionism was, and for some time remained, as [Chaim] so permanently stated, more or less a "closed book" to me.'¹⁷ Indeed discussing the 1905 Uganda project, Vera wrote that she, 'hardly understood what all the fuss was about. Palestine still seemed so remote, so firmly secure within the Ottoman Empire.'¹⁸ The couple were married in 1906 and afterwards moved to Manchester where Chaim was employed as a research chemist at the university.

This arrival in Manchester is a pivotal turning point in Vera's story and forms a dramatic episode in her account. Without friends and with no knowledge of English, she felt isolated in Manchester and, describing her arrival in the city, recalled that, 'I cannot say that I took a liking to this place: on the contrary I hated it from the very beginning; but I did not divulge this secret to my husband.'¹⁹ Jehuda Reinharz states that, while Weizmann's rooms at Parkfield Street were adequate for a bachelor, Vera found them depressing. A cab station in front of the house provided a background of unceasing noise; the three sparsely furnished rooms were cold and uninviting. Hampered by her inability to speak English, Vera was necessarily housebound, waiting in these miserable surroundings for Chaim to return home from his daily work at the laboratory or from weekend trips devoted to Zionist propaganda. The monotony was only broken by an occasional tea party to which the university wives invited her, making valiant attempts to communicate with her in French.²⁰ Vera was 'desperately cold and lonely' and stated that 'some of my most difficult and depressing years were spent in Manchester. They were dark days indeed'.²¹ Vera's account of her arrival in Manchester resonates with the experiences of the expatriate women in Jakarta studied by Fechter. She found that 'a key concern for many women is a loss of personal identity, as they feel cut off from their social environments in their home countries'.²² Vera also presented her experience of migrating to Manchester as an experience of loss. She felt acutely homesick and this was exacerbated by the hostile environment she found herself in.

However, if Manchester was originally portrayed

as a place of darkness, this did not remain the case. Vera began to soften towards Manchester. Talking about making friends with other university wives, she reflected that, 'there were many other pleasant interludes which helped to diminish my feeling of loneliness in Manchester, a city for which I gradually began to feel some affection. It was after all my first "home" in England'.²³ Indeed recounting the Weizmann's Manchester period, their friend Israel Sieff wrote that, 'Vera herself has told me of the nostalgia she has often felt for what she describes as "the most wonderful epoch of our lives".'²⁴ One reason for this change of heart was Vera's developing professional life. Fechter found that among those women who felt they were victims of their migration, it was the loss of their professional identity which emerged as being most troubling to them.²⁵ Vera's attitude towards Manchester altered with her growing professional independence. In 1913, she successfully passed the British medical certification examination, after having studied medicine for two years in Manchester, in addition to her studies in Geneva. Initially Vera received a temporary job in public health, working in the Manchester slums where she was in charge of seven maternal and infant welfare clinics. This later led to a permanent position.²⁶ I would argue that her professional success enabled Vera to form a more positive impression of her migration experience.

However, Fechter also notes that successful homemaking was another way by which women could come to terms with their migration experiences.²⁷ Vera's happiness in England also depended upon her ability to create a home for her family and it was something she took great pride in. The houses which Vera inhabited form a central theme of her narrative. She describes them at length and in great depth which reveals their importance to her. Indeed 'home', not only as a metaphysical idea but also the domestic space, is a recurring theme throughout the memoir.²⁸ In the spring of 1907, shortly before the birth of their first son Benjy, the Weizmanns 'were able to move into a home of our own'.²⁹ This house was in Birchfields Road, in close proximity to Victoria Park and the university. In 1907 it was one of Manchester's main roads, thus making it easily accessible by public transportation. The houses were attractive, with small gardens, and it was a solid, middle-class neighbourhood.³⁰ It was during this period in Manchester that, in 1910, Vera took out British nationalisation papers and it was indicative of her developing attachment to the country. Indeed, her loyalty to her two homes of Britain and Palestine became a source of tension – one which constantly recurs throughout her memoirs. Vera explained:

Whatever 'alienation' we may have felt subsequently during the struggle for Jewish statehood, neither Chaim nor I ever lost our feeling of special affection and admiration for Britain and the British people. That during the period of the Mandate our affection may have been misunderstood by our own people was a penalty we both accepted in silence.³¹



Figure 1. The Weizmann House. Personal photograph taken by the author December 2008.

During the First World War, the couple moved to London so Chaim could undertake government war work. Chaim had discovered a process for synthesising acetone, a solvent used in the manufacture of munitions.³² Initially the Weizmanns moved into an elegant house on 67 Addison Road in Kensington. This fifteen-room mansion was the kind of home the Weizmanns had always aspired to live in. In this house, Chaim and Vera's second son, Michael, was born on 16 November 1916. In 1919, when their lease expired, the Weizmanns moved to a nearby and even larger house at 16 Addison Crescent.³³ Fechter notes that a great source of satisfaction to the expatriate women she spoke to was the ability to provide for their families under difficult circumstances.³⁴ Vera's description of her search for this new home is suggestive of such a feeling of accomplishment. She explained:

to find a suitable house in post-war London was not easy. There had been no building during the war. Edwardian or Victorian mansions of six or seven floors were to be had, but these I could not and would not take. At last I found a house in Addison Crescent which filled our needs ... When Chaim returned from the peace conference, I had re-decorated the house and put in central heating.³⁵

Vera did not initially return to medical practice after the move to London. Her role as a hostess formed a full-time job. Jehuda Reinharz has written of how:

As the Weizmanns' social life became increasingly active, Vera combined tea and Zionist politics with her natural elegance. Her beauty, impeccable intuition, and

accumulated knowledge of the mores and manners of upper-class British society were a great asset, and she was a willing partner in the world of the salons within which she and Chaim moved.³⁶

Chaim himself said that the 'house was for thirty years the center for all who were interested in, or connected with, Zionism and Palestine'.³⁷

Returning home? Palestine

While 1919 might have marked the height of their London life, it was also the year of Vera's first visit to Palestine. This first visit 'home' provoked an ambivalent response. While she described it as 'the beginning of a new and fulfilling experience of my life, the beginning of my own journey back to my own people', she also wrote that the visit, 'to which I had looked forward so much, was an abysmal disappointment'.³⁸ This visit to Palestine was made with Vera's friends and Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) colleagues Rebecca Sieff and Edith Elder.³⁹ Vera felt that all three women experienced a culture shock: 'from so highly developed a civilization as England's it was not easy for us to adjust our outlook to those rugged physical conditions'.⁴⁰ She continued, 'I was not altogether sorry, I must admit, to leave Palestine at this time'.⁴¹ In late autumn 1919, Vera saw Rehovot, which was to be her future home, for the first time, and she found it as displeasing as the rest of the country: 'Had I been told that we should eventually take up permanent residence in this sandy place, I am sure I should have laughed the mere suggestion to scorn'.⁴² Nonetheless, land was purchased; a famous architect, Eric Mendelsohn, was engaged and building on the 'Weizmann House' began in 1935 (See Fig. 1). Vera recalled that she made

the move to Rehovot with the same trepidation that she had felt on her arrival in Manchester thirty years before. Chaim Weizmann wrote that the family gave up their London home with deep regret, although consoled by the fact they had made another home in Palestine.⁴³ Norman Rose has offered a less positive account explaining that 'Vera felt the change most'. She so much 'wanted to have things like in London'.⁴⁴ Vera herself said that her 'early life in Rehovoth [sic] was far from happy'.⁴⁵ As in her first migration to Manchester, she experienced the move with a sense of loss.

In her research on expatriate wives, Fechter found that women used the project of recreating 'civilisation' as a way of bringing purpose to their migration experience.⁴⁶ Vera tried to recreate the atmosphere of the couple's London home in their new environment in Palestine, filling the house with the markers of a cultured, Western-European lifestyle. To the dismay of Eric Mendlesohn, Vera insisted on designing the interior of the house. All the furniture and art were originals, most of them imported from England or France. The kitchen contained Israel's first refrigerator. The drawing-room was adorned with a number of splendid works of art. A bust by Jacob Epstein surveyed the dining-room, spacious enough for the most lavish of parties. From the hall, a majestic spiral stairway led to the bedrooms and guest rooms.⁴⁷ Vera's desire to create the splendour of the Weizmann House can be seen as her way of establishing agency through homemaking. She was trying to take control over her environment by imposing her ideal of civilised living upon it. Employing her model of 'living on the frontier', Fechter argues that amongst the women she studied, a group saw their migration experience as 'comparable to the lives of pioneers in the "Wild West"'.⁴⁸ In the context of the '**pioneer movement**' that immigrated to **Palestine** before 1948, Vera Weizmann's conception of her migration to Palestine as being 'pioneering' would have been more loaded and meaningful.⁴⁹ Indeed Vera wrote that "'Kibbutz Weizmann", as I jokingly call my house, has become part of the living history of Israel.'⁵⁰

Conclusion

The question of where was home was one that Vera Weizmann was never able to entirely resolve. She held multiple understandings of home, and indeed felt conflicting ties to her different homes, throughout her life. For example, when she first moved to England she was 'homesick' for Russia. Indeed she said she always felt Russian. However, she then developed a deep attachment to her adopted home of England.⁵¹ When compiling her memoirs in her final home in Israel, she continued to reminisce about England, calling it her 'other home'.⁵² Vera was never able to wholly separate herself from England, and this can be seen in her constant comparison of the new Israeli state to her former country of residence. For example, after travelling to the United States after Chaim's death she recalled how, 'On my return home to Israel later that year, I was impressed by our policeman who reminded me of British "Bobbies" –

they were as smart and correct.'⁵³ Ultimately, though, she also felt a strong connection to Israel, which she viewed as being the Jewish homeland, and reported that when Boris Guriel, the curator of the Weizmann Archives, asked her, "'What keeps you here?" I replied, "The grave". The past and the living present had anchored me to Israel.'⁵⁴ The foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 had marked the realisation of the Zionist quest for a Jewish homeland, which her husband Chaim, and indeed Vera herself, had worked for so long towards. Nonetheless, Vera struggled to feel 'at home' there. In constructing the Weizmann House, Vera was trying not only to help build the new Jewish homeland, but also establish her own place within it.

Notes

1. Vera Weizmann, *The Impossible Takes Longer* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1967), 77.
2. Umut Erel, Mirijana Morokvasic and Kyoko Shinozaki, 'Introduction', in *Crossing Borders and Shifting Boundaries*, Vol. 1, ed. Umut Erel, Mirijana Morokvasic and Kyoko Shinozaki (Opladen, Leske and Budrich, 2003), 9.
3. Marlou Schrover and Eileen Janes Yeo, 'Introduction: Moving the Focus to the Public Sphere', in *Gender, Migration and the Public Sphere, 1850-2005*, ed. Marlou Schrover and Eileen Janes Yeo (New York and London, Routledge, 2010), 1-2.
4. Eileen Janes Yeo, 'Gender and Homeland in the Irish and Jewish Diasporas, 1850-1930', in Schrover and Yeo, *Gender, Migration and the Public Sphere*, 15-17.
5. Yeo, 'Gender and Homeland', 17-19.
6. *Ibid.*, 21.
7. Lara Marks, 'Carers and Servers of the Jewish Community: The Marginalized Heritage of Jewish Women in Britain', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 10 (1991), 106-27. See also Lara Marks, *Model Mothers. Jewish Women and Maternity Provision in East London, 1870-1939* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994).
8. For example, Rickie Burman, 'The Jewish Woman as Breadwinner: The Changing Value of Women's Work in a Manchester Immigrant Community', *Oral History*, 10 (1982), 27-39; David Cesarani, ed., *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990); Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2002); Tony Kushner, ed., *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London, Frank Cass, 1992).
9. Anne-Meike Fechter, *Transnational Lives: Expatriates in Indonesia* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), 38.
10. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 48.
11. The Pale of Settlement covered modern-day Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine and western Russia. Except for some minor exceptions, the Russian imperial authorities forced Jews to live in the Pale.
12. For the position of Russian Jews see Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001), 1-58; Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002); Eugene M. Avrutin, *Jews and the Imperial State* (Ithaca, Cornell

University Press, 2010).

13. Esther Carmel-Hakim, 'Vera Weizmann', *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, 1 March 2009, Jewish Women's Archive, [jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/weizmann-vera, accessed 13 January 2011].

14. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 5.

15. *Ibid.*, 1.

16. *Ibid.*, 9.

17. *Ibid.*, 13.

18. *Ibid.*, 19. The British Uganda Programme was a plan to give a portion of British East Africa to the Jewish people as a homeland.

19. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 31.

20. Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985), 300-1.

21. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 30-1.

22. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 45.

23. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 33.

24. Israel M. Sieff, 'The Manchester Period', in *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography by Several Hands*, ed. Meyer W. Weisgal and Joel Carmichael (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 95.

25. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 43.

26. Carmel-Hakim, 'Vera Weizmann'.

27. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 49.

28. A large literature exists on women and domestic space. For example, Hilde Heyden and Güslüm Baydar, eds, *Negotiating Domesticity* (London, Routledge, 2005); Susan Kent, ed., *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994).

29. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 34.

30. Reinharz, *Zionist Leader*, 301.

31. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 42.

32. Jehuda Reinharz, 'Science in the Service of Politics: The Case of Chaim Weizmann during the First World War', *English Historical Review*, 100 (1985), 599-600.

33. Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 77.

34. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 49.

35. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 95.

36. Reinharz, *Statesman*, 78.

37. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York, Harpers and Brothers Publishers, 1949), 72-3.

38. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 79 and 91.

39. Vera Weizmann and her colleagues Edith Eder, Romana Goodman, Henrietta Irwell and Rebecca Sieff formed a separate Zionist organisation for women, The Federation of Women Zionists (FWZ), in 1918. It was renamed the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) in 1920.

40. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 92.

41. *Ibid.*, 94.

42. *Ibid.*, 133.

43. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 72-3.

44. Norman Rose, *Chaim Weizmann* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 299.

45. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 137.

46. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 49.

47. Reinharz, *Zionist Leader*, 299-300.

48. Fechter, *Transnational Lives*, 49.

49. See Deborah S. Bernstein, *Pioneers and Homemakers* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992); Martin Gilbert, *Exile and Return* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978).

50. Weizmann, *Impossible*, 141.

51. *Ibid.*, 254.

52. *Ibid.*, 254.

53. *Ibid.*, 236.

54. *Ibid.*, 254.

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The private and political journey of Norah Dacre Fox, a suffragette turned fascist

Susan McPherson and Angela McPherson

University of Essex

Introduction

Norah Dacre Fox was one of three high profile suffragettes to join the British Union of Fascists (BUF) during the 1930s. The others were Mary Richardson, infamous for slashing the Rokeby Venus, and Commandant Mary Allen, awarded an OBE in 1917 for her commitment to developing women's policing.¹ With hindsight, the political choices of these women seem paradoxical. How could a woman who fought for a profoundly democratic right to vote then fight for profoundly undemocratic principles just twenty years later?

In the 1920s and 1930s, the world was recovering from the social turmoil that erupted after World War One, and for a period Britain was run by two National Coalition governments voted into power in 1931 and 1935. Worldwide, governments were dominated by issues arising out of the Great Depression; there were endless arguments over the benefits of free trade versus protectionism and about how to deal with the endemic poverty and general hardship. Many intellectuals and leading thinkers in Britain at this time (including Churchill) flirted with fascist thinking, partly because Mussolini and Hitler seemed to have policies that might be able to combat unemployment.² Meanwhile, the women's movement, having succeeded in achieving its uniting aim, female suffrage, was now a disparate movement – its former members forming or joining diverse groups and societies with a range of feminist as well as other more general social or political aims.

It is in this context that we explore why Dacre Fox (later known as Elam) was attracted to Oswald Mosley and the BUF. This approach takes into account the prevailing social norms of the interwar period in Britain but also seeks to understand how Dacre Fox's personal and political experiences and inherent personality traits may have influenced her political thinking.

It is critical to note that it was nearly twenty years after the end of the suffrage campaign that Dacre Fox and her fellow suffragettes, Allen and Richardson, joined the BUF; hence the journey was not a direct path for any of them. Indeed, these twenty years saw all three women follow apparently divergent political careers. Mary Allen stood as an Independent Liberal candidate in 1922 and from the end of the war campaigned for women's policing. She became deputy to Margaret Damer Dawson's Women's Police Service and ultimately its Commandant in 1920 when Dawson died. The service was not formally part of the Metropolitan Police and gained mixed acceptance by the regular police force and the government, but was appreciated in some quarters for concerning itself with women's issues such as prostitution, trafficking and the fair handling of women in courts. Woodeson suggests that the movement to introduce a female police arm was not

ultimately successful at this time because it was peopled by middle and upper-class women, mostly volunteers without the need of an income, who put moralistic aims above the protection of the working-class women they were working with.³ This concern with growing 'vice' was a theme taken up within the BUF from where Allen continued campaigning in the 1930s.

Mary Richardson joined the Women's Freedom League and stood as a Labour and then Independent Labour candidate in successive elections (1922 and 1924). Joining the BUF therefore appeared to be a significant u-turn from socialism to fascism, although she left the BUF in 1935, whereas Allen and Dacre Fox remained members throughout the period.

Dacre Fox pursued at least four prominent causes in her lifetime: the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) suffrage campaign 1912-14; the anti-alien campaign 1914-20 (on which basis she stood as an Independent candidate in the 1918 General Election); the anti-vivisection and anti-vaccination movement 1919-40; and the BUF 1934-45. We will examine each of these in more detail.

It is important to note that Allen, Richardson and Dacre Fox had different careers within the WSPU. Richardson makes clear in her autobiography (1953) that she was very much a foot soldier, carrying out orders from the top and having little contact with any of the WSPU leaders.⁴ Her infamy stems from a very public stunt (slashing a famous piece of art) which earned her a reputation, but it was nevertheless related to her orders, such as the hierarchal structure of the WSPU. Allen was a regional organiser for the WSPU in Sussex and then Edinburgh and, although she received a hunger strike medal, she was not part of the Pankhurst cadre in London. Dacre Fox, however, was a key member of the inner cadre, issuing, not receiving, instructions. She was a key planner, strategist, spokeswoman and propagandist.

Pugh has argued that there was a clear trajectory from WSPU activism to fascism, suggesting that there were practical as well as ideological links.⁵ The organisations shared a semi-militaristic style, similar uniforms, street confrontations and membership of a tightly-linked group. The ideological links included feminism (which Mosley claimed to espouse), women as full citizens with equal pay, and a rejection of parliamentary politics to achieve political ends. Yet it is clear that Allen, Richardson and Dacre Fox followed very different paths towards fascism, personally and politically. The links proposed by Pugh are not by themselves enough of an explanation as to why these women chose fascism; other groups and societies in the 1930s also offered former suffragettes some degree of familiarity ideologically, socially or in their organisational structure.⁶ In order to understand the political choices of any one individual, it is crucial to examine their personal

trajectory. In this article we seek to understand the political choices of one individual and how these related to each other and her private life. We hope through doing so to contribute to a conversation about what motivated some feminists to move into fascism, but recognise that a single biography cannot be directly extrapolated from to explain a complex social phenomenon.

Methodology

When examining an individual biographically, it is important to be cautious about sources and inherent biases. The present research was conducted by descendants of the subject (her granddaughter and great-granddaughter), the former (Angela McPherson) having lived with Dacre Fox for four years as a child. Angela found Dacre Fox to be a frightening figure and this memory may have potentially clouded her interpretation of some of the evidence. Moreover, it has been suggested to us by journalists and other researchers that discovering an ancestor to have a 'shameful' past (membership of the BUF) would incite strong emotions. Inevitably this is true, but in addition, the discoveries based on our research have kindled a range of emotions from pride to disgust and we hope that the counterbalancing effects of these have enabled us to form a relatively even-handed view.

Certainly we attempted to undertake the research with an attitude of historical as well as personal curiosity and to try to understand, rather than judge, Dacre Fox. We had no personal papers from Dacre Fox and our research has primarily been based on a range of public domain sources, including newspaper archives, National Archives, fascist press, books and public records of births, marriages, deaths, probates and passenger lists. In addition, some oral family history was obtained, which included the memories of one author (Angela), as well as that of her sister Christine Elam and mother Olive James. Olive James is the only living person we are aware of who was an adult when they knew Dacre Fox. These matters had not been discussed within the family prior to the current research, which was initiated by the author, Susan McPherson, in 2004, and much of it was unknown to the authors prior to then. Oral family history was gathered in conversation and email exchanges between 2004 and the present. Inevitably there are limitations associated with using information from oral family history, such as issues of selective memory, memory informed by hindsight and the role of family dynamics. Nevertheless, there are also advantages to using this type of evidence since it is not available in the public domain and can give access to apparently inconsequential information that when added to the more formal evidence helps to support or refute emerging hypotheses.

Another critical element of our methodology has been to follow up sources of information to check credibility wherever possible. We were aware that some



Nora Elam, reproduced with the kind permission of the Museum of London

myths had emerged about Dacre Fox, perhaps because of suspicions that developed around her and other fascists in the late 1930s, and perhaps also because of her own willingness to allow misunderstandings of her identity to go unchecked (for example, over her marital status) and the use of two different names when working in two different organisations (Dacre Fox for LPAVS and Elam for the BUF) during the same period. Because of this ambiguity, we were keen to ensure that we checked as many sources as possible and in the process uncovered evidence which refutes some myths. For example, Pugh listed Dacre Fox as one of thirty-seven well-to-do ladies giving large donations to the WSPU between 1906-14. Pugh's reference was a newspaper article in the Janie Allen collection now held at the Edinburgh Library. Rather than rely on a newspaper article, we checked the WSPU accounts held at the Women's Library carefully examining

each year's detailed accounts to discover that Dacre Fox had never donated any large sum and her only contribution was her annual membership fee of one shilling beginning in 1912.⁷ This and other evidence suggested that Dacre Fox was keen to be thought of as well-to-do, but was middle class in origin, being the daughter of a printer and Irish politician and the wife of a surgeon's son. Other myths and partial truths found in published work include claims that Dacre Fox was a member of the Women's Freedom League (which she denied publicly in a letter to *The Times*); that she worked on government commissions during World War One (claimed by Mosley); that she was 'Lady' Dacre Fox; that she and Dudley Elam were married; that Dudley Elam was a Professor and Don at Oxford (he was merely a rather poor student);⁸ that Dudley was 'Chairman' of the Chichester Conservatives (he was in fact a minor member of the committee); that Dacre Fox and Dudley were 'invited' to visit Mosley and Diana in Holloway prison in 1943 (the prison officer in fact mistook her for Mosley's mother-in-law which led to Mosley agreeing to see her). While some of these statements are partially true, and others completely untrue, our aim was to examine in detail original source documents and properly contextualise them. It is this attention to detail employed throughout our research that we hope lends it credibility, despite our familial relationship with the subject. Owing to space, it is not possible to discuss all of these myths and half truths or to present a complete biography. Instead, this paper attempts to address a key question surrounding Dacre Fox: why she turned to fascism, having campaigned so vigorously for democracy in the WSPU.

WSPU suffrage campaign

Dacre Fox entered the ranks of suffrage campaigners late in 1912 at the age of thirty-five.⁹ Her main motivation was probably heavily influenced by a stated hatred of her father, whom she described as a strict disciplinarian who treated his wife and daughters like children and possessions, expected to be subservient at all times. Dacre Fox's resentment of men, evident in her reactions to her father, developed and became more entrenched during her suffragette activities.

Dacre Fox rose quickly through the WSPU and by March 1913 was made General Secretary becoming a member of the Pankhurst inner cadre. According to suffragette Grace Roe, she was highly prized by the Pankhursts for her public speaking, described as unapologetic, rousing and defiant.¹⁰ Dacre Fox became a leading WSPU spokeswoman, delivering propaganda in public speeches and statements to the press. Roe recalled in interviews in the 1970s that Dacre Fox was a lively, loyal comrade, who 'played a big role for her', relating how she and Dacre Fox would make up the middle pages of the Suffragette newspaper together each week, sometimes in hiding from the police.

Dacre Fox took a prominent role in two particular WSPU campaigns. Hunger striking was a WSPU tactic aimed at embarrassing the government, in response to which the government introduced the infamous 'Cat and Mouse Act' in 1913. The horrors of force feeding and

the treatment of women under this legislation are well recorded.¹¹ To embarrass the government further, the WSPU launched a campaign to enlist the support of the Established Church in condemning force feeding. Dacre Fox led delegations to the Archbishop of Canterbury and other leading churchmen, and was involved in a letter-writing campaign in major newspapers. The response of church leaders was to assert that the women brought this problem on themselves because militancy was causing them to fail in their Christian duties as women and, in so doing, were opposing the will of God. Dacre Fox's response was made clear in a description of her interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury, 'I can only say that as I sat looking at that old man, the feeling which was uppermost in my mind was that of contempt ... I wondered if Calvary had almost been in vain'. She also wrote to the Bishop of London, publishing the letter in *The Post*:

The Bishop of London in 'Blinkers'

The whole truth of the matter is that, like others, you have allowed the Government and the prison officials to hoodwink you ... A whitewash brush, my Lord Bishop, has been placed in your hand by the authorities, in order that the public shall still remain in ignorance of the diabolical methods used by the Government in their desire to terrorise the militant women ... Obviously, in the circumstances, your investigation of the horrors of forcible feeding was no investigation at all ... It is clear, then, that in the case of the Suffragists the Home Secretary is not punishing them for what they have done, but is inflicting, or threatens to inflict this torture upon them to prevent them doing in the future what they believe to be their duty ... An endeavour to force a recantation of principle is, and always has been, the essence of torture.¹²

The WSPU failed to win church support to end force feeding, but the hypocrisy and farcical stance of the church's position on militancy was revealed in an interview with the Archbishop of York when Dacre Fox asked if the same attitude would be applied by the church to the Ulster militants. The Bishop responded that the 'WSPU position was different ... the Ulster rebels had created a situation which the Government had to accept'. Dacre Fox responded, 'This is a direct incitement to militancy. We are to create a situation which is such a terrible menace that the Government must yield, then you will support us?'¹³

Dacre Fox was born in Dublin. Her father was a prominent Irish nationalist having been a founder member of the Dublin branch of the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association.¹⁴ Her mother was Church of Ireland and her father was born Catholic, converting on marriage.¹⁵ Given this heritage, Dacre Fox is likely to have had a particular interest in the Home Rule debate; hence, her second campaign concerned Ulster militancy. The Ulster militants were headed by Sir Edward Carson who had founded the

Ulster Unionist Party with the object of getting Ulster excluded from any Home Rule Bill the government might introduce to grant Irish independence. The third Home Rule Bill was passed in 1912, followed in 1913 by the founding of the Ulster Volunteer Force and the outbreak of militancy. Carson instigated gun-running and training men to fight in Ulster.

The WSPU saw new opportunities to embarrass the government in this imbroglio. The campaign consisted of Dacre Fox and Flora Drummond camping on the doorsteps of Carson and Lord Lansdowne (a fellow Ulster MP). When the press arrived Dacre Fox stated that 'she had been summoned to appear in the afternoon for making inciting speeches and as Lord Lansdowne had also been making inciting speeches, yet seemed to be perfectly safe from interference, she thought she had better be with him so that if they took her they could take both'. The logic was irrefutable, but that did not stop Dacre Fox and Drummond being arrested and imprisoned in Holloway, where both endured force feeding. Carson and Lansdowne were never arrested for their role in inciting Irish militancy.¹⁶

Although these women are today highly regarded for their bravery in the cause of female suffrage, it must be remembered that at the time the attitude of the church leaders was seen as perfectly normal and acceptable. Many women were opposed to WSPU militancy, including other suffrage campaigners who thought it only served to put their cause in a bad light. For Dacre Fox, however, the hypocrisy and appalling treatment she experienced contributed to strengthening her anger, frustration and resentment, especially towards men in positions of power. Moreover, her confrontations with church leaders and then Ulster militants may well have had a major impact on her beliefs, including her loss of faith in God.

Anti-alien campaign

On the outbreak of War in 1914, suffragette prisoners were promised release and the Pankhursts were described as 'going all patriotic',¹⁷ undertaking a campaign to support the government, arguing for women to be employed in war work, encouraging men to enlist, and arguing against trade union opposition.¹⁸ Early 1915 saw labour unrest in the South Wales coalfields, the Midlands and Clydeside, and Dacre Fox accompanied Emmeline Pankhurst, Flora Drummond, Annie Kenney and Grace Roe touring these areas pushing their message.¹⁹

Later in 1915, the WSPU exhibited their talent for political opportunism by concentrating firepower on criticising Germany and, in particular, Germans living and working in England in the higher echelons of the civil service, who were considered potential infiltrators or spies, the enemy within.²⁰ Anti-alien opposition was a huge political issue during and after World War One.²¹ One of the Pankhursts' motivations was articulated by Grace Roe who stated that their hatred of the Kaiser stemmed from their fear that, if successful, he would put the cause of women back irreparably.²²

This campaign eventually drew Dacre Fox away



Olive James and her daughters Angela and Christine, reproduced with the kind permission of the McPherson family

from the Pankhursts to pursue her own anti-alien agenda, standing as an Independent in the 1918 General Election. Dacre Fox's pro-war, far-right credentials (in terms of nationalism and racism) are evidenced quite clearly by her political activity at this time. During her campaigning, she aligned herself with far-right, virulently anti-Semitic political parties such as the National Party and the British Empire Union who believed that both Jews and Germans within Britain were internal threats to British security and should be eliminated. Dacre Fox never became a member of these organisations but had much sympathy with them, speaking from their platforms at huge political rallies, her rhetoric arguably inciting racial hatred, calling for the internment or death of all Germans.²³ In the WSPU campaigns, Dacre Fox condoned violence against individuals (for example, she called for the horsewhipping of a doctor who supported force feeding), but calling for the death of Germans appears to show a more violent sentiment in her.²⁴ Paradoxically, her anti-alien campaign, in spite of being more aggressive, was legal, whereas

the WSPU campaign was at the time illegal and her incitements were what led to her imprisonment. Oral family reports indicate that she also displayed violent or cruel traits later in her personal life, including chasing her partner Dudley Elam around the house with a knife and locking her daughter-in-law and three young grandchildren in a room all day with no access to food.²⁵

John Doherty, the father Dacre Fox claimed to have hated, appears to have supported her anti-alien campaign, chairing a large public meeting for which his printing company had made the campaign leaflets.²⁶ This seems a strange diversion from his own politics given that he was a 'staunch' Irish nationalist and a lifelong member of the National Liberal Club. This could suggest that father and daughter both fluctuated in their political views with the times or that what we now see as clear cut distinctions between liberal, conservative and socialist politics were perhaps more fluid during this period. It is this hypothesis that is explored below in our attempt to understand the shift Dacre Fox made from WSPU activism to fascism.

Dacre Fox's split with the Pankhursts was not recorded as acrimonious, but Christabel Pankhurst and Grace Roe did lose contact with Dacre Fox after she gave birth to an illegitimate child in 1922. No father's name is recorded on the birth certificate, but it is likely to have been Dudley Elam, a married man, with whom Dacre Fox subsequently set up home. Dacre Fox was shocked to discover that she was pregnant, having believed she was infertile and, in her characteristic aggressive style, chastised the doctor who diagnosed her for being incompetent.²⁷ It was, however, her husband, Mr Dacre Fox, who is likely to have been infertile, as he did not go on to have any children by his future lifelong companion.²⁸

Emmeline Pankhurst's views on the moral depravity of infants born out of wedlock were very much in keeping with the social norms of the period. She never forgave her daughter Sylvia for having an illegitimate child and never saw her grandchild.²⁹ Dacre Fox was effectively ex-communicated, never once mentioned in the Suffragette Fellowship newsletter entitled 'Calling All Women' published between 1947 and 1971 to keep former suffragettes in touch, and which, for a long period, was edited by Grace Roe. Dacre Fox may have been left feeling sad or bitter about this as she had greatly admired the Pankhursts and spoke with pride about her association with them in later life.³⁰

Anti-Vivisection & Anti-Vaccination

One of the reasons Dacre Fox claimed to have hated her father was because of a childhood incident that was burned onto her memory. John Doherty kept dogs, and one day she intervened to stop him beating them with a whip, receiving a slash across the face with the whip in the process.³¹ It may be that this was a one-off incident, but, more likely, reflected that John Doherty had violent tendencies, which allowed him to be conveniently characterised as a 'hot-tempered Irishman' in a court case reported in *The Times*.³² Dacre Fox's closest sister Emily (or 'Dot') Pinto-Leite was an animal rights activist and member of the RSPCA, British Union of Anti-

Vivisectionists, the Canine Defence League and Our Dumb Friend's League. Newspaper reports reveal Pinto-Leite involved in acrimonious leadership splits. There was significant overlap in the membership and leadership of these organisations. Disputes appeared to be rivalrous and centred on approaches towards anti-vivisection, hunting and the qualifications required for leadership. In particular, she openly opposed Robert Gower MP, who appears to have felt that women had too much influence in these societies. When an argument erupted into violence in February 1935, Pinto-Leite was called to give evidence in court.³³

The London & Provincial Anti-Vivisection Society (LPAVS) was founded in 1876, and it is likely that Dacre Fox was a member from early adulthood. From 1919, Dacre Fox held the position of Honorary Secretary and from 1938 took on the roles of Secretary and Editor.³⁴ During this time, she actively campaigned on many issues including the 'Dog's Bill' in 1921, and in 1931 and 1932 undertook a gruelling road campaign throughout the Midlands and Northern England, holding rallies in major cities along the way.

Dacre Fox's anti-vaccinationist stance appears to have related not only to her lifelong love of animals but also to her resentment of men. Like many anti-vaccinationists of the time, she associated vaccination with the male-dominated medical establishment. A leading bacteriologist working on inoculations, Dr Almroth Wright had a very public run-in with feminists during the suffrage campaign, illustrating the link between feminism and anti-vaccinationism. On 28 March 1912, Wright published a letter in *The Times*, the same day that the third Parliamentary Franchise (Women) Bill was due to be debated in the House of Commons. Wright's letter set out a virulent diatribe against suffragists, claiming they were immoral, unbalanced, unreasonable, hypersensitive, and suffered in excess from the afflictions of their sex generally, in that all women eventually became insane because it was part of their nature and could not be avoided. Furthermore, Wright claimed his arguments were based on scientific medical evidence, asserting that women should be kept out of public life and confined to the home. This sparked a fierce debate in the columns of *The Times*. Wright was also a national figure at the outbreak of World War One, promoting his new anti-typhoid inoculation for troops going to the trenches, but was ultimately unsuccessful in persuading the government to introduce a compulsory vaccination bill.³⁵ Dacre Fox never relented in her anti-vaccinationist principles, refusing to allow her son to be vaccinated, and instilling him with the same belief, so that he was discharged from the army during World War Two after refusing vaccination.³⁶

Dacre Fox would therefore have found fellow feminists to work with in the anti-vivisection and anti-vaccination movements, including Mary Allen. She would also have found comrades who shared a range of right-wing views, including the Treasurer of LPAVS, Dr Bertrand P. Allinson who was the son of Dr T.R. Allinson, the well-known eugenicist, anti-vaccinationist and wholemeal bread manufacturer.

In 1934 and 1935, the LPAVS published two

companion-piece monographs by Dacre Fox: *The Vitamin Survey*, *A Reply* and *The Medical Research Council (MRC), What it is and How it Works*.³⁷ To write the *Reply*, Dacre Fox had to undertake an extensive survey of the research into vitamins and understand many technical research explanations in medical papers. Her second paper came out of the insight she had gained into the workings of the MRC when she worked there as a typing pool supervisor for twelve months during 1916-17.³⁸ While the influence of eugenics can be seen in some of her arguments against animal experimentation, her main criticisms were that the MRC was totally undemocratic and a costly luxury funded by the taxpayer. Dacre Fox riled against 'powerful vested interests' that had managed to 'entrench' themselves behind 'State-aided research', making themselves unaccountable, and arguing that the public were unable to influence research decisions, the MRC operating like a closed shop, answerable only to itself. Dacre Fox's criticisms on this issue still resonate today, but more interestingly they show a consistent concern with the deterioration of democracy within both politics and social institutions.

This was perhaps the least high profile of her campaigns, although it overlapped with the others. After the birth of her son in 1922, Dacre Fox moved to Sussex to live with Dudley Elam, retaining a relatively low profile away from London, continuing only her LPAVS work. Ironically she lived up to the negative stereotype of a suffragette mother, seemingly unable to bond with and look after her son.³⁹ Dudley hired a full-time nanny, being concerned about her inability to cope. Her son, Tony Elam, believed that his nanny was his mother until he was about nine. Tony was sent to a local boarding school in Petworth and Dacre Fox had a turbulent relationship with him which continued all her life. Moreover, he was teased and bullied for being a 'bastard'. It was only when Tony was old enough to be sent to Germany for some education, and the stigma and disgrace of his illegitimate birth had perhaps been forgotten, that Dacre Fox turned back to high-profile politics.⁴⁰

The British Union of Fascists

The BUF is traditionally considered to have been an archetypal anti-democratic organisation espousing an ideology (fascism), which was fundamentally opposed to democracy. Yet we argue that it was Dacre Fox's concern to see greater democracy throughout society that drew her ideologically towards the BUF.

In order to progress in the BUF, Dacre Fox had to overcome and suppress many personal issues, among which were the necessity to hide her true marital status. She had changed her name by deed poll to Norah Elam in 1928 as she and Dudley were unable to marry, presumably because their respective spouses refused to divorce.⁴¹ Dacre Fox appeared to allow the belief that she and Dudley were married to go unchecked by her BUF colleagues, and never challenged press reports referring to her as 'Mrs Elam', even using the title herself in notices she published in *The Times*, although she remained Mrs Dacre Fox within the LPAVS.

More importantly, Dacre Fox had to submit to the discipline of a male-dominated organisation, particularly in her early BUF years when she was forced to work closely with William Joyce (later nicknamed 'Lord Haw Haw' for his propagandist work). Joyce was her line manager in the West Sussex Blackshirts. For Dacre Fox, whose father was an Irish Nationalist, Joyce represented all that she hated. Joyce claimed to have been born in Ireland and became an informer for the Black and Tans, the notoriously brutal paramilitary force deployed in Ireland by the British government to suppress the Home Rule movement.⁴² Later in life, Dacre Fox would tell how she would rejoice every time she heard that the Black and Tans had been captured by Irish rebels and 'strung up to trees', yet further indication of a cruel streak.⁴³

Nevertheless, Dacre Fox overcame these issues and found within the BUF a platform to express her views on 'democracy'. Mosley, like the Pankhursts, quickly became aware of her talent for delivering propaganda effectively in speech and print, and she was given full reign to do so. Some historians have speculated that BUF women were attracted to Mosley's looks and charisma.⁴⁴ Dacre Fox's attraction to Mosley was much more likely to have been about his willingness to give her free reign to voice her propaganda and, importantly, his upper-class credentials. Dacre Fox was undoubtedly attracted to the upper classes to which she aspired, illustrated by her willingness to allow the belief that she was a well-to-do 'lady' to circulate during the suffrage campaign, and later amongst BUF colleagues, and also in her bad treatment of her daughter-in-law who she felt was too low class for her son. Dacre Fox prized her relationship with Lady Diana Mosley and her sister Unity Mitford, keeping a signed photo of Diana in her bedroom in later life. She also made much of an Elam family myth that Dudley was descended from an illegitimate liaison with Oscar Bernadotte, King of Sweden. Careful ancestral research shows this to have been untrue, but Dacre Fox clung to this belief throughout her life, even keeping large portraits of the sisters Julie and Desiree Clary (Oscar's aunt and mother) in her bedroom and ordering her granddaughters to 'behave like ladies' according to their heritage. Family members recall that Dacre Fox always spoke Received Pronunciation English in spite of her Irish roots.⁴⁵

For Mosley, Dacre Fox was an important recruit owing to the growing anti-fascist sentiment in Britain, which frequently referred to fascism as an anti-feminist ideology.⁴⁶ Former suffragettes (particularly Flora Drummond) were claiming that fascism would lead to a deterioration of gender equality. Mosley therefore needed Dacre Fox to refute these claims using her characteristic eloquence. The titles of some of Dacre Fox's articles give a clue to the way in which Mosley made use of her to counter anti-fascist claims: 'Fascism will Mean Real Equality'; 'J'Accuse – Failure of the Women's Movement'; 'Women, Fascism and Democracy'.⁴⁷ The common themes in these articles are trenchant criticism of the failure of women to make any headway within the democratic party political system. Dacre Fox frequently pointed out that having been a suffragette, she had a greater authority to pronounce on these issues than others:

What high hopes then animated that wondrous band of women; what promise of high endeavour lay within our grasp? We were to bring into the new life that opened out before us all those qualities of strength and determination which we claimed to possess; we were to supply an influence with which by our very nature we were endowed. In politics we were to clean up the corruption and chicanery which we had denounced during our period of struggle under a Liberal Democratic administration; we were to bring to public life the fresh vigour of newly emancipated human beings, and above all, we were to demand and insist upon peace and the end of bloody war, in the interests of decadent governments and the vested interests that control them. To-day not a single achievement stands to our account, and supreme tragedy faces those of us who survive, the tragedy of lost leadership, and the eclipse of all claim to have used for the betterment of humanity the unique opportunities that lay to our hands.

One of her most scathing criticisms was that she believed women (including her former WSPU colleagues) had been tricked into silence and impotence by being given the vote to shut them up, enabling men to control, sideline and ignore them. She squarely blamed 'party wirepullers' for this state of affairs:

Their [women's] failure, which none can deny lies in their capitulation from the moment of their enfranchisement, to the bondage of Financial Democracy, for with very few exceptions they have once more allied themselves with the very Parties in the State which had treated them with such unprecedented contempt ... they have turned again as handmaidens to the hewing of wood and drawing of water for the Party wirepullers, and they add to all this futility the cross upon the ballot paper once in every five years.

Her main talent, exploited fully by the BUF propaganda machine, was for criticising and highlighting with intellect and fiercely logical insight, the flaws of the democratic system and the problems this generated for women, specifically that 'democracy' as it was operating at the time was not in fact democratic in the true spirit of the word. 'Party wirepullers', by which we assume she means Party Whips, meant that the party system was inherently undemocratic. Dacre Fox therefore appears to remain allied to the spirit of democracy, espousing ideals such as freedom, anti-corruption, no exploitation of individuals, a role for both men and women to influence public life and the avoidance of those with vested interests dictating policy; yet she feels this was not achieved in the system of 'democracy' then operating. The implication was that fascism would offer something closer to the spirit

or true meaning of 'democracy', for women and men, in spite of our modern interpretation of 'fascism' being a polar opposite of 'democracy'.

According to Durham, there were conflicting views within the BUF on gender equality since, as well as Mosley's support of Dacre Fox and fielding her as a parliamentary candidate to kill 'for all time the suggestion that National Socialism proposed putting British women back into the home', there were also those in the BUF who preferred to consider women's proper and natural role as being mothers and home-keepers, hence the corporate system proposed by the BUF included a Domestic Corporation and a Corporation of Motherhood. Durham proposes that rather than seeing either the BUF claims of supporting gender equality or the claims to see women's proper role in the home as being fraudulent, that the BUF was in fact a site of conflict between different forms of fascism and there were therefore 'contradictory impulses' within its policy.⁴⁸ Indeed, arguably, there were also different forms of feminism in Britain at the time, with Mary Allen speaking vehemently about the dangers of vice and arguing that women needed to recognise their responsibility for moral standards in society (hence the women's police service to counter vice).

Many political and social organisations offered and continue to offer debating grounds for new and emerging ideas, rather than being vehicles for pursuing fixed ideologies, the latter being implicit in questions about why individuals 'changed' their views or 'crossed the floor'. Dacre Fox also had other ideological pre-occupations beyond gender equality. In 'Tragedy of Passchendale', 'The Affirmative Guaranty' and 'A Great Illusion – Poison Gas and Poison Tongues', she discussed issues of international security, war and peace.⁴⁹ She is recorded as having given talks on international security, for example to the Northampton League of Nations Youth Group.⁵⁰

McCarthy describes the way in which Mosley changed his views over time towards the League of Nations (LON).⁵¹ He had originally been on the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union, a cross-party organisation supporting collective security measures represented by the LON. When he formed the New Party, his view was that the LON was a failure as it had been unwilling to act against aggressors. The BUF's stated position before World War Two was to avoid war, which was not so much a pacifist as an isolationist stance.⁵²

Dacre Fox had wholeheartedly supported the Pankhurst's pro-World War One stance because she believed the Kaiser would set back gender equality, hence her fear of German aliens living in Britain, all being regarded as potential spies and enemies. Along with a tendency to embrace violence, we can therefore assume she was not a natural 'pacifist' in the humanist sense. She did adhere to Mosley's anti-war stance in the 1930s, but for reasons unrelated to a natural opposition to war and violence, and more to a concern with the country's security. In her letter published in *The Blackshirt* in February 1934, entitled 'Tragedy of Passchendale,' her argument was not anti-war, but consisted entirely of criticism of the men who conducted it. She stated that these men were:

utterly incapable of understanding the new conditions that had arisen, due to the fact that (their) military mentality was that of the past, trained in the old conceptions, and operating through the old channels, just as today the political mentality of our effete politicians is incapable of realising that their day is done.⁵³

Conclusion

There will be a range of reasons why any individual shifts political views and personal ideologies during their lifetime. Changing political and economic environments (national or global) may lead them to consider that a different ideology is required for modern times; they may learn from experience and age that their former views were in some way wrong or immature and their new ideas are more mature (including people who 'see the light', a phenomenon discussed by Kean regarding Mary Richardson).⁵⁴ Alternatively, individuals may not change their ideology drastically, but the political system shifts underneath them and an ideology or political party that once represented their views now appears to them to represent antithetical ideas. Another alternative explanation, used by Kean to discuss Mary Richardson's changing political choices, is that individuals do not lead clear coherent lives with unifying ideas underpinning all their choices, and it is merely a fad of historians and biographers to seek to find unity and coherence where there is none. Finally, it is conceivable that individuals could be inherently fickle as regards ideologies and choose their campaigns largely on the basis of the social benefits it may bring, such as a sense of belonging or social standing.

It is possible to propose any of these hypotheses to be true of Dacre Fox. In some senses, there is no coherence to her campaigns: democracy to fascism, pro-war to anti-war, anti-German to pro-German, against cruelty to animals but not averse to cruelty towards humans (if they are lower class, undeserving, the wrong nationality or race or fighting for the wrong cause), hatred of her misogynist father to speaking from the same platform. In other senses, we can see a degree of coherence from her point of view by looking closely at her arguments, such as her criticisms of democracy being undemocratic (an accusation arguably still true today as regards the Party Whip system and the problem with voting alone not giving individuals, including women, much of a role in public life). Feminism appears to have informed all of her campaigns in greater or lesser ways and was always present, but there is a sense that a wish for 'democracy' in the spirit of the word both in parliament and social institutions played a more central role in all of her campaigns than gender equality. Certainly the world and the country changed drastically after World War One and many new ideas emerged which attracted people from varying political and social persuasions, of which Dacre Fox's journey is just one (for example Mosley's own political journey from socialism to fascism). However, it is also possible to see that there may be no ideological or political coherence to explain the choices of Dacre Fox and that she was merely ideologically fickle like Richardson (according to Kean), choosing only the

adrenalin of any campaign or cause that recruited her. Yet, we prefer to believe that individuals do not make entirely random choices in life (political, ideological, personal or otherwise) and that while it is not possible to find an all-encompassing underpinning ideology that explains Dacre Fox's whole life course, or to pinpoint all the external events and experiences that caused shifts or rifts along the way, we can nevertheless see some consistency in her campaigns. Moreover, having examined her politics in the context of her personal life and relationships, we believe that these had some influence and can help to explain her motives where ideological coherence is lacking.

Specifically, Dacre Fox grew up in a household in which there were forms of male tyranny and aggression, possibly violence (although we have no definite evidence of this). Instead of becoming subservient, Dacre Fox became defiant towards her father and turned her defiant energy to serve the political causes she chose to support, often painting men as the enemy. Yet she also perpetuated the aggression that she observed in her father. Her rhetoric was at times violent, her attitudes towards others sometimes cruel, and she perhaps inadvertently re-created her misogynist father in her son through her parenting style – since Tony Elam ultimately became an alcoholic, violent bully towards his wife and daughters. Dacre Fox was also extremely socially versatile, able to entertain and form good friendships (Grace Roe and Mary Allen, for example), although she struggled to retain lifelong friendships and many of her key relationships became turbulent or broke down (including those with her father, her brothers, Grace Roe, Mr Dacre Fox, Dudley Elam and Tony Elam). She was keen to be part of a respectable social group, to be well regarded and to appear as upper class. This snobbery perhaps meant she was attracted to small niche groups, where social ties tended to be stronger and she could more easily reach the inner cadre and feel important. Moreover, Pankhurst and Mosley were perhaps the epitome of the kind of person she wanted to be close to and well regarded by: strong characters with class and breeding, respected by others with a no-nonsense, often tyrannical leadership approach. Arguably, there are strong parallels here in her relationship with and attitude towards her father. Yet tragically, each of these figures ultimately rejected her and when she died there was no obituary from any of the movements she had worked for. She also died alienated from her son. Her cremation was brief with no speeches and no service, only the tune *Crimmond* playing in the background as the coffin slid behind the curtains.⁵⁵

For a biography of Dacre Fox, see Susan McPherson and Angela McPherson, *Mosley's Old Suffragette A Biography of Norah Elam* (Lulu.com, 2011) [www.oldsuffragette.co.uk, accessed 5 Jan. 2012].

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Give till it hurts: Janet Vaughan and Spanish Medical Aid

Sheena Evans

Dr Janet Vaughan – or Dame Janet, as she became in 1957 – is usually remembered primarily as the Principal of Somerville College Oxford from 1945 to 1967.¹ One of her nicknames at Oxford was ‘The Red Queen’ – referring not to her academic gown, but to her political views. The dichotomy this reflects between establishment respectability and political radicalism dates back to her activities in the 1930s, and particularly to her work as a medical doctor in support of Spanish Medical Aid. Drawing in particular on private papers held in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, the TUC papers held at Warwick University Modern Records Centre, and papers on Spanish Medical Aid held by the Marx Memorial Library, this article explores Janet Vaughan’s involvement with Spanish Medical Aid in the 1930s, when she was an eminent medical researcher in the emerging specialism of haematology. It also seeks to assess how typical she was of contemporary female medical doctors and scientific researchers in her activities for and commitment to the ‘Aid Spain’ cause.

A number of historians have written on the subject of British women and their activities in relation to the Spanish Civil War. These include most notably Angela Jackson and Paul Preston; but Tom Buchanan and Jim Fyrth, in their coverage of the numerous organisations active under the ‘Aid Spain’ banner between 1936 and 1939, also give a great deal of interesting detail.² They demonstrate that British women made a significant contribution to Spanish Medical Aid and the Basque Children’s Committee, as well as to filling foodships sent to Spain from various British ports in late 1938 and early 1939. But very few of the women singled out for study by historians were qualified medical doctors, and even fewer were involved in scientific research. This is surprising when the known left-wing and humanitarian stance of so many women in these fields is taken into account.³ Consideration of the contribution of Dr Janet Vaughan may shed more light on this area.

Influences

What was the origin of her socialism? At first sight, her background was one of upper-middle-class respectability. Her father was headmaster of Wellington College during her teenage years, and Janet was largely educated by governesses. Having decided to become a doctor, she scraped into Oxford in 1919 after much cramming. Her parents still expected her to settle for marriage and social work rather than a career in medicine. Both her brothers became right-wing Conservatives as adults.

But appearances can be deceptive. Janet’s father was a radical liberal with a strong – and strongly Christian – social conscience. In all his headships, he nurtured strong links between the public school and an underprivileged urban community. Her mother was a daughter of the writer

John Addington Symonds, brought up in Switzerland by unconventional parents with literary and artistic friends, and imbued with an anti-establishment, romantic outlook. Other strong female role models included her mother’s sister Katharine Furse, made a Dame for her work in organising the Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses and then the Women’s Royal Naval Service in World War One; and Lettice Fisher, the wife of her godfather, the historian H. A. L. Fisher, who was eminent in the suffrage and maternal and child welfare movements.

Janet decided to become a doctor because, as she wrote later, she was concerned with questions of poverty and social justice and thought that the experience and authority gained from a career in medicine would enable her to ‘influence affairs’.⁴ Like a number of her medical contemporaries, including the nutritionist John Boyd Orr and her fellow student at University College Hospital, Philip D’Arcy Hart, she became a socialist because of the poverty she saw in the slums during her training, in her case north of the Euston Road, London. Her cousins Amabel and John Strachey were socialists and Labour Party members from the early 1920s, and would have backed her decision. During the 1926 General Strike, Janet helped with work on behalf of the strikers.⁵

From 1926 onward, Janet lived in the heart of pacifist, left-leaning Bloomsbury, with many friends and acquaintances in artistic and literary as well as medical circles. In 1930, she married David Gourlay, who had been a conscientious objector (describing himself as an ‘international socialist’) during the First World War. He now ran the Wayfarers Travel Agency, which was dedicated to bringing people from different countries together to promote peace.⁶ The couple had agreed before their marriage that Janet would keep her maiden name for professional purposes, and that she would continue with her career.

Janet’s work as a pathologist and haematologist in these years confirmed her view that too much avoidable disease and death was caused by poverty. She was doing grant-funded research at the London Hospital from 1931 to 1935, and the suffering and unemployment she saw in the East End during the depression that followed the financial crisis of 1929 only added to that conviction. Like many others on the political left, including many doctors and scientists, she visited Russia (in her case in 1934) for what was no doubt a carefully orchestrated tour, and was impressed by the preventive health measures taken to improve the lives of working people.⁷ There is, so far as I know, no direct evidence that she joined the Socialist Medical Association, founded in 1930, but many of her friends and colleagues were members and she would certainly have agreed with its aims, which included a socialised medical service, both preventive and curative, free and open to all.

She did support the Committee Against Malnutrition,

formed in 1934 by a group of doctors, nutritionists and scientists. The Committee's bulletins and public meetings publicised the type of diet needed to maintain health and fitness, and what it cost. These facts were used to campaign to raise food standards – for example, through free school meals for families of unemployed workers, free milk at clinics, and more generous scales of public assistance. Janet contributed to the bi-monthly bulletin and almost certainly added to its publicity through her editorial writing for *The Lancet* on haematological issues in these years.⁸

Many on the political left were pacifist in the 1930s, and Janet was sufficiently interested to join the Medical Peace Campaign, set up in 1936 by a small group of doctors led by the pacifist John Ryle, then Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge University.⁹ The Campaign emphasised the moral duty of doctors to preserve life, and focused on strengthening the League of Nations as a means of preventing war.

All these groups – the Socialist Medical Association, the Committee Against Malnutrition and the Medical Peace Campaign – had members and interests in common. The Socialist Medical Association papers at the Hull History Centre show that it circulated issues of the *Bulletin of the Committee Against Malnutrition* to its members, and by November 1935 was collecting the names of those willing to be Associates (supporters of and potential contributors to) the Committee. In February 1938, they were trying to avoid a clash of meeting dates because they expected a considerable audience overlap. In late 1937, a joint meeting between the Medical Peace Campaign and the Socialist Medical Association was being planned, and a year later a Medical Peace Campaign member was nominated to speak about its work at a London branch Socialist Medical Association meeting.¹⁰

By 1934, when Janet published her classic book on *The Anaemias*, she had a growing international as well as national reputation in haematological research.¹¹ In 1935, she achieved financial security as well as academic status when she was appointed the equivalent of lecturer at the new Postgraduate Medical School in Hammersmith. She was promoted to senior lecturer equivalent in 1936.

In the meantime, events abroad were increasingly disturbing. Janet's correspondence in the early 1930s reveals her concern about the situation in Germany after Hitler came to power in 1933, and indicates that she had contacts among the refugee German doctors and scientists coming to London.¹² She was well placed to have first-hand knowledge of the wider picture. Her cousin John Strachey had broken with his former ally Oswald Mosley in 1931, and was now a prominent Marxist writer and activist. His sister Amabel went as a representative of the PEN Club (a worldwide association of writers formed in 1921; the defence of freedom of expression was one of its aims) to witness the trial in September 1933 of those accused of starting the Reichstag fire. Closer to home, the Wayfarers was the travel agency of choice for the Society of Friends in London, which was very active in helping refugees from Germany. Ernest and Netta Franklin, of the Jewish banking dynasty which also embraced the

Montagus and Samuels, had funded the start-up of the Wayfarers and were firm friends. They were also prominent in the Jewish-led organisations in London helping Jewish refugees.¹³ David would have known about conditions in Europe through his work; and even after the birth of their two children, in 1932 and 1935, he and Janet took a holiday alone together in Europe – usually a walking holiday – each summer. In 1933, they walked in the Bavarian highlands.

By 1936, the mood on the liberal and socialist left in general – of which they were part – was one of near-despair about the apparently unstoppable rise of fascism and the failure of the League of Nations to combat Italian and German aggression in Abyssinia and in Western Europe. It was against this background that the Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936. The war was caused by an army-led rebellion against the Popular Front government which had been elected the previous February. The fascist governments in Italy and Germany were soon supporting the rebels, covertly at least. Soviet Russia, also covertly, tried to bolster the government, or Republican, side. The British Conservative government adopted a policy of non-intervention which in practice favoured the rebel, or Nationalist, side. Janet wrote later that the Spanish Civil War 'became for many of us the great opportunity to take a stand against fascism'.¹⁴ She took that stand through her work for Spanish Medical Aid.

The Holborn and West London Committee for Spanish Medical Aid

Historians are agreed that 'Aid Spain' was the biggest outpouring of popular activism and generosity towards a foreign cause in twentieth-century Britain.¹⁵ The first national, or central, Spanish Medical Aid Committee was set up in August 1936, under the auspices of the Socialist Medical Association, although at the instigation of the Communist Party.¹⁶ Soon afterwards, Janet and others set up the Holborn & West London committee for Spanish Medical Aid. With Janet as chair, this became one of the most effective of the many local committees across London and in the country at large.

In its fund-raising activities, the Holborn committee was not dissimilar to other groups.¹⁷ The secret of its particular success lay in its Bloomsbury membership, which included not only representatives of political parties, the Holborn Peace Council and trades unions, but scientists, doctors, artists and professional workers. Among these was Francis Meynell, the publisher and typographer. It was presumably thanks largely to him that the committee took on the major publishing work for Spanish Medical Aid, producing pamphlets and Christmas cards, and, from May 1938, the monthly bulletin of the central committee. In the pamphlet *Spain and Us*, published by the Holborn committee in November 1936, Meynell wrote urging people to give money for medical supplies for the Spanish government side: 'Give – give till it hurts. It will not hurt so much as a bullet in the belly.'¹⁸

Portia Holman, then a medical student, was Honorary Secretary of the Holborn committee, and remembered



Janet Vaughan, March 1945
© National Portrait Gallery, London.

that 'money poured in' while they organised meetings and she worked with Janet to organise the sending of medical supplies to Spain. Money-raising methods included house-to-house canvasses and exhibitions of Spanish art and culture, but the most effective method was simply writing with appeals to individuals: about three quarters of those approached would respond with sums of between £1 and £100 by return of post. She also remembered Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Claude Rogers designing or giving pictures to be auctioned, and Francis Meynell dealing with the typography and layout of pamphlets and helping to compose letters.¹⁹

Glimpses of Janet's role are revealed by other sources. For example, Vanessa Bell wrote, in October 1936, that 'For the last few days we have all been trying to do posters for a meeting ... to get money to send medical help to Spain – Janet Vaughan asked me and Duncan to do some – and Q[ueentin] and A[nge]lica have done one each too'; and again in November Janet was one of those who 'pestered' her 'by every post' with demands to help with a show of Spanish art.²⁰

By Christmas 1936, less than four months after it had been set up, the Holborn committee's financial accounts show that it had raised more than £684 (the equivalent of £34,500 in 2009).²¹ In early summer 1937, it enabled the national Committee to send bacteriological laboratory equipment, costing over £300, 'with five borrowed microscopes'. According to a reference in a later letter from Dr Morgan, Janet seems to have obtained these microscopes; and a colleague of hers at the Postgraduate School, Dr Maeve Kenny, went to Spain to help set up the laboratory equipment.²²

In May 1937, the committee published *Spain: the Child and the War*, with a preface by Leah Manning, the ex-teacher and ex-Labour MP, who at this time brought 4,000 Basque refugee children to England under the auspices of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, the co-ordinating body to which the national Spanish Medical Aid Committee was affiliated. The pamphlet introduced an exhibition of children's art from Spain, the main theme of which was aerial bombardment; and then emphasised the privations child refugees would face in the coming winter, with a shortage already of food and milk. (The Committee against Malnutrition added statistical ammunition here: its contemporary illustrated pamphlet, *Children in Spain Today*, highlighted the danger of famine among over one million refugees in the Republican Government-held area.²³)

Later that year, the committee planned a more intensive campaign, with the St Pancras Joint Council of Labour, culminating in a 'Spain Week' on 22-29 January 1938. Their aim was to raise more than £1,000 for a mobile operating theatre. There had been an excellent response to their appeal in October for subscriptions for six months, and they now planned a special drive to send food for Christmas. They succeeded. In early December, the Holborn Committee and the Spanish Women's Committee for Help to Spain held a concert at the Scala Theatre to raise money for food – especially milk – and medical supplies for the refugees in Catalonia.²⁴ Contributions in kind were also sought: for instance, some architects had offered to design furniture and donate the whole of their fee, or to give a large part of their commission if they received an order for a house or other building. If readers had some valuable possessions they could spare, they should send them to the Committee to sell.²⁵ The architects in question may have been the firm of Amabel Strachey's husband, Clough Williams-Ellis.

'Spain Week' in Holborn included a public meeting at Whitefield's Central Mission, an exhibition of Spanish art at the Bloomsbury Gallery, a 'social' with sketches, dancing and songs at the Unity Theatre, a shop with Spanish goods on sale and an exhibition of photographs from the front, a film and a concert of Spanish songs, and talks by, among others, V. S. Pritchett on Spanish Art, Clough Williams-Ellis on Spanish Architecture, Princess Antoine Bibesco on Spain, and Janet herself on the work of the British medical unit in Spain. The £750 raised went, in the event, to meet the most pressing need at the time, funding three ambulances for Barcelona. In April 1938, a further £240 was sent to the central Committee, and events

planned included a public meeting on air-raid precautions in Britain and Spain at Friends House in Euston Road (then as now administrative centre of Quakers in Britain), and a bridge tournament at the Arts Theatre Club.²⁶

The national Spanish Medical Aid Committee

The national Committee was chaired by Dr Hyacinth Morgan, prominent in the Socialist Medical Association and Medical Adviser to the TUC. When Janet joined, and what contribution she made, has never been made clear, partly because the surviving records of the Committee are fragmentary, and held in a number of separate archives. She seems to have joined in the spring of 1937, by which time, according to an appeal pamphlet referring to the siege of Madrid preserved among the Addison papers in Oxford, she was also one of the figurehead 'Vice-Presidents' of the national Committee.²⁷ The main basis for this dating is in her resignation letter, referred to below. It is supported also by the following evidence: the fact that Philip D'Arcy Hart and Alex Tudor Hart, who served on the Committee for less than a year from August 1936, were both later able to remember Janet as one of a mere handful of names of other members (Philip took up a new post in south Wales in summer 1937, while Tudor Hart went to Spain around Christmas 1936); by a mention by Dr Morgan in June 1937 that 'additional members' had earlier been agreed in his absence, although he had no personal objection to those members (and there is no evidence of further additional members being appointed later in the year); and by Janet's correspondence with Leonard Woolf after the death of Vanessa Bell's son Julian in Spain in July 1937. She tells him on 27 July: 'I see something of the other lorry drivers & ambulance drivers & if I find anyone who has known Julian I will let you know in case Vanessa would like to see him'. On 2 August she writes again, having seen Philip Hart on his return from Spain, which he had visited on behalf of the main Committee, and giving his contact details.²⁸

Tom Buchanan has described Dr Morgan's struggle to ensure that the Committee was controlled by its Labour Party/Socialist Medical Association members, as opposed to the Communists and fellow-travellers among them.²⁹ At some point during these years, Janet herself joined the Communist Party, motivated, she recalled, by admiration for the commitment and effectiveness of the communists around her and frustration with the apparent inaction of the Labour Party, rather than by ideological considerations.³⁰ This is borne out by her work on the central Committee, where her interests seem to have been purely practical and humanitarian.

During 1937, Morgan faced not only tensions between communists and non-communists, but personal antagonisms, particularly between Leah Manning as honorary secretary and George Jeger as organising secretary. These seriously threatened the effectiveness of the aid work. As chairman, he succeeded in asserting control, and greatly improving the efficiency of the Committee, in September and October of that year, when a sub-committee of three members reviewed

the administrative arrangements. Their detailed report provoked a similarly detailed reply from the organising secretary, enabling the Committee to take remedial action and move forward. Janet chaired this sub-committee, was appointed to the reconstituted organisation sub-committee, and was apparently also vetting volunteer medical staff.³¹

There can have been few evenings, from late 1936 to spring 1938, when Janet was not working on Spanish Medical Aid business – the central Committee and its sub-committees usually met weekly, whilst the Holborn Committee had office hours in the evening as well as the day. Perhaps inevitably, she overtaxed herself. The last straw may have been her father's death in India in February 1938, after which Janet organised the memorial service in St Martin-in-the-Fields. Her resignation letter on 13 April mentioned a septic throat and doctor's orders that she do no work apart from the day job for three months. She had already resigned as chair of the Holborn Committee.

Dr Morgan's personal reply to her resignation letter shows his regard for her contribution:

I am indeed very sorry that you of all persons should feel that it is necessary ... to give up your membership. You are one of the persons that I can confidently consult in difficult matters arising in the Committee's work, & I shall deeply regret on personal grounds your departure from the Committee. Had you stated any other reason except health, I would have asked you strongly to reconsider.

In her reply of 29 April 1938, Janet referred to the Committee's problems during her membership when she concluded: 'I hope I have learned something from you in the last year of the value of a conciliatory chairman.'³²

There was at least one further personal contact between Janet and the central Committee. She wrote privately to Dr Morgan in June 1938 to let him know that she had, quite by chance, come across two nurses who had worked for Spanish Medical Aid in Spain and were now being treated in Hammersmith Hospital. No one from the central Committee had as yet come to see them, and she had herself made sure that Penny Phelps (well known as 'English Penny' during her time in Spain) had the necessities of a change of night gown, a dressing gown and sponge, soap and toothbrush.³³ Ten days later, she wrote again to say that the Professors of Surgery and Medicine had seen Penny and that all pathology investigations were negative. 'This is an unofficial note because I am not in charge of her bed but knowing how ill she is I felt you would like to know that she had seen the best Surgeon & Physician we have.' She specified that no reply was needed, but Dr Morgan was sufficiently disturbed to send her a detailed account of the Committee's actions on behalf of the nurses, while thanking her for her concern.³⁴

Apart from this, she seems to have limited herself, as a 'Vice-President', to speaking at meetings, signing public appeals and joining deputations. In October 1937, the young paediatricians Audrey Russell and Richard Ellis, and Leah Manning, made separate reports to the

National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief on the dire condition of refugees in Catalonia.³⁵ As a result, by May 1938, the British Government with the Society of Friends had helped form an International Commission in aid of the estimated quarter of a million child refugees in Spain. Voluntary effort intensified, with a huge campaign around Britain between autumn 1938 and March 1939 to fill and send foodships to Spain, to help the entire population in Republican-held areas. Janet was one of those who addressed an All London Women's meeting for this purpose, and afterwards went with a delegation to the Foreign Office to urge the British Government (without success) to do more both to increase the aid and enable it to get through the Nationalist blockade of Republican-held ports.³⁶ The central Committee sent more supplies of drugs and equipment by air and lorry at the end of January 1939, and Janet was one of those who signed a memorandum on the food situation, published, with an appeal for more donations, by the National Joint Committee in early February.³⁷

Barcelona's fall to the Nationalists on 12 February 1939 sounded the death knell of the Republic. The central Committee in Britain published a new appeal, saying that they were continuing to send supplies and help refugees: 'Now we are forming a new Medical Unit to go out and establish emergency dressing stations and relief posts'. (In fact the records show that the central Committee decided on 1 February to send a new unit, but rescinded that decision on 8 February in view of the deteriorating situation in Catalonia.³⁸) It seems that Janet planned to go with that unit. When interviewed in 1983, she said she had been dealing with passport and visa formalities in order to go to Barcelona when the war ended: 'I felt it my duty to go to Spain I think ... I'm always one who likes to do things rather than to theorise about them, and sitting in a committee trying to run affairs from afar wasn't the sort of thing I cared for doing really.'³⁹

Half a lifetime later, in 1970, Janet no longer distinguished between the national and Holborn committees in her memories. She spoke of walking in poster processions, speaking on soap boxes at street corners and in 'huge public meetings', selling 'many treasured possessions' in aid of the Basque children, and of the committee meeting 'night after night in a small attic room up many dark stairs'.⁴⁰ Her sacrifice was also that of her family. David Gourlay would have supported her fully – though he did grumble about those late nights at committee meetings. Perhaps influenced by the Quakers with whom he had worked in France after the First World War, he, like Janet, believed you should only keep enough money and possessions to meet your needs. The children were less able to understand. Mary, aged four and a half in May 1937, remembers standing alongside her mother's soap boxes on Saturday afternoons. She also has a vivid memory of returning one day to find the flat dark and empty, the car and much of the furniture sold. And of her mother's 'absolute delight' because of the amount of money she had raised.⁴¹

How typical was Janet of women scientists and doctors in the 1930s?

Janet was one of a small select peer group. In 1933, there were 2,810 women doctors practising in Great Britain, and a much smaller group of female medical and scientific researchers.⁴² Most of the London teaching hospitals did not admit women for clinical training and it was very hard for women doctors to get employment even in non-teaching hospitals. It was exponentially harder if they were also married and had children. Those employed as Medical Officers of Health in local authorities usually had to resign on marriage, owing to local authorities' operation of a marriage bar. Similar considerations applied to research posts, where women – even those of the calibre of Dorothy Hodgkin, Honor Fell or Dorothy Needham – usually depended on the continuation of annual grant funding from bodies like the Medical Research Council.⁴³

Most of these women were, like Janet, strongly motivated in their careers by humanitarianism. But very few could risk taking significant time out from their work, and only one female doctor went to Spain with a Spanish Medical Aid Unit. This was Ruth Prothero, young and obscure, and apparently soon forced out because she was not a communist.⁴⁴ Audrey Russell, a young unmarried paediatrician, was able to take a significant amount of time out from her job at University College Hospital to work with children in Catalonia. Others, like Maeve Kenny, made short visits for specific purposes. One eminent woman ear nose and throat surgeon, Josephine Collier (also unmarried), went to Spain at least twice, in 1938 and 1939, apparently in order, with Audrey Russell, to make contact with the innovative and successful Spanish surgeon Josep Trueta. Twice in 1938 they spoke to him in detail about his practice in treating war wounds. Early in 1939, both Trueta and Dr Durán Jordà of the Barcelona Blood Transfusion service escaped with their families from Spain to southern France, and at this point Collier and Russell arranged for them to come to London.⁴⁵ Those planning the emergency medical services for Britain in the war now known to be imminent were keen to make use of their experience and knowledge. Josephine also signed the National Joint Council appeal for food aid in February 1939.

Other female doctors taking part included, on the main Committee, Esther Rickards, a surgeon – by 1936 a London County Council Alderman – whose hospital career had been impeded by her left-wing political affiliations, and on the All London Aid Spain Council Dr Margaret Deas, qualified in Edinburgh, but apparently more Liberal political party activist than practising doctor.⁴⁶ In autumn 1938, the Treasurer of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee set up in Marylebone was Dr Elizabeth Jacobs, a GP and Socialist Medical Association member recently selected as prospective Labour candidate for St Marylebone. Dr Elizabeth Bunbury, a psychologist and honorary joint secretary of the Camberwell Aid Spain (Refugee) Committee, was also Propaganda Secretary of the Socialist Medical Association.

The majority of female research workers whose views have survived appear, like Dorothy Hodgkin, to have sympathised with the Republican cause and may have given time and money to it. Some took more prominent roles: Dr Joyce Wright, a research worker with a secure job at the Wellcome Laboratories, served on the national Committee for longer than Janet, but less information seems to survive concerning her contribution. Nutritional researchers like Harriette Chick (also with a secure job at the Lister Institute) can be expected to have supported the Committee Against Malnutrition and, in relation to Spain, at least the food aid campaigns.⁴⁷

Janet, as pathologist and medical researcher, seems to have been unique in the extent of her commitment to Spanish Medical Aid: as head of a local committee and member of the national Committee, whilst also being married and having children. She was fortunate in her secure academic post, and in the fact that the Postgraduate School was new, with mainly youthful staff and little prejudice against women colleagues. These youthful staff could also be left wing, as shown by Dr Kenny's trip to Spain and the presence of a young surgeon from the School, Alan Watson, on the main Spanish Medical Aid Committee at the same time as Janet (he stayed on after her resignation). She was also fortunate in her very supportive husband.

Janet's energy, capacity and determination were inborn. Her commitment and self-confidence were not unique among women of her social background in the first half of the twentieth century. What became clear through her work for Spanish Medical Aid was her ability to ruthlessly prioritise and compartmentalise her various activities. For a considerable period, she was managing the needs not only of research, administration, teaching and family, but also of a very public leadership and administration role in fundraising and propaganda for a humanitarian and increasingly political cause. This combination of interests and talents is in itself atypical.

One potential parallel might be provided by Dr Joan McMichael, whose husband came from Edinburgh to the Postgraduate School in 1939. She had two children, was a committed Communist Party member and Socialist Medical Association activist, and had worked for the Edinburgh Corporation as a School Medical Officer and Child Welfare and Antenatal Officer. From 1936 to 1939, she also worked – presumably in Scotland – for both Medical Aid for Spain and Medical Aid for China (set up to help the communist Chinese fighting the Japanese in the late 1930s). By the end of 1939, her political activities had led to the breakdown of her marriage, and she continued to be a leading activist for humanitarian causes, most notably Medical Aid for Vietnam, for the rest of her life.⁴⁸

As to communism, a number of Janet's contemporaries – including those, like her, whose natural home was really the Labour Party – were either already Communist Party members or joined the party around this time. Her deputy on the Holborn Committee, who succeeded her as chair, was Eva Reckitt of Collet's Bookshops, an important donor to Communist Party funds. Isabel Brown was acknowledged by Morgan to be

the most influential member of the central Committee, and by all to be the most effective fund-raiser at public meetings. Doctors who are known to have joined the Communist Party tended to be younger, like Kenneth Sinclair Loutit and Alex Tudor Hart who worked with the British Medical Aid Unit in Spain, but many more were sympathetic to it; among scientists, J.B.S. Haldane – a friend and tutor of Janet's at Oxford – and J. D. Bernal were the most eminent. Converts, like Janet, supported the Party's overtly humanitarian stance during the Spanish Civil War and believed it to be the most effective opponent of fascism. Most dismissed as propaganda the stories from Russia about enforced famines and criticism of the show trials of the late 1930s. The fact, however, that people like Portia Holman and Philip D'Arcy Hart resisted the idea of actually joining the party does perhaps indicate a lack of political sophistication on Janet's part; and she never seems to have become an active member.

Janet's intention of going to Spain accords with her practical bias. She must have been chafing as she watched others close to her, including Portia Holman (twice) and Maeve Kenny, going out to give direct support. What had held her back? Probably a combination of things: her two small children; the needs of her research and of the new postgraduate school whose reputation had to be built; the fact that she was not a surgeon or even a practising physician. But by February 1939, she may have felt that her children, now aged six and three, were past the most vulnerable and dependent stage; that she could afford to leave her work at Hammersmith for a short time; and that her knowledge of nutritional diseases of the blood could be useful in a situation of near famine.

In leaving her children, possibly to place herself in danger, Janet would not have directly contravened the mores of her class. This was the age of boarding schools and of absentee parents in the colonial service, as well as of women in science, medicine and other professions who had to leave their children in the care of others to pursue their careers. Contemporaries like crystallographers Dorothy Hodgkin and Kathleen Lonsdale, and consultant physician Alice Stewart, continued to work after having babies. As already indicated, however, they were a small minority, and during the Spanish Civil War Nan Green was the only mother to go to Spain for an extended period, leaving her (rather older) children to be cared for by grandparents and boarding school.⁴⁹

Conclusion

By the end of the 1930s, Janet was a prominent member of what might be called the left-wing medical and scientific establishment, an important network which, unlike so many others, was open to women. Her switch from pacifism to support for the war effort was typical of the left's conviction, crystallised by the Spanish Civil War, that fascism must be fought. Her work with the blood transfusion service for London during World War Two arose directly from her knowledge of Spanish expertise, partly gained at first hand from Durán Jordà himself. After his arrival in London early in 1939, Janet was one of

those who helped him find a job and somewhere to live in England.

It is fair to say that in her views – including her sympathy with the Communist Party – Janet was typical of left-wing activists and middle-class intellectuals in the 1930s, whatever their gender or calling. If in her actions she was less typical of her female medical and scientific peer group, this can be attributed in part to the constraints then operating on this group, and her own comparative freedom from them, as well as to inherent differences of character.

Janet said in old age that the most important political event of her life had been the Spanish Civil War. She was not alone in maintaining a lifelong sympathy for the Spanish Republican cause. She continued after 1939 to donate money for the support of dissidents in Franco's Spain and to the International Brigades Association. She bought a pendant made by a member of the Association from a stone picked up in 1981 on the Jarama battlefield in Spain, and wore it with pride from then on. When she spoke at the unveiling of the Memorial to the International Brigades on the South Bank in 1985, many of those listening were moved to tears as she recalled some of her ex-colleagues in Spanish Medical Aid – Isabel Brown, Leah Manning, Audrey Russell, Richard Ellis and Julian Bell – and urged all present to fight 'for our democratic rights, for our social services, for our health service, for our children's right to full education and full employment. We can say as the Brigades said in 1936, No pasarán!'⁵⁰

Notes

1. Richard Doll, 'Vaughan, Dame Janet Maria (1899-1993)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/42277, accessed 14 Feb. 2012].
2. Angela Jackson, *Women in the Spanish Civil War* (London, Routledge, 2002) and Paul Preston, *Doves of War: Four Women of Spain* (London, HarperCollins, 2002). Also Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1997) and *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain* (London, Sussex Academic Press, 1997); and Jim Fyrrh, *The Signal was Spain* (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1986).
3. G. Hudson, 'Unfathering the Thinkable: Gender, Science and Pacifism in the 1930s', in *Science and Sensibility. Gender and Scientific Enquiry 1780-1945*, ed. M. Benjamin (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1991), 264-86.
4. Janet Vaughan, 'Jogging Along', 14 (hereafter JA). (Ironically titled, unpublished personal memoir. Copies in Somerville College Archive, Oxford, in the Royal Society, and in the ownership of Janet's daughter Mary Park.)
5. Philip D'Arcy Hart (1900-2006), by 1936 a junior consultant at UCH, member of the Socialist Medical Association and founder member of the central Spanish Medical Aid Committee. Amabel and John were the children of John St Loe Strachey, Editor of the *New Statesman* 1898-1925. Amabel, a writer, married the architect Clough Williams-Ellis in 1915. General Strike: JA, 30.
6. David's own account of the early years of the agency is in *Geoffrey Franklin 1890-1930* (London, Chiswick Press, 1933), published privately by the Hon Henrietta Franklin for private circulation.
7. Wellcome Library, GC/4 Social Medicine: typed paper by Janet Vaughan.
8. There is no means of identifying *The Lancet* contributors in the 1930s, but Janet recalled in her memoir writing editorials and book reviews, and this is confirmed by her contemporary personal correspondence.
9. University Archives, Hull History Centre (hereafter HHC), U DSM (3)/14/8: Medical Peace Campaign letter of 11 Nov. 1937 lists Janet as a member of its Advisory Council.
10. HHC, U DSM (2) 6, (3) 14/8 and (3) 14/23.
11. Janet Vaughan, *The Anaemias* (London, Oxford University Press, 1934, 2nd ed. 1936).
12. Harvard Medical Library in Francis Countway Library of Medicine, GA 55 box 3, f38, letter from George Minot to Janet Vaughan, 21 Oct. 1933.
13. Monk Gibbon, *Netta* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960). The Franklins' son Geoffrey (1900-1930) had been joint founder with David Gourlay of the Wayfarers' Travel Agency.
14. JA, 62.
15. Most notably Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, and Fyrrh, *The Signal*.
16. Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM) Sound Archive, 844, interview with Isabel Brown.
17. The best documented is that in Battersea – see Mike Squires, *The Aid to Spain Movement in Battersea 1936-39* (London, Elmfield Publications, 1994).
18. Marx Memorial Library (hereafter MML), B/C 00268763 YC08/SPA, boxed pamphlets.
19. IWM Sound Archive, 13797, interview with Portia Holman.
20. Tate Archive, TGA 9311/62 and /66, letters of 4 Oct. [1936] and 1 Nov. [1936] from Vanessa Bell to Julian Bell.
21. MML, 29/C/1; www.measuringworth.com.
22. MML, B/C 00268852 YC08 MED; Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick (hereafter MRC), TUC Archive, Mss 292/946/32/37, letter of 16 Oct. 1939 from Dr Morgan to Janet Vaughan; and Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter BL Oxford), MS.Addison.dep.c.207, minutes of central Committee meeting, 15 Jun. 1937.
23. *The Lancet*, 1 (1937), 1118.
24. *The Lancet*, 2 (1937), 1283.
25. MML, 29/C/3.
26. MML, 29/B and 29/C/5; and MML 29/C/7b.
27. BL Oxford, MS.Addison.dep.c.207, appeal pamphlet.
28. IWM sound archive, 13824 and 13771, interviews with Philip D'Arcy Hart and Alex Tudor Hart; MRC, TUC Archive, Mss 292/946/32/129, letter of 29 Jun. 1937 from Dr Morgan to George Jeger; and University of Sussex Special Collections, Leonard Woolf papers, general correspondence.
29. Tom Buchanan, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War*.
30. JA, 64.
31. BL Oxford, MS.Addison.dep.c.207, 341-67.
32. MRC, TUC Archive, Mss 292/946/32/38. The whole

exchange is at pp. 72i-73ii.

33. Penny remembered Janet's kindness, telling me of it in a telephone conversation in 2001.

34. MRC, TUC Archive, Mss 292/946/32, Janet Vaughan letters of 14 and 24 Jun. 1938, and Dr Morgan's reply of 8 Jul.

35. Russell and Ellis were later to marry; Audrey was a founding member of the Committee Against Malnutrition.

36. *The Manchester Guardian*, 24 Jan. 1939.

37. *The Lancet*, 1 (1939), 341-2. The others were Miss D. J. Collier, Sir Gowland Hopkins (also Committee Against Malnutrition), Lord Horder (also Committee Against Malnutrition), Sir Robert McCarrison, Professor R. A. Peters, and Professor John Ryle.

38. MML, 29/B/12, SMAC Bulletins. MRC, TUC Archive, Mss/292/946/93, 28-9.

39. IWM sound archive, 13796, interview with Janet Vaughan.

40. JA, 63.

41. Interview with Mary Park, 6 Feb. 2000.

42. Philippa Strachey, *Memorandum on the Position of English Women in Relation to that of English Men* (London, London and National Society for Women's Service, 1935).

43. Lesley A. Hall, 'Chloe, Olivia, Isabel, Letitia, Honor, & Many More: Women in Medicine and Biomedical Science, 1914-45', in *This Working Day World*, ed. Sybil Oldfield (London, Taylor & Francis, 1994).

44. Buchanan, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War*.

45. Josep Trueta, *Trueta: Surgeon in War and Peace* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1980).

46. Charles Brook, *Making Medical History* (London, Percy P. Buxton, 1946).

47. MRC, TUC Archive, Mss 292/946/93: on 23 Nov. 1938 the central Committee discussed sending a medical delegation to Spain. One of the four names suggested was Harriette Chick.

48. Dr Joan McMichael-Askins 1906-1989: *The Guardian*, 16 Aug. 1989.

49. Preston, *Doves of War*.

50. The words are taken from notes for the speech in Janet Vaughan's own file of papers on Spain, held by her grandson James Park; a letter from Jim Jump on the same file, dated 10 Oct. 1985, reports the effect on the audience. 'No pasarán' – 'They shall not pass' was the cry of Republican opponents of fascism in Spain.

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'I'm not your typical nurse': Caribbean nurses in Britain and Canada

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Introduction

In 1966, at the age of eighteen, Trinidadian-born Ancilla migrated to Britain. Her childhood aspiration had been to become a physician, but her parents were unable financially to pay for her education. Motivated by people migrating to Britain from her area, Ancilla decided to follow to pursue nurse training. To finance the trip, a friend of her father loaned him the money on the premise that his daughter 'would send the money from England to [her] dad, to help pay back' his friend.¹ Ancilla was among the masses of Caribbean people who left their individual islands for the 'motherland' after the Second World War. Many were encouraged to migrate by family members and friends who had already made Britain home. Others were recruited to work in a variety of industries as a result of the labour shortage, and some took the trip as a form of adventure. By the time Ancilla arrived in Britain, the Caribbean migrant population had reached about 330,000.²

Teenagers, such as Ancilla, who left the Caribbean constituted a unique group in that they migrated alone, and did not always have support systems, familial or otherwise, in place. While Caribbean migration to Britain has received ample attention, the narratives of teenagers such as Ancilla remain virtually absent from scholarly literature.³ Drawn from a larger project conducted with Caribbean and Black Canadian-born nurses on themes that included childhood, nurse education and training, family, work and community,⁴ and using semi-structured interviews, this paper explores the migratory subjectivities of young women such as Ancilla. These young women, sixteen in total, left the Caribbean between the years 1949-1968, trained primarily as state-registered nurses (SRN) in Britain, and then migrated to Canada.

In discussing how Black women were situated within British and Canadian society following the Second World War, the tendency has been to underscore their subjectivity as workers. Writing about Black women in these geographic locations, the scholarly consensus is that they were victims of the racist, sexist, and classist ideologies that structured capitalist relations of production. Easily exploitable, Black women were often concentrated in service: that is, in semi- and unskilled work where they were poorly remunerated. For example, in *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe argued that, 'Service work was little more than institutionalised housework, as night and daytime cleaners, canteen workers, laundry workers and chambermaids an extension of the work we had done under Colonialism in the Caribbean'.⁵ Writing specifically about nursing, Carol Baxter noted that Black

nurses in Britain 'were over-represented in the less prestigious specialties and lower echelons of nursing to which they tend to be recruited (geriatrics, psychiatry, and mental handicap)'.⁶ This analysis was extended to Canada as well.⁷ Indeed, those researches are an excellent starting place for understanding how institutionalised forms of oppression impacted on Caribbean nurses. At the same time, such generalisations about Caribbean nurses as an undifferentiated category ignore differences related to the time of migration, age, education, training, and work experience.

My objective in this paper is to elucidate a more embodied portrait of Black nurses' subjectivity beyond that of mere workers and embattled victims of capitalism and White racism. This is not to deny the pernicious impact of systemic and institutional forms of oppression that rendered Black nurses suitable for certain positions or how they were treated by various medical personnel and patients.⁸ Rather, the goal is to provide a more holistic portrait of these young women who consciously made choices about their material lived reality even in the face of racist and sexist hostility in and outside of nursing. To do this, I begin by providing some brief biographical information about the interviewees. Who were these young women who made the sojourn to Great Britain? What were their reactions to Britain? And, what prompted them to choose nursing as an occupation? I juxtapose their recollections with the dominant discourses and images of Black women circulating in Britain during that time. From there, I move to discuss the women's reactions to nursing in Canada. Finally, having had careers that spanned decades, the last section of the paper explores the interviewees' revelations about their occupation, and the lessons they wish to pass on to their successors. Here, I focus specifically on the women's involvement in and responses to organisations that represent their interest. In addition to delineating the multiple dimensions of Black nurses' lives, this paper fills a gap in the scholarly literature that, according to Julia Hallam, 'continues to deny Black nurses voices of their own and a secure place in nursing history in spite of their large numbers in the workforce'.⁹

Growing up in the Caribbean

The English-speaking Caribbean was under colonial rule when the young women in this study were growing up. Both Jamaica and Trinidad gained independence from Britain in 1962, and the other islands (Dominica, Antigua, Grenada, Barbados, and Guyana) remained under British control until the 1970s and early 1980s. In fact, the majority of the interviewees were British subjects when they migrated. While the unequal distribution of

wealth and resources in the islands meant that poverty dominated many of the Black inhabitants' lives, there were exceptions. Some families were able to move into the middle class by farming, entrepreneurial activities or skilled trades. Being lower- to middle-class made a huge difference in how the majority of interviewees lived while growing up.

Most of the women described their socio-economic status as lower-middle to middle class. For these women, their family's economic status was determined not necessarily by their father's occupation, but by land, cattle, and home ownership. Unlike their working-class or poorer counterparts, access to resources was not an issue. Besides having their basic needs met, such as food, shelter, and clothing, the children of middle-class families had toys, such as dolls. How one dressed further indicated a person's class status, which meant for middle-class children wearing shoes as opposed to going barefooted.

The availability, quality, and quantity of certain foods, such as roast beef, plus a wife's status, and the responsibilities assigned to children in households were also indicative of class background. Middle-class families were able to hire extra help, often from their working or poorer counterparts, to assist with household and yard duties, which spared children from assuming these tasks. Jamaican-born Daphne B., whose mother was a popular seamstress, explained that,

When we were very small she [mother] employed somebody to look after us until we grew to a stage where we could help ourselves so she let that person go. And then we had somebody to wash and iron for us. And when I went to England at nineteen, we still had somebody to wash our clothes.¹⁰

Having household assistance meant Daphne B.'s mother had time to devote to the Women's Guild and the Parent Teachers Association. As a child of middle-class parents, Daphne B. participated in extracurricular activities, such as the 4-Club, and attended chaperoned dances. Middle-class children also learned how to play musical instruments, such as the organ. Equally important, these parents were able to send their children to some of the islands' best secondary and high schools. In so doing, their children could enter middle-class occupations to maintain their class status.

Besides providing a formal education, the schools in which some of these women enrolled served other purposes as well. Bridget Brereton noted that 'they would also acquire with their schooling a command of good English or French and some familiarity with European literary culture, both essential requirements for successful upward mobility'.¹¹ This meant avoiding, for example, the speaking of *patois*, the language of the masses. Daphne B. maintained that growing up she was taught 'middle-class values', including how to be a lady, the proper use of cutlery, and speaking proper English. Middle-class Caribbean families attempted to replicate European norms and sensibilities, which the educational system reinforced. Thus, Daphne B. pointed out that if the teachers 'heard us

speaking what they called poor English', students would endure some form of humiliation as punishment.

Of course, not all of the Caribbean interviewees grew up middle class. In this group, Ancilla admitted that her family was poor. Unlike Daphne B., who had household help and other assistance, this was not Ancilla's reality. Growing up, Ancilla experienced the burden of housework and paid work. She explained,

Other than trying to help in the fields in order to get money to go to school, I would have to help with the cooking and the washing. I hated ironing, so I only did it when I was forced to. I cleaned the house, do all those things. I had to do the work as if I was an adult. And then, when my mom would have babies, I would have to take care of the babies and do all the extra diapers and all that kind of stuff.¹²

Still, according to Ancilla, her father wanted a different life for his children, and subsequently encouraged them to pursue a formal education. She was awarded a scholarship to attend Naparima Girls' High School, which, she boasted, 'was very prestigious in those days'. Once they completed high school, the young women found migration to be a more attractive option than staying on their respective islands.

Migration to Britain

The general consensus among migration scholars is that economic factors historically drove Caribbean people to cross borders and, once they arrived, the primarily unskilled laborers occupied the lowest echelons of the industries where they were employed.¹³ The reality, as Caribbean scholar Elizabeth Thomas-Hope pointed out, is that 'at times working class, skilled or unskilled labor movements have predominated, at other times, middle-class and high-level occupational groups have been the majority'.¹⁴ She further added that, 'for each social class, the movement has been characterized by different patterns, different purposes, and different meaning'. Thomas-Hope's latter point is especially relevant when taking into account the reasons young Caribbean women migrated. None of the interviewees migrated as workers; in fact, some mentioned that they already had employment prospects once they completed the appropriate examinations.

While a few of the women mentioned the lack of opportunities available on their respective islands, they were the exception rather than the norm. Dorette cited mothers' fears of their daughters getting pregnant, and their use of migration as a preventative measure. Several of the women mentioned invitations from family members and friends to migrate. Two of the interviewees were granted scholarships to study nursing in Britain as long as they agreed to return home at the completion of their studies. At least two of the women, aware of the demand for nurses, contacted hospitals in Britain that welcomed them as a way to relieve the shortage of nursing personnel.

In addition to their individual rationale for migration, the women all saw migration to Britain as a form of adventure. A glimpse into several of their recollections regarding migration provides insight into their motivations. Barbadian-born Muriel, who migrated in 1955, had this to say: 'It was the first time for me going out in the world, literally on my own. And everything was exciting for me. That's one of the things that I liked about it. Everything was so exciting'.¹⁵ Jamaican-born Daphne C., who migrated in 1958, likened the migration of Jamaicans overall to a 'fever' – which was infectious. Here, she explained what prompted her to migrate:

So, you get the fever that you wanted to go. And so, my aunt had a daughter, and we were brought up like sisters. And she sent for her daughter. And after Elaine went, then I wanted to go! Because once she got there, she started telling her mother that I have to come. So, I got to go to England.¹⁶

Similarly, Barbadian-born Joan, who migrated to Britain in 1954, explained,

I had just left school, and even though my parents more or less wanted me to stay on the island, some of my friends went to England, and I thought, oh, I'd love to go to England. I applied to Netherne Hospital, and they accepted me, and then I left Barbados to go England.¹⁷

Chris Weedon argued that this 'history of major migration, which helped to change the face of Britain, remains largely unknown to Britain's White population'.¹⁸ If the varied reasons for Caribbean migration had been incorporated into the larger public discourse and made available to the British people, perhaps their perception of these migrants might have been different.

The ease with which these young women discussed moving to Britain reflected the relationship between the imperial metropole and its colonies. As Winston James pointed out, 'At home, especially in the Caribbean, which had endured 300 years of British Colonialism, Black people had been taught that they were British and came to think of themselves as such'.¹⁹ Consequently Muriel, Daphne C., Joan, and the other young women who entered Britain after the Second World War, according to James, were not immigrants; they 'were simply moving from one part of the British Empire to another as *British citizens*'.²⁰ Unfortunately, White British society in general did not welcome or view Caribbean people as British subjects. This was reflected not only in parliamentary debates aimed at stemming migration from the colonies, but also in terms of the racism that was present in employment, housing, education, and other aspects of society.

The interviewees who made the sojourn to Britain were vivacious, intelligent, and confident. Regardless of how these young women saw themselves, gendered racism coloured how they were viewed by wider British society. On the whole, Black people were viewed as 'strangers who lacked the qualities assumed to be central

to the character of white Britons'.²¹ Furthermore, how Black womanhood was constructed revealed a specific racialised view of femininity that stood in stark contrast to middle-class White womanhood as the epitome of beauty and domesticity.

The image of Caribbean female migrants as hypersexual breeders unable to control themselves was reflected in letters to the editors in the *Nursing Times* following the Notting Hill and Nottingham riots in 1958. In one letter, the writer complained, 'The illegitimacy rate is high; and that many of the women arrive in this country at various stages of pregnancy, and often live on National assistance'.²² 'Primitiveness, savagery, violence, sexuality, general lack of control, sloth, irresponsibility', were assumed to be the defining characteristics of Caribbean people, which were in direct opposition to British values and norms.²³

The interviewees did not fit the condescending image circulating in Britain. They did not migrate to Britain to be a burden on the state as was suggested by the above-referenced correspondence, or by political figures.²⁴ In fact, as discussed earlier, these women mostly grew up in middle-class families and attended schools where they were inculcated with British moral values. Indeed, the majority believed that the only way to procreate was within the confines of marriage and that children fared better in nuclear families. Interestingly enough, one interviewee, nineteen at the time, was pregnant upon arrival to Britain but resumed working immediately after the baby was born. She placed him in a residential nursery with the aid of a social worker, where, according to her, 'he was well looked after'.²⁵ Due to the absence of familial support in Britain, this interviewee sent her son back to Jamaica to live with her mother and aunt. So concerned were they that Caribbean people would disrupt the panorama of 'their' country, it appeared that Whites rarely took the opportunity to get to know the so-called strangers, relying instead on a nexus of racist, classist, and sexist stereotypes to render them as outsiders.

A closer look at why young Caribbean women chose nursing as an occupation actually reveals how similar their aspirations and dreams were to their White counterparts.²⁶ While Caribbean migrants who entered nurse training felt that living in residence protected them from the virulent forms of racism in mainstream British society, nursing schools and hospitals did not always welcome prospective Black students. 'Until 1966, it remained legal to discriminate in all areas of life on the grounds of race, and Blacks ... often found themselves excluded not only from acceptable housing, but also from skilled employment'.²⁷ Such exclusionary and discriminatory practices were tied to fears of the impact of Black people generally on Britain's national character, fears that led White nurses to ignore or downplay shared similarities with Black women. Acute labour shortages, however, had a way of tempering racist attitudes, even if momentarily.

The interviewees reported no single reason why they chose the nursing profession. The influence of family members who were nurses, limited career opportunities available to women at the time, knowledge of the

nursing shortage, and recruitment of nurses by hospital administrators were some of the explanations. A few offered a more altruistic reason that they wanted to 'do nursing and serve others'.²⁸ Two of the interviewees were awarded government scholarships to train as nurses with the stipulation that they return to the Caribbean once they completed their studies. Regardless of their rationale, it was patently clear that the interviewees were ambitious, motivated, and that they envisaged a future that included a secure, full-time, stable and respectable career.

As they reflected on how they came to be nurses, the majority of interviewees presented themselves as autonomous subjects who thoughtfully exercised the power to choose their careers. Guyanese-born Jean was attracted to teaching, nursing, and missionary work because she had 'always wanted to help people'.²⁹ In each of these roles, she surmised, '[I could] help kids get a better education, as a missionary I could go to different parts of the world to help people, and as a nurse, I could [help] with their healing'. In 1958, at the age of eighteen, Jean migrated to England to pursue nurse training. After graduating from grade eleven and completing her Second Grade Cambridge Examination, Dominican-born Nancy was undecided about a vocation. She began to think about nursing when a Canadian nurse visited her high school as part of a program to help students decide about their future profession. Following the presentation, Nancy went to the library and read the book *Hospital Careers for Girls*. 'After the way she portrayed nursing to us, I decided that's what I wanted to do', she declared.³⁰ A cousin already living in Britain further solidified the decision to migrate.

Jamaican-born Dorette was the youngest of the migrants and the only one to attend and complete high school in Britain. She left Jamaica at the age of fifteen-and-a-half to join her father and stepmother. Over a period of several years, Dorette worked at General Electric, Raleigh Industries, and British Railways as a stenographer. She also attended night school. Discouraged and disillusioned, she called in sick one day and went for a nursing interview. 'Out of the blue, I went into nursing, just out of the blue, I just got fed up', she recalled.³¹ Dorette's frustration was a result of the gendered racism she encountered which marked her as *other*, first in high school, and then in wider British society. Moreover, she resented working in environments where her male superiors invalidated her expertise and knowledge. Decades later, Dorette concluded, 'I still feel that because of discrimination I went into nursing, I'm still convinced that's what drove me into nursing; it was safe'.

Dorette's apparently spontaneous decision to pursue nurse training was a result of dynamics other than her work experience. From her point of view, nursing appeared less discriminatory, as none of the nurses who frequented her stepmother's hair salon had complained about differential treatment in the occupation. Dorette also had a cousin who was a nurse. In addition, her relationship with her stepmother was strained and she felt stifled by an over-protective father. She weighed the options available and chose to be in a more hospitable environment. Besides the opportunity to pursue a career,

nursing provided certain benefits for young women who were discovering who they were. Dorette insisted that, 'nursing gave me freedom', a freedom which she had not experienced living at home.

In contrast, Grenadian-born Dorothy J. assumed that she would automatically join the young women from 'back home' who were employed in various factories throughout London, earning about five pounds a week. Considering that the majority of interviewees had never worked for remuneration, the opportunity to earn any income signified independence, which meant a great deal to them. Nick, Dorothy J.'s brother, had his own ideas about his younger sister's future. Dorothy J. recalled:

My brother said to me, 'You will go into nursing.' It wasn't my [choice]; I didn't say 'I'm going into nursing.' He said to me 'You are going into nursing—you are not going to work in no factory.' So that was it. My sister-in-law got the application, and I went into nursing. I got to England in June, and I think I started nursing in August of that year.³²

Nick apparently recognised that nursing offered far more possibilities for his younger sister. Indeed, it offered guaranteed stability, a steady income, and more respect than factory employment.

To be sure, choosing nursing as a career was also connected to other factors such as the women's culture, religion, and early socialisation.³³ Together, the church, family, and school, albeit with various intensity, were critical in the socialisation of Caribbean girls and boys.³⁴ In these institutions, characteristics deemed as feminine and masculine, though socially constructed, were propagated as natural. These discourses about gender roles undoubtedly influenced young women's occupational preferences even if unconsciously. The interviewees believed in the seemingly universal and innate characteristics, such as healing, caring, and nurturing, that women supposedly possess. The church reinforced these ideals as women's greatest gifts to be used in caring for others and in their households; gender dictated what was considered girls' and boys' work. Equally important, the educational system was designed to sustain the status quo by promoting a gender ideology in which girls were prepared to work in particular areas suited for their sex.

As mentioned earlier, the prevailing scholarship on Black nurses tends to explore Black women's subjectivities as mainly workers, with a focus on how their experiences are mitigated by institutional racism in its various manifestations. Thus, in the crucible of a hierarchical occupation, the vectors of race, gender, and class operated to shape and define Black women's experience. Indeed, the interviewees related multiple examples of systemic, institutionalised, and everyday forms of racism. Yet, gendered racism was only one aspect of Caribbean women's narratives regarding what it meant to train, live, and work in Britain. Similar to Whites and other nurses, Caribbean practitioners used nursing as an opportunity to become skilled workers developing a

professional identity that was partly rooted in the notion of caring – a characteristic which was believed to be intrinsic to womanhood. This commonality, however essentialist and contrived, could have served as one of the bases for forging a powerful bond of sisterhood. Nursing, however, was anchored in a White, middle-class identity, which came to be representative of its ideals and practices.³⁵ These ideals and practices were embedded in the organisation and structure of the occupation influencing not only how Black nurses were viewed generally as workers, but their social relationships with White nurses. Instead of challenging stereotypes, White nurses generally colluded in the distorted perceptions about their Black counterparts.

Training and working in Britain

To explain the differential positions of Black women, and subsequently their oppression in the National Health Service (NHS), some writers have focused on the low status of state-enrolled nurses (SEN) whose responsibilities mirrored those of domestics. Only two of the nurses interviewed for this study were SEN; the majority trained as state-registered nurses (SRN) with midwifery. Of the aforementioned group, a few had additional training in health-related fields such as neonatal. One of the interviewees trained as a registered mental nurse (RMN), and one SRN sought further training in psychiatry. In describing how well they performed academically, the women, defying the notion that they were somehow intellectually inferior, inadvertently challenged mainstream discourses about citizenship and belonging.

In summarising her training, Daphne C. stated, 'I was good. I studied hard and I won lot awards for my hard work'.³⁶ Joan echoed Daphne C., adding, 'In my first year, I excelled in anatomy and physiology, and I remember getting a certificate because if you did well you get a certificate and a book. I got both certificate and the book'.³⁷ Likewise, Trinidadian-born Carmencita, who migrated to Britain in 1968 at the age of twenty and trained at Providence Hospital, also commented on how academically astute she was by stressing how she excelled on all the exams. 'I was a really good student', she maintained. How these interviewees represented themselves as nursing students is hardly surprising given their educational background, acumen, and drive to succeed.

Similar to their non-nursing counterparts, Caribbean women had a range of experiences training, working, and living in Britain. Despite the fact that colourism, a manifestation of slavery and colonialism, which created social hierarchies based on skin tone, was deeply embedded in Caribbean society, it was in Britain that most of the young women came to realise how social meanings were attached to their skin colour. In addition to dealing with institutionalised and systemic forms of oppression within the NHS, as students and workers, the interviewees experienced hegemonic domination at the hands of White nurses, patients, and physicians. For some, it was the racist stereotypes British nurses held about Black people generally. For others, it was the isolation they felt through being ignored at work,

while others mentioned the patronising attitudes directed towards them. In her interviews with Barbadian nurses, Julia Hallam noted that they too 'found "managing" their White nursing peers and hospital management teams far more difficult than managing racist reactions from their patients'.³⁸

It bears repeating that a narrative that explores the practitioners' victimisation in nursing is only partial. It does not account for how nursing training itself allowed probationers to forge bonds that crossed culture, class, and race lines. In other words, affiliations and friendships that were meaningful, memorable, and lasting are obfuscated when the emphasis is primarily on the interface between Black women's exploitation and contemporary capitalism. Trained under the apprenticeship system as a cheap supply of labour for hospitals, trainees endured long hours, monotonous, tedious, and sometimes laborious assignments. They were also subjected to authoritarian Sisters, disciplined for certain infractions, and expected to defer to physicians and senior nursing staff.³⁹ Antiguan-born Jennette, who migrated in 1958, in describing her first year of nurse training, pointed out how uniforms were used to differentiate between probationers and the more senior students. She further added that, 'You got to do all the dirty work; you do the bedpans, the sluice and all that stuff. It was a very hierarchical system'. Yet, Jennette maintained, 'It was fun. It was hard work, but it was teamwork'.⁴⁰ Besides the kinds of teamwork mentioned by Jennette, residence led to the creation of friendships that might not have been possible in other spaces. Attention to these relationships revealed a more rounded portrait of how these young women navigated life in Britain.

Notwithstanding that they missed their families, found the climate unbearable, and had difficulties adjusting to the exigencies of nurse training, the interviewees also had fond memories. They matured and felt their horizons expanded in ways that might not have been possible had they remained in the Caribbean. For Barbadian-born Muriel, training at the Epsom District Hospital meant being exposed to a diverse group of nurses. She explained,

There were a whole lot of other nurses from every part of the globe ... I think that was interesting. Our school was so diverse, so I tried to learn a little bit of other people's cultures. A lot of Irish girls were there. You know somebody from Iraq, a friend is from Tehran. And so, I met a lot of really nice people. We got along really well. I didn't really have any problems with those students.⁴¹

Carmencita mentioned making friends with and socialising with nurses from different geographical locations. Commenting on her experience, she stated, 'I was very multicultural so I had friends from China, Spain, and we used to have an evening where we cooked all different foods. I'll cook a Trinidadian dish; an African dish ... we all intermingled in our class'.⁴²

Daphne B. also maintained that living in residence was 'lots of fun' because of the heterogeneity of the nursing population. Dorrette, too, felt that living in

residence and interacting with others was a meaningful experience especially since her father 'prevented her from mixing with people' upon her arrival in Britain because he was trying to protect her.⁴³ Associations also extended beyond the classroom, wards, and residences as a few Caribbean nurses visited the homes of some of their new-found friends. According to Joan, 'I went to Glasgow with one of the nurses. I went to her home and I always had a wonderful time'.⁴⁴ In articulating their ability to forge friendships that transcended divisions based on culture and race in particular, these migrants painted themselves as more sophisticated and progressive than those British people (including medical and nursing personnel) who defined them as the hyper-visible, sexual *others*.

The interviewees who worked in Britain were generally pleased with their work experience overall. Indeed, there is a tacit recognition of their indispensability to the NHS even if it was not apparent to them at the time. As she reflected back on the eight years she spent in England, Daphne C. vividly recalled the details of her first delivery:

The first baby I delivered by myself was on St. Patrick's Day. The mother wanted to have a boy so she could call the baby Patrick. She got a girl, so she called the baby Patricia. I have a picture with me and the baby somewhere. I saw it not too long ago. It was a wonderful experience delivering these babies, especially going into these homes to deliver the baby in the mother's bed, and you cannot afford to mess up anywhere.⁴⁵

Daphne C. was not only a midwife; she served in the capacity of a Sister, a supervisory role, until she migrated to Canada in 1970. Despite difficulty in procuring employment and housing, only to discover that 'it was because of the color of your skin', Daphne C. was able to say, 'England was beautiful in terms of a lot of things'.⁴⁶ The interviewees' experiences in Britain would be reconfigured when their professional qualifications and identity was called into question upon migration to Canada.

Migrating to Canada

Migration allows for the reconstitution of subjectivities as migrants negotiate and inhabit new spaces and places. In addition, migration provides an opportunity for an exploration of the self in a way that is not always possible in the places left behind. In other words, crossing borders, moving from one place to another, allows for comparisons, assessments, and conclusions regarding certain experiences.⁴⁷ This was evident when British-trained Caribbean migrants discussed how their credentials were assessed in Canada. It is in the evaluation of the various nursing systems that one can see Black nurses' recognition of their value and worth, but also a keen analysis of how patriarchy structures the medical field.

The women gave similar reasons for migrating to Canada as they did for Britain. Again, for some, the

decision to travel to Canada was rather spontaneous. Upon completing her SRN and midwifery training, Jennette returned to Antigua in 1963; approximately one year later, she migrated to Canada. She explained why she chose Canada:

I had a couple of old English nursing magazines and I looked up and found a hospital. I didn't even know there was a London, Ontario until I looked. I found this hospital in London, Ontario looking for nurses, and I wrote, got offered the job. They told me to write to Immigration to get my landed (permanent resident status).⁴⁸

Jennette felt she had outgrown her hometown and the people she had left behind, and wanted to leave. Returning to England was not an option because, according to Jennette, 'I couldn't stand the English due to their arrogance'.⁴⁹

A trained SRN and midwife, Barbadian-born Eileen explained that she had been in England for six years and 'thought that at the time I needed to go somewhere else. Canada at the time was looking for nurses, so I applied and got a job at a hospital in Sudbury'.⁵⁰ She migrated to Canada in 1960. Elaine, on the other hand, admitted that she had gone to England with the 'intention of becoming a nurse, but diverted from my plans and got married instead'.⁵¹ She eventually trained as a state-enrolled nurse (SEN), and migrated to Canada in 1969 with her husband and one child. As in the case of Britain, reuniting with, or migrating because of family members was another common motivation.

Judging from the nurses' reactions when they arrived in Canada, it is obvious that they made certain suppositions about their new work environment. They assumed that the Canadian nursing system was similar to Britain, which was not entirely accurate. The first issue Caribbean migrant nurses confronted upon migration were in relation to accreditation — that is, how their foreign qualifications were evaluated in Canada. State-enrolled nurses (SEN) found that there was no equivalent in Canada. Both Dorothy R. and Elaine fell into this category. Dorothy R., however, had begun her general training but migrated to Canada prior to writing her SRN exams. Both nurses were stunned by how their qualifications were evaluated. For Elaine, the discrepancy between the information provided by the school where she inquired about upgrading and the College of Nurses, which is responsible for adjudicating migrant nurses' qualifications, intensified her frustration. Elaine explained that the College of Nurses told her that her pediatric background was limited, and as a result she needed an additional twenty-one hours of training. When she inquired at the school where the course was being offered, she was told that she needed to redo the entire program. Elaine was incensed: 'They didn't think it was up to their standard having done two years [in England] when theirs [Canada] is just a ten month program'.⁵²

To intensify an already tense situation, the nurses were also amazed at how limited their scope of responsibilities was in Canada compared to Britain. Dorothy J. provided the following example:

When I came here [Canada] I was working as an RNA (Registered Nursing Assistant), but I was already like a staff nurse in England because I had already graduated from my school of nursing. I found things here to be much different. I couldn't do meds, I couldn't do certain dressings, and there certain things such as taking out sutures, clips, and things you did automatically like suctioning. Working as an RNA, I couldn't do those things because they were left to the RN — that was the RN's job.⁵³

The women used terminology such as 'degrading' and 'second-class citizen' to describe what it was like working in Canada during the early years of migration. Eventually, Elaine and Dorothy J. upgraded and subsequently met licensing requirements to practice as RNs.

Trained as a Registered Mental Nurse (RMN) in Britain, Myrna also worked as a RNA because, like Elaine, her specialised training had no Canadian equivalent. She too was told by the College of Nurses to upgrade, but refused to do so, and confidently pointed out that, 'there was nothing for me to learn, I had learned everything in England'.⁵⁴ In comparing her experience in Canada and Britain, Myrna said,

nursing in England, you were a nurse, and you were taught everything, whereas here [Canada] you learn some things, and the things you do learn, you cannot really work with it because the doctors do most of it. That is what nursing here is all about; you are not really a nurse.⁵⁵

In reporting what felt like an attack on their education and, by extension, their professional identity, Britain emerged for the interviewees as the quintessential geographic location where nursing knowledge and practice were considered superior compared to Canada.

In addition to grappling with how their skills were adjudicated once in Canada, the nurses were further shocked at the physicians' omnipresence in the hospitals, which they felt placed Canadian nursing practitioners in a subservient role. In comparing the two systems, Eileen had this to say:

There were a lot of things in England that you were not allowed to do here. They were certain procedures that the doctors did and you went along with it. I heard that when the thermometer first came out the doctors walked around with it as if it was a precious thing. In time they too will have to learn that they will have to give up some procedures to nurses and accept it.⁵⁶

Some of these procedures included, but were not limited to, doctors being responsible for writing prescriptions, checking patients' temperatures, and inserting nasogastric tubes.⁵⁷ Perhaps the greatest disappointment was felt by nurse midwives who discovered

upon migrating to Canada that they were prohibited from delivering babies. By the time the interviewees had arrived in Canada, practicing midwives were virtually eliminated in most provinces as physicians controlled the birthing process.⁵⁸

Daphne C., another SRN and nurse-midwife, explained how she found out about the role of midwives in Canada: 'I started in the nursery, and it was at the time I learned that you are not allowed to deliver babies, even if you are working in the case room, you're just there to assist, to take the baby from the doctor'.⁵⁹ Daphne C. was not only disturbed by the common practice of using forceps by physicians, she also found it unusual that midwives were unavailable for 'people who do not want to have babies in hospitals'. She continued, 'It really did something to me'.⁶⁰ For these nurses, it was difficult and painful to be left out of the birthing process. Working in the pediatrics department was the closest that nurse-midwives such as Eileen and Daphne C. came to babies.

While they too struggled with the reality that their midwifery skills would never be utilised in Canada, Daphne B. and Jamaican-born Lillie, the only nurse to train in Scotland in 1954, refused to work in the hospital. Under no circumstances would these nurse-midwives assist male doctors in an area that they fervently protested should be a woman's enclave. Daphne B. compared physicians in both countries, 'Doctors [in Canada] were like little gods, and the nurses seemed afraid of them. In England, the doctors relied on you. They taught you a lot more so that you could be their eyes and ears and you could do things when they were not there to do it'.⁶¹ She continued, 'I never work in the case room delivering babies. I didn't want to be a glorified maid for any doctor mopping up after they make a mess'.⁶² Also, in reference to Canada, Lillie argued, 'They give you no responsibility. The doctor has to order everything. Although it seems to be getting better, it seems all they [doctors] want is a handmaiden. There are so many British-trained nurses who have their midwifery training, and none of them are accredited for it here'.⁶³ British-trained nurse midwives were cognisant of the positions of dominance that existed in the hospitals which privileged and legitimised physicians' expertise and knowledge, and which subsequently structured the relationship between them and the physicians.⁶⁴ Clearly, these women in their critique of physicians' hegemony were contributing to feminist analysis about patriarchal power within the medical arena. To avoid being a 'glorified maid' or 'handmaiden', Lillie and Daphne B. enrolled in the University of Toronto School of Nursing where they earned the requisite qualifications to work as public health nurses.

Already retired or near retirement at the time of the interviews, the women have had time to reflect on their nursing careers as well as their lives. All of the nurses admitted to having enjoyed and found their nursing career fulfilling, yet there was a sense that they were unhappy with the direction of the occupation. This dissatisfaction stemmed from transformations that were connected to the restructuring of the Canadian health care system which started earlier, but intensified in the

1990s. This encompassed, for example, the introduction of technology and divisions among rank-and-file nurses, that is, university graduates versus those trained in the apprenticeship system. Tensions between nurses and management were also a concern. Moreover, the women maintained that these changes in the health care system led to an environment where caring was no longer intrinsic to nurses' professional identity. I have discussed these issues in detail elsewhere;⁶⁵ as such, the rest of this paper is devoted to highlighting a few pressing issues the interviewees identified. The objective here is to legitimise Black nurses as knowledge producers who can offer valuable insights that nurses across geographical boundaries, regardless of their multiple social identities, may use as a basis for solidarity.

A disproportionate number of the interviewees expressed concern about what they perceived to be a lack of support for rank-and-file nurses especially among nurse-managers and organisations that claimed to represent nurses' interests. The interviewees emphasised that nurses' well-being, broadly conceived, must always be a priority. While Daphne C. worried about the profession in terms of 'efficiency, accountability, and responsibility', she pointed to the plight nurses face daily while working. For her and other nurses, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) and those in supervisory positions are abdicating their responsibility to nurses. Regarding the RNAO, Daphne C. made the following observation:

They are not representing them half as much, there are a lot of things that were happening to nurses, and you have no one to take your side. Even if a patient spits at you, it's like, okay, it's the patient's job to spit at you. There's nobody you could really complain to about something that a patient has done to you or is doing to you. So, it's like whatever the patient did, the patient was right. Even if the patient was lying, there's nobody to say, 'Okay, the patient was lying and the nurse was right.' ... We need somebody to take our sides.⁶⁶

Similarly, Dorothy J. related an incident where the son of a politician had been extremely abusive to her and other nurses. She complained to management but was virtually ignored. In a conversation with the nurse-supervisor, Dorothy J. stated, 'I told the charge nurse that we have no rights ... because nobody would stand up for us'.⁶⁷ Dorothy J. made it clear that she would not be subjected to the patient's abusive behavior. Although nurses are instructed to document cases of abuse, Dorothy J. found the policy ineffective inasmuch as there is often no resolution to nurses' complaints, which she finds disheartening. The message the interviewees wanted to emphasise was that when organisations and those in positions of authority refuse to advocate on nurses' behalf, it sends a negative message to them regarding their value and significance.

As the largest group of health care workers in Canada and Britain, the interviewees insisted that nurses

should not only be informed about their unions, but that they must choose conscientious leaders whose mission it is to defend and protect their interests. Muriel was in management for most of her career, yet she pointed out,

You need to have a union that has the people's interests at heart, but they also need to be able to work with administration. And they need to know their purpose, they need to educate the nurses around what the union can and cannot do for them, rather than, 'Elect me because, I'll represent you'.⁶⁸

Muriel insisted that leaders should not be elected on a whim, but must demonstrate their commitment to those they represent. She further underscored that the relationship between the union and administration must be amicable in order to avoid, for example, strikes that can have a detrimental impact on patients and on nurses' morale. While the majority of nurses felt they benefited from collective bargaining, some were concerned about the union's inability to address inequality in the occupation.

Given the diversity in nursing, attention must be paid to how institutional forms of oppression are reproduced and maintained in ways that disadvantage nurses of colour. To address this issue, the interviewees recognised that *all* nurses have a role to play, however minimal. To create a more inclusive nursing environment, gendered racism must be taken seriously. In order for this to occur, nurses must be at the forefront and be willing to risk being censured. Ancilla worked at the same hospital for thirty-six years in a variety of capacities, and in 1980 became president of the nurses' union. Ancilla recognised that as a Black woman she not only occupied a position that historically had been the preserve of Whites; she was also dealing 'with a predominantly White workforce', where racism was a taboo issue.⁶⁹ Not to be deterred, Ancilla pointed out, 'I brought it forward, the Ontario Nurses' Association flagged that as something that they would have to eventually deal with in the collective agreement'.⁷⁰ For Ancilla (whose activism began as a nursing student in Britain when she organised a protest that led to a change in the menus and the redecoration of the residence), ignoring any form of injustice was not an option. She declared:

If you want to make changes, then you have to get involved ... You can't just sit and gripe about it. So, I am not your typical woman. I am not your typical nurse, sitting in the background. I do everything that would help to improve the situation. So, if I can't help to make it better, then I don't talk about it.

Practitioners such as Ancilla know from experience that racism and other forms of discrimination poison the work environment, and suggest a multi-pronged solution to eradicate inequality. They urge implementing policies to ensure that all nurses regardless of their social location receive fair treatment. At the same time, policies are ineffective if they do not translate into practice. The interviewees also insist that White nurses, especially

those in management, play an active role in addressing gendered racism. Too often Caribbean nurses have been the objects of, or have witnessed, differential treatment at the hands of their White colleagues, patients, and their families. Often White nurses' answer to the problem has been to keep silent. Finally, all nurses (especially those from the dominant group) must commit to understanding how power relations are constituted and play out in nursing. Nurses must avoid being complicit in the victimisation of others who are less powerful.

Conclusion

The narratives presented here are not intended to represent *all* Black nurses. The aim was to provide a more nuanced examination of Black nurses' lives that moves beyond their portrayal as mere victims of capitalism, patriarchy, and gendered racism. Including information on the interviewees' background and reasons for migrating, challenges the idea that all migrants were from unskilled and working-class backgrounds and migrated for economic reasons. Furthermore, these young women migrated alone and not as appendages to men, as is often assumed by migration scholars. Whether in Canada or Britain, these women were pioneers on many levels, and have by their very presence contributed to the nursing profession and the societies in which they lived.

Notes

1. Ancilla Ho-Young, interview, Burlington, Ont., 15 Aug. 2007.
2. See Ceri Peach's authoritative book on the subject, *West Indian Migration to Britain: a Social Geography* (London, Oxford University Press, 1968). These statistics must be used with caution. Peach pointed out that prior to the 1961 Census and the implementation of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, the only official statistics on migration were compiled by the Board of Trade, and some migrants were excluded from the official count.
3. For one exception to this trajectory, see Mary Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return* (London and Warwick, Caribbean Studies, 1997); Karen Fog Olwig, *Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2007).
4. See Karen Flynn, *Moving beyond Borders: Black Canadian and Caribbean Women in the African Diaspora* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2011). The interviewees signed consent forms and were also given the option of using pseudonyms; four of the women chose this option. The tapes are currently in the possession of the author.
5. Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London, Virago Press, 1985), 25.
6. Carol Baxter, *The Black Nurse: an Endangered Species: a Case for Equal Opportunities in Nursing* (Cambridge, National Extension College, 1988), 16. See

- Gail Lewis, 'Black Women's Employment and the British Economy', in *Inside Babylon: the Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, ed. Winston James and Clive Harris (New York, Verso, 1993), 73–96. For a general overview on Black workers in Britain, see Clive Harris, 'Post-War Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army', in James and Harris, *Inside Babylon: the Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, 9–54.
7. Agnes Calliste, 'Women of "Exceptional Merit": Immigration of Caribbean Nurses to Canada', *Journal of Canadian Women and the Law*, 6 (1993), 85–103.
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 17. Joan Virtue, interview, Scarborough, Ont., 12 Sep. 2006.
 18. Chris Weedon, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (London, Open University Press, 2004), 63.
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 24. See, for example, Enoch Powell's infamous 'River of Blood' speech. Extracts can be found at www.sterlingtimes.co.uk/powell_press.htm.

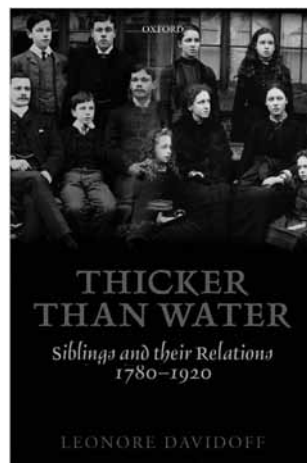
25. Daphne Bailey, interview, Toronto, Ont., 29 May 1995.
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30. Nancy Ward [pseudonym], interview, Toronto, Ont., 5 Jan. 2000.
31. Dorette Thompson [pseudonym], interview, Mississauga, Ont., 17 Aug. 1999.
32. Dorothy Jones [pseudonym], interview, Rexdale, Ont., 29 Feb. 2000.
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34. For an excellent discussion on gender socialisation in the Caribbean, see Olive Senior, *Working Miracles: Women's Lives in the English-Speaking Caribbean* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991).
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38. Hallam, *Nursing the Image*, 159. See also Linda Ali, 'West Indian Nurses and the National Health Service in Britain 1950 – 1968' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2001).
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40. Jennette Prince, interview, Toronto, Ont., 8 Oct. 1999.
41. Muriel Knight, interview, Scarborough, Ont., 12 Sep. 2006.
42. Carmencita Gomez [pseudonym], interview, Toronto, Ont., 14 Oct. 1999.
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46. Daphne Veronica Clarke, interview, Windsor, Ont., 27 Apr. 2006.
47. Karen Flynn, *Moving Beyond Borders*.
48. Jennette Prince, interview, Toronto, Ont., 8 Oct. 1999. Landed means permanent resident status. See also Shkimba and Flynn, 'In England We Did Nursing', 147.
49. Jennette Prince, interview, Toronto, Ont., 8 Oct. 1999.
50. Eileen Jacobson, interview, Burlington, Ont., 6 Jan. 1995.
51. Elaine McLeod, interview, Toronto, Ont., 5 May 1995.
52. Dorothy J. [pseudonym], interview, Rexdale, Ont., 29 Feb. 2000. See also Karen Flynn, 'Experience and Identity: Black Immigrant Nurses to Canada, 1950–1980', in *Sisters or Strangers: Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, ed. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004), 387.
53. Dorothy Jones [pseudonym], interview, Rexdale, Ont., 29 Feb. 2000.
54. Myrna Blackman, interview, Brampton, Ont., 29 May 1995. See also Shkimba and Flynn, 'In England We Did Nursing', 150.
55. Myrna Blackman, interview, Brampton, Ont., 29 May 1995.
56. Eileen Jacobson, interview, Burlington, Ont., 6 Jan. 1995. See also Karen Flynn, 'Proletarianization, professionalization, and Caribbean immigrant nurses', *Canadian Woman Studies*, 18/1 (1998), 57–60.
57. Cynthia Toman pointed out that the issue of delegating certain tasks that were once the purview of physicians was a contested issue as nurse leaders grappled with the legal ramifications. In some hospitals nurses did assume certain tasks while in others it took longer. See, e.g., Cynthia Toman, '"Body Work": Nurses and the Delegation of Medical Technology at the Ottawa Civic Hospital, 1947–1972', *Scientia Canadensis*, 29/2 (2006), 155–75.
58. Dianne Dodd, 'Helen MacMurchy: Popular Midwifery and Maternity Services for Canadian Pioneer Women', in *Caring and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada*, ed. Dianne Dodd and Doborah Gorham (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 135.
59. Daphne Veronica Clarke, interview, Windsor, Ont., 27 Apr. 2006.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Daphne Bailey, interview, Toronto, Ont., 29 May 1995.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Lillie Johnson, interview, Toronto, Ont., 9 Aug. 1999. See also Flynn and Shkimba, 'In England We Did Nursing', 152.
64. Ema Gamarnikov, 'Sexual Division of Labour: The Case of the Nursing', in *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, ed. Annette Kuhn and AnneMarie Wolpe (Boston, Routledge, 1978), 96–123; Pauline Leonard, 'Playing Doctors and Nurses: Competing Discourses of Gender, Power and Identity in the British National Health Service', *Sociological Review*, 51/2 (2003), 218–37.
65. Karen Flynn, 'Black Canadian Nurses and Technology', in *Nursing Interventions Through Time: History as Evidence*, ed. Pat D'Antonio and Sandra B. Lewenson (New York, Springer Publishing, 2010), 153–69.
66. Daphne Veronica Clarke, interview, Windsor, Ont., 27 Apr. 2006.
67. Dorothy J., [pseudonym], interview, Rexdale, Ont., 29 Feb. 2000.
68. Muriel Knight, interview, Scarborough, Ont., 12 Sep. 2006.
69. Ancilla Ho-Young, interview, Burlington, Ont., 15 Aug. 2007.
70. Joan Virtue, interview, Scarborough, Ont., 12 Sep. 2006.

Book Reviews

Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker Than Water: Siblings and their Relations 1780-1920*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. £35, 978-0-1995-4648-0 (hardback), pp. xiii + 449

Reviewed by Alysa Levene
Oxford Brookes University



This latest book from Leonore Davidoff continues the professional preoccupation with the lives of the middle classes for which she is so noted. In this case, however, she takes a deliberately side-on perspective on an aspect of social and familial life, which she notes has been largely neglected by historians in particular: sibling relationships, and by extension also, uncles, aunts and cousins. This view requires us to re-think the

usual focus on parent-child relations (although this is present), and instead take a broader view of experiences of family life, for, as the inside cover blurb states, '[b]rothers and sisters remain, for those that have them, an inextricable part of existence'.

I was reflecting on this statement as I made my first flick through the book while waiting for my sister in a coffee shop. I was aware as I browsed of a slight irritation that she was late, speedily followed up by a reassuring conviction that she would be here soon, and that in any case, it would immediately be forgotten. I even noted down an interesting fact to tell her when she arrived. It is this sort of shared common ground, formative experience and sentiment towards 'life's longest relationship' (p. 2), which Davidoff highlights throughout her study, importantly, in grown-up siblings as well as children. The key difference is that I was waiting for one of my two sisters, while the families spotlighted in the first part of this book were generally very much larger; in Davidoff's term these were 'long families', where generations could quite easily overlap in age. The fertility transition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century forms an important backdrop to the study, and one which Davidoff uses as a useful framework for studying changes in sibling relationships.

The book is an interesting mixture of general themes to do with kinship and siblinghood (including incest, intra-familial marriages and sibling loss), and case studies of selected families. Sigmund Freud and William Gladstone's relationships with their siblings form the most detailed examples, but most of the other chapters are dotted with more fleeting examples, from otherwise unknown family papers to recognisable names like the Woolfs/Bells, Dickens, and the Wordsworths. These case studies are used to illustrate and explore a variety of scenarios, from the deeply affectionate William and Dorothy Wordsworth

(used to explore the potential tension between close siblings and sexual desire), to the very controlling relationship William Gladstone had with his younger sister Helen. Other, quantitative, information is supplied by the 1881 census, used to illustrate, for example, the number of grown sisters living with grown brothers. More detailed evidence from this source is presented in the Appendix.

Readers of this journal will find a great deal to interest them here, as gender (and especially femininity) is a consistent central theme (as is religion). Davidoff provides a strong feminist reading of the sources – not just on sisters' traditional role as care-giving aunts, although these are present – but also as business partners, role models, and givers of influential advice. There is also much of interest on the psychological impact of being a sister rather than a brother: the tragedy of Anne Gladstone's life seems to have been her inability to express publicly the strong character traits that she shared with her brother, for example. Life as a sister emerges as one potentially fraught with the restraints that came with conforming to the middle-class feminine ideal, but at the same time it is shown to be one with a great deal of nuance and potential agency restored to it.

The book's conclusion returns to the present, pointing out the new levels of complexity present in a society of adoption, donor sperm, and step-families. Davidoff states at the outset that her 'fundamental purpose' is 'to throw light on how present concerns shape conceptions of the past and on the way the past illuminates the present' (p. 2). For this reader, this was scarcely necessary as the book raises so much to provoke new thought about this period of great change in family size. The rise of single-child families is also passed over here (save for a somewhat unconvincing statement that singletons define themselves by their want of siblings). Nonetheless, the stated purpose is a laudable aim, and one which will further enlarge the readership of this meticulously-researched and persuasively-argued book.

Deborah Simonton, *Women in European Culture and Society. Gender, Skill and Identity from 1700*

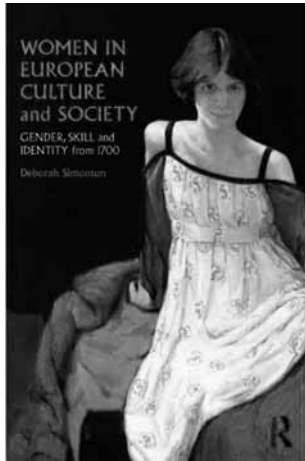
London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

£75.00, ISBN 978-0-4152-1307-3 (hardback),

£22.99, ISBN 978-0-4152-1308-0 (Paperback), pp. xiv + 416

Reviewed by Marjo Kaartinen
University of Turku, Finland

Organised chronologically in a very reader friendly manner, *Women in European Culture and Society* explores women of the past three hundred years. The first of the three main parts focuses on eighteenth-century and Enlightenment Europe up to the French Revolution – which in its part is discussed separately in a short



chapter titled 'Intermezzo'. Part Two discusses women's worlds after the backlash caused by the Revolution: the naturalisation of domesticity in the nineteenth century receives its due here. The second 'Intermezzo' looks at the fin de siècle, and is followed by Part Three exploring modern times.

Deborah Simonson's command of European women's history is astounding and admirable. This book is about European women's

experience in social and cultural terms, and in a breathtaking manner it travels across Europe and through time, and never fails to showcase interesting women of the past. From the endless forests of Central Finland to Silesia, from the Scottish Highlands to Greece and Portugal, we find women as agents of their lives. Towards the end, the book tends to move somewhat from the analysis of aims and motives into noting accomplishments and achievements: this is understandable since so many things must be noted in a limited space. Simonson does not forget to acknowledge, however, that everything is far from perfect, and presents staggering facts concerning gender equality in late-modern Europe.

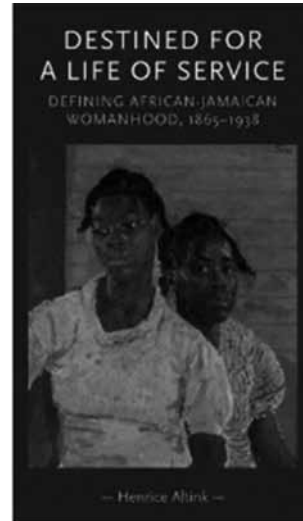
As the book's title suggests, her book's aim is to interpret European culture and society, and women's input in these. Simonson is especially strong in the social history of European women: their work, skills, family life and education, to mention some of her key topics. The concept of 'culture' is trickier than the one of 'social', but I find the solution employed in this book sensible: 'culture' is understood in rather a narrow sense to include, for example, arts and women's writing. Having said that, this book admittedly addresses many issues that are rarely seen in works aiming to be surveys, especially the discussions on the history of consumption and the gendering of space offer valuable insight and can easily be termed as cultural history.

Women in European Culture and Society will serve perfectly as a university textbook, and one hopes that this book will not *only* become a compulsory read in gender or women's history classes but also earn a place in general history classes. It definitely is a book all historians and all those who are interested in European history must read. Deborah Simonson has written in a thoroughly enjoyable, lucid and beautiful style; her book is approachable and yet contains a compressed pack of solid information and employs a great array of sources.

Henrice Altink, *Destined for a Life of Service: Defining African-Jamaican Womanhood, 1865-1938*

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011. £60, ISBN 978-0-7190-8028-9 (hardback), pp. x + 225

Reviewed by Barbara Bush
Sheffield Hallam University



After the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, the date when this study commences, the colonial 'civilising mission', begun in the penultimate years of slavery by non-conformist missionaries, intensified. Given the negative stereotypes of slave women as sexually 'loose', rebellious, and lacking the feminine virtues of white women, the transformation and 'uplift' of free African-Jamaican women was prioritised by churches, voluntary organisations, and the colonial state. The debates

and initiatives centred on redefining African-Jamaican womanhood according to European conceptions of femininity and the complex class, colour and gender divisions that characterise Jamaican society form the core of Altink's study. Her book is effectively organised and the discussion utilises an impressive range of personal testimony, primary and secondary sources. The first three chapters engage with the dominant negative perceptions of lower-class African-Jamaican womanhood relating to female sexuality, marriage, motherhood. The final two chapters focus on women in the workplace and struggles to attain citizenship as anti-colonial nationalism intensified during the inter-war years.

Altink takes on board some controversial and sensitive issues relating to the intimate lives of African-Jamaican women which still generate polarised and, at times, emotive debate. In her first and second chapters, she considers the perceived 'problem' of illegitimacy, a major preoccupation of white policy makers, academics and do-gooders. Lower-class women, she argues, were 'deeply ashamed' when they had children out of wedlock and aspired to 'get the ring' and become respectable married women (p. 201). She disagrees with historians who emphasise the strength of African-derived traditions in the intimate areas of poorer black women's lives and argues that, on the contrary, such women extensively engaged with dominant [European] ideals of femininity (p. 201). This rather sweeping generalisation does not explain the persistence of high rates of 'illegitimacy' into the post-independence period and the failure of

initiatives to eradicate cultural practices regarded as a barrier to development. Her arguments relating to the complex relationship between European and African-derived value systems needed to be more convincingly developed in critical engagement with key sources, in particular research by white 'outsiders' such as Judith Blake and Madeline Kerr (who is described on p. 26 as a social psychiatrist when she was an academic social psychologist). Lower-class Jamaicans were aware of the negative attitudes towards African-Jamaican culture held by Europeans and middle-class 'coloured' Jamaicans and, arguably, told them what they wanted to hear not what they really believed or felt.

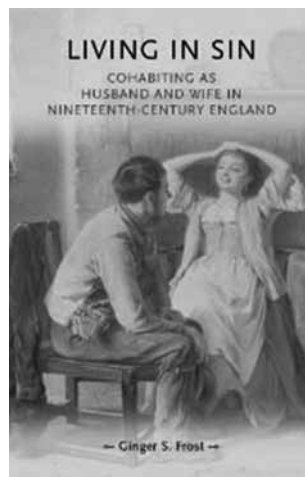
These weaker points in the first two chapters are redeemed by the three subsequent chapters on motherhood, work and citizenship. Chapter three reveals the hardships women faced in rearing children in adverse conditions, including the pressures to live up to European-derived ideals of motherhood, which could result in infanticide and concealment of birth (p. 96). Altink challenges arguments for the empowering aspects of African-derived forms of mothering and emphasises the powerlessness of lower-class motherhood (pp. 99-100). This included lack of resources to give birth and raise children in healthy conditions, yet colonial officials attributed high infant and child mortality to untrained traditional midwives or 'nanas', the sexual mores of mothers and poor parenting. However, after the First World War, the welfare of colonised mothers was given greater priority in colonial policy. There was also more recognition of the impact of ignorance, poverty, and malnutrition on infant mortality rates and voluntary initiatives, later supported by government grants, resulted in the establishment of child welfare clinics and leading to some improvements.

In chapter four, Altink turns to the importance of class and colour in shaping the place of African-Jamaican women in the workplace. Women were discriminated against in education and training and opportunities for poorer, and darker, women were limited. This is a well-crafted chapter that provides interesting detail about the gendering of the labour market. My only minor quibble is that more could have been said about the informal sector of the economy, including cultivation of family land, and how poorer women who could not depend on financial support from men survived. Government policy, argues Altink, endorsed this class, colour and gender hierarchy, and further stimulated women's struggles for greater equality. This is the focus of her final chapter which considers African-Jamaican women's campaigns for equal rights. These campaigns dovetailed with, and were informed by, the movement for race pride associated with Marcus Garvey and the growth of nationalism. In sum, *Destined for a Life of Service*, is a welcome addition to the existing historiography and will be thus of interest to scholars and students engaged in research into twentieth-century Jamaican history and issues of gender, race and class in Caribbean societies. The main arguments raised and themes developed should provoke productive debate and discussion.

Ginger S. Frost, *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England*

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008, second edition 2011. £55.00, ISBN 978-0-7190-7736-4 (hardback), £15.99, ISBN 978-0-7190-8569-7 (paperback), pp. viii + 264

Reviewed by Lesley A. Hall
Wellcome Library, London



Ginger Frost has already provided us with valuable evidence of the complexity and subtlety of Victorian responses to problems around marriage, courtship and the relations between the sexes in her earlier work, *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class and Gender in Victorian England* (University of Virginia Press, 1995). Her new book on cohabitation similarly brings home to us the extent to which Victorians were, in practice, a good deal more morally flexible

in specific cases, if not about laying down general rules, of matters of marriage and the heart. Using a wide range of source materials, she explores the various situations in which couples might be living in essentially matrimonial relationships 'without benefit of clergy'. There was no single model and such ménages could be found in all classes, undertaken for a variety of reasons.

The majority of couples who were cohabiting in nineteenth-century Britain did so because they could not marry within the law as it then stood, unless they were willing to commit bigamy (far from uncommon). In some cases, one or other or even both partners were already married and unable to obtain a divorce (as in one of the best-known instances, the union between Mary Ann Evans – George Eliot – and George Henry Lewes). There were also many instances in which the couple fell within legally forbidden degrees of affinity or consanguinity, too closely related, in the eyes of English law, either by blood or marriage. Perhaps the most discussed reason throughout the period, affecting couples who wished to marry but were legally prevented, was the designation of a marriage with a deceased wife's sister (who might well be living in the widower's household and accepted as a substitute mother by children of the first match) as incestuous: campaigns to lift this ban continued throughout the nineteenth century and the law was finally changed in 1909. Unions – even between relatively close relations – might traditionally be accepted in particular areas and subcultures but could not be formalised. Those who could afford to do so might travel to some jurisdiction in which the rules were different, but the status of their marriage under English law remained precarious. Couples in these anomalous situations were

often perceived as respectable by those around them though most were discrete about their irregular nuptial state.

Irregular unions among the poor caused considerable problems for the administrators of the Poor Law system. Strife between legitimate children and illegitimate (but recognised and accepted) offspring of unwed unions created legal tangles and family feuds. Judges found men's violence against their cohabitantes reprehensible even if the women were, by definition, unchaste and fallen females. Thus records of parish administration and the courts (and periodicals for the legal profession) provide a paper trail even if there was no marriage licence.

Members of the demi-monde and the lowest of the underclass always tended to regard marriage as completely optional if not irrelevant, as they had no façade of respectability to maintain. Some men of the middle and upper classes maintained long-term quasi-marital households with working-class women: Frost suggests that though this was a risky option for the woman, it could sometimes turn out to her advantage.

A handful of high-minded social reformers with ethical objections to the involvement of church and state in the relationship between two individuals, and (or) opposed to the inequitable legal status of married women, advocated, and in some instances practised, 'free unions'. However, Frost suggests that, although such unions did not impose legal coverture on women, they still had significant disadvantages for women, who were far more vulnerable should difficulties arise; and that critiquing marriage as an institution did not necessarily lead to rethinking traditional gender roles. Such unions might be accepted within liberal radical and freethinking circles, but fear of the judgement of the wider community led campaigners for women's rights to pressurise Elizabeth Wolstenholme into formalising her comradely union with Ben Elmy.

This is an outstanding work which vividly illuminates our understanding of the negotiations between principles and practice around marriage and morality in Victorian England.

**Susan Mc Pherson and Angela McPherson,
*Mosley's Old Suffragette: A Biography of
Norah Dacre Fox (Revised edition)***

Lulu.com, 2011. £9.99, ISBN 978-1-4466-9967-6 (e-book), pp. 276

Reviewed by Julie V. Gottlieb
University of Sheffield

In many respects this is a story of survival; surviving the person and the legacy of Norah Elam (aka Dacre Fox), possibly the most personally unsympathetic and politically detestable of those women who fought alongside the Pankhursts in the Women's Social and Political Union. This biography of the Irish-born suffragette, anti-vivisectionist, opponent of vaccination, and British fascist is written by the subject's granddaughter and great-granddaughter; the former, Angela, having lived with her cantankerous

Mosley's Old Suffragette

Susan McPherson
Angela McPherson



grandmother in unhappy circumstances for a couple of years in early childhood. The authors are at their best when they engage in life writing, when the relationships, the personal traumas, and the psychological depths are delved, providing insights and intimate details only a family member could know. Norah Dacre Fox and Dudley Elam, both of whom were still married to

others, had a child together in 1922. This only child was Angela's father, a boy who was emotionally neglected by his parents, sent to Germany to go to boarding school in the 1930s where he also joined the Hitler Youth, who never lived up to his mother's expectations and who – as his daughter tries to understand – became an abusive alcoholic husband and father himself as a consequence of maternal deprivation. As Angela remarks (p. 244), 'my father was unwanted and unloved by Norah, and made to feel that he was an intrusion and encumbrance into her and Dudley's life'. As a biography written by two generations of Norah's descendants, neither of whom are historians, the book's style, tone and the adventures in genealogical research it recounts are analogous to the approach taken by the popular television series, *Who Do You Think You Are?* It is clear that the writing of this book has been a labour of love, or more rightly the labour of Norah's unloved offspring.

In this sense, we can see this self-published biography as a product of the 'memory boom', but it also thickens our understanding of a prominent figure in the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), further elaborating on her aberrational journey from feminism to fascism. Elam was a prominent member of the Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) in the 1930s, but after she fell out with the 'Leader' after the war she went even further to the extreme right, joining forces with Britain's answer to Hitlerite anti-Semitism, the former camel veterinarian and founder of the Imperial Fascist League, Arnold Leese. The route from suffragism to fascism was one taken by only two other women in Britain, Mary Richardson and Mary Allen. The story of the trio has been told elsewhere, by myself in *Feminine Fascism* (2000), by Hilda Kean (on Richardson), and by Martin Durham in *Women and Fascism* (1998), and Norah's story is especially dramatic as she was the only woman to find herself in Holloway prison on two historic occasions, first as a WSPU prisoner and hunger striker, and again in 1940 when she was interned under Defence Regulation 18B1(a) for her fascist activities, her proximity to the BUF leadership, and the threat she posed to national security. She had played a fairly prominent role in the BUF; her partner, Dudley Elam, was very much

the junior partner under her influence. She spoke at fascist meetings, stood as a prospective parliamentary candidate for the BUF in Northampton, and was involved with the movement's finances at the critical juncture during the 'Phoney War' period when Mosley feared for his life and was making contingency plans.

Much of that is already a familiar story, but what the McPhersons are able to reveal is more about Norah's origins, some light on her marital status and her financial affairs, and the range of her political interests, filling in the gaps between her political awakening in the WSPU and her involvement with the fascists. We know much more now about the decisive turn to the right taken by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst during and after the First World War and with the formation of the Women's Party in 1918, in time to contest the first general election

in which women had the vote. But Norah went much further still in developing a nationalist and chauvinistic feminism, premised on xenophobia. She was involved with both the National Party and the Empire Union after the First World War, but her main concern was to eradicate German influence and expel Germans from Britain. Her journey from militant suffragette to fascist was very clearly signposted indeed.

The McPhersons set out to 'examine in detail the original source documents that are available and properly contextualise them' (p. 5). They commendably achieve their first objective, but their attempt to contextualise is more heavy-handed. As genealogical research, this biography has a lot to offer, and historians of the WSPU, British feminism, various anti-establishment campaigns, and British fascism should all be grateful for the painstaking examination of the sources and the most intimate knowledge of the family history and family secrets.

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Celia Lee and Paul Edward Strong (eds.), *Women in War: from Home Front to Front Line* (Pen and Sword)

Sue Niebrzydowski (ed.), *Middle-aged Women in the Middle Ages* (D S Brewer)

Elizabeth Norton, *Bessie Blount* (Amberley)

There are also some titles left from the list published in Issue 68 (Spring 2012) of the magazine. If you are interested in any of these please email **bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org**

Libbie Escolme-Schmidt, *Glamour in the Skies: The Golden Age of the Air Stewardess*

Stroud: History Press, 2010. £12.99, ISBN 978-0-7524-5787-1 (paperback), pp. 223 and multiple illustrations

Reviewed by Jo Stanley

Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University



Golly gosh, ladies! Isn't being an air stewardess a jolly adventure! All those pranks with naughty pilots! If *Hello* magazine was to co-publish a history of British women cabin crew in conjunction with the *Tatler* then it would read rather like this book. Even so, I could not wait to read the next page, and the next, in order to get the unprecedented insights of insiders in the flying high business.

Camel riding, playing tennis by moonlight, wearing little black dresses at chic embassy parties in the last days of Empire, being served afternoon tea at the poolside by Indian bearers, getting gold watches from sheikhs, enjoying caviar and champagne on tap – all 'the glam' is in these pages. But, so too are the behind-the-scenes revelations, which will probably have BA's public relations team flinching with horror. It is not just the stories about silly fun such as squirting up each other's skirts with soda siphons; making apple-pie beds for other crew members in stopover hotels; routine petty theft (for example filching Gilbey's gin disguised in empty Elizabeth Arden skin tonic bottles); and someone throwing a party to celebrate the 50th captain she had laid.

There are also references to terminations, rape and gynaecological problems. When abortion was still illegal in Britain in the 1960s, a 'wonderfully understanding' doctor at the BOAC medical centre 'arranged a solution'. Other cabin crew flew to Hong-Kong for terminations, not least because they would have to resign if pregnant. Rapes by colleagues went unreported for fear of losing jobs and reputations. And Escolme-Schmidt light-heartedly reveals that too much flying seems to have caused sterility in her colleagues too.

The author, a former flight attendant then BOAC trainer, was in a very privileged position in creating this book. Because she was a trusted colleague, she could gather the memories of hundreds of stewardesses and also some of the pilots. These informants worked for British Airways and its predecessors from 1936 to 1980. They shared photographs and disclosed some interesting anecdotal information not previously made

available in the academic histories such as those by Drew Whitelegg and Kathleen M. Barry.

But unfortunately Escolme-Schmidt did not ask probing enough questions or have any conceptual framework. So the book is an assemblage of light fragments of barely linked powder-room one-offs, rather like a daring and chatty high-school year book. It is a chaotic cornucopia, very roughly in chronological order. The author does not even refer to the seminal book about women cabin crew that highlights their emotional labour (Arlie Russell Hochschild's *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*). While it is fair enough to choose to write non-analytically, it is not acceptable to just shake up a sackful of gossip plus some 'technical' panels by pilots, then stick them between a cover.

Reading this book necessitates finding a way to tolerate the most badly-edited pages I have ever seen outside of self-publishing. It is repetitive, rambling, and full of contradictions and clichés and I do not understand how such a manuscript could be let through to publication stage.

Feminist historians will not only be appalled by the book's formal limitations; they may well be offended by the author's blithe lack of critique of a business that is a by-word for the sexual commodification of women staff. For example, the author chattily jokes about the acronyms used: BEA (British European Airways) was said to stand for Be Elegant Always, and BOAC (British Overseas Airline Corporation) for Bend Over Again Cynthia. And she proudly parades her resistance to attempts at unionisation, which were a key part of the struggle to reduce the exploitation of women's bodies in the industry. Escolme-Schmidt and two other gosh-golly gels claimed that the union intimidated people into becoming members. The three held out and eventually got special dispensation to remain outside the union, in a closed-shop deal struck with management in the 1960s.

Glamour in the Skies is a fascinating read, not least because it is a reminder of the destructive way some women employees thought about themselves in the days before second-wave feminism. The author's inability to understand the wrongs that were systemically done to her and her colleagues is therefore one of the most revealing aspects of the book. I have struggled to be as constructive as possible about this book and the best I can say is that she tried; and she at least included a chronology and an index. And it will be useful as a source for serious scholars to pillage for all the cats it lets out of the airline industry bag.

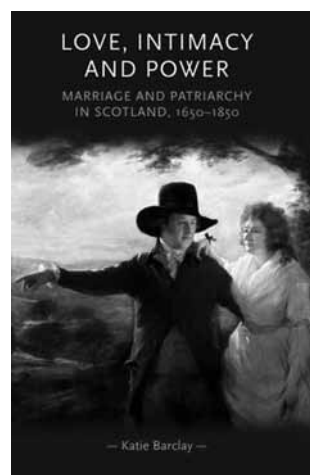
Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850*

Manchester: Manchester University Press,
2011. £60.00, ISBN 978-0-7190-8490-4

(hardback), pp. viii + 223

Reviewed by Jane Hamlett

Royal Holloway University of London



Seventeenth-century wives often signed off letters to their husbands stressing their obedience—but what did these words really mean? Katie Barclay's new study of patriarchy in marriage across the long eighteenth-century takes a fresh look at the construction of gendered power relations, and the results make a fascinating read.

Barclay's central premise, following Judith Bennett, is that patriarchy was

the overarching superstructure that dominated the lives of Scottish elite women from 1650 to 1850, shaping law, custom and intimate relationships. Her task is to show how power relations operated within that structure, and, drawing on Foucault, she seeks to map out exactly how these worked. In particular, she pays attention to change over time, and the ways in which women were sometimes able to negotiate the strictures which bound their lives. The book thus offers a historical case study of the operation of patriarchy and will interest feminist scholars across a variety of disciplines.

Barclay's study, which draws on 65 sets of papers from Scottish elite families, will be read avidly by those with expertise in eighteenth-century British women's history, which, with some notable exceptions, has tended to focus on the English. As Barclay points out, Scottish elite women had as much in common with their European counterparts, and there were many differences in custom and law that had an important effect on women's lives. Scottish women kept their surnames when they married, symbolising their role within marriage as gatekeepers of the relationship between the two families.

Seventeenth-century love letters often expressed relationships between men and women in terms of affectionate obligation. Hierarchical forms were used, and love and obedience were linked. Christian Kilpatrick, for example, signed off with, 'I rest your loving obedient wife.' While such modes of address established lines of authority, women were able to express demands and negotiate agency within this framework. Wives were less likely to stress their obedience from the early eighteenth century, and the figure of the disobedient wife disappeared from popular culture. But the demise of the discourse of obedience wasn't necessarily a boon for women.

Historians have long argued over the rise of romantic love in the eighteenth century. Here, Barclay

looks beyond the rhetoric, at what these terms actually meant for women. Analysing love letters, she finds that the language of romantic love was indeed employed more extensively from the mid-eighteenth century, in the letters of courting couples and married pairs. First and pet names, including 'thou bewitching creature' and 'my dearest puddle', were increasingly used. Romance, however, swiftly became the servant of patriarchy. Women tended not to evoke it in courtship letters—and indeed, Barclay argues that romantic language allowed men to exert a stronger voice and more active role than previously. While ardent men waxed lyrical about their affections, married women's definitions of love increasingly revolved around their husbands. Recently, historians of British women have moved away from the story of diminishing female power in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in both work and private life. But Barclay's well-evidenced argument challenges this, and gives us pause for thought.

In sum, Barclay's new book is an exciting and readable contribution to women's history; it shows us how patriarchy, as a system of power relations, worked in a given historical context, as well as how women themselves were sometimes able to negotiate it. Based on excellent research, and a substantial new archival survey, the book brings women's words to the fore.

Remember the WHN in your Will

Do please consider leaving a gift to the Women's History Network in your will. Many people who give to charities also choose to leave something in their wills to a particular cause. Not only is this a fitting way to ensure that your commitment to the WHN continues in the longer term, legacies often constitute a very important income stream for smaller charities, passing on some excellent tax advantages not only for us, but also for you! Leaving a legacy to the WHN, for example, could save on inheritance tax, as the value of your donation, no matter how large or small, is normally deducted from the value of your estate prior to inheritance tax being worked out. There are several forms of legacies of which a Pecuniary Legacy (a fixed sum) or Residuary Legacy (part or all of your estate once all your other gifts have been deducted) are two of the most common.

If you are interested in finding out more about how to go about naming the WHN as a beneficiary of your will please contact the HM Revenue and Customs website which has some helpful basic information www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/donors/legacies or consult your own solicitor.

If you would like to discuss legacies, and the ways in which they could be deployed by the WHN, please contact our Charity representative, Anne Logan, email charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

No matter how small, your gift will make a difference.

Getting to Know Each Other

Name

Tanya Cheadle

Position

Doctoral researcher,
University of Glasgow



How long have you been a WHN member?

Three years. My first WHN conference was at Warwick. At dinner on the first night, I happened to sit next to Katherine Holden, the outgoing WHN Committee Convenor. We chatted about my media experience (my first career was in television, directing documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4). The next thing I knew, I was standing for the Committee! I am currently on the Media and Publicity Sub-committee with Kate Murphy. At the moment we are working on some exciting new publicity material, as well as organising a media session at the Cardiff conference, designed to help more of us get our research on television and radio.

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

A childhood love of history, nurtured by my mother, fused with a growing feminist consciousness at university into a strong identification with women's history as *my* history. Joanna de Groot's Gender History course during my undergraduate degree at York in 1995 was epiphanic. Joe Bristow suggested my undergraduate dissertation topic, Oscar Wilde's brief editorship of *The Woman's World* magazine in 1887-9, initiating a long-term interest in late-Victorian gender and sexuality. More recently, Lynn Abrams and Eleanor Gordon at Glasgow have been exceptionally wise and patient mentors, supporting me throughout my MLitt and PhD as I have attempted to juggle returning to academia with looking after two young children. Finally, the community of researchers at the Centre for Gender History at Glasgow, as well as at Women's History Scotland and the WHN, have proved an invaluable support network, providing me with advice, ideas and occasionally even last-minute child-minding services!

What are your special interests?

My current research is on sexual progressives in Scotland between 1880 and 1914. I am looking at three individuals in particular, the Independent Labour Party feminist Bella Pearce, the biologist, sociologist and sex writer Patrick Geddes and the eugenic feminist Jane Hume Clapperton. As well as exploring their attitudes towards sex and gender, and looking at how these related to their own intimate and social lives, I am interested in how their networks functioned in spaces outside of London, which is so often portrayed as the epicentre of free-thought, especially for this period. Research into Bella Pearce has thrown up a

fascinating connection with utopian religion in America. Her and her husband were members of the Brotherhood of the New Life, a Christian sect led by the charismatic Thomas Lake Harris, who preached a heady mix of socialism and sexual mysticism. I find utopian communities endlessly fascinating, with my interest informed to a certain extent by personal experience. In 2000, I was the film-maker on the BBC programme *Castaway*, and lived for a year on the beautiful island of Taransay in the Outer Hebrides, documenting the attempt to build a small, self-sustaining community. The experience has given me some idea, at least, of the intense emotional dynamics that are often generated by such endeavours.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

I particularly like the unconventional women in history, those who found ingenious ways to tread their own paths and gain a modicum of power over their own destinies. I am thinking for example of the women who cross-dressed as men to follow a profession, the innumerable ladies who enjoyed lifelong romantic friendships with other women, the medieval women mystics and the Victorian spiritualist mediums.

Also, the strong women within my family, around whom many stories circulate. My Nana (after whom I named my daughter) died last year at the age of 102. She became a Salvation Army lassie in the late 1920s, in the face of strong disapproval by her Methodist parents for the radical methods of her new faith. The generational rebellion continued when her daughter (my Aunt) reacted against her own Salvation Army upbringing, moving to London at the height of the Swinging Sixties.

Women's History Magazine is keen to carry profiles that celebrate the diversity of WHN membership. If you would like to complete a 'Getting to Know Each Other' questionnaire, or you would like to nominate someone else to, please email

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize

An annual £500 prize for a first book in women's or gender history

The Women's History Network (UK) Book Prize is awarded for an author's first single-authored monograph which makes a significant contribution to women's history or gender history and is written in an accessible style. The book must be written in English and be published the year prior to the award being made. To be eligible for the award, the author should be a member of the Women's History Network (UK) and be normally resident in the UK. The prize will be awarded at the annual conference.

Entries (books published during 2012) should be submitted by 31 March 2013.

For further information please contact Ann Kettle, chair of the panel of judges, Mediaeval History, School of History, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9QW
Email: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

Carol Adams Prize

An annual £100 prize for the best AS, A2 or Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers essay on women's history

The Women's History Network will award a £100 prize for the best AS, A2 or Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers essay on women's history. This award was set up in honour of the late Carol Adams (first Chief Executive of the GTC) who helped pioneer women's history in schools.

Essays

- can focus on any aspect of women's history
- should be no longer than 1,500 words
- should include a bibliography
- be word processed
- the front page should include your name, the name of your school and the title of the essay

If you require any further information please contact Dr Paula Bartley at drpauladudley@hotmail.com. Essays should be sent to this email address.

Deadline: The deadline for submission is 31 May 2013. The prize will be awarded in September 2013.



Clare Evans Prize

An annual £500 prize for a new essay in the field of GENDER AND HISTORY

In memory of Dr Clare Evans, a national prize worth £500 is offered annually for an original essay in the field of women's history or gender and history. Essays are considered by a panel of judges set up by the Women's History Network and the Trustees of the Clare Evans Memorial Fund. Subject to the normal refereeing criteria, the winning essay is published in *Women's History Review*.

Clare Evans was an outstanding woman who died tragically of cervical cancer on 30 November 1997, aged just 37. Born in Bath, she read history at the University of Manchester, graduating in 1982. She continued her studies, registering for a PhD at the University whilst preparing and delivering seminars on feminist history, creating the first feminist historiography course in collaboration with Kersten England and Ann Hughes. Clare would have approved of an award which helped women to publish for the first time, giving them the confidence to further develop their ideas.

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must be a) a woman who has not yet had a publication in a major academic journal, b) not in a permanent academic position, and c) normally resident in the UK.

The article should be in English and of 6,000 to 8,000 words in length including footnotes. We welcome submissions from any area of women's history or gender and history.

Please send completed essays to Ann Hughes by 31 May 2013. Please also include brief biographical details (education, current job or other circumstances) and include a cover sheet with title only (not name) to facilitate anonymous judging.

Those wishing to apply for the prize should first email or write for further details to:

Ann Hughes, Department of History and Classics, University of Keele, Keele, Staffs, ST5 5BG.
Email: hia21@keele.ac.uk.



Getting to Know Each Other

Name: Dr Kate Murphy

Position: Independent researcher

How long have you been a WHN member?

I have been a member of WHN since the beginning. I missed the first conference in 1991 because I'd just had a baby that week, but I was panel member at the second conference in 1992.

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

I became active in the women's movement as a young woman, having bought my first copy of *Spare Rib* in 1973 when I was fourteen. My other passion was history, which I studied at university. The combination of the two led me to a WEA adult education course in the mid 1980s on women's history – and I was hooked. In 1986 I wrote a small book called *Women's London*, which took me to the glorious Fawcett Library for the first time and my next book, *Firsts: British Women Achievers*, was a direct product of the Library, where I spent hours ferreting out fascinating facts. In 1993 I joined *Woman's Hour* as a producer, where I was able further to indulge my passion for women's history.

What are your special interests?

Last year I completed a part-time PhD at Goldsmiths on women and work at the BBC in the inter-war years. It has been the most extraordinary journey, becoming THE expert in a particular field and, having recently left the BBC, I'm hoping to build on my specialist knowledge. I have also just started my dream job, as researcher/guest curator for The Women's Library 10th anniversary 'Treasures' exhibition (all the more significant now the Library is under threat), which means that I spend much of my day in the presence of awesome books and objects: a first edition of Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women'; Elsie Duval's suffragette prison diary; papers from the first Women's Liberation Conference at Ruskin... What



a privilege. I have always loved the depth of women's history, so this touches all my interests.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

My heroine from history is Hilda Matheson, BBC Talks Director from 1927-1932. She was coaxed away from her job as political secretary to Nancy Astor MP by John Reith, who recognised that her culture and intellect would be an asset to the Corporation. As well as expanding the breadth of general talks, she was passionate about developing programmes for women. For instance, *The Week in Westminster* (still on Radio 4 today) was her brainchild; presented by all female MPs, its initial remit was to explain the workings of parliament to women. Hilda Matheson was a remarkable woman and I love to imagine her walking the corridors of the BBC.

Women's History Magazine is keen to carry profiles that celebrate the diversity of WHN membership. If you would like to complete a 'Getting to Know Each Other' questionnaire, or you would like to nominate someone else to, please email

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee News

The Steering Committee of Women's History Network met on 18 February 2012 at the Institute of Historical Research. Agenda items included the Network's finances and future conferences.

Since the meeting, London Metropolitan University has announced that it is seeking a new sponsor, owner or home for the collections it currently maintains at the Women's Library. If a solution is not found by December 2012, the library's opening hours will be reduced to one day a week. This news is hugely concerning for the Steering Committee and no doubt for all members of the Network. So many of us have spent many hours in the library (or its predecessor in the basement of London Guildhall University as it then was) researching for our degrees, our books and even for the sheer love of historical investigation that such a situation seems unthinkable. As Professor June Purvis, one of the founders of Women's History Network, wrote in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 'the library, with more than 60,000 books and pamphlets, a massive archive of personal letters, ephemera, oral recordings and more than 11,000 objects – including banners from the women's suffrage campaign – is the most extensive collection on women's history in Europe. It documents, in myriad ways, women's struggle for equality in the past and present'.

Since the University's announcement in March, there has been coverage in the national press including – in addition to the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* – the *Guardian*, and *Private Eye*. Supporters need to keep up the pressure for a satisfactory solution to be found to safeguard the library and its treasures for the future. An internet petition has been launched and at the time of writing has attracted over 10,400 signatures in support of the library. There is also a Facebook group called 'Save the Women's Library'. The Committee urges anyone who has not signed the petition to do so as soon as possible (at www.thepetitionsite.com/925/128/986/save-the-womens-library-at-london-metropolitan-university/) and those of you that use Facebook, please join the group. We hope that by the time the next edition of this magazine appears there will be some good news about the library.

The next committee meeting will be held on 7 September at the Women's History Network Conference, Cardiff. All WHN members are invited to attend if they wish.

Call for members to join the WHN Steering Committee

Several members of the committee will finish their term of office this year. If you are interested in coming on to the committee from this September please submit a brief CV by email to the Convener, convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org preferably before the end of July.

Publishing in *Women's History Magazine*

Women's History Magazine welcomes contributions from experienced scholars and those at an earlier stage in their research careers. We aim to be inclusive and fully recognise that women's history is not only lodged in the academy. All submissions are subject to the usual peer review process.

Articles should be 3000-8000 words in length. Contributors are requested to submit articles in final form, carefully following the style guidelines available at:

[www.womenshistorynetwork.org/
whnmagazine/authorguide.html](http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/whnmagazine/authorguide.html)

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org



What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national charity concerned with promoting women's history and encouraging women interested in history. WHN business is carried out by the National Steering Committee, which is elected by the membership and meets regularly several times each year. It organises the annual conference, manages the finance and membership, and co-ordinates activities in pursuit of the aims of the WHN.

Aims of the WHN

1. To encourage contact between all people interested in women's history — in education, the media or in private research
2. To collect and publish information relating to women's history
3. To identify and comment upon all issues relating to women's history
4. To promote research into all areas of women's history

What does the WHN do?

Annual Conference

Each year the WHN holds a national conference for WHN members and others. The conference provides everyone interested in women's history with a chance to meet and it has become an exciting forum where new research can be aired and recent developments in the field can be shared. The Annual General Meeting of the Network takes place at the conference. The AGM discusses issues of policy and elects the National Steering Committee.

WHN Publications

WHN members receive three copies per year of the *Women's History Magazine*, which contains: articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities.

Joining the WHN

Annual Membership Rates

Student/unwaged	£15*	Overseas minimum	£40
Low income (*under £20,000 pa)	£25*	UK Institutions	£45
High income	£40*	Institutions overseas	£55
Life Membership	£350		

* £5 reduction when paying by standing order.

Charity Number: 1118201. Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration and Banker's Order forms are available on the back cover or join online at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Women's History Network Contacts

Steering Committee Officers:

Membership, subscriptions

membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

Finance, Dr Gráinne Goodwin:

treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, Professor Barbara Bush:

convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

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web@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Ms Ann Kettle:

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editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For Book Reviews: Dr Anne Logan:

bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

or send books to her at University of Kent, Gillingham Building, Chatham Maritime, Kent, ME4 4AG.

For magazine back issues and queries please email:
backissues@womenshistorynetwork.org

*You may now join the WHN online – just go to
www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the instructions.
Payments, standing-order mandates and Gift-Aid declarations can all be
accessed online as well – see panel on page 25 for further details*

Membership Application

I would like to *join / renew my subscription to the Women's History Network. I */ enclose a cheque payable to Women's History Network / have filled out & returned to my bank the Banker's Order Form / for £ _____ (* delete as applicable)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Tel (work): _____

Tick this box if you DO NOT want your name made available to publishers/conference organisers for publicity: ☐
Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History,
University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD
Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

Gift aid declaration

Name of Charity: Women's History Network

Name :

Address:

.....

..... Post Code:

I am a UK taxpayer and I want the charity to treat all donations (including membership subscriptions) I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature: _____ Date/...../.....

Notes

1. If your declaration covers donations you may make in the future:

- Please notify the charity if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force
- You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity—it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.

2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).

3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).

4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.

If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

Banker's Order

To (bank) _____

Address _____

Account no.: _____

Pay to the account of the Women's History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60—02—05), on _____ 20__, and annually thereafter, on the same date, the sum of

(in figures) £ _____ (in words) _____.

Signature: _____