

Women's History

The journal of the Women's History Network

Special issue: Remembering Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946)



Autumn 2016

Articles by

*Susan Cohen,
Pat Thane,
Sumita
Mukherjee,
Julie V. Gottlieb,
Anne Logan*

Plus

*Twelve book reviews
Getting to know each
other
Conference Reports*

women's
HISTORY
NETWORK





Image Credit: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Zurich,
from LSE Library's collections, WILPF/22/1.

Women's History Network Annual Conference, 2017

WOMEN AND THE WIDER WORLD

Friday 1 September – Saturday 2 September 2017

University of Birmingham

In September 2017, the University of Birmingham will be hosting the 26th annual Women's History Network conference on the theme of Women and the Wider World. Further information about the conference and the Call for Papers will be advertised shortly.

Conference organised by Laura Beers
(L.Beers@bham.ac.uk) and Zoe Thomas

Welcome to the Autumn 2016 issue of *Women's History*, the journal of the Women's History Network. With this special issue, guest edited by Susan Cohen, we are in celebratory mood: we are both commemorating the 70th anniversary of Eleanor Rathbone and also reflecting on the very successful 25th WHN annual conference, hosted in September by Leeds Trinity University. With this issue we also say warm thanks and bid a reluctant farewell to Lucy Bland, who has made a huge contribution to the editorial team over the past four years and who will be much missed. Finally – just a reminder that the journal is your space as members – so do, please, get in touch with any comments and suggestions.

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Editorial team: Jane Berney, Lucy Bland, Rosalind Carr, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin and Rachel Rich

Introduction

Susan Cohen (University of Southampton)

This special themed edition of *Women's History* celebrates and commemorates the 70th anniversary of Eleanor Rathbone's death in 1946. The papers were amongst those originally presented at a symposium, 'Remembering Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946): From Somerville to Westminster, 1893-1946' held at Somerville College, Oxford on 22 January 2016, by courtesy of The Principal, Dr Alice Prochaska and Rathbones Investment Management, Liverpool. The symposium, attended by nearly ninety people, was a particularly special day. It brought together a number of historians at Eleanor's alma mater; they focused on a range of issues that mattered to her, almost seventy years to the day after her death in 2 January 1946. Eleanor's other claim to Somerville fame is that she was the first of its students to become an MP and, as such, is much admired. As a part of the celebrations, and by way of tribute, the college room where her portrait hangs was officially named The Eleanor Rathbone Room.

Given her background, one could say that Eleanor Florence Rathbone was destined to be a pioneering woman of stature and, given the range and scope of her achievements and humanitarian activism, it is surprising and disappointing that she has not received the recognition that she so richly deserves. Both Susan Pedersen and I have made our own contributions to raising Eleanor's profile in our publications: Pedersen in her sweeping biography, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience*, published in 2004, and in my own monograph, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees*, which followed in 2010. Additionally, in an effort to really get Eleanor's name out in the public domain, a colleague, Lesley Urbach, and I set up the 'Remembering Eleanor Rathbone Group' specifically to organise a range of events across the country during 2016, to mark the 70th anniversary of her death. The Somerville symposium was amongst the first of these.

So who was Eleanor Rathbone and what shaped her life? Born in London in 1872 to the successful and highly respected Liverpool merchant and Liberal MP, William Rathbone VI and his second wife Emily, Eleanor grew up in an affluent household, but learnt early on in life that the most important thing you could do with money was to help other people less

fortunate than yourself.¹ A strong, but lapsed, Quaker heritage was influential and she learnt by example. Her father was a philanthropist and a pioneering social and welfare reformer, responsible for, amongst other innovations, establishing district nursing as a profession with a scheme that trained nurses to treat the sick poor in their own homes.² Responsible citizenship was a byword in the Rathbone household, and Eleanor and her siblings were encouraged to follow the family motto, 'what ought to be done can be done'. Like many girls of her class, Eleanor was educated by governesses before finally being sent to Kensington Girls' School for a year in 1889. She was then presented at court in May 1890, the hope being that she would, in due course, follow convention and make a 'good' marriage. But this well-trodden path was not what she had in mind, having determined to study Greek and philosophy, an ambition that was ultimately achieved, though not without a struggle. Against the odds, she persuaded her

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Editorial | 3 |
| Eleanor Rathbone and Family Allowances | 5 |
| Radhabai Subbarayan: Debates on Indian Female Franchise in the 1930s | 10 |
| Membership Announcements | 14 |
| Eleanor Rathbone, the Women Churchillians and Anti-Appseament | 15 |
| Eleanor Rathbone, the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees and the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning | 19 |
| The International Work of Margery Fry in the 1930s and '40s | 23 |
| Book Reviews | 30 |
| WHN Book Prize 2016 | 40 |
| Community History Prize | 41 |
| Getting to Know Each Other | 41 |
| Women's Material Cultures/Women's Material Environments: WHN Annual Conference Report 2016 | 42 |
| WHN AGM Report, 2016 | 45 |



Cover: Portrait of Eleanor Rathbone at her desk, c. 1931

by kind permission of Kenneth Norton Collins.



*Eleanor Rathbone with a group of her fellow Second year students, in 1895. She is third from left in the middle row.
By kind permission of the Principal and Fellows of Somerville College, Oxford*

parents to engage a Girton classics scholar, Janet Case, to tutor her and, with Case as her role model, Eleanor soon harboured an ambition to attend university. Her parents, and especially her mother, vehemently opposed the idea, but the arguments made Eleanor so ill that in the end a compromise was reached, which enabled her to attend Somerville, Oxford – still a Halls of Residence – rather than the more liberal Newnham College, Cambridge, which she had hoped for.

Much to Mrs Rathbone's chagrin, Somerville acquired College status shortly after Eleanor's arrival in 1893, providing the young student with a far more liberal environment than her mother had envisaged. She thrived in this new and exciting milieu, immersing herself in her study of philosophy and the classics, developing her incipient feminism and engaging with the suffragist movement, whilst making new and enduring friendships with like-minded young women. On her return to Liverpool, and as Susan Pedersen describes, the young woman ultimately turned her back on an academic career and instead engaged firmly with the struggle for women's equality, simultaneously following in her father's footsteps as a social and welfare investigator and reformer.³ Somerville and her introduction to the Idealist school of philosophy reinforced his example. Her investigations included surveys of the casual dock labour system in Liverpool, her involvement, with Elizabeth Macadam, with the professionalisation of social work, investigations into family poverty, poor housing and education, and much, much more. But it was her campaign for family endowment, launched in 1917/18, that ranks as the most significant and enduring of her reforms, and is examined by Pat Thane in her article. This also touches upon Rathbone's presidency, from 1919, of the National Union of Societies of Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), following Millicent Fawcett's resignation. She had come a long way since being appointed parliamentary secretary of the Liverpool Women's Suffrage Society in 1897 and, with suffrage for women partially achieved, Rathbone steered NUSEC towards legislative campaigns which were the catalyst for reform. This led to improvements in women's domestic rights, helping to improve their access to pensions, divorce, the guardianship of children, and separation and maintenance from abusive husbands.

Rathbone recognised early on in her career that

she needed a much stronger campaigning platform to achieve her goals of improving the lives of the poor and underrepresented. Thus, when the opportunity arose in 1909 to stand for election to the local city council, she grabbed it and became the first woman to be elected in her home town of Liverpool. As Independent Councillor for Granby Ward she campaigned tirelessly on behalf of her constituents and, as a feminist, focused many campaigns on inequality issues concerning women. These ranged from organising the payment of separation allowances to the impoverished wives of serving men during the First World War to tackling slum housing, from low wages to poor education. Her achievements were legion but by the time she resigned in 1935 she had broadened her horizons and joined the small number of women elected to parliament.⁴ Her success in the 1929 so-called 'Flapper' election followed a failed attempt in Toxteth, Liverpool in 1922. With women's issues firmly in her mind, her new platform enabled her to campaign on behalf of women not only at home but also in Britain's colonies, including India,

Kenya and Palestine, then ruled under a British mandate.⁵ The rights of Indian girls and women had been of concern to her since 1919, and were now in the forefront of her activism, specifically the cultural practice of child marriage and the question of female franchise. Sumita Mukherjee's article sheds light on the debates concerning the enfranchisement of Indian women that took place between Eleanor and the Indian activist, Radhabai Subbarayan, also encompassing the Sarda Act and the question of child marriage.

On 13 April 1933, Eleanor's powerful denouncement of Hitler in the House of Commons left politicians in no doubt as to her views of the dictator and the Nazi regime:

the re-emergence of an evil spirit which bodes very ill for the peace and freedom of the world ...there is one dreadful fact beyond doubt, that is that the (Herr Hitler's) [sic] party...is now in uncontrolled power in Germany and is inflicting cruelties and crushing disabilities on large numbers of law-abiding peaceful citizens, whose only offence is that they belong to a particular race or religion or profess certain political beliefs...Herr Hitler and his colleagues have let the world see plainly their feelings which they cherish about questions of blood and race ...⁶

This marked a turning point as she moved away from domestic social and welfare issues and consolidated her involvement with foreign affairs, most significantly after the Abyssinia crisis in 1935. She used her backbench position to challenge the government on its policy of non-intervention in Spain and subsequently became engaged with Katherine, Duchess of Atholl and others in numerous committees providing aid to the country during the civil war.⁷ One of these was her major role within the umbrella organisation, the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief and, as a vice-chairman of the Basque Children's Committee, she helped organise the rescue, in 1937, of some 4,000 children from the Basque combat zone during the Spanish Civil War.⁸

Her fervent opposition to appeasement, along with a handful of other courageous women, is the subject of Julie Gottlieb's incisive article, and leads on to Eleanor's change of focus following the Munich agreement and the annexation

of part of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Eleanor's personal sense of responsibility for Britain's part in the refugee crisis that resulted from the settlement, which added to the already challenging situation regarding the admission of refugees from across Europe who were attempting to flee Nazi oppression and persecution. The penultimate article provides an overview of Eleanor's commitment to the refugee cause with the establishment of the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees in 1938, and gives an insight into her working collaboration with Tess Simpson, the secretary of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning during the early years of the Second World War through a small but significant cache of correspondence held in the Bodleian Library.

Last, but by no means least, Anne Logan's paper discusses the international work of Margery Fry as a counterpoint to Eleanor's work. Fry, who gained a reputation as a penal reformer and educationalist, first met Eleanor when they were students at Somerville, and the two women formed a lasting friendship. They had much in common, not least of all their feminist beliefs and sense of public duty and responsible citizenship. Both knew, and discussed, the fact that any worthwhile career, other than becoming Principal of Somerville, was closed to women.⁹

The papers in the edition can only provide a flavour of Eleanor's life and work, but are a timely reminder of the life and work of one of the great humanitarian activists and backbench politicians of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. Eleanor Rathbone, *William Rathbone: A Memoir* (London, Macmillan, 1905).
2. Monica E. Baly, *A History of the Queen's Nursing Institute, 100 Years 1887-1997* (London, Croom Helm, 1987).
3. Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2004).
4. Pamela Brookes, *Women at Westminster: An Account of Women in the British Parliament 1918-1966* (London: Peter Davies, 1967) 71 ff; Julie Gottlieb and Richard Toye eds, *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918-1945* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
5. For the Kenya campaign against clitoridectomy see Pedersen, *Rathbone*, 246 – 9.
6. *Hansard* HC, vol.276, cols.2761, 2763. 13 Apr 1933.
7. The secondary literature on the SCW is extensive and includes Jim Fyrrh, *The Signal was Spain: The Spanish Aid Movement in Britain, 1936-39* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1986). For an overview of Eleanor's humanitarian activism during the Spanish Civil War see Pedersen, *Rathbone*, 286-8, 294-5, 298-9, 299-301.
8. *Ibid.*, 270-99.
9. *Ibid.*, 54.

Eleanor Rathbone and Family Allowances

Pat Thane

King's College, London

Eleanor Rathbone is well known as the initiator of family allowances. This paper examines firstly her ideas and her campaign, before turning to the implementation and later history of family allowances in Britain up to the present, based upon the most recent research in this field by myself and others.¹

'Family Endowment'

When family allowances were introduced in 1946 they were paid weekly to mothers for the care of children. This was not Rathbone's original aim and she did not call her proposed scheme 'family allowances'. What she advocated from 1917 was 'family endowment'. Her aim was a state-funded scheme of regular payments to all mothers and their children, initially those children under five. This would ideally be extended in the future to those up to age fifteen. This aim arose from her belief that those married women not employed outside the home lost their independence, becoming wholly dependent on their husbands' earnings. This was a situation which encouraged some men to dominate and control their wives: the 'Turk Complex', she called it, as she would probably not have done today. She believed that the weekly allowances the state paid to the families of servicemen during the First World War, for the first time ever, gave many married women who were not in paid work unusually independent control of their own and their children's lives in the absence of the husband. She wanted this payment and this situation to continue into

peacetime, still funded by the state. This was on the grounds that wives and mothers performed essential work for the state and society by bearing and bringing up children and looking after working men, enabling them to contribute efficiently to the economy. It was an argument, also, against the prevailing defence of unequal pay: this was that men should earn more because they had families to support. Rathbone pointed out, rightly, that childless and unmarried men received the higher rate, yet many women supported ageing parents and other family members, or were widowed or separated mothers, but were paid less. She wanted the 'endowment' to be funded by redistribution through the tax system from childless men to mothers.

Many feminists in inter-war Britain put forward similar arguments, for the same reasons given by Rathbone. Women's work in the home should no longer be disparaged; it should be treated and respected as 'work' of equal value to society and the economy as paid work outside the home. Women who argued this way, including women in the Labour Party, did not necessarily claim that mothers *should* stay at home. Rather, they believed that the conditions should be provided to enable them to make a reasoned choice between work in, and paid employment outside the home, assisted by social services including childcare. This would relieve the double burden of work in and out of the home on those in paid employment. Women who worked at home should experience improved working conditions: well-designed homes and support from social services so that they could enjoy the 'eight hours, work,

eight hours sleep, eight hours leisure' trade unions demanded for men at this time.²

But activists in the women's movement, even if they shared these views, did not necessarily support Rathbone's proposed Family Endowment. These included the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), the successor organization to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), established in 1918 to help women use the vote to promote gender equality now that they had partially gained it. Though Rathbone was President of NUSEC from 1919, it did not commit to Family Endowment. In view of the number and range of gender inequalities to be tackled, it decided to prioritise a limited number of objectives which, members believed, were attainable. Initially these were: equal pay for equal work, reform of the divorce laws and establishment of 'an equal moral standard', pensions for civilian widows, equal rights to custody of children and opening the legal profession to women. By 1926 there had been substantial progress on all of these except equal pay.³ Family Endowment was not on the list, probably because it seemed less attainable than the other objectives, being more costly and requiring substantial redistribution from men to women. This would be politically difficult, even explosive. When economic depression started to hit Britain from the end of 1920, followed by severe cuts to social expenditure, it became even less realistic. Rathbone's response was that businesses could cut their costs in the recession by reducing male wages if families were compensated by Family Endowment payments. Given the size and militancy of the trade union movement this was a risk politicians and businesses were unlikely to take, and it would still require large public expenditure.

But Rathbone went on campaigning, expressing her ideas in the book *The Disinherited Family*, published in 1924, and establishing the Family Endowment Society to promote them.⁴ This replaced, on a much broader base, the small and less formal Family Endowment Committee she led from 1917. She advocated a variety of possible schemes, short- and long-term, including universal or means-tested payments, payments to mothers and children or just to children. None was widely popular but the ideas appealed to growing numbers especially of Liberal and Left intellectuals, including William Beveridge. Beveridge had advised the government on introducing Unemployment Insurance in 1911 and remained an adviser on employment policy through the war. He retained a strong interest in social insurance and social welfare and, in the 1920s as Director of the London School of Economics (LSE), introduced family allowances for staff members.⁵

Beveridge and Family Allowances

Beveridge and others were attracted to Rathbone's proposals for a variety of reasons; these were not necessarily the same as hers or because they shared her belief in the oppression of married women. Important reasons included, firstly, the findings of the large number of poverty surveys in the 1920s and 1930s. These showed that unemployment was of, course, a major cause of poverty. They also found that low pay when in work was another significant reason for severe poverty and malnutrition among children, especially in larger families. The poverty surveys of Booth and Rowntree at the beginning of the century had also found that low pay, especially in larger families, was a major cause of poverty and

little had changed. In the interwar years, larger families could be better off unemployed than in work because unemployment benefits included allowances for children. These were adjusted for family size whereas earnings were not. For Beveridge, this was another argument for family allowances. He feared that unemployed men would be deterred from finding work if their family was better off on benefits; if their wages were supplemented by family allowances this could be avoided.⁶

The second concern was the declining birth-rate. This had been falling since the 1870s and had reached an historically low point in 1933. This caused widespread, mounting concern, even panic, together with much debate, to which Beveridge and John Maynard Keynes contributed. Theirs was not the classic eugenicist panic about the feckless masses multiplying while the respectable classes dwindled since the birth rate decline affected all classes, though with regional differences⁷. Beveridge was particularly concerned that, at the same time, life expectancy was extending, raising the spectre of ever more aged people needing care and funding from a dwindling younger working population – similar to recent fears about the ageing of society. There were also fears that richer nations' populations were dwindling while poorer ones' kept growing, creating what some believed was a dangerous world imbalance. A possible way to reverse the change was state-funded allowances for children. This might encourage families to have more children, though few people, including Beveridge, had much hope that women would easily be persuaded to have more children now that they had learned how to avoid this. But allowances could also help to ensure that those children who were born grew up fit and healthy and capable of becoming productive citizens, lessening the ill-effects of child poverty on individuals and society.⁸

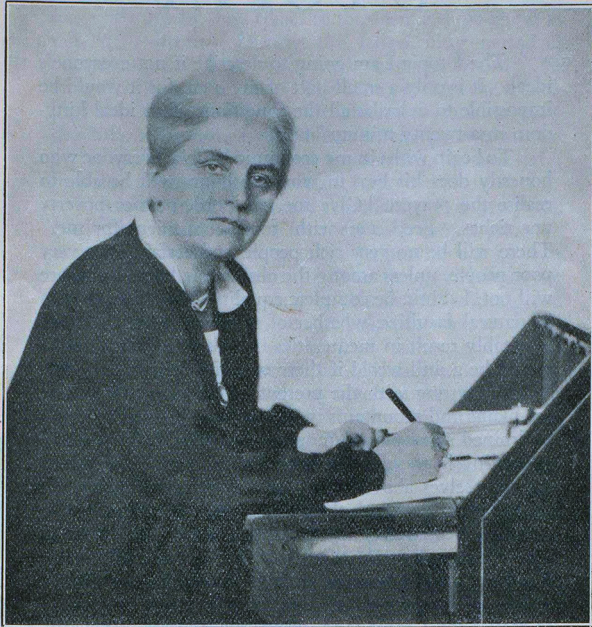
Eleanor Rathbone increasingly adopted these arguments, if only tactically, to promote her schemes. It was much easier to get sympathy and action from the state for impoverished children than for their mothers, because healthy children (potential workers and soldiers) were perceived to be in the state's long-term interest. The initial outcome was not cash allowances but improved services, including health and welfare clinics for mothers and young children. In the early 1930s Rathbone developed the Children's Minimum Council, with cross-party political support. Its campaigning played a part in the introduction, in 1934, of a scheme of subsidised milk for schoolchildren and the expansion of the school meals service originally introduced in 1906.

Support for family allowances (for children not mothers) increased further during the Second World War, as Rathbone and her allies continued campaigning. Keynes, now an adviser to the Treasury, advocated family allowances as a means to control wages and prices. They gained support in the Labour Party, trade unions and in parliament, partly due, as in the First World War, to concern about the need to replace men lost in the war with a healthy successor generation. In addition, Beveridge's official 1942 report on social insurance, which was immensely influential during and after the war, made family allowances one of the three 'assumptions' underlying his proposals, alongside a National Health Service and full employment. His brief was to recommend reforms to the National Insurance system. However, he argued that if poverty – or 'want' as he described it – and its ill effects on society were really to be eliminated, these other three reforms were essential. Since they could not be effected through National

Price 1d.

THE FAMILY ENDOWMENT SOCIETY

UTOPIA CALLING!



Miss E. F. Rathbone, M.P.

A Plea for Family Allowances from
an Address Broadcast by Miss
Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., from
Northern Stations on February 11th,
1930

*By kind permission of University of Liverpool Library:
(RP XIV.3.99)*

Insurance, details of their implementation lay outside his brief, but he insisted that they were vital and the government should explore them further.

Concerning family allowances, Beveridge recommended that, to abolish deprivation among children, they should all receive a weekly cash payment of eight shillings at current prices, plus free or subsidised school meals and milk. He conceded that if more services were provided, the cash element could be reduced. When it became clear that the Treasury would resist the cost of his full proposal, Keynes persuaded him to withdraw the allowances from the first child in each family. He defended the compromise on the grounds that wages normally could provide for parents and one child, and parents should not avoidably be relieved of their responsibilities. He proposed that family allowances should be paid from taxation rather than through National Insurance contributions, on the grounds that the contributions he was proposing for other benefits were already high enough for most workers to afford. In addition, the whole community benefitted from measures to maximize the health of children so every taxpayer should contribute. He also still had a sneaking hope that allowances might encourage families to have more children. They should be paid up to age sixteen if the child was in full-time education

or training. He recommended that allowances should be universal for all families with more than one child, on the entirely accurate grounds that means-tested benefits cost much more to administer and were inefficient because many eligible people always failed to apply. Beveridge argued that better-off beneficiaries could be taxed on their allowances, or the tax allowances received by taxpayers in respect of each child (since 1911) could be reduced. Very few working class people paid income tax at this time so only better-off people benefitted from child tax allowances.

Beveridge has been accused of promoting a 'male breadwinner welfare state', presuming 'that women were, and ought to be, financially dependent on their husbands' and favouring mothers remaining at home, out of the labour market.⁹ This was a very different approach from Rathbone's, if true. In fact, Beveridge shared many of Rathbone's views. He was much exercised about the difficulty of fitting women who did not earn (and so could not pay contributions) into a contributory social insurance system in a way that did not demean them. He was explicit in his report that he regarded 'housewives [...] not as dependents of their husbands but as partners'. He was highly critical of the existing unemployment insurance scheme which treated wives as dependents and health insurance which ignored them, other than by paying a maternity benefit on the birth of a child.¹⁰ He wrote:

None of these attitudes is defensible. In any measure of social policy in which regard is had to facts, the great majority of married women must be regarded as occupied on work which is vital though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue. In accordance with facts, the Plan for Social Security treats married women as a special insurance class of occupied persons and treats man and wife as a team.

This echoed the feminist argument that women's work in the home should be valued as real work. He had no need to make these arguments, which were not conventional views among influential men, so it seems reasonable to assume that he really meant them. He did not believe that married women *should* stay at home but, realistically enough, accepted that most of them did so, given the difficulties of combining work inside and outside the home and the British state's lasting refusal to provide affordable childcare except in wartime. Additionally, the 'marriage bar' prohibited married women from many occupations. It largely came to an end during and after the war but this was not clear in 1942. Any insurance system had to take this reality into account and there was no ideal solution. Beveridge feared, presciently, that if wives' benefits were funded directly by the taxpayer, not by contributions, they would be denigrated as worthless dependents upon hard-working taxpayers.

Family Allowances Introduced

The Cabinet accepted Beveridge's family allowance proposals in principle in 1943 and a Bill was published in February 1945, before the end of the war. It stated that the allowances should be paid to fathers. Rathbone, now an MP,

led a rebellion, which Beveridge supported, demanding they be paid to mothers, who could more reliably be expected to devote the payments to the needs of children. This was successful and the family allowance legislation, establishing that they would be paid to mothers, was passed through parliament.¹¹ They were implemented in 1946 under the Labour government but the weekly allowance was only five shillings (25p), not the eight shillings recommended by Beveridge. Labour cut most of Beveridge's proposed benefits to below the subsistence level he recommended. In general, they pared back welfare spending, partly to meet the costs of war but also because they prioritised reconstructing the economy and achieving full employment over welfare spending. This was on the grounds that full employment at decent wages was the best route to improved living standards for most people – something the Labour Party had argued since its foundation.¹² The party achieved full employment in peacetime for the first time in modern history and it survived until the 1970s. Meanwhile, living standards for most people markedly improved. But insurance and other benefits suffered. The lower family allowance was justified by the government on the grounds that an additional three shillings would be provided in the form of services, as Beveridge had suggested. Provision of such items as means-tested free school meals and school uniform grants did improve, but whether they really compensated for the lower family allowance is uncertain.

Low as the family allowance was, it was never popular. Opinion polls showed persistently throughout its existence that it was the least popular welfare benefit.¹³ Many people resented that it was paid to better-off people who also received child tax allowances, which were unchanged. It was also widely believed that the allowances were intended to raise the birth rate; this was now unnecessary since births had started to rise during the war and continued at higher levels until the late 1960s – the so-called 'baby boom'. There was also less concern for child poverty after the war. It was generally believed that the post-war welfare state had eliminated poverty, except among old people, so there was no need for family allowances. Consequently governments saw no reason to increase them. There was a small increase in 1952, but no more until child poverty became an issue again in the 1960s, while prices rose and the real value of the allowance declined.

The Rediscovery of Child Poverty and Campaigning for Higher Family Allowances

Meanwhile, social workers were becoming aware that poverty continued in working families. This was confirmed by the research of Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend at the London School of Economics (LSE) published as *The Poor and the Poorest* (1965). This showed clearly that there was indeed much poverty among older people but also, more unexpectedly, it was very extensive among low-paid families in work, especially if they had several children. They concluded that 2.25 million children were in poverty in Britain, 41% of whom were in families where there was at least one full-time worker. This was 'relative poverty', not the starvation level measured by Booth and Rowntree sixty years before. The researchers argued that, in the modern world, people forced to live at standards adequate for bare survival but considerably below prevailing norms were severely disadvantaged including in health and educational attainment. The research was

much publicised as 'the rediscovery of poverty' and put child poverty back on the political agenda. It sparked the formation of a new campaign group, the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), founded in 1965. It chose its name, as a group actually campaigning about family poverty, because 'child poverty' aroused more compassion – the same reason Rathbone shifted to prioritising children over mothers in the 1930s.¹⁴

The CPAG campaigned for family allowances to be increased substantially, hopeful because a Labour government had been elected in 1964. But Labour ministers had been left with a huge deficit by their Conservative predecessors and faced continuing financial problems as well as demands to increase other inadequate benefits including pensions. CPAG produced a compromise: increased family allowances funded by reducing child tax allowances. This was introduced in 1968 and family allowances were raised, but not enough for CPAG, which continued to criticise Labour, producing a pamphlet in the 1970 election campaign entitled 'The Poor Get Poorer under Labour'.¹⁵

The Introduction of, and challenges to, Child Benefit

Labour lost the election. CPAG kept up the pressure on the Conservatives, who won, but their response in 1970 was to introduce a means-tested supplement to family allowances, the Family Income Supplement. This had the effect Beveridge had foreseen – only a 50% take-up by needy families unaware of their rights – and it was expensive to administer. In 1974 Labour returned to government and CPAG continued the attack. Labour promised in the election campaign to extend family allowances to all children. CPAG now proposed funding a higher universal allowance for all children in full-time education or training, named Child Benefit, by abolishing the child tax allowance, which still did not benefit many working-class families. After much wrangling within the Labour Party, which there is no space to discuss, this was introduced in 1977 and phased in to reach four pounds per week for all children by 1979, which satisfied CPAG.¹⁶ Again, the original legislation would have paid the benefit to the father. Again, following protest, it was paid instead to mothers.

Then, in 1979, Mrs Thatcher won the election for the Conservatives, who remained in office until 1997. They immediately froze Child Benefit and then changed the system of regular annual uprating in line with prices (introduced in 1977) so that it fell in real value. There were repeated proposals by the Thatcher governments until her resignation in 1990, followed by those of John Major between 1990 and 1997, to replace the universal Child Benefit with a means-tested scheme targeted on the poor. At the same time, unemployment rose, other benefits were cut and provision of school meals was eroded. The graph below shows how child poverty rose as a result. CPAG joined other child and family charities in a Save Child Benefit campaign, which succeeded in preserving it, though much reduced in value¹⁷.

Labour returned to office under Tony Blair in 1997. In 1999 Blair made an unexpected public pledge to 'end child poverty forever' within twenty years. With measures such as Tax Credits, combined with services such as Sure Start for children in their earliest years, plus rising employment levels, child poverty fell until the financial crisis hit in 2008 (Figure 1). However, it did not fall as fast as Blair had pledged and

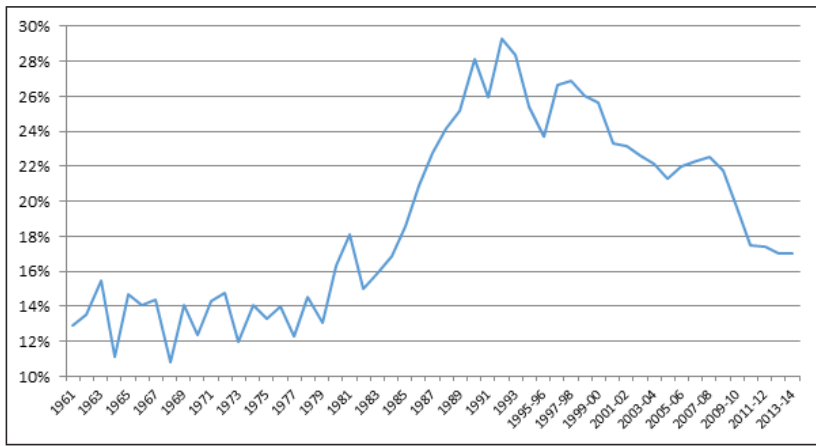


Figure 1: Relative Child Poverty Rates since 1961 (GB)

Note: Poverty line is 60% of median income. Years up to and including 1992 are calendar years; thereafter years refer to financial years. Incomes are measured before housing costs have been deducted and equivalised using the modified OECD equivalence scale. Authors' calculations based on Family Expenditure Survey and Family Resources Survey, various years.

Source: J. Cribb, R. Joyce and D Phillip, *Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2012* (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2012), p. 84. Updated from post-2012 IFS data: www.ifs.org.uk/tools_and_resources/incomes_in_uk

remained more severe than in the mid-1960s.

Under the Coalition, then Conservative, governments since 2010, Child Benefit has again been eroded. Unemployment has risen and so has child poverty, again heavily concentrated in working families on low pay. Sadly, for all Eleanor Rathbone's efforts and those of her successors, child poverty remains a severe problem and its causes have hardly changed since 1917. Most mothers may have more independence within marriage now than then, but this is due to broad social and cultural changes rather than to state-funded allowances. Furthermore, continuing high levels of domestic violence suggest that male domination within partnerships has not been eliminated. Family allowances, then Child Benefit, brought some improvements to the lives of poorer children and their families, but never as much as Rathbone hoped.

Notes

1. Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004), especially 151-3; previous surveys written some time ago such as John Macnicol *The Movement for Family Allowances* (London, Heinemann, 1980) and Hilary Land 'The Introduction of Family Allowances: An Act of Historic Justice?' in *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy* ed. Phoebe Hall, Hilary Land, Roy Parker and Adrian Webb (London, Heinemann, 1975) are now somewhat dated, overtaken by the availability of new sources on the politics of the period and by the research of Pedersen and Harris (see below) among others which has deepened our understanding of social conditions, social attitudes and social politics in the period.
2. Pat Thane, 'The women of the British Labour Party and feminism, 1906-1945', in *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* ed. H.L. Smith (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1990), 124-43.
3. Pat Thane, 'What Difference Did the Vote Make?' in *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present*, ed. Amanda Vickery (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001), 276.
4. Eleanor F. Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family: A plea for the endowment of the family* (London, E. Arnold & Co., 1924).
5. Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 332-4.
6. Ian Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain, 1900-1965* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2003).
7. Eilidh Garrett, Alice Reid, Kevin Schürer and Simon Szreter, *Changing Family Size in England and Wales, 1891-1911*

(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001).

8. Pat Thane, 'The debate on the declining birth-rate in Britain: the "menace" of an ageing population, 1920s-1950s', *Continuity and Change*, 5/2, (1990), 283-305.
9. Kathleen Kiernan, Hilary Land and Jane Lewis, *Lone Motherhood in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 179-80.
10. Sir William Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, Cmd 6404 (London, HMSO, 1942). Para 107
11. Pedersen, *Rathbone*, 364-6.
12. Pat Thane, 'Labour and Welfare' in *Labour's First Century*, Pat Thane, Nick Tiratsoo and Duncan Tanner (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 80-82.
13. Keith Banting, *Poverty, Politics and Society* (London, Macmillan, 1979) 91,96, 175n.
14. Pat Thane, 'CPAG at 50', *Poverty. Journal of the Child Poverty Action Group*, Issue 150 (London, Child Poverty Action Group), Winter, 2015, 6-8.
15. *The Poor Get Poorer under Labour: the Child Poverty Action Group in the 1970s* (Institute of Contemporary British History Witness Seminar 18 February 2000) www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/icbh/witness/Political/CPAG1970s [accessed 8 March 2016].
16. Frank Field, *Poverty and Politics: The Inside Story of the Child Poverty Action Group's Campaigns in the 1970s* (London, Heinemann 1982), 29-38. For a recent survey of the history of the Child Poverty Action Group see Pat Thane and Ruth Davidson *The Child Poverty Action Group, 1965-2015* (London, Child Poverty Action Group, 2016) cpag.org.uk/Content/50th-anniversary-cpag.
17. Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scrounger? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth Century England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 175-8.

Radhabai Subbarayan: Debates on Indian Female Franchise in the 1930s

Sumita Mukherjee

University of Bristol

During Eleanor Rathbone's early parliamentary career in the 1930s, she was a vocal campaigner for the rights of Indian women and a supporter of Indian female franchise. She kept up a regular correspondence with a number of Indian women throughout that decade, chaired a British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise and visited the country in early 1932. This was to conduct her own independent tour and campaign to increase the size of the Indian female electorate. Rathbone, as president of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), had dealings with Indian campaigners for the female vote from at least 1919 when Herabai and Mithan Tata, suffragists from Bombay, visited Britain to campaign on this issue.¹ However, her election as Independent MP for the Combined English Universities in May 1929 enabled her to focus her attention on issues relating to Indian women.

Indian female impressions of Rathbone were not, however, always positive. Particularly influenced by the publication of the American Katherine Mayo's book *Mother India* in 1927, together with ongoing debates about child marriage resulting in the Child Marriage Bill (Sarda Act) in 1929, she organised a conference on 'Women in India' at Caxton Hall, London in 1929.² Rathbone angered a number of Indians because no Indian women had been called upon to speak, and because she appeared to support Mayo's criticisms of India.³ Dhanvanthi Rama Rau publicly criticised the conference from the floor, and a letter was sent to *The Times* signed by a number of Indians residing in Britain and by sympathisers such as the Theosophist Emily Lutyens. Rathbone responded, in her defence, that the conference had mainly been organised to galvanise British support for Indian causes, arguing also that she had consulted with Indian women.⁴ Nevertheless, despite Rathbone's attempts to highlight reform issues for Indian women, criticisms and suspicion from Indian women plagued her throughout the 1930s. Barbara Ramusack has described Rathbone, along with some of her contemporaries, as a 'maternal imperialist' adopting a 'mother knows best' tone when she lectured Indian women about the suffrage movement.⁵ Susan Pedersen has argued that, despite these criticisms, Rathbone was not a maternal imperialist, but rather was bound by Westminster politics and her language and actions relating to empire varied considerably with audience and context.⁶ This article seeks to explore further the question of interpreting Rathbone's imperial concerns, through an exploration of her engagement with the issue of Indian women's franchise and her relationship with an Indian activist, Radhabai Subbarayan.

After 1921, Indian women were slowly enfranchised on a province by province basis. By 1930, only women who met the required property qualifications could vote, and since the majority of women neither owned nor could inherit property, the number of those who were eligible was very small. The ratio of male to female voters was about 25:1 and the percentage of women voters compared to the adult female population was under 1% in most provinces.⁷ Female enfranchisement

remained an important issue and came to a head in the 1930s as the British Government began negotiations about constitutional reform for Indians, discussing ways to ensure greater political participation for 'minorities'. In a 1933 House of Commons debate on Indian Constitutional Reform, Rathbone claimed that she had lived with the question of the position of women under the new Constitution for four years, with hardly a day not pondering it. She reminded the House that in reference to the 'minority question' women were India's largest 'minority'.⁸

Rathbone was not unique in her interest in Indian women, which was an issue that agitated many British women, both inside and outside of parliament. This was because of India's close relationship to Britain and the campaign activities of Indian women who lived or visited Britain in the interwar period.⁹ Some of Rathbone's correspondence with Indian women based both in India and Britain, especially in the 1930s, survives in the Women's Library in London. This article concentrates on her relationship with another Somerville alumnus, Radhabai Subbarayan. Subbarayan was one of two Indian women delegates at the first Round Table Conference (RTC) on Indian constitutional reforms in London in 1930 and also attended the second RTC in 1931. She and Mary Pickford were the two female members on a Committee on Indian Franchise chaired by Lord Lothian, which toured India gathering evidence in 1932.¹⁰ Rathbone and Subbarayan shared similar views about the methods by which *gradually* to enfranchise Indian women, but faced opposition from various official Indian women's organisations, which, in contrast, demanded immediate and full adult franchise.

Subbarayan and the Round Table Conferences

The RTCs were held at the end of 1930, 1931 and 1932 in London. They were designed to discuss the potential for dominion status of India within the Commonwealth, and the nature of political representation within India, with reference to a range of 'minority' interests including those of Muslims, the depressed classes and labour (workers). When the initial list of delegates was prepared for the inaugural RTC, no women were included. As it was held during a time of civil disobedience in India when M. K. Gandhi and a number of members of the Indian National Congress were imprisoned, the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC) boycotted the conference in solidarity.¹¹ However, Rathbone petitioned for both British and Indian women to be included in the delegation. Letters were also sent by British women's organisations, including the Women's Freedom League and St Joan's Social and Political Alliance, to the India Office specifically asking for British women to be involved in the conference. The RTC was seen as an example of the way in which British women, despite equal political rights, continued to be excluded from the full range of Westminster politics, especially imperial affairs.¹² Subbarayan and Begum Shahnawaz were eventually included, and although Catherine



*Round Table
Conference, St.
James's Palace,
London, 1930*

*Source: British
Library, Foster
Collection 784/1(83)
Public Domain*

Candy suggests that Rathbone may have been influential in their appointments, in Shahnawaz's case it was partly a matter of convenience as she was already in London serving as private secretary to her father Sir Muhammad Shafi, a leading Muslim official in British India.¹³

Radhabai Subbarayan was born in South India in 1891 and was the daughter of a lawyer and prominent social reformer. She was a graduate of Madras University and a member of the reforming Hindu sect, the Brahmo Samaj.¹⁴ Her husband came from a family of landowners and in 1922 became an independent member of the Madras Legislative Council, serving as Chief Minister from 1926 to 1930. His position enhanced the view of her as loyal to Britain's interest. Subbarayan herself was involved in various small-scale women's and reform groups in India including the Madras Ladies' Recreation Club, the Niligari Ladies' Club at Ooctamund and the Girl Guides Executive Committee. She was the first woman to be elected to the Senate of Madras University by the graduates and was subsequently elected to the Syndicate of the University by the Senate.¹⁵ In 1930, Subbarayan's 11-year old daughter, Parvati, accompanied her to the RTC. Subbarayan knew the South of England well, not only from her term spent studying at Somerville College in 1912, but from regular summer visits to Eton College, where her three sons were studying.

The Simon Commission Report on India, published in May 1930, had expressed a desire to increase the proportion of female voters and had suggested that wives and widows, aged over twenty-five, of male property owners should be granted the vote and that a literacy qualification for women should also be introduced. As an article in the Women's Freedom League paper, *The Vote*, put it, although female franchise was ultimately the concern of Indian women, 'indirectly, however these questions are also of great concern to the women of this country, for we know by experience that the inferior status of women in any one country has a damaging effect on the status of women in every other country.'¹⁶ Throughout the 1930s, British feminists were keen to point out that the Simon Report had noted that Indian women were the 'key to progress', echoing the philosophy of John Stuart Mill, a phrase that Rathbone in particular was very keen on.

With the involvement of female delegates, the topic of female franchise was raised at the RTCs, and the discussion

not only covered the right to vote but also considered whether women should have 'reserved seats' (quotas) within political assemblies alongside other minorities. In this, Subbarayan drew the ire of the two leading organisations, the Women's Indian Association (WIA) and AIWC, following her participation in the first RTC. They were critical of her not only because she was not their chosen representative but also because she favoured reserved seats for women and a gradual, rather than immediate, increase in the franchise. These divisions became more apparent in the ensuing years and Subbarayan reflected upon them at length over the rest of her career.¹⁷ Her position on the matter was similar (though not exactly the same) as Rathbone's and the two became close allies. Subbarayan noted that conceding votes to women in stages had taken place not only in Britain but in other western countries too and saw her recommendations as progressive, but both women were criticised by Indian women's organisations for not listening to the views of 'Indian women'.¹⁸

At the first RTC, Subbarayan and Shahnawaz issued a memorandum. This stated that, although they believed in the principle of full adult franchise, they were willing to allow a limited franchise for women to continue, as long as it was increased from the *status quo* based on property ownership. Subbarayan was particularly critical of the property qualification, arguing that civic spirit was not peculiar to the wealthy and that the electorate needed to be broadened to reflect the views of all sections of society. In private correspondence to the MP Lady Astor, she revealed her concern that the property qualification allowed 'dancing girls of ill repute' the vote.¹⁹ Rathbone was also in favour of increasing the female franchise in stages, and supported the recommendations of the Simon Report. British female MPs, including Astor, Rathbone and Pickford, sent in a memorandum advocating that wives or widows of existing Indian male voters be given the vote, when aged over twenty one.²⁰ The government had made it clear that universal adult franchise was not possible at this stage, and Rathbone urged Indian women to agree to these concessions.

In her own memorandum to the RTC, Rathbone argued that Indian women should also have seats reserved for them in the provincial assemblies. Subbarayan wanted seats reserved for female candidates in the Legislative Assemblies for the following fifteen years, or three elections. Subbarayan suggested that this would be an effective way to jump-start

the number of female MPs and give them experience in political office.²¹ Referring to the experience of Britain, where it had taken twelve years to elect only fifteen female MPs, Subbarayan's colleague Shahnawaz asserted that the 'theory that women need only a fair field and no favour does not yet apply in this world – certainly not in India'.²² The *Manchester Guardian's* special correspondent supported the policy, citing the experience of other countries where women who had only recently become engaged with public politics were finding it hard to get elected.²³

Members of the WIA and AIWC became aggrieved with the authority Subbarayan and Shahnawaz were asserting in London on behalf of Indian women and rejected the proposal for political quotas. In October 1930, one of the editors of the WIA organ, *Stri Dharma*, criticised the appointments of the two women to the RTC:

They have absolutely no credentials from the organised women of India to say that they represent the opinions of Indian womanhood. They represent only themselves and as such women will wish them good luck, but they will mis-represent [sic] the thirty thousand prisoners, including many of Indian's best women.²⁴

On the other hand, both Subbarayan and Rathbone rejected the view that the WIA or AIWC represented the views of Indian women, citing their relatively small membership and examples of Indian women who disagreed with these official views. In the aftermath of the first conference, the leaders of the WIA continued to express their concern about the female appointments and that Subbarayan, in particular, was too loyal to the imperial government.²⁵ By May 1931, the WIA had called a meeting alongside other women's organisations to draft a memorandum condemning the recommendations of the conference. They stated that only full adult franchise was acceptable and that there should be no reserved seats for women.²⁶ They rejected Rathbone's argument that they should accept the concessions and became militant in their hard-line stance. In continued correspondence and delegations to various sections of the Government, Indian women's organisations expressed their displeasure that their views on franchise were not being heard and explained that Rathbone's suggestions did not reflect Indian opinion.

Subbarayan and Rathbone: Utilising their Networks

After the first RTC, Subbarayan consulted Rathbone regularly for her advice on the female franchise question and on how to deal with the often-vociferous criticism from the main Indian women's organisations. On 1 May 1931, Subbarayan explained to Rathbone that the prominent women's organisations had declared for 'equality and no privileges'; 'a fair field and no favour'. She believed that, though many Indian women supported her view, the authoritarian leadership of the WIA and AIWC would not allow space for dissenting voices, and that the support of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress were influencing Indian women. She asked Rathbone to take on the cause of reservation of seats and to explain this to her contacts. This included an appeal to Sir Philip and Mabel Hartog to write to the WIA, for the

International Council of Women in London to write to the Bombay Council of Women, and for the Women's International League to write to the AIWC committee.²⁷

In 1932, Ramsay Macdonald introduced the Communal Award, which gave reserved seats to women. Some of these seats were further divided along 'community' (religious) lines. Indian women's organisations felt hugely betrayed, as they had consistently argued that Indian women did not care for communal divisions. Subbarayan was extremely disappointed as she had been in favour of reserved seats for women, precisely to avoid communal interests seeping in, and women's organisations in India considered boycotting these seats. In correspondence, Rathbone reassured Subbarayan that women should take up these reserved positions and then work together to demonstrate that they did not believe in communal divisions.²⁸ Meanwhile, Subbarayan sent letters to Lady Astor despairing about the communal vote and the need to increase the female franchise. She asked her to bring all the women MPs in parliament together to support Indian women – 'We expect you, as women, to help us'.²⁹ It was soon after this, in April 1933, that the British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise was set up.

One of the specific concerns Indian feminists had about Rathbone's recommendations was that, by enfranchising the wives and widows of existing male property owners, only married women were getting votes. Thus, women were not being enfranchised based on individual citizenship rights. As Charulata Mukerjee, secretary of the AIWC, put it to Shahnawaz in 1933, she did not understand why Rathbone was 'so insistent on the wives & widows getting votes', explaining it was derogatory to Indian women. 'It might have been alright some years ago, but now women want to stand on their own rights & Miss Rathbone, more than anybody else, should understand that point'.³⁰ In fact, following her tour of India in early 1932, Rathbone became even more adamant that Indian women needed to accept these recommendations. Despite not being married, she remained supportive of enfranchising wives, arguing that Indian women faced so many disadvantages, including the incidence of purdah, unfair property laws and high illiteracy, that 'a fair field and no favour' was an impossible dream.³¹

Faced with the criticism of Indian women leaders who were allied with anti-imperialist nationalist thought, Subbarayan became increasingly keen to downplay her relationship with Rathbone, afraid of Englishwomen 'butting in'.³² In a letter of 8 January 1932, Rathbone retorted:

By the by, if when you or others are pressing for reservation of seats you are again criticised (as you told me you had been) on the ground that you are being too much influenced by Englishwomen, you can tell your critics that the English women's societies which have interested themselves in India are just as much divided as Indian women themselves. [...] [i]t is really inconsistent of Indian women to say that they want perfect equality between the sexes and yet that they resent Englishwomen expressing any views about Indian affairs. So long as this country is concerned with India at all and is appointing Committees and placing projects before Parliament, it cannot be right that British

men should be able and expected to express views and exercise influence, while British women are asked to keep their hands off. There are so few of us in Parliament and in the official machine, that that machine is bound to take a mainly masculine view.³³

More than a year later, on 6 February 1933, Subbarayan wrote to Rathbone: 'It is not because I do not wish to acknowledge my appreciation of your help but because the suspicion that I am "a tool in the hands of the Br. women" will do harm to our cause'.³⁴ Franchise reform was bound up with anti-colonial sentiment. Although the correspondence between Subbarayan and Rathbone (in the archives) appears to have ceased by 1934, official Indian women's sentiment towards Rathbone also appeared to be softening by 1933. Leading Indian campaigner Sarojini Naidu, who had been critical of Subbarayan, described Rathbone as able and energetic and was appreciative of her efforts.³⁵

The Aftermath

The Franchise Committee completed its recommendations in 1932, suggesting the gradual extension of the female franchise along literacy and wifehood lines. Indeed, much of the language appeared to be lifted from Rathbone's memorandums on the issue.³⁶ By 1933, it was clear that these recommendations would form the basis for the 1935 Government of India Act and Indian women's organisations conceded that universal adult suffrage would not be possible at this time. Indeed, by 1933 some members of the AIWC and WIA were putting forward recommendations to enfranchise women in urban areas, and discussing methods of group voting. Despite this, criticisms of Rathbone were still forthcoming. Rama Rau wrote from London in 1934 to AIWC member Rajkumari Amrit Kaur that Rathbone was still active on the issue of Indian suffrage, and still failed to consider or discuss Indian women's views as she had failed to do in the 1929 conference.³⁷ However, by the 1940s, Indian women leaders appeared to have softened towards Subbarayan who, after becoming the first female member of the Indian Council of State in 1938, became a member of the Congress party and became more actively involved in civil disobedience and nationalist politics.³⁸

This article adds complexity to our understanding of debates about who could properly represent Indian women's interests. Indian women's organisations were as critical of Subbarayan for promoting her own views above theirs as they were of Rathbone for failing to consider their views. Rathbone was not unique in her interest in Indian women, which was an issue that agitated many British women both inside and outside of parliament. This was largely because of India's close relationship to Britain and the campaign activities of Indian women who lived or visited Britain in the interwar period. Whilst she was not universally admired, and was viewed as overly meddling by some Indian women, Rathbone also had many supporters who were appreciative of the action she took on this issue. Her recommendations and insistent lobbying within government circles ultimately formed much of the basis of Indian female franchise legislation in the 1930s, helping to increase female political participation in some small way before universal adult franchise was introduced in 1949.

The research for this article was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under Grant number AH/M004236/1.

Notes

1. For example, Rathbone chaired a meeting of Liverpool Council of Women Citizens on 13 Oct. 1919 calling for the enfranchisement of Indian women: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi (hereafter NMML): Misc. Acc 612, Tata Collection, Jessie Beavan to Herabai Tata, 27 Nov. 1919.
2. For more on *Mother India* controversy and reaction see Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: the Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2006), 109-51.
3. Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, *An Inheritance: The Memoirs of Dhanvanthi Rama Rau* (London, Heinemann, 1978), 169-170. Rama Rau was a member of the National Council of Women in India and the AIWC.
4. 'Women in India', *The Times*, 22 Oct. 1929, 12; 'Women in India', *The Times*, 24 Oct. 1929, 12.
5. Barbara N. Ramusack, 'Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies: British Women Activists in India, 1865-1945', in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992), 33.
6. Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004), 427 (footnote 100).
7. British Library (hereafter BL) *Indian States: Enfranchisement of Women*, India Office Records, IORL/I/1/171, file 25/3.
8. House of Commons Debates, 28 Mar. 1933, vol 276, 941 hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1933/mar/28/indian-constitutional-reform [accessed 20 July 2016]
9. Sumita Mukherjee, 'Herabai Tata and Sophia Duleep Singh: Suffragette Resistances for India and Britain, 1910-1920', in *South Asian Resistances in Britain 1858-1947*, ed. Rehana Ahmed and Sumita Mukherjee (London, Continuum, 2012), 106-21.
10. Mary Pickford was Conservative MP for Hammersmith North from 1931 until her death in 1934.
11. Gail Pearson, 'Reserved Seats Women and the Vote in Bombay', *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 20/1, (1983), 53.
12. The Women's Library@LSE (hereafter TWL), St Joan's Social and Political Alliance Minute Book, 7 November 1930, 2SJA/A1/6; 'Women and the Round Table Conference', *The Vote*, 19 Sept. 1930, 300.
13. Catherine Candy, 'Competing Transnational Representations of the 1930s Indian Franchise Question', in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race* ed. Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall and Philippa Levine (London, Routledge, 2000), 198; Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography* (Lahore, Nigarishat, 1971), 100-103.
14. Somerville Archives, Oxford, 1912 Register, Subbarayan.
15. Reading University Library Special Collections (hereafter RUSC): Nancy Astor Papers, MS1416/1/251. Press cutting labelled 'N. C.', 24 Oct. 1930. See also 'Indian Women's New Freedom', *Daily Express*, 12 Sept. 1931, 3.

16. 'British Women for India?', *The Vote*, 6 Mar. 1931, 76.
17. Radhabai Subbarayan, *A Statement on the Political Status of Women under the New Indian Constitution* (Madras, Madras Publishing House, 1933), 3.
18. *Ibid.*, 5.
19. BL: Q/RTC/23. Indian Round Table Conference 1930-1. Franchise Committee; RUSC: Astor Papers. MS 1416/1/1/1012: Subbarayan to Astor, 26 Aug. 1932.
20. Q/RTC/23: 3rd meeting of franchise sub-committee, 30 Dec. 1930.
21. Q/RTC/23.
22. Charles A. Seldon, 'Indian Women Ask Equality as Voters', *New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1930, 7.
23. 'Parliament of all India', *Manchester Guardian*, 23 Dec. 1930, 4.
24. 'Women and the Elections', *Stri Dharma*, XIII, 12 (Oct. 1930), 532.
25. 'Mrs Subbarayan's Commonsense', *Stri Dharma*, XIV, 5 (Mar. 1931), 180.
26. 'Women and the New Constitution', *Stri Dharma*, XIV, 7 (May 1931), 286.
27. TWL, 7ELR/07, Subbarayan to Rathbone, 1 May 1931. Philip Hartog was an educationalist who had worked in India.
28. TWL, 7ELR/07, Rathbone to Subbarayan, 2 Sept. 1932. For more on Rathbone's stance on Indian suffrage see Mrinalini Sinha, 'Suffragism and Internationalism: The Enfranchisement of British and Indian Women under an Imperial State', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 36/4 (1999), 461-84.
29. RUSC: Astor Papers. MS 1416/1/1/1012: Subbarayan to Astor, 26 Aug. 1932.
30. NMML: AIWC Papers, Roll 3. File 34. Mukerjee to Shahnawaz, 1 June 1933.
31. NMML: AIWC Papers, Roll 2. File 21. Rathbone memo, 10 Mar. 1932.
32. TWL: 7ELR/07, Rathbone to Subbarayan, 8 Jan. 1932.
33. *Ibid.*
34. TWL: 7ELR/07, Subbarayan to Rathbone, 6 Feb. 1933.
35. Anon., 'Indian Women Vigorous Fighters' in S. Muthulakshmi Reddi, *Mrs Margaret Cousins and Her Work in India: With a Brief Life Sketch of Her Colleagues and Comrades* (Adyar, Madras, Women's Indian Association, 1956), no page numbers.
36. Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone*, 254.
37. NMML, AIWC Papers, Roll 6. File 59. Rama Rau to Kaur, 9 Feb. 1934.
38. P. N. Premalatha, *Nationalism and Women's Movement in South India, 1917-1947* (New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 2003), 146-8.

Membership Announcements

In response to rising costs the Women's History Network is making a move towards a digital distribution of 'Women's History'. It has therefore been decided to increase membership fees for all members wishing to continue to receive *Women's History* in hardcopy. This decision has been outlined in a recent E-mail sent to all members and the new membership fees can be found on the back cover or on our website. If you have any questions or queries please email - membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

You can manage your WHN membership, update your details, pay your subscription, add your research interests/books and make a donation by logging into the Members' Area at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Do you pay your subscription by standing order? If so, can you check that the payment details reflect the 2016 rates. Don't forget, we have different rates to reflect different personal circumstances, so it is worth checking that you are paying the correct rate for you. Details of the 2016 rates for all categories of members can be found on the back cover of the magazine or by logging into your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

Has your email address changed? If we don't have your current details, you may not receive the monthly e-newsletter, included in your membership fee. If you have changed email addresses since joining, or recently acquired a new email address, please update your details by logging into your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing the membership secretary.

All information (or queries) about membership, or changes to personal details, can be arranged by logging into your account at womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing membership@womenshistorynetwork.org OR by mail to Ms Felicity Cawley, Postgrad Research Student, Economic & Social History, Lilybank House, University of Glasgow, G12 8RT.

Eleanor Rathbone, the Women Churchillians and Anti-Appeasement

Julie V. Gottlieb

University of Sheffield

This article examines Eleanor Rathbone's transition from domestic, feminist and welfare issues to international affairs by the mid- to late-1930s. It explores her teamwork with other leading women politicians, each renegades in their own way, in opposition to Britain's foreign policy and especially appeasement. Rathbone worked closely with the MPs Ellen Wilkinson and the Duchess of Atholl. They demonstrated how women could work together, across party lines, when passionately united by a cause, and became known as the 'Glamour Girls', working in parallel to the Edenite and Churchillian appeasement dissidents. Rathbone became one of the public figures who redefined 'appeasement' from a positive to a pejorative term.

Eleanor Rathbone covered the gamut of political causes in women's welfare and humanitarian politics but, by the second half of the 1930s, her career took a decisive international turn. The significance and complexity of this transformation has only come into focus in recent years, under the influence of the "international turn" in the scholarship. This is especially thanks to the multi-dimensional biography of Eleanor Rathbone by Susan Pedersen, which provides a highly nuanced account of her shift from feminist campaigning and domestic and imperial concerns to foreign policy, triggered by the Abyssinia Crisis in 1935. Henceforth, Rathbone 'would mount her own "foreign policy", defending states and peoples vulnerable to fascist aggression'.¹ Despite the fact that Rathbone had redefined the very term 'appeasement' from a desirable goal of diplomacy to a pejorative, like other pro- and anti-appeaser women, she has hitherto been largely neglected from the story of British foreign policy in the build-up to the Second World War.

The reasons for this neglect are not very mysterious and part of the answer for this lies in the general erasure of women from political history. With his usual sexist-elitist eloquence, Harold Nicolson's remarks about Rathbone in *The Spectator* illustrate all too well the marginalisation of women from the centres of power in foreign policy debate. As an Edenite National Labour MP, Nicolson delighted 'in the way Miss Rathbone rushes about taking up cudgels. Most people (even if they be ambidextrous) find one cudgel at a time as much as they can manage; Miss Rathbone is not only provided, as was Vishnu, with four arms, but she collects additional cudgels in her lap'. He imagined her to be the 'Britomart of 1939' as she tilted 'at windmills with her wholly altruistic fervour'.² It was Nicolson's main objective here, however, to isolate her from his own anti-appeasement cabal, defined at the time either as the Eden Group, the Glamour Boys or the Abstentionists. This treatment of Rathbone by Nicolson is all the more surprising, as they were billed as the only two speakers at a public meeting at Sevenoaks on the 'German Child Refugee Problem' on 8 February 1939, a little more than a fortnight after Nicolson's caricature of Rathbone appeared in *The Spectator*.

While women *qua* women were repeatedly represented as the best friends of Neville Chamberlain's policy, this notion

is contested by the mobilisation of women for anti-fascist campaigns and women's own searching confessions and expressions. It can also be attributed to the results of the Munich by-elections, which failed to make a clear case that the 'women's vote' was a bloc vote for Chamberlain.³ For obvious reasons, these women cannot be subsumed within the Anthony Eden-led 'Glamour Boys'. They were explicitly excluded from events where the leading anti-Chamberlain figures congregated. This included the 'dinner-party for men only', made up of MPs, newspaper proprietors and prominent journalists who came together to commiserate the agreement reached at Munich in those last days of September 1938.⁴ But the culture of male exclusivity in the Foreign Office milieu and male-domination within the concentric circles of foreign-policy 'dissentients', should not blind us from seeing the significant contributions women made to anti-appeasement politics. Women built up the anti-appeasement bloc as politicians and campaigners inside and outside parliament and as public intellectuals and journalists.

A group without a ready-made name, I have called them and claimed them as the 'women Churchillians'. Included here are those who worked closely with Winston Churchill in a number of campaigns and those who shared his outlook on foreign policy and likewise perceived the dire threat posed by Nazi Germany. They also identified him as the heroic alternative to Neville Chamberlain. During the Second World War, both Churchill's old enemy Nancy Astor, the first woman to take her seat as an MP, and Rathbone became alert champions of Churchill, that old anti-feminist bogey. In August 1945 Rathbone said:

my admiration for him is such, that I hate to differ from him on anything because I believe that he will go down in history as the man to whom not only this country, but the whole world, owes more than to any other British statesmen who ever lived.⁵

From across the political spectrum, these women represent Churchill's 'fellow travellers'. Even if we give them this name, we have to emphasise that they were not a homogenous group—their collaboration was inconsistent and they had nothing resembling an organisational base.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, Churchill's own *The Gathering Storm* (1948), the keystone of anti-appeasement historiography and an exemplary work of 'great man' history writing, barely acknowledged women's presence. There is no mention of Eleanor Rathbone, the Duchess of Atholl, Violet Bonham Carter, Shiela Grant Duff or Ellen Wilkinson. Even his beloved wife Clemmie is only a minor figure in Churchill's grand narrative. Churchill was especially 'ashamed to see the great Conservative Party looking forward to an Election where they will exploit the psychosis of fear and hope that the old women of both sexes will give a renewal of the present incompetent regime'.⁶ National defence was a man's business, to be spoken



Eleanor Rathbone (2nd left) with Katherine, Duchess of Atholl (5th) in Cluj, Romania, February 1937

By kind permission of the collection of Blair Castle

about in a diction of virility.⁷

Gradually, some women have been recognised as players in opposition to Chamberlain's appeasement politics. In an early classic in the scholarship, *The Anti-Appeasers*, Neville Thompson improves on Churchill's version by giving brief mention to Atholl, Wilkinson and Rathbone. Indeed, Rathbone is credited with transforming the meaning and the charge of the very term 'appeasement' when she defined it as: 'a clever plan of selling your friends in order to buy off your enemies—which has the danger that a time comes when you have no friends left, and then you find you need them, and then it is too late to buy them back'.⁸ Largely ignored in the scholarship of appeasement, historians of women have been better at recognizing the achievements of women activists and the first women parliamentarians.

While Churchill was no feminist, a number of prominent women did side with him in his opposition to the National Government's foreign policy. A handful of high-profile women Churchillians made their influence felt, standing with women in direct contact and collaboration with Churchill. These were the Liberal Violet Bonham-Carter, with whom Churchill's personal and political relationship was already very well established by the 1930s; the Conservative Katherine, the Duchess of Atholl, with whom he carried on a regular and mutually respectful if not very intimate correspondence; Shiela Grant Duff, a young journalist related to his wife Clemmie, who was a press correspondent in Czechoslovakia in the lead up to the Crisis; and Eleanor Rathbone, who reached out to him on numerous occasions in search of a true leader. While these women did not join in any one political organisation, their paths often crossed and their similar views on foreign policy often transcended party divisions. They were the 'Glamour Girls'—although 'Glamour Women' would be more apt as most were well into middle-age and seasoned veterans of party, feminist and internationalist politics.

Presumably, Churchill set aside his objection to

women's presence in what he reckoned should have remained a man's chamber, the House of Commons, and he collaborated with the Duchess of Atholl (Conservative, Kinross) and Eleanor Rathbone (Independent, Combined Universities). Eleanor Rathbone's connection with Churchill was somewhat more distant than Atholl's. From 1936 she had regular contact with Churchill and had marked him out as the next prime minister. She wrote to him personally a number of times along these lines. For example, Churchill was impressed that she had adopted his figures on German air strength in one of her letters to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* and hoped she would stand to her guns. He warned this Cassandra that 'we are really in great danger'.⁹ In August 1936, at an International Labour Party summer school, she was already coming to Churchill's public defence after he was attacked by Fenner Brockway. Brockway criticised Churchill's discovery of the 'League cause' as his new way of protecting the Empire from the imperialistic-minded Nazi Germany. In contrast, Rathbone credited Churchill with 'one of the most significant events of 1936' for expressing 'exactly the attitude of the whole pro-League left-wing bloc of Liberals and Labour, but coupled it with a demand for adequate armed forces for use in defence of collective security'. She urged her audience to 'watch that man carefully ... Dispel prejudice, and consider facts about him'.¹⁰ In October 1936, she told an audience in Hull that the only possible remedy was a return to collective security, and acknowledged that 'some of the clearest sighted Conservatives were in favour of it, such as Mr Winston Churchill and the Duchess of Atholl, for those who were watching the trend of affairs in Europe were beginning to realise that we were face to face with a great danger'.¹¹ By September 1938, she was in no doubt that Churchill represented the great white hope and she begged him and Eden to rally opinion in the country because 'there is a great longing for leadership'.¹² She made the same plea in public for their inclusion in the Cabinet.¹³

But despite their political compatibility, as Pedersen

emphasises, no place was made for either Rathbone or Atholl in the anti-appeasement cabal.¹⁴ The two women had been disapprovingly dubbed the 'feminine United Front' by William Waldorf Astor (Conservative) during a debate on the importance of propaganda in Spain and the Little Entente countries. Their sex also continued to remain a significant liability.¹⁵ Unswerving and unclubbable, both Rathbone and Atholl lacked the easy access to Churchill and his fellow sceptics in the autumn of 1938 and both were excluded from meetings where these men conspired. Just as before, Rathbone and Atholl were left to voice their dissent on public platforms, at open meetings and through the press. Nonetheless, as political figures, Rathbone and Churchill were recognised to hold the same views on foreign policy and to be strategically linked. This is demonstrated, for example, by a telegram sent specifically to Churchill and Rathbone by the union societies of British Universities on the new situation in central Europe at the end of March 1939, expressing 'concern for the fate of thousands of Czech patriots, refugees from Germany now in Czechoslovakia and Jews, whose lives are in the greatest danger and demand immediate action for their safety'.¹⁶ Further, Rathbone seems to have impressed Churchill and, even more, his wife Clementine: the Churchills 'actually liked her'.¹⁷

As we can see, in this phase of their lives, Atholl and Rathbone's political careers were closely intertwined. Both were high-profile and admired (rather than popular) women MPs. Rathbone's demeanour was that of 'the headmistress of an expensive and prosperous girls' college. Furiously angry with Mussolini; Haile Selassie is her hero. When members shout "Order!" in response to her innumerable supplementary questions on Abyssinia, she beams'.¹⁸ Similarly, Atholl was depicted as a 'frail-looking lady' who 'can develop astonishing energy when her conscience is aroused, as it has been on Spain. She has a technique of gathering people around her, of always speaking for a group rather than as a lone fighter.' Wilkinson supposed this was 'the hostess instinct of a great lady, and it is amazing how effective it has been among her own Party'.¹⁹ Both Rathbone and Atholl began from a position of support for collective security through the League of Nations, both were critics of the strong pacifist tendency, and both eventually gave up on the League and the League of Nations Union (LNU) by the time of the Munich Crisis in 1938. Rathbone worked closely with the LNU and wrote *War Can Be Averted* (1937) under its auspices. Atholl addressed the LNU's Women's Advisory Council on the European Crisis on 8 April 1938, differentiating herself from so many other women by confessing these:

seem to me days in which the policy of all peace-loving nations should stand together, not merely talking and passing resolutions, but looking to their arms and showing that they are ready to use their arms in defence of any country that is the victim of unprovoked aggression, anyhow in Europe.²⁰

The two women were also acknowledged to be the 'most embarrassing to the Government'.²¹

They were two of a trio at the core of the 'Glamour Girls'. Atholl, Rathbone and Ellen Wilkinson shared numerous platforms, experienced transformative fascist encounters together and embarked on relief and fact-finding missions. With Dorothea Layton, wife of *The Economist* editor and *News Chronicle* proprietor Walter Layton, Atholl and Rathbone took

an unofficial but well publicised tour of the Little Entente countries—Yugoslavia, Roumania and Czechoslovakia—in February 1937. Rathbone and Atholl framed this tour as a means of studying the economic conditions of women in East-Central Europe. In Prague, they were warmly welcomed by Madame Zeminova, a woman deputy, who declared 'that the women and mothers of Great Britain and Czechoslovakia were united in desiring peace and the right to existence of all nations' and 'expressed the gratitude of the people of Czechoslovakia for the moral support given to their country by Great Britain in recent months'.²² This was especially poignant, considering what was coming a little over a year later. Building on the success of that visit, together with Wilkinson and Dame Rachel Crowdy, Atholl and Rathbone embarked on an eminent fact-finding and relief mission to Spain in the spring of 1937. This was described as a 'mixed mission' the task of which was to inspect refugee camps of the belligerents. But Rathbone and Wilkinson, both already on Franco's blacklist, were to refrain from inspecting camps in insurgent territory. The mission had to be passed off as strictly non-political and 'Mr Eden has extracted from each member of it an undertaking to refrain from any form of political propaganda'.²³ Rathbone was nevertheless exposed to fascist aggression much nearer to home after a stink bomb was broken when she was speaking on behalf of the LNU at a 'Back to the League' conference. At the close of the meeting she was also 'tackled by a group of youthful Fascists who asked innumerable questions, mostly rather naïve, on the subject of Czechoslovakia', which she answered very fully.²⁴ In mid-September 1938, Wilkinson and Rathbone were key speakers at a Trafalgar Square rally in support of the Czech people, an assembly that included a large proportion of women and finished with a march to the Czechoslovakian Legation to deliver a resolution.²⁵ The only reason Atholl was not there was because she was on a tour of Canada and the USA campaigning on behalf of the Spanish government.²⁶ After the crisis Rathbone went again to Czechoslovakia to organise relief and rescue for refugees. The cause of the victims of Nazism thereon becoming the focus of her political work.²⁷

On the one hand, the humanitarian aspects of these women's engagement with foreign affairs was very much in keeping with the pervasive constructions of gender-based citizenship and women's place in civic life as social mothers. On the other, when these same women became identified with war, their political problems became acute. A persuasive illustration of this is Atholl's failed anti-Chamberlain by-election campaign, where she was represented as a war-monger and disconnected with the mothers of her constituency. In some respects, her defeat by a National Conservative in this by-election was a personal defeat and embarrassment, but it was also a very high-profile contest that amplified opposition to Chamberlain's appeasement policy at the national level and even more specifically within his own party. Atholl's defeat notwithstanding, the band of women Churchillians continued to grow and, in May 1939, *Time and Tide* declared 'We Need Churchill' and reported that 'everywhere—in the clubs, in the pubs, in the cafes and in the streets, people are talking about Mr Churchill. In the press, too, the demand grows apace'.²⁸

With Atholl out of Parliament, Rathbone carried on the struggle and entertained the idea of joining forces with Cripps' Popular Front. From the vantage point of the beginning of 1939, she declared that the past year 'has been the worst year I have ever lived through. One disaster has followed another,

and I think we all feel that in each disaster our country has played a part of which, whatever the excuses you can make for it, none of us can feel proud.²⁹ Further, as an independent, she was free of any party whip. Rathbone did need to consider the same dilemmas faced by Ellen Wilkinson, for example, when it came to forging strategic alliances with Popular Fronters in the fraught and highly divisive atmosphere of pre-war Labour politics. For her part, Atholl, who was not yet convinced that her political career was at an end, and Duncan Sandys, Churchill's son-in-law, co-founded the dissenting Hundred Thousand Crusade in January 1939. At its inaugural private meeting of 300 people at the Caxton Hall, one third were women.³⁰ Within a few weeks, Sandys dropped out and Atholl assumed the leadership of the ginger group, supported in her endeavours by Rathbone.³¹

In conclusion, it is clear how central and all-consuming the international crisis, from a political, diplomatic and humanitarian perspective, had become for Rathbone from the mid-1930s. That is certainly how the rather unsympathetic journalist Rom Landau constructed it when he interviewed her about what she considered the necessary long-view policies. Rathbone's reply was: "How can we think of such policies while all these horrors go on in Germany, China, and Spain! We must first concentrate on helping the victims." He appreciated how 'her entire work is overshadowed by the horror of modern barbarism', and believed that this meant she now showed 'disregard for the less tangible, purely feminine issues'.³² In short, he was suggesting that her feminism had been displaced by her internationalism. However, we can also see that it is important not to downplay gender in assessing this phase of Rathbone's career. Indeed, she frequently correlated women's emancipation with internationalist humanitarianism. Furthermore, no matter how focused she had become on the notionally 'unfeminine' matters of international affairs, she was severely restricted in her action and influence by her gender and by the cultures of male-exclusivity that dominated high politics and diplomacy. She could only ever be, in this sense, a *woman Churchillian*.

Notes

1. Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 283. There are a number of biographies of Rathbone, focusing on various parts of her career, but Pedersen's is the most compelling and comprehensive. See also Laura Beers, 'A Model MP? Ellen Wilkinson, Gender, Politics and Celebrity Culture in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 10: 2 (June, 2013), 231-50; and Matt Perry, *'Red Ellen' Wilkinson: Her Ideas, Movements and World* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014).
2. H. Nicolson, *The Spectator*, 20 Jan. 1939.
3. See Julie V. Gottlieb, 'Guilty Women', *Foreign Policy and Appeasement in Inter-war Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015).
4. Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget* (London, Faber and Faber, 1953), 241.
5. Quoted in Brian Harrison, 'Women in a Men's House: The Women MPs, 1919-1945', *Historical Journal*, 29: 3 (September, 1986), 632-54.
6. Letter from Winston Churchill to Charlie, Lord Londonderry, 18 Nov 1938, CHAR 2/333.
7. It is interesting to note that the historical telefilm *The Gathering Storm* (2002), starring Albert Finney and Vanessa

Redgrave, is all about the overlapping of private and political life. See also Mary Soames, ed., *Speaking for Themselves: The Personal Letters of Winston and Clementine Churchill* (London, Black Swan, 1999).

8. *Manchester Guardian*, 25 February 1939. Quoted in Neville Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers: Conservative Opposition to Appeasement in the 1930s* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971), 27.
9. Letter from Winston Churchill to Eleanor Rathbone, 13 April 1936, Eleanor Rathbone Papers, University of Liverpool, RP XIV.4.1-8.
10. 'Mr Winston Churchill: Attacked and Defended by Socialist M.P.s', *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail*, 3 August 1936.
11. 'Rotary Club Ladies' Day', *Hull Daily Mail*, 24 Oct 1936.
12. Letter from E. Rathbone to Winston Churchill, Sep 1938, RP XIV.4.1-8.
13. 'A Reconstructed Government', *Manchester Guardian*, 30 Jun 1939.
14. Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience*, 292-93.
15. 321, Hansard HC Deb, 25 Mar 1937, col.3136.
16. 'Bristol Students' Plea', *Bristol Evening Post*, 20 Mar 1939.
17. Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience*, 333.
18. 'Our 9 Women MPs are Good Champions of their Sex', *Daily Mirror*, 18 May 1936.
19. 'Session 1937', by Ellen Wilkinson, *Time and Tide*, 31 Jul 1937.
20. 'The European Crisis: Address by the Duchess of Atholl to the Women's Advisory Council, April 8th, 1938', 12.5.38, LNU-5/7.
21. 'Feminine Critics', *Gloucestershire Echo*, 30 Jun 1938.
22. 'Woman MP Welcomes Duchess of Atholl', *Dundee Courier*, 19 Feb 1937.
23. 'A Mixed Mission', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 14 Apr 1937.
24. 'Friendly Understanding for League without Sentimentalism', *Northampton Mercury*, 3 Jun 1938.
25. 'Our London Correspondence', *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Sep 1938.
26. 'Fund Given for Spain at Dinner to Duchess: Farwell for Atholl's Wife Aids Loyalist Relief', *New York Times*, 18 Oct 1938.
27. See 'Notes on Visit to Prague: 14th-20th January, 1939', Eleanor Rathbone Papers, XIV.2.15(12). See also S. Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London, Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).
28. 'We Need Churchill', *Time and Tide*, 6 May 1939.
29. 'Miss Eleanor Rathbone: A Common Front', *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Feb 1939.
30. 'Critics of the Government', *The Times*, 5 Jan 1939.
31. 'Duchess to Lead Ginger Group', *Daily Mirror*, 8 Mar 1939.
32. Rom Landau, *Love for a Country* (London, Nicholson, 1939), 308-9.

Eleanor Rathbone, the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees and the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning

Susan Cohen

University of Southampton

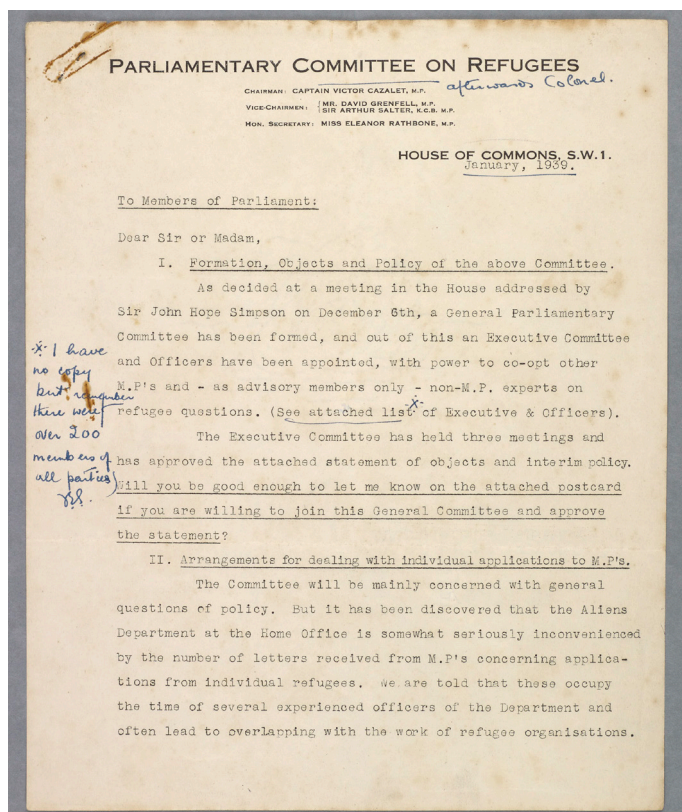
Eleanor Rathbone's humanitarian activism on behalf of refugees, most specifically those in and from Nazi occupied Europe, has received far less attention from historians than her wide-ranging, feminist social and welfare work. This is despite the fact that, from late 1938 until her death in early 1946 – a period encompassing almost half of her parliamentary career – she devoted the majority of her time to campaigning on their behalf.¹ She left no stone unturned in her efforts to help save endangered people – including victims of the Spanish Civil War – in the first instance and, following the outbreak of war, to fight for the humane treatment of refugees, mostly Jews, interned in Britain.² This included liaising with other refugee groups on the basis that collective pressure would have a greater impact on government. One such organisation was the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL) founded by Professor A.V. Hill, William Beveridge and Ernest Rutherford in 1933 as the Academic Assistance Council (AAC). The AAC, later known as the SPSL, was set up specifically to assist prominent refugee scholars and academics, dismissed from their posts on the grounds of their race, religion or political position, to escape Nazi persecution.

Rathbone had her own committee, the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees (PCR), an all-party, purely voluntary group which she had established in November 1938 as a pressure and propaganda tool. This was largely in response to the refugee crisis that ensued following the signing of the Munich Settlement weeks before, on 29 September, which resulted in thousands of endangered people fleeing the Nazi-occupied Sudetenland.³ As Julie Gottlieb demonstrates in her article in this journal and elsewhere, Rathbone was a staunch anti-appeaser. Her sense of personal responsibility for Britain's role in creating this human disaster led to her campaigning, largely but not exclusively through the PCR, on behalf of the most threatened Czech refugees, whether they were communists, social democrats, Old Reich refugees or Jews.⁴ The crisis was further exacerbated following *Kristallnacht*, the orchestrated anti-Jewish pogroms that swept across Germany and Austria on the nights of 9/10 November 1938.⁵

Rathbone's activism on behalf of Czech refugees and Jews attempting to flee other Nazi-occupied countries in Europe continued up to the outbreak of war, but from September 1939 her focus changed, as the doors into Britain were slammed shut. She now turned her attention to domestic refugee concerns and the welfare of thousands of refugees, mostly Jews, who had managed to find a safe haven here. The British government immediately set up tribunals to assess the allegiance and potential risk to national security of every so-called enemy alien. Mass internment was rejected at this point, and of the 73,800 screened, less than 1 per cent were designated Category A and interned, 64,200 in Category C were exempt from any restrictions, whilst the remainder, in Category B, had restrictions imposed upon them.⁶ It was this last group who Rathbone was most concerned about, for their work opportunities and independence were severely affected, and she became one of their most vociferous champions

as she challenged officials to ease the impositions placed upon them. Her workload and the concerns for the refugees increased dramatically once the policy of mass internment was introduced at home in May 1940.⁷ Some 26,700 people were arbitrarily arrested, mostly at night time, initially held in prisons, public buildings or make-shift camps, and besides having no idea of what was happening to them, had no way of contacting their families and no notion of when and how they would be released. They were then despatched around the country to transit camps, before being dispersed elsewhere, many to the Isle of Man, others to an unknown destination, which in some cases included Australia or Canada.⁸ The PCR office, and Rathbone herself, were inundated with calls for help from concerned relatives of internees and, along with other activists, bombarded the government and officials with evidence of the uninhabitable living conditions, the inhumane treatment and accounts of suicides in the internment camps. The death of 100s of enemy aliens being transported abroad on the torpedoed *Arondora Star* was the final straw and the government was forced to hold a major debate on the refugee issue on 10 July. Eleanor was a vociferous participant, intervening at length on seventeen occasions. She argued, as did the majority of MPs, that other than in exceptional cases, internment was counterproductive and that the treatment meted out to internees was unacceptable and often inhumane. It struck at her sense of justice, right and wrong, but she was always patriotic and never lost sight of the priority, which was the safety of the country and its citizens. Post-debate, MPs were granted permission to visit the internment camps, and at Huyton, near Liverpool, in mid July 1940, Rathbone met some of the scholars and academics being held in 'protective custody', on whose behalf the SPSL were campaigning.⁹ No doubt keen to act as effectively as possible, she soon made contact with Esther (Tess) Simpson, the secretary and linchpin of the SPSL, eager to discuss how best to ameliorate the situation and get the academics and scholars released from internment.¹⁰ Given that there are few extant examples of personal correspondence between Rathbone and individuals running refugee organisations, the small cache of papers in the Bodleian gives a rare insight into her concern for the refugees as individuals, and not solely as a collective entity. They confirm the conditions and psychological effect of internment; they reveal the esteem in which Rathbone was held by the refugees and their families and the value they put on her political campaigning on their behalf. Tess was in a different situation, for the SPSL had no such connection and needed the support of politicians to facilitate change in policy. The tone of the letters between Tess and Rathbone was always formal, and the relationship between them remained a purely professional one.

The release of interned scholars was at the top of the women's agenda in August 1940, with fears over the mental health and work prospects of several men, including Dr Richard Samuel and thirty-eight year old Dr Otto Pächt, a young Jewish Viennese art historian, being discussed.¹¹ The



Letter to MPs from Parliamentary Committee on Refugees

©Parliamentary Archives, HC/LB/1/122

release issue appeared intractable, for despite the Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson's agreement in mid-July, to give sympathetic consideration to any cases supported by the SPSL, the society was making little headway.¹² Tess had, on the back of Anderson's promise, submitted lists of men. Eleanor, who had her own list of 'aged' interned scholars – more than 40% were over fifty years old – wanted to liaise with her to discuss these cases and to see how best they could work together, share information and most importantly influence the speeding up of the current release procedure.¹³

What troubled Tess most, she confessed, were 'the alarming stories of the lamentable conditions to which some of these old men have been reduced', conditions with which Eleanor was all too familiar, having received first-hand accounts from internees. One young man recorded that there was not enough food, there were constant body searches, and there was no furniture and no beds; whilst the older men had no access to medical care or medicine, other than aspirin, which they had to pay for themselves. Tess had received a letter relating the inadequacy of air-raid precaution protection at Huyton, for there was only one stirrup pump in the camp which held 2,400 internees. Besides this, the houses had no basements and, with sixteen internees living in each house, the accommodation under the stairs was totally inadequate.¹⁴ Eleanor had also made her own assessment having visited Huyton on 20 July 1940, and subsequently other camps on the mainland and the Isle of Man.¹⁵

To Tess's dismay, when the White Paper relating to these releases was issued in early August, the Category 'B' internees, the doubtful people whose activities had been curtailed, were not mentioned. This included the many Cambridge scientists

who had the misfortune of coming before a local tribunal judge who was highly suspicious of them all, reckoning that they might easily all be German spies in disguise. To add insult to injury, he categorised the whole family in the same way, just to be on the safe side. There were, Tess said, so many cases of the unjust award of the 'B' category, which reinforced her view that the 'variety of the standard adopted by different tribunals was worrying.' One thing that Eleanor was keen to avoid was any overlap of appeals, and she was eager to make a plan of action, but Tess was so 'swamped with appeals from scholars and scientists not registered with the SPSP' that she could not immediately put her mind to anything else. There was no easing of the pressure as Eleanor passed on more lists, this time of interned doctors, all held in Huyton, all of whom had been engaged in unpaid research work under permit, including the neuroscientist, Professor Hermann Josephy, who had endured a month in Sachsenhausen concentration camp in late 1938.¹⁶ He was amongst the almost 6,000 Jews who were sent to the camp following the SS roundup in the days following the orchestrated *Kristallnacht* pogroms.

Eleanor was so inundated with work that she did not find time to write to Tess again until 12 September. The barely legible and fragmented letter reflected the pressure that Eleanor was under, 'overwhelmed as probably you have been by the volume of my correspondence concerning refugees'.¹⁷ On a positive note, she was pleased to report that there was slow but steady progress in the camp conditions, largely thanks to the Council on Aliens, of which she was a member, who kept pushing for more improvements. She also thought that by prioritising the release of the elderly, the sick and those men whose work was of national importance, the Home Office was dealing quite well with releases, and thought it would be wrong to complain. This was a point on which she and Tess initially disagreed, but within a couple of weeks Tess realised that it was hopeless trying to put any pressure on the already overworked Aliens Department, which was, she conceded, doing the best it could in very difficult circumstances. The naturalisation question was equally problematic, but Eleanor feared it was 'useless to take up with the Home Office as the general question.' The best course of action, she thought, was to tackle individual cases on the grounds of interruption to work, and the two women agreed to compile a list of scholars whose early applications were still in limbo.¹⁸ If all this were not enough, in early October, Tess was passing on correspondence about refugees who had been transported to Canada, and offloading her worries about the judge who was being put in charge of the new tribunal to review category 'B' cases, whose reputation on harsh treatment preceded him.¹⁹

One of the main arguments for releasing men speedily was that their skills were badly needed in the workplace. Tess highlighted the national shortage of secondary school masters, and she was wondering how on earth to get the Home Office to include school teachers 'of guaranteed character and loyalty' in a new category for release. The case she cited was extraordinary, for Mr Curt Ofner, a German high school teacher, had been arrested after Kristallnacht and, like Professor Josephy, had been incarcerated for a month in Sachsenhausen concentration camp before managing to emigrate to the UK and joining the staff of St Bee's School, Cumberland. The school was urgently appealing for his release, yet he was still lingering in an internment camp in late November 1940.²⁰

In between concerns over the refugees, in late 1941 Tess

became involved in a fundraising appeal for the PCR, which Eleanor had been financing herself since its inception.²¹ When Professor Hill discovered this, and that funds were perilously low, Tess spearheaded a fundraising campaign, first in Cambridge and then in Oxford.²² Although Tess only wrote to 'selected refugees,' there was a backlash from some who were either insulted to be asked for what they misguidedly thought was paying for the cost of internment, or just too poor to give anything. Others, including Dr Ludwig Guttmann, who went on to found Stoke Mandeville Hospital, made a huge effort to collect what they could from colleagues and, when he sent nine pounds from twenty two refugee academics in January 1942, he wrote 'I hope that even this small amount will help, and show the gratitude of refugees for the work of the committee'.²³

It was, as Eleanor knew, largely due to Tess's energy and enthusiasm that the academic community responded so generously, and she also appreciated that without their support, which continued throughout 1942, she would have had to dig even deeper into her own, admittedly deep, pockets. In July 1942 Eleanor was seeking advice again from Tess, this time about refugee architects, and the fact that the Architects' Registration Council was discriminating against aliens. It was, she explained, happy to accept payment from them to put their names on the register, but was then withholding scholarships from them. Tess found it hard to believe that the Royal Institute of British Architects was only answerable to its own council and not to any government body, which precluded Eleanor putting down a Parliamentary Question. Eleanor was determined to pursue the matter, and called upon Edward 'Bobby' Carter, RIBA's librarian-editor, and Walter Moberley, chairman of the University Grants Committee, for support. Bobby Carter was, in fact, the driving force behind the Architects' Refugee Relief Fund and had set up an émigrés group to help architects, including Walter Gropius and Erno Goldfinger, to flee repressive regimes. He had then found work for them, as well as a number of engineers, painters and musicians, not just in England, but all over the world. Eleanor chose well, for both men were very keen indeed to see that something was done and, whilst Bobby Carter was 'happy to share his very full files of refugees in connection with their release from internment', he and Moberley agreed it needed some official rather than behind-the-scenes action. Tess, for her part, was only able to suggest a few influential people for Eleanor to approach.²⁴

The penultimate letters between Tess and Eleanor were sent in November and December 1942. Weeks earlier, in September, Pétain had publicly announced his intention to 'cleanse France of its foreign Jewry', numbering some 100,000 people. By November, news of the Nazi plans for the mass extermination of Europe's Jews had reached Britain. Eleanor personally received information from a variety of sources, including the Quaker activist Bertha Bracey, and the YMCA in Geneva. Her response had been to set up a new organisation, the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, as a propaganda tool and a mechanism for encouraging small scale rescue missions.²⁵ In a desperate effort at saving lives, Eleanor and a strong deputation of refugee activists tried to persuade Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, to admit more than the small number of children and old people already agreed upon, into Britain. His absolute refusal only hardened Eleanor's resolve, and she began to look further afield for help, an attempt that was exacerbated by the German occupation

of all of France on 12 November. In relating the outcome of the deputation to Tess, she wrote of how she and the PCR were resisting the temptation to publicise Morrison's reply for fear of jeopardising rescue efforts. As she so often did, Eleanor was looking around for influential people who could help with her rescue plans and called upon Tess for some discreet assistance. The philanthropist, Dr Redcliffe Salaman, responded with a donation of fifty pounds but funds were not what Eleanor was really after. Quite what she expected him to do is unclear, for what she really wanted was for either Argentina or Chile to agree to provide refuge for the endangered French Jews. Tess's last letter, written on 2 December, conveyed a message from Philip Guedalla, a British barrister and author, and was hardly encouraging. It did not really matter, he said, if Argentinian goodwill *could* be relied upon, or whether Chile had good intentions, for the enemy was unlikely to pay any attention to any request they might make.²⁶ Within two weeks, news of the mass deportation and planned massacre of all Jews in Nazi occupied countries eclipsed all else.

Tess sent a further cheque for fifty pounds to Eleanor in April 1943, including her 'best wishes for the work of the PCR'. And clearly neither she nor the SPSL were deterred by the reluctance of a few refugee scholars to help, for as Tess wrote, 'If we receive an appeal from the new National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, I shall be glad to submit it to our committee. It is good to know that organisations and individuals are being active in this rescue work in spite of the absence of an official lead.'²⁷ Eleanor expressed her gratitude to Tess and the committee on very many occasions, never taking their assistance for granted. She also made it very clear that it was not just the financial help for which she was grateful, but the way in which Tess had helped in 'so many other ways', a compliment that very many other people paid her for Tess, like Eleanor, refused to 'stand by' when support was needed, went out of her way to do whatever she could for 'her refugees'.²⁸

Whilst the letters between Tess and Eleanor subsequently dwindled away, both women continued to fight for the refugees in their own inimitable fashion. Eleanor was considering reviving the PCR in late 1945. Her concern was now for the many refugees who were threatened with repatriation to the very countries they had escaped from and for the fight for a homeland in Palestine for the survivors of the Holocaust. Her death in early 1946 brought an end to all her humanitarian activism.

Both women had a huge impact on the lives of the refugees, both directly and indirectly. Eleanor's parliamentary campaigning not only resulted in positive improvements being made in very many aspects of camp conditions and release, but her activism, and the knowledge that someone cared, boosted the morale of the refugees, earning her the soubriquet, 'MP for Refugees'. Conversely, in official circles she was considered to be 'tainted with the refugee brush' and was referred to as 'the perishing Miss Rathbone' as she refused to allow the refugee question to be brushed under the carpet. Tess, meanwhile, continued to work for the SPSL, often in a voluntary capacity, from the end of the Second World War until her official – but not actual – retirement at the age of seventy-five. She gave help to refugee scholars fleeing Czechoslovakia in 1948 and again in 1968, Hungary in 1956, apartheid South Africa after 1960, and Poland, Chile, Greece, Brazil, Argentina, Bangladesh, Zambia, Rhodesia, Iraq, Persia, and China—in fact wherever and whenever a brutal regime targeted independent-minded,

Notes

1. Rathbone's first involvement with the rescue of refugees was during the Spanish Civil War. For an overview of Eleanor's humanitarian activism during the Spanish Civil War (SCW), see Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004) 286-8, 294-5, 298-9, 299-301. Five files (RPXIV.2.10-14) in the University of Liverpool Library, Special Collections, reflect Rathbone's parliamentary career during the Spanish Civil War as a member of the Joint Committee for Spanish Relief and Honorary Secretary for the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees. The secondary literature on the SCW is extensive and includes Jim Fyrrth, *The Signal was Spain: The Spanish Aid Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1986).
2. For Eleanor's work for refugees, and for the PCR see Susan Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London, Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).
3. Cohen, *Rescue*, 113 ff.
4. For Rathbone and anti-appeasement see Julie V. Gottlieb, 'Guilty Women', *Foreign Policy and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) especially 249-54.
5. For Kristallnacht and Czechoslovakia see Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948. British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 97-168.
6. London, *Whitehall*, especially 169 ff.
7. Peter and Leni Gillman, *Collar the Lot! How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees* (London, Quartet, 1980).
8. Anthony Grenville, 'Remembering Internment', *AJR Journal*, 1 (2007). www.ajr.org.uk/index.cfm/section/journal/issue/Jul07/article=875 accessed 13 July 2016. Also Jennifer Taylor, "'We have more than enough": Conditions in Huyton internment camp in the Autumn and Early Winter of 1940', *Liverpool History Society Journal*, (2009), 99-108.
9. For the 10 July debate see Cohen, *Rescue*, 139-42; for the Huyton visit, 142-44.
10. Bodleian Library, MS Coll. SPSL (Henceforth SPSL) 120/2, fol. 244. Eleanor Rathbone (hereafter ER) to Esther Simpson (hereafter ES), 29 July 1940; also SPSL 120/2, fol.258. ES to ER, 13 Aug. 1940.
11. For Samuel see SPSL 301/4, fols. 290, 303, and for his complete file see SPSL 310/4 fols. 71- 422. For Pächt see SPSL 190/5, fols.487-9, Jeanne Pächt to ER, 23/24 July 1940. Also SPSL 120/2, fol. 269, ES to ER, 18 Sept. 1940 (re: Mrs. Pächt's visit to Huyton). For Pächt's file see SPSL 190/5.
12. SPSL 120/2, f.247 ES to ER 1 Aug. 1940 and reply, f.255 ER to ES, 4 Aug. 1940.
13. SPSL 120/2, fol. 245, ES to ER, 30 July 1940, fol. 261, Doris Hardman to ES, 13 Aug. 1940.
14. SPSL 120/2, f.268, ES to ER, 17 Sept. 1940.
15. For the Huyton visit see Cohen, *Rescue*, 142-5.
16. SPSL 120/2, f.259 60, 13 Aug 1940. For Josephy see also SPSL 395/5 and 433/4.
17. SPSL 120/2, f.266, ER to ES, 18 Sept. 1940.
18. Ibid.
19. SPSL 120/2, fol.275, ES to ER, 4 Oct. 1940.

20. SPSL 120/2, fol. 283, ES to ER, 20 Nov. 1940; on Curt Ofner see also United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Acc. No. 2013.371.1, Ofner family papers.
21. For the fund-raising campaign see SPSL 120/3, fols. 331-538.
22. SPSL 120/3, f.355, ES to Dr Paul Maas, 31 Jan. 1942 for A.V.Hill finding out about the parlous state of the PCR's finances.
23. SPSL 120/3, f.342, ES to Guttman, 20 Jan. 1942; f.343, Guttman to ES, 22 Jan. 1942.
24. SPSL 120/2, fol. 299, ER to ES, 18 July 1942; fol. 300, Reply of ES to ER, 20 July 1942.
25. For the NCRNT see Cohen, *Rescue*, 207-38.
26. SPSL 120/2, fol. 311, ES to Dr Salaman, 19 Nov. 1942; fol. 313, 23 Nov. 1942; fol. 315, ES to ER, 2 Dec. 1942.
27. SPSL 120/2, ES to ER, 1 Oct 1940; f.275, ES to ER, 4 Oct. 1940.
28. See, for example, BL, MS Coll SPSL, 120/2 f.304, ER to ES, 7 Nov. 1942.
29. *Refugee Scholars: Conversations with Tess Simpson*, ed. R.M.Cooper, (Leeds, Moorland Publishing, 1992).

**Conferences, Calls for Papers, Events,
Prizes, News, Notices, Publishing
Opportunities ...
All of the above can be found in the
WHN electronic
Newsletter**

The WHN *Newsletter*, which is emailed to members monthly, enables us to keep you up-to-date with news, conferences and other events concerning women's history.

The *Newsletter* also provides a more frequent forum for publicising your events and informing members about other activities and projects.

To advertise in the WHN *Newsletter*, please email its editor, Gillian Murphy, at:

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

**To download current and back issues visit the
Newsletter pages at**

www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/news/newsletters/

The International Work of Margery Fry in the 1930s and '40s

Anne Logan

University of Kent

This article discusses the international work of Margery Fry (1874-1958) not only as a counterpoint to that of Eleanor Rathbone but also because – as Gottlieb has pointed out – the historiography of British foreign policy and the issue of appeasement in the 1930s has consistently ignored the views and involvement of women in the debates which took place.¹ While there has been excellent work by feminist historians on international women's organisations, there has been comparatively less recent analysis of the actions and reactions of individual influential women in the foreign policy field.² Partly this is because political historians concentrate on the powerful – or at least those with visible power – and Rathbone was one of only a very few women with a seat in parliament in this period. Yet arguably, even Rathbone's role in international policy discussions was somewhat neglected until the publication of Pedersen's and Cohen's biographical studies.³

Despite this lacuna in much of the literature, new research is discovering that influential women in the post-suffrage years possessed a surprising degree of political agency, albeit often away from the front line in politics. Fry was one such woman, arguably one of the pre-eminent examples of her generation. Despite her strongly left-wing views, Fry was highly valued and trusted by civil servants and therefore served upon countless government advisory committees and enquiries. Her existence as a policy advisor has been conceptualised as a 'political life in the shadows'.⁴ However, not all her political life was lived in a clandestine way. An examination of contemporary newspapers, the records of the pressure groups that Fry was involved in and the personal papers of her and her family, demonstrates her political commitment to anti-Fascist causes and willingness to take public positions on international issues. This article considers three aspects of Fry's international work during the 1930s and '40s: aid to refugees; her attitude towards disarmament and appeasement and – most significantly – her support for China following the Japanese attack of 1937 in the context of women's agency and the opportunities that existed for political involvement outside formal party politics. Firstly, a few biographical details about Fry are given and a brief discussion of her relationship with Rathbone is presented.

Despite her distinguished career in public service, Margery Fry's life and work have been largely neglected by historians. There is only one full-length biography – published shortly after her death – although she merits an entry in Oldfield's biographical dictionary of women humanitarians.⁵ Fry was born into a large, wealthy Quaker family, the seventh of eight surviving children. Her father was a judge and her uncle ran the eponymous chocolate manufacturing business in Bristol. After being educated mainly at home, she went to Somerville College, Oxford, to read Mathematics. While at Somerville, she became a close friend of Rathbone's, who seems to have been converted to her feminism and to the cause of women's suffrage. Years later Fry recalled a conversation at Oxford between her and Rathbone during which they had discussed possible future careers and 'bewailed the fact that

for women there could be no ambitions'.⁶ In an ideal world, Fry would have wanted to become a lawyer like her father or even a member of parliament (MP). Neither career was open to her until she was in her mid-forties and (apart from one abortive attempt to become an MP) she never came close to achieving either ambition. Instead, after an early career in university administration, she performed humanitarian work during the First World War and then embarked on a career as a professional pressure group activist, most notably with the Howard League for Penal Reform. By the late 1920s, when Fry was for a short period Principal of Somerville College, she was already a well-known public figure and was making regular appearances on BBC radio. She was also the only woman on the University Grants Committee (UGC), which advised the government on the funding of higher education, a post that gave her enormous influence in British universities. In summary, Fry had recognised expertise in two important fields of public policy: criminal justice and higher education. In the 1930s, following a visit to China as a representative of British universities, she became prominent in agitation over international issues and in 1937, was made a Governor of the BBC. She carved out a political career in the realm of civil society, which, while not unique to women of her generation, was highly unusual with respect to the public prominence and recognition she achieved.

As already mentioned, Fry and Rathbone met when they were students together at Somerville in the mid-1890s and they became firm friends. The women had parallel family backgrounds as members of prominent, nonconformist clans, the same interests and a similar worldview regarding a range of political and social issues. Both were members of a social and political discussion group formed by Somerville students and called the 'Associated Prigs' during their college days.⁷ The pair maintained contact after leaving Oxford and Rathbone even offered a job to Fry in the days when the latter was still deciding what career to take on.⁸ They were comrades and allies in the suffrage movement, both devoted to the non-militant National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and they kept their commitment to – if not always active involvement in – national and international women's organisations during the interwar period. Whereas Rathbone pursued a parliamentary (as well as extra-parliamentary) political career. However, Fry's political activity took place mainly in the realm of pressure groups.

Refugee support

In the interwar period, Fry had a strong public profile in both domestic and international political fields. Domestically her prominence was grounded in her educational expertise, knowledge of criminal justice and media appearances. By the early 1930s, she had attained the status of a 'public intellectual'. Her ideas mattered because, as a person of influence, she occupied public platforms, most significantly, the BBC. This distinction is notable because, as Collini points out, women's voices were by no means widely heard at that time.⁹

A consequence of Fry's visibility as a 'name' and an expert was the number of 'round robin' letters to the press that she was asked to sign on a wide variety of causes. One example was the public announcement of the formation of the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) to aid refugee academics from Germany in May 1933. The Council was formed at the instigation of Sir William Beveridge following the passage of the Nazi regime's law for the 'cleansing of the Civil Service', which brought about the expulsion of Jewish post-holders and the regime's political opponents from German universities.¹⁰ Beveridge and Lord (Ernest) Rutherford drafted a press statement launching the AAC with the aim of not only raising money for refugee scholars' maintenance but also endeavouring to persuade British universities to employ them. Of the forty-one signatories to the initial announcement, only two were women: Margery Fry and Professor Winifred Cullis, a former president of the Federation of University Women and the first woman to hold a chair in physiology in Britain.

It is clear that Fry was invited because there was perceived to be a need for 'a woman' to be among the founders of the AAC. Beveridge sent her a letter stating that there '*ought to be* some women signatories'.¹¹ Clearly as the sole woman on the UGC she was an important and influential choice. Fry immediately answered the appeal and sent a donation. However, strangely, Beveridge failed to mention her in his list of initial contributors, citing only Maynard Keynes, Michael Sadler of University College, Oxford, and Emrys Evans of the University of Wales. Beveridge's retrospective account of the Council's foundation is unwittingly revealing of the position of women in universities at this time. He stated that the signatories were 'collected as men [sic] of academic standing and interest' and then sought to account for the relative absence of Jewish scholars from the list.¹² In other words, he reflected on the ethnic make-up of the AAC's founders, but remained blind to the matter of gender diversity. Of course, the key imperative when constructing publicised appeals was to get names who were known to the general public and, given the nature of this particular initiative, eminence in academia was another prerequisite. Fry met the first criteria handsomely but was in some ways a curious choice in the light of the second. However, although her university career had been entirely administrative in nature and devoid of any formal contribution to scholarship, her importance as a member of the UGC, as well as her prominence as a public intellectual, must have made her an obvious choice as an eminent representative of her gender.

Fry's practical involvement with the AAC (later renamed the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, SPSL) was limited by the many other demands on her time, but she remained committed to its principles. In 1934, after her return from a visit to China, she sent the Council another cheque and suggested that those wishing to help refugee scholars from Germany should consider placing them in Chinese universities.¹³ Thereafter she continued to send money (while apologising that she was of limited use in recruiting other supporters 'as I am chiefly connected with bankrupt societies and with the kind of people who are already giving pretty generously in every direction') and regular apologies for missed meetings.¹⁴ At the beginning of 1938 Fry offered to resign, but was told by the general secretary that the Council wished for her to continue, since her membership demonstrated publicly her full co-operation and (revealingly) that the organisation

benefited from association with her name. Fry replied that she was willing to stay on 'in a symbolic capacity'.

In 1940, she exercised political agency in refugee work when she visited Paris in an attempt to help refugee scholars resident in the city move to the UK.¹⁵ This mission, on behalf of an organisation called 'For Intellectual Liberty', put her fluent French and exceptional organisational skills to practical use. However, writing to her sister Isabel, Fry expressed her frustration and doubts about the scale of the enterprise:

It may seem horrible to limit one's efforts, but I believe I'm right simply to go for the 'intellectuals' – not because humanly they matter more, but because they both have far more effect in international feeling, & hold more of the keys to the future than the rank & file. And at first I only can go to enquire. I'm as conscious as you can be that this is an absurdly limited thing to undertake... I am in terror that the whole journey will be a wild goose chase... An old thing like me can't do a very big crusade.¹⁶

Fry seems to have taken the initiative for this mission, and her words imply that her age rather than her gender was the factor most likely to impede success. She was nothing if not practical in her approach to helping the stateless: she took refugees from France and China into her own home in London during the Second World War, as she had previously provided accommodation to Belgians in 1914.

In 1940 Fry was placed on a government committee dealing with interned enemy aliens. Ironically, some of the interned individuals were scholars whom the SPSL had rescued from Germany. Despite wide acceptance among MPs of the fact that refugees were highly unlikely to be Nazi sympathisers, thousands of them were arrested after the outbreak of war and sent to internment camps or even deported to Canada or Australia. Following severe criticism in the House of Commons – not least from Rathbone – the government reconsidered its policy and established an advisory committee headed by Sir Francis Lindley, a former diplomat and Conservative party candidate, to assess internees with a view to releasing those who were guaranteed to be loyal to Britain and could potentially be useful to the war effort.¹⁷ Because of her membership of this committee, the Home Office sent Fry to the Isle of Man in 1941 to facilitate the release of communists from internment there, following the United Kingdom's alliance with the Soviet Union.¹⁸

Margery Fry's work for refugees was small-scale in comparison with Rathbone's, yet she did as much as she felt able to, given her other commitments. From the time of Hitler's accession to power in Germany onwards, Fry lent her name to organisations, sent them money and offered practical help, as she had in the First World War when she had worked in France with people made homeless and destitute by warfare. Moreover, after the outbreak of the Second World War, her track record as a reliable Whitehall committee woman resulted in her appointment to the Lindley committee.

Disarmament and appeasement

Fry was a prominent part of the public discussion of foreign policy in the 1930s and of the general discourse concerning the most effective method of combating the rise



*Margery Fry group at Somerville, 1926.
With kind permission of Somerville College Archives*

of fascism. The AAC announcement mentioned above was one of many press statements, letters to editors and other circulars Fry was asked to sign. Her name usually appeared alongside other left-of-centre public figures. A study of these published statements and her private letters shows that, like many men and women of her time, the events of the 1930s forced Fry to reassess her attitude towards war, pacifism and disarmament. Although a birth right Quaker, Fry was not a pacifist: she abhorred war, yet, from the time of the Abyssinian crisis of 1935 onwards, her conviction that fascist aggression might require a military response grew steadily.

Oldfield claims that Fry renounced absolute pacifism as a result of the rise of fascism.¹⁹ In fact, Fry's attitude towards warfare was conflicted and ambivalent well before the 1930s. During her sojourn as a relief worker in First World War France, her proximity to the suffering of civilians caused her to declare, 'if I were a man, I would enlist'.²⁰ Following her return to England in early 1918 she moved closer to the anti-war movement. In her new role as a penal reform campaigner, which she had taken on partly as a result of reports of prison conditions from incarcerated conscientious objectors, Fry maintained links with peace organisations, especially the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). During the 1920s Fry occasionally supported peace organisations with money – and even hosted a 'No More War' garden party – but she does not seem to have been actively involved in any formal pacifist body.²¹ She did, however, lend her name to a round robin 'women's appeal for disarmament' in 1927.²² Although she formally submitted her resignation to the Society of Friends in 1932 (her membership having been merely nominal for many years) she remained very much part of Quaker social networks, a factor which may account for her name appearing on several pacifist petitions published in the press.²³ In 1932 she signed letters alongside other prominent peace activists, Quakers and Anglican churchmen, urging the British government to table proposals at the World Disarmament Conference that would prohibit certain classes of armaments, including submarines and air weapons.²⁴

However, after the accession of Hitler to power in Germany and in the light of the seeming failure of the League of Nations to prevent aggression and enforce collective security, Fry became increasingly concerned about the prospects for disarmament and began to reassess her support for pacifism.

By the autumn of 1935 events were prompting her to reconsider – at least in private – the necessity for military action. Fry was well acquainted with the international as well as the national political scene. In 1919 she had lobbied the US president, Woodrow Wilson, on behalf of the International Council of Women and from 1935 to 1939 she travelled annually to Geneva to campaign at the League of Nations Assembly for an international prisoners' charter.²⁵

In common with other activists, Fry reassessed her stance on collective security in the light of the Abyssinian Crisis of 1935. Writing on the very day of Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, she admitted to her sister, Isabel, that she was in a quandary over pacifism and international relations. 'I seem to be driven to saying (in imagination) to the gov[ernmen]t "I think upholding the L[eague] of N[at]ions by force if need be is *your* right action, but I wouldn't stir a finger to help you with it – and that seems a fairly untenable position, doesn't it?"²⁶ Her reaction to events was not dissimilar to that of Kathleen Courtney, Fry's old comrade from the NUWSS executive and from First World War relief work, who, as Gottlieb has shown, moved away from pacifism as successive foreign relations crises unfolded during the late 1930s.²⁷ Fry herself had absolutely no illusions concerning the nature of Germany's new government: not only was she well aware of the treatment of Jewish and opposition academics, she was also in touch with activists who made her aware of the misuse of prison detention under fascist regimes. She soon came to realise that democracy might need a more muscular defence than a purely pacifist policy could offer.

Following the apparent capitulation of the British and French governments over Abyssinia, and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Fry became a strong advocate of the attempts to unite liberal and left wing opinion in defence of democracy and in opposition to fascism, which became known as the 'popular front' policy. In 1936 she joined the committee of a new organisation, For Intellectual Liberty (FIL). This was 'founded as a rallying point for those intellectual workers who felt that the conditions of the world called for the active defence of peace, liberty, and culture' and in response to a call from a similar French organisation called the 'Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes'.²⁸ FIL, whose president was Aldous Huxley and committee notably also included 'Bloomsbury' figures such as EM Forster and Leonard Woolf, attracted an

impressive range of well-known supporters from academia, politics, journalism, literature, and art: in fact from the English intelligentsia in general. It made public statements supporting the Spanish government as well as arguing strongly that the Liberal and Labour parties should sink their differences and co-operate in a popular front. As late as 1939 Fry was involved in a FIL recruitment drive, visiting Manchester in connection with an appeal by prominent university people in the city.²⁹

Writing from Geneva in the autumn of 1936, Fry exclaimed to Isabel that 'an anti-Fascist Front Populaire is *essential*'. Once more, circular letters were being put together, but according to Fry, 'idiotic' Labour people were obstructing progress by wishing to 'preen themselves on not being communist!'³⁰ Fry – although she was a Labour Party member at this point (she announced her resignation from the Party in 1939) – obviously considered herself free to associate with whomever she wished in a broad-based anti-fascist coalition.³¹ In Geneva during the League of Nations assembly meeting of 1937, Fry reported that 'everyone' there regarded the League as effectively dead. However, she acknowledged that the so-called 'social questions' which the assembly was discussing were like a 'life-raft'.³² So perhaps she still harboured some residual optimism for internationalism.

In common with other left-inclined political activists, Fry was dismayed by the British and French governments' non-intervention strategy towards the crisis in Spain, which effectively prevented the Spanish Republic from defending itself, and she took part in demonstrations on the republican government's behalf. She supported all-party appeals for the Spanish government to have the right to buy arms as well as backing publicly a charitable appeal for the war's orphans. In January 1939, only months before the final defeat of Republican Spain, she joined other dignitaries, including the former Conservative MP, the Duchess of Atholl, and the Liberal anti-appeaser and Popular Front advocate, Wilfrid Roberts MP, on a march to Downing Street for full recognition of the Spanish republic in international law.³³ Two weeks later, Fry presented the views of campaigners to Sir Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Liberal Party, at a Caxton Hall meeting. She argued that 'party considerations should be subordinated in the supreme need of saving democracy'. The deputation demanded that elected Spanish government should be entitled to buy arms, British ships trading with Spain should be protected, food should sent to Republican Spain, and the Italian and German governments should be pressed to withdraw their forces from the country.³⁴

In September 1938 Fry was once more in Geneva lobbying the League of Nations on prison reform while the Munich crisis was unfolding. While the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain negotiated with Hitler, Europe seemed to be on the brink of war. Fry expressed her consternation and anger at Chamberlain's agreement with Hitler in a letter to her sister.

People here think the League is absolutely killed – [and] everyone I have spoken to [in Geneva] feels that Eng[land] has in capitulating utterly to Hitler not only betrayed *another* small country but made things infinitely worse for our own future. It's like a funeral of all one cares for – [and] it may be absurd, but one has a sense of personal shame into the bargain which is overwhelming. The Soviet woman, Kollontay [sic], whom I've

rather hated sometimes, made me cry with her sympathy...³⁵

Fry's agonised reaction to Chamberlain's agreement with Hitler underscores her rejection of the policy of appeasement. Moreover, her view stands in contrast to a statement signed by leading British pacifists at the time, which pledged signatories to 'resist and to organise such opposition as will hasten the end' of any potential war. Interestingly two of Fry's sisters, Joan and Ruth, signed this statement, but her name does not appear.³⁶

As in the First World War, much as she valued peace, Fry could not commit herself entirely to pacifism, especially not as the events of the late 1930s unfolded. This attitude was shaped as much by her reaction to events in China (discussed below) as it was to the European situation. To some extent, Fry serves as a case study of a path followed by many politically active feminists in the period, and even of public attitudes at large. By 1939, Fry was prominent in pro-Spanish Republic events, and her misgivings about appeasement, which at first had only been expressed privately, were publicly proclaimed.

China

Of greatest personal importance to Fry towards the end of the 1930s was the fate of China, a country in which she travelled extensively on behalf of British universities in 1933 and with whose people she identified passionately. She was more than willing to lend her name to petitions and even attend demonstrations for the Spanish republic. But it was the movement in solidarity with China – a country similarly under attack from aggressive invaders – that really engaged her energies in the final years of the interwar period.

It is only relatively recently that historians have shone the spotlight on the pro-Chinese movement in Great Britain. Traditionally its existence has been overshadowed by discussions of the general theme of appeasement and anti-appeasement, and by the phenomenon of the British left's solidarity with Republican Spain. This neglect has been somewhat mitigated in recent years by an article by Perry on British diplomacy with China between 1937 and 1939, and within a wider treatment of the relationship between the British Left and China by Buchanan.³⁷ Until these publications appeared the sole retrospective account of the now largely forgotten reactions of the British public to the Japanese attack of July 1937 was contained in the pages of *Aid China*, a first-hand, retrospective account by the former China Campaign Committee (CCC) organiser Arthur Clegg.³⁸ While Buchanan makes many references to Fry's work for the CCC, he did not consult her private papers which reveal far more about her involvement than the sources he relied upon. The Chinese predicament was not a sideshow in the international politics of the late 'thirties, but was an issue that engaged – albeit briefly – considerable attention in the UK.

It certainly engaged Margery Fry's interest. In July 1937, the hostility between Japan and China finally erupted into all-out war when Japanese forces launched an attack near Beijing following an incident with Chinese soldiers at the so-called Marco Polo Bridge (now Lugou). Although there had been repeated hostilities between China and Japan since the latter's occupation of Manchuria began in 1931, this incident represented the beginning of an escalation and by August 1937 there was full-scale warfare. At the end of October, Shanghai

(minus the foreign concessions) fell to the Japanese and the Chinese forces in Nanjing surrendered in December. The military action, with its accompanying bombings, casualties and all the attendant horrors of war, was widely reported in the British press, prompting a wave of protest meetings and philanthropic appeals for funds for medical supplies. The CCC, which brought together a wide variety of pro-Chinese individuals and organisations in a Popular Front-style coalition, was established in September.³⁹ At this point, Fry was not involved in the campaign, probably because she was out of the country that autumn visiting Geneva and touring prisons in south-eastern Europe. However, she closely followed events in China from the continent.⁴⁰ After her return from Europe, Fry joined the CCC as vice-chairman in late 1937 and presided at the meetings that the chairman, the publisher Victor Gollancz, was unable to attend.⁴¹ She remained involved in the campaign until 1946, alternating as chair and vice-chair with Gollancz.

In addition to chairing meetings, Fry's role in the CCC was very much that of propagandist and figurehead. Her name frequently appeared in letters to the press from the Campaign and in newspaper accounts of its public meetings. According to Clegg, the CCC was initially inundated with demands for speakers from churches, trade union branches, peace councils and local left book clubs.⁴² Fry toured the country seemingly tirelessly to speak on the CCC's behalf. At the beginning of January 1938 she reported to Isabel that she already had 'lots to do with the China campaign'.⁴³ A letter written to a friend in 1941 gives a more detailed, light-hearted account of her experiences addressing meetings: 'I've been specialising on Rotary Clubs', she told him, mentioning visits to Stafford and St Albans. 'Chelsea said I had to be thanked, but reluctantly, since I'd said some things in criticism of British governments [and] even of British BUSINESS!'⁴⁴

It is perhaps characteristic of Fry that she was so involved in a campaign that mixed political with humanitarian objectives. The CCC not only sought to raise political awareness but also tried to offer humanitarian aid to the war-torn country, much as pro-Spain organisations had been doing for the Spanish Republic since 1936. The Campaign fulfilled Fry's desire for broad-based, coalition-style politics: in its early phases, it received backing from bodies outside the usual network of left-wing organisations, such as churches and missionary societies. The Lord Mayor of London launched a fund for relief work in China, yet the CCC itself organised the dispatch of weekly consignments of medical supplies and appealed for gifts of clothing for Chinese war refugees. Politically the Campaign expressed solidarity with the Chinese people and aimed to 'spread the knowledge and [encourage] the appreciation of the Chinese people'.⁴⁵

Press coverage of the Sino-Japanese conflict in the press undoubtedly gave the Chinese cause some momentum in the last weeks of 1937. Early the following year, British newspapers began to print accounts of outrages taking place in Nanjing, giving further reason for British protest and concern.⁴⁶ The CCC urged the British government to co-operate with its League of Nations allies and criticised the sale of war materials to Japan by Britain and the United States. However, although fifty-two nations passed a resolution at Geneva, neither the League nor the nine powers with trade concessions in China did anything to punish Japan. In response, the CCC, supported by co-operative societies, called for a boycott of Japanese goods and organised public demonstrations.⁴⁷ Dockers at ports

including Southampton, Glasgow and Liverpool refused to unload Japanese cargos, and in Middlesbrough union members refused to load scrap iron intended for export to Japan.⁴⁸ CCC officials supported the dockers and more generally sought to educate the British public regarding the Japanese economy. Fry contributed to the debate on the boycott in a speech in which she urged her audience to understand the economic consequences of Japanese aggression for British workers. If Japan – with its tradition of low wages and cheap labour – was allowed to gain full control of China's immense human and natural resources it would be a disaster for the world economy, she alleged.⁴⁹

Fry also played a part in the CCC's attempts to raise awareness and appreciation of Chinese culture among the British public. A CCC pamphlet mentioned the 'wholesale destruction of life, property and centres of education and culture' in China.⁵⁰ The Campaign took care to include Chinese students resident in Britain on its platforms and some meetings even included entertainment from the American singer, Paul Robeson.⁵¹ A series of cultural events was organised to raise both funds and public awareness. An exhibition of Chinese art, much of it from a private collector, was mounted to raise money for China, and Chinese variety artists performed in the West End. In April 1938, the Unity Theatre (a left-wing theatre in London) held a 'China Week' to raise awareness and support for the Campaign. The following year a troupe of Indonesian dancers visited England and gave benefit performances for China, including one at the headquarters of the English Folk Dance Society, Cecil Sharp House. The dancers even appeared on the embryonic BBC television service: according to Clegg this was due to the influence Fry had as BBC governor, but there is no other evidence to support his contention.⁵² Fry certainly valued such cultural activities as she had long appreciated Chinese art and was fond of dance and drama. Moreover, she saw solidarity with China as not only political but also cultural. The preservation of Chinese education and culture – including the country's universities – in the face of a 'war of extermination of the humanities', mattered greatly to Fry.⁵³ She firmly believed that not only was China's newly established democracy under attack, but also its entire civilisation.

By the summer of 1938, as the anniversary of the Lugou incident approached, Fry was thoroughly involved in CCC activities. In June she launched an appeal for funds to pay for ambulances for the International Peace Hospital, which had been recently established in China by a Canadian doctor, Norman Bethune. She told *Manchester Guardian* readers that an ambulance, which had been used in Spain, would be touring Lancashire 'to win help for the International Peace Hospital Scheme' and requested that they 'give generously'.⁵⁴ Fry then took part in a deputation to the Japanese ambassador in London to protest at the aerial bombing of Canton, accompanied by MPs and CCC officials. At a protest meeting in August, held to promote the boycott of Japanese goods, Fry alleged that 'women and children were being bombed in order to demoralise their menfolk fighting at the front'. She also argued that China should be defended for its civilisation and democratic aspirations.⁵⁵

This is a new sort of attack on civilisation. There is no doubt that Japan chose this time to make war on China because she saw that China was getting on her feet and as a nation was becoming

a civilised and more or less democratic country. Japan intervened to prevent China from achieving unity. From the first her attack was on the cultural life of China.

This speech also contained one of her favourite themes: higher education. Mentioning her own visit to China, she claimed that 'the Chinese desired to have universities because they knew only an educated people could form a sound democracy'. Her linkage of higher education and democracy must have at least in part resulted from her personal experience of the interconnections between the struggles for women's education and suffrage.

In 1939, Fry became embroiled in the fall-out from the so-called 'Tientsin incident'. In April a pro-Japanese Chinese official had been murdered and the Japanese authorities accused several men who were living in the British Concession at Tientsin (now known as Tianjin). Four months later the British authorities decided to acquiesce with Japan's demands and hand over four men for trial. Fry's response – together with Norman Bentwich of the National Council of Civil Liberties (NCCL) – was to instruct solicitors in London to apply for a writ of habeas corpus. The pair also sent a telegram to the Foreign Secretary, seeking assurances that the government would abide by the law. Fry's action incurred the wrath of a *Daily Mail* editorial, which linked the matter to her role at the BBC.

Miss Margery Fry is a Quaker whose zeal for reforming the prison systems of the world has won respect... She is also a governor of the BBC at a salary of £1000 a year. Perhaps she forgot this appointment when arranging with Professor Norman Bentwich to interfere with the decision of the Tientsin judicial tribunal to hand over to the Japanese the four Chinese accused of murder.

Miss Fry, no matter how good her motives may seem to her, should remember that the BBC is apt to be regarded abroad... as an official government institution. If she wants to interfere in international affairs she should resign her governorship.⁵⁶

It is doubtful that criticism from a right-wing newspaper like the *Daily Mail* at all concerned Fry but it is worth noting that her BBC governorship did end suddenly only a few weeks later, and she was never to regain it. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that her role in supporting the rights of the Chinese suspects brought her such scathing treatment in the British press.

Important though it was to Fry, involvement in the CCC was certainly not without its problems. After the initial interest in China during the winter of 1937-8, public attention began to wander as events in Europe became more threatening to the UK's security. For years after that, the Campaign was a hard slog, even when Japan became officially confirmed as an enemy of the British Empire after Pearl Harbor. Although public sympathy was once more with China from that point, developments there tended to be crowded out from the news by events elsewhere. Fry was used to years of hard work for unglamorous campaigns, but more problematic for her was the faction-fighting within the CCC. Clegg recalled that she was intent on preserving the broad-based support for the Campaign, urging that its spokespeople should not

alienate the general public by launching personal attacks on government ministers, even after the Munich crisis.⁵⁷ Fry knew full well from her years of committee work the importance of keeping people with potentially conflicting opinions on board. Another difficulty was the Communist influence in the CCC, which presented her with a problem, not least because it resulted in Labour politicians tending to keep the Campaign at arm's length. Clegg himself was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) (as were several other employees and activists in the CCC) and there were suspicions that the Communists were holding separate caucus meetings prior to the full Committee gatherings.⁵⁸ Fry's letters repeatedly show her concern over Communist influence, especially in the months between the outbreak of war and the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

Despite the difficulties, Fry continued her work for the CCC until 1946, albeit interrupted by a lengthy visit to the USA in 1942. Her priorities in the CCC centred upon public speaking, educational work, and the maintenance of contacts between British and Chinese universities. In 1941 she worked on a 'wartime home study course' about China which was offered by the Cooperative Union's education department. Only five days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the CCC ran a weekend school, chaired by Fry, on the topic of 'China and the Pacific'. In 1944 she gave talks about China to cooperative societies, trade unionists and members of the Workers Educational Association, among others.⁵⁹ She also maintained contacts with visiting Chinese politicians and academics. For example, in 1941 the son of the former nationalist leader Sun Yat-Sen, who was studying at Oxford University, visited Isabel's house in Buckinghamshire to meet Fry.⁶⁰

The British declaration of war on Japan on 8th December 1941 (the day after Pearl Harbor) unsurprisingly revived interest from the British public in China's plight. While there were difficulties in arranging evening meetings in central London during the blitz, the CCC continued to run 'bowl of rice' lunches. Clegg recalled that Fry even invited Anthony Eden to one of the lunches, but he refused.⁶¹ Perhaps this is another instance of her interest in building broad coalitions of support. In 1942 the British United Aid to China Fund (BUACF) was launched and Fry became a CCC representative on its Council. The Fund, supported by British business, the labour movement and missionary societies, was humanitarian in intention, concentrating on practical aid for Britain's Chinese allies and the education of the British public. Buchanan claims that BUACF literature was 'naïve and sentimental', but that it did enable the CCC to reach a wider audience than it had managed hitherto. Politics was never far from the surface, however. Buchanan reports suggestions both of undue CCC (presumably meaning, CPGB) influence in the BUACF and of suspicions that the latter was too supportive of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (the Chinese Nationalist Party).⁶² This was dangerous political territory for Fry, but her principles remained those of the broad left, and she perhaps naively hoped that the organisations would stay free of political bias. However, her suspicions regarding communism resurfaced soon after the end of the War and in 1946, she finally resigned from the position of CCC chair.⁶³

Margery Fry's work for China combined her interests in culture, education and politics. Moreover, it enhanced her public profile as a – relatively rare – woman who gained the attention of press and public on political matters. Undoubtedly,

some of the attention, such as that of the *Daily Mail* was negative, but the 'Tientsin incident', which was widely reported in British newspapers, illustrated her willingness and ability to take political action as a leading representative of civil society.

Conclusion

Whereas Eleanor Rathbone became interested in policy in India and worked tirelessly for European refugees, her great friend Margery Fry ultimately demonstrated her greatest passion in international affairs for China. While much of Fry's political work for the last forty years of her life was undertaken in the shadowy world of Whitehall committees, her public positions and activities regarding refugee scholars, Spain, and China in the 1930s and '40s demonstrate that women could and did play a notable role in public discourse on foreign policy. Fry's role can be seen as one in which she interpreted international events for domestic audiences, a job she was well suited to given her years of experience in lobbying ministers and MPs and attempting to influence public opinion on penal reform. She exercised agency by utilising her already-established platform to inform the public on matters dear to her heart and to contribute to debates. She was one of only a handful of women to achieve such a platform at this time.

It is worth noting that Fry's public resistance to fascist militarism not only brought her the hostility of the *Daily Mail* but also of the Nazi high command. In 1945 the *Mail* revealed that Fry and Rathbone's names were both on a 'blacklist' of 2300 British 'marked men' [sic] allegedly held by Himmler.⁶⁴ This is something of an accolade for both women, as well as for the others on the list. Indeed, Himmler's 'blacklist' is, perhaps, a fairly accurate inventory of the anti-fascist British men and women who commanded public attention at that time.⁶⁵ Although ostensibly their careers had gone on different paths, one as a member of parliament and the other as a lobbyist and public intellectual, Rathbone and Fry had many things in common. Not least among these was their willingness to stand up for what they believed in – above all, human rights and democracy – and their willingness to be utterly outspoken should the need arise. Their shared principles were at least in part ones that they had developed as young women at Somerville College.

Notes

1. Julie V. Gottlieb "The Women's Movement Took the Wrong Turning": British feminists, pacifism and the politics of appeasement', *Women's History Review* 23/ 3 (2014), 441-62.
2. For international women's movements see especially Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: the Making of an International Women's Movement* (Chichester, Princeton University Press, 1997); Marie Sandell, *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism* (London, IB Tauris, 2015).
3. Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (London, Yale University Press 2004); Susan Cohen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London, Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).
4. Anne Logan, 'Political Life in the Shadows: the Post-suffrage Political Career of S. Margery Fry (1874-1958)', *Women's History Review* 23/ 3 (2014), 365-80.
5. Enid Huws Jones, *Margery Fry: The Essential Amateur*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965); Sybil Oldfield, *Doers of*

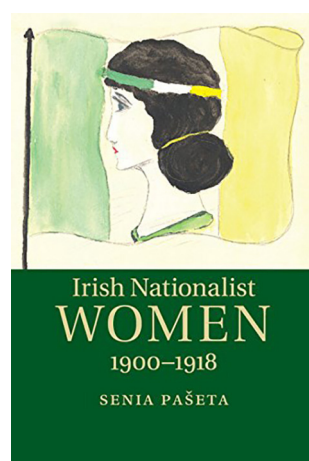
- the World: British Women Humanitarians 1900-1950*, (London, Continuum, 2001).
6. Somerville College Margery Fry Papers (hereafter MFP), 41/4, radio script, 'Eleanor Rathbone', 18 Mar. 1952.
 7. Pauline Adams, *Somerville for Women*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 129-30.
 8. MFP 27/3, Eleanor Rathbone to Margery Fry (MF), 7 Aug. 1898.
 9. Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006).
 10. William Beveridge, *A Defence of Free Learning*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1959); N. Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars 1933-1952* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1953).
 11. Bodleian Library, Society for the Protection of Science and Learning archive (hereafter SPSL), Fry file, William Beveridge to MF, 16 May 1933, emphasis added.
 12. Beveridge, *Defence of Free Learning*, 3.
 13. SPSL, Fry file, MF to Secretary, 27 Apr. 1934.
 14. *Ibid.* MF to Secretary, 13 Nov. 1934.
 15. *Ibid.* Walter Adams to MF, 14 Jan. 1938; MF to secretary, 17 Jan. 1938; MF to Miss Ursell, 4 June 1947.
 16. MFP 13/5 MF to Isabel Fry (IF), 19 Jan. 1940.
 17. House of Commons Debates, 9 Oct. 1940, cc 365-6; Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone*, 314.
 18. Institute of Education, London (hereafter IOE), Isabel Fry papers, FY/A19, diary entries dated 30 July and 17 Aug. 1941.
 19. Oldfield, *Doers of the World*, 84.
 20. MFP 32/1, War Journal, 9 Sept. 1915.
 21. MFP 9/2, MF to her mother, 7 July 1924.
 22. *Manchester Guardian*, 9 Nov. 1927, 11.
 23. MFP 26/6, W. F. Nicholson to MF, 8 Apr. 1932.
 24. *Manchester Guardian*, 14 June 1932, 18; 19 Oct. 1932, 13.
 25. Anne Logan, 'Feminism and Criminology in Britain, 1900-1950, in *New Perspectives on European Women's Legal History*, ed. Sarah L Kimble and Marion Röwekamp (New York, Routledge, 2017), 272-91.
 26. MFP 13/2, MF to IF, 3 Oct. 1935, emphasis in the original.
 27. Gottlieb, 'The Women's Movement', 452-4.
 28. For Intellectual Liberty, *Bulletin* 1, Nov. 1936.
 29. *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Jan. 1939, 11.
 30. MFP 13/3, MF to IF, 9 Oct. 1936.
 31. *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Jan. 1939, 11.
 32. MFP 23/7, MF to family, 28 Sept. 1937
 33. *Manchester Guardian*, 9 Jan. 1939, 13. For the involvement of Liberals like Roberts in popular front-style movements, see Martin Pugh 'The Liberal Party and the Popular Front' *English Historical Review*, CXXI, 494, (2006), 1327-1350.
 34. *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Jan. 1939, 12.
 35. MFP 13/3, MF to IF, 19 Sept. 1938.
 36. *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Sept. 1938, 5.
 37. JKJ Perry, 'Powerless and Frustrated: Britain's Relationship with China during the opening years of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-39', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 22, (2011), 408-30; Tom Buchanan, *East Wind* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).
 38. Arthur Clegg, *Aid China* (Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 1989).
 39. Clegg, *Aid China*, 17; *Manchester Guardian*, 7 Oct. 1937, 19.
 40. MFP 23/7, MF to family, 28 Sept. 1937.
 41. Clegg, *Aid China*, 51.
 42. Clegg, *Aid China*, 18.
 43. MFP 13/3, MF to IF, 9 Jan. 1938.

44. MFP 23/6, MF to Champion Russell, 21 Mar. 1941.
45. CCC, *China and the Far East: Facts and Figures* (London, CCC, n.d.).
46. See, for example, *Manchester Guardian*, 14 Feb. 1938, 13.
47. *Manchester Guardian*, 10 Feb. 1938, 12.
48. Clegg, *Aid China*, 27-8.
49. CCC, *China in World Affairs*, (London, CCC, 1939), 3.
50. CCC, *China Appeals to You* (London, CCC, c.1938).
51. *Manchester Guardian*, 14 Feb. 1938, 13.
52. Clegg, *Aid China*, 21-2, 61, 98.
53. Buchanan, *East Wind*, 81.
54. *Manchester Guardian*, 6 June 1938, 20.
55. *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Aug. 1938, 11.
56. *Daily Mail*, 19 Aug. 1939, 8.
57. Clegg, *Aid China*, 90.
58. Buchanan, *East Wind*, 69.
59. MFP 15/4, MF to Agnes Fry, 30 Jan. 1944.
60. IOE FY/A18, 31 May 1941.
61. Clegg, *Aid China*, pp. 132-50.
62. Buchanan, *East Wind*, pp.94-6.
63. Clegg, *Aid China*, 164.
64. *Daily Mail*, 1 Sept. 1945, 1.
65. The *Mail* did not print the full 'blacklist', but out of the names the paper recorded, only seventeen were women. *Ibid.*, 4.

Book Reviews

Senia Paseta *Irish Nationalist Women 1900-1918*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. £60, ISBN 978-1-107-04774-7 (hardback), pp. 292

Reviewed by Phylomena H Badsey
University of Wolverhampton



This is a demanding text on a complex topic which well deserves close reading and analysis by people already well versed in the topic of Irish politics and feminism. It makes excellent use of primary sources, footnotes and selected bibliography but has a limited index and no illustrations. For those who are less familiar with the subject I suggest they start by reading the Epilogue which summaries the discussion and also gives the reason why this text is important

for Irish feminists and the "Movement" today.

Irish Nationalist woman both Catholic and Protestant in 1900 sought enfranchisement as a political and social tool by which 'equality of difference' (p.9) would be created in both the public and private sphere between the sexes; they hoped to bring a 'healthier atmosphere' to Parliamentary debate which 'would discourage war while encouraging co-operation between classes, sexes and nations'. (p.267) This was neither a fatuous nor naive view but in part based on women's experience in Irish local politics from 1898 onwards. By 1911/12 they could stand as County Councillors, the mood of this time is best summed up as; 'Nationalism drove republican activists, but it was a nationalism created from an assortment of odd influences including civic republicanism, Catholic mysticism and revolutionary socialism in some cases.' (p.10)

While Unionist women focused their efforts on the Primrose League, the Women's liberal Unionist Association and the Ladies Committee. This is discussed in detail in both the *Introduction* and Chapter 1, *The Movement*, the name coined by these women to describe what they were doing

while the male Nationalist and Unionist parties fought each over the 1912 Home Rule bill. In Chapter 2, *The Daughters of Ireland*, we learn of nationalist women's effort to dissuade Irish men from serving in the British Army, often by approaching the women and girls in their company. The inventive use of artistic, literary and theatrical outlets to promote their political cause is outlined in Chapter 3, *Politics, Theatre and Dissent*. For example, the provision of an 'alterative treat'- a large free public event for children and their parents when Royal visits were planned to Ireland and the use of Lantern Slide shows and tableaux's of Irish history in villages.

Chapter 4, *Old Nationalism* and Chapter 5, *New Nationalism*, give the most detailed analysis of the fractured politics of the Irish Suffrage organisations but also their shared aims. This feeds directly into Chapter 6, Social Activism – which explains the role of Irish MP's under John Redman and the complex non-religious divisions between Catholic and Protestant women who worked well together on a wide range of social problems. Chapter 7, *Loaded with Sedition*, outlines the tangle of reactions to the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 and the conscription debate, which gives the setting for the Easter Rising in 1916. This pivotal moment in Irish and nationalist history is discussed in Chapter 8, *The Fight*, a number of myths are challenged and a clear and concise account is given in particular of the actual role and actions of Constance Markevicz. The consequences for many women who took part is given in Chapter 9, *After the Rising*. A fuller personal history of each named individual would have greatly assisted the readers understanding of events but enough is given to give a sense of lives ruined and trust betrayed from both within and without the nationalist community. This point is debated in Chapter 10, *Feminism and Republicanism*, as from 1918 Sinn Fein members, particularly outside of Dublin and Cork were suspicious of "nationalist" women who did not follow the party line and over whom they could not exercise control. Women members as a result, often found themselves on segregated committees or branches in the rural districts. It was noted that Eamon de Valera (1882-1975) always 'had the usual way of saying men and every man etc., as if there were no women in the country.' (p.227).

Many active nationalist women focused on health and social issues in local area rather than on national Irish politics. Chapter 11 *Triumph and Disenchantment* notes that Irish

women were granted the franchise aged 21 years in 1918, the same as Irish men but the 'equality of difference' was never achieved. It's difficult to read of what was lost and speculate what might have changed for Irish women then and now had they been able to play a full role in the formation of the Irish Free Irish State Constitutions of 1922 and 1937.

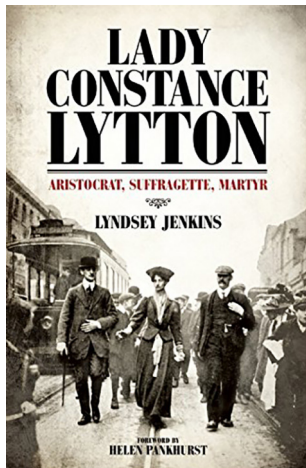
This text reclaims the lost voices of Irish Nationalist women, I may not agree with all their political aims and actions but as an Irish woman in the 21st century I can respect and admire them and I urge you to read this text.

Lyndsey Jenkins, *Lady Constance Lytton, Aristocrat, Suffragette, Martyr*.

London: Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2015. £20.00, ISBN 978-84954-795-6 (hardback), pp.xxvii + 264.

Reviewed by Wendy Tuxill

Anglia Ruskin University



Lady Constance Lytton (1869-1923) has been described as the forgotten suffragette. Although her contribution to prison reform is frequently referenced in suffragette literature, this is the first account of her life. The book, which comprises a foreword, prologue, twelve chapters and afterword, follows a chronological format divided into different phases of Lytton's life. The author, a former political speech writer, completed the biography as part

of an MA in Creative Writing. It is well referenced and has a useful bibliography of suffragette material. In the Foreword, Dr Helen Pankhurst describes this as 'a broad-brush portrayal of a woman in the context of an influential family' (p.xv).

Jenkins takes a wide-ranging approach to Lytton's aristocratic background, childhood, prison experience and later life. Some aspects of Lytton's life are already well known: she met Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence and Annie Kenney through the Esperance Club for Working Girls when she became aware of the appalling conditions of suffragette prisoners. After she became a member of the Women's Social and Political Union, her most celebrated act was to be arrested at a demonstration under the assumed name of a seamstress, Jane Warton, in order to expose the treatment of working-class prisoners. Lytton, as Jane Warton, was force fed eight times and subsequently suffered a stroke. Her memoir, *Prisons and Prisoners* (1914), drew attention to the need for prison reform and was widely credited with bringing it about. Jenkins draws heavily on this memoir and uses a range of other archival papers to provide a context for Lytton's life.

At times, Jenkins makes sweeping generalisations about Lytton's character that seem at odds with the evidence. Whilst depicting Lytton as 'not much of a reader' (p.27), Lytton's diaries reveal that she was an avid reader of Shaw, Bronte, Kipling, Schreiner and others. We are also told that Lytton was not a practical person yet we are informed that her favourite hobby 'was cleaning...her birthday treat was to clean

the lavatory' (p.29). Jenkins states that Lytton was 'always disorganised' (p.xvii), but we find that when Lytton attended a demonstration following which she expected to be imprisoned, she left a detailed note for her mother 'who depended on her for all things practical' to inform her that 'account papers, tradesmen addresses and wages paper in lift-up place of desk on dining-room table' (p.118).

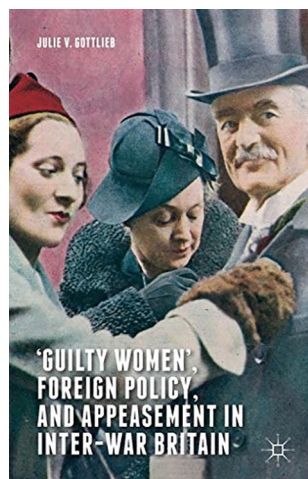
The longest chapter in the book deals with Lytton's eight-year relationship with John Ponsonby, a soldier who her mother strongly disliked. Jenkins supposes that even though the Ponsonby family may have wished him to marry her, 'that doesn't mean he wanted the same'. She assumes that he wished to extricate himself from this 'unwanted relationship' (p.67). The evidence is to the contrary: a letter from Lytton to her cousin Adela in the family archives at Knebworth makes clear that it was Lytton's relatives who were instrumental in ending the friendship. Writing to Adela, Lytton quotes, verbatim, a letter from Ponsonby in which he states: 'I am so thankful that you have written to me and enabled me to explain myself as I longed and tried to do in England...one morning I received a letter from Mrs Earle (Lytton's aunt, her mother's sister) she used every argument against my seeing you...she even said it would be better for me to appear brutal...how great was my desire to see you I need hardly say. Mrs Earle never even hinted that I could meet you at her house - you know I would have come at once'. The strength of their relationship is indicated by the fact that Lytton never married and Ponsonby remained unmarried until twelve years after her death.

The book is written in the style of a popular biography and contains much peripheral detail, for example Lytton's Knebworth estate is now famous as a rock concert venue (p.26). Jenkins reflects that the book has a more 'uneven' shape than a traditional biography; this becomes evident in sections that are analytical and others that are full of conjecture. Her depiction of Lytton as a martyr reiterates the views of Marie Mulvey-Roberts as Jenkins acknowledges. Mulvey-Roberts, author of 'Militancy, Masochism or Martyrdom? The Public and Private Prisons of Constance Lytton in Votes for Women' (2000), considers that Lytton's suffering was masochistic, 'centred on self, with an active desire to suffer through acts of self-deprivation and self-harm which met with the self-gratification of self-sacrifice' (p.176). Jenkins agrees and speculates that prison for Lytton was 'an anthropology experiment...a chance to become immersed in the lives of some of the most wretched women in society' (p.124). Although Lytton is described by Jenkins as a complex character, the nuances of her complexity are not fully explored in this book.

Julie V. Gottlieb, *'Guilty Women', Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. £70.00, 978 0230 30429 1 (hardback) pp. xii + 340

Reviewed by Susan Cohen

Honorary Fellow of the Parkes Institute, University of Southampton



Julie Gottlieb's path breaking book sheds new light on the role and impact that a small number of women played in the debates and discussions around foreign policy and appeasement in the 1930s and 40s. Almost without exception, the plethora of published studies view this as male-centric, and Gottlieb sets out, successfully, to redress the gender imbalance, as she says, to 'reclaim and resituate women in the history of the international crisis of the 1930s'. (p.10) The study is enhanced by the use of

Mass Observation material, through which Gottlieb identifies a definite gender division in the response to the Munich crisis, where, in general, women took a maternalistic stance, fearing the loss of their menfolk and inclined to pacifism and appeasement, whilst the men saw Chamberlain's acquiescence as weak and unmanly. Similarly, the book is enlivened by the use of quotations from women's diaries and letters, giving unprecedented voice to their personal view of the inter-war crisis. The title has been appropriated from a 1941 misogynist tract, *Guilty Women*, by Richard Baxter, in which the author 'marvelled at the public ignorance about women's nefarious influence on Anglo-German relations', and attacked women for 'their part in Britain's diplomatic fumbling of the late 1930's' (p.1). The booklet had little impact, unlike Cato's *Guilty Men*, the 1940 publication which probably inspired Baxter, and in which the National Government's foreign policy was indicted.

The first half of the book provides the context, with three chapters which explore the changing political status of British women activists and feminists. One outcome of the partial enfranchisement of women in 1918 was the subsequent transformation of political relationships between the sexes. The 1920s and 30s were marked by a growth in feminist internationalism, promoted particularly by Vera Brittain (p.37), but it took Hitler's accession to power in January 1933 for her audience to be convinced that domestic problems were intimately linked to international affairs and the threat of fascism. Fascism is the theme of chapter two, headlined by the *News Chronicle* on 17 December 1937 as 'Women's War on Fascism' (p. 20). Personal encounters with fascism had, as Gottlieb describes, a transformative effect, with Ellen Wilkinson's experience of Nazi violence whilst on a visit to Germany in July 1933 given as an example. (p.42).

In chapters three and four the reader is introduced to the "Guilty Women" who 'colluded with, assisted, and celebrated... the "Guilty Men" who brokered the very fleeting phase of 'peace with honour'. Most were well-known women. Some were like Nancy, Lady Astor, who thought appeasement was worth

pursuing, yet others were absolute pacifists, including Maude Royden (p.65) and some were pro-Nazis, such as the Rt. Hon. Unity Mitford (p.65) and Lady Londonderry, (pp.83 – 8) who fully supported appeasing Hitler. In chapter five, Gottlieb looks at how the six incumbent Conservative women MPs supported the Prime Minister (p.103ff) - the rebel 'Red' Ellen Wilkinson is discussed elsewhere - whilst in chapters six and seven she tackles public and personal opinion about appeasement and elucidates on the way in which gender, class, age and ideology played their part. Use of the Crisis Letters, written to Anne and Neville Chamberlain, and which reinforced his belief in the widespread support of women, are another rich and underused source. (p.153, pp.196-211).

The role of gender and appeasement politics is the subject of chapter eight, and was, as Gottlieb describes, of primary importance in the eight by-elections that took place, post-Munich, between October and December 1938, not least of all because of the relatively large number of women candidates, and women voters. The final chapter introduces the 'politically eclectic' group of female anti-appeasers whom Gottlieb calls the 'women Churchillians' (pp.235-65), who have to a large extent been left out of appeasement scholarship, and given that he was 'feminist-unfriendly' (p.263) are noticeable by their absence in Churchill's own work, *The Gathering Storm*. Yet these women, who include Eleanor Rathbone, the Duchess of Atholl, Violet Bonham-Carter, Ellen Wilkinson and Sheila Grand Duff, played an important but largely overlooked role. Rathbone's vehement opposition to appeasement, and her personal shame at Britain's part in the Munich Settlement, have been subjected to scrutiny by Susan Pedersen in her biography, *Eleanor Rathbone and The Politics of Conscience* (2004), and in my own book, *Rescue the Perishing. Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (2010), and it is worth recalling that Rathbone was the only woman MP to speak in the foreign affairs debate on 13 April 1933, called to discuss the new Nazi regime, when she presciently warned of the danger that Hitler posed to the peace and freedom of the world.

Gottlieb is to be applauded for providing the first gendered study of appeasement, bringing together women's history and the male-centric appeasement history.

Susan E. James, *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485 – 1603, Authority, Influence and Material Culture*,

Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015. £75.00 9781472453822

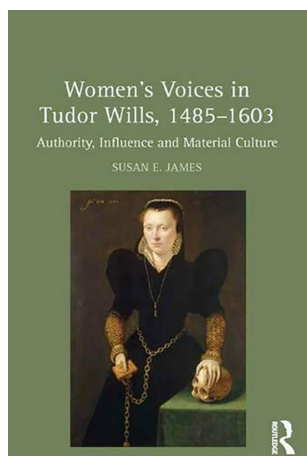
(hardback), pp. xi + 319

Reviewed by Julie Chamberlain

Independent Scholar

Susan E. James has explored 1,200 women's wills, and produced a very well-written and detailed study which finds as many women's choices as women's voices. Although recent scholarship splits the Tudor era between medieval and early modern, James has researched from Edward VI to the end of Elizabeth I's reign to keep sight of religious, social and economic change, though she concentrates mainly on the considerable changes to practices and content in will making pre- and post-Reformation.

In her introduction, James writes that she wants to



find out if women's concerns are different to men's and whether they changed over time. She states that men tended to see families more vertically and women more horizontally in their will-making and "women as a population group demonstrate through their wills a more active interest in an expanded definition of family, more extensive investment in broad-ranging communal concerns and a greater awareness of social interactions and obligations

than has generally been assumed." (p2). She then expands on this throughout. Concerns that standard preambles, influence of scribes or other outside influences can mute women's real voices are dealt with swiftly, and put aside.

The first two chapters, which deal with 'The Performance of Death', including spiritual intercessions and charitable donations, and 'Identity and Remembrance', are the stand out ones, and those in which women's voices are mostly clearly heard, with many interesting quotes from wills. Women often stated they wanted to be buried with their parents rather than husband(s). James has a nice turn of phrase, one example being: "Death did not break the social contract between parent and child, it intensified it, sometimes to the exclusion of the marital bond" (p23). Women wanted to be with their original family on the day of judgement.

James explores women's charitable giving in which they demonstrated a sense of responsibility to the world around them. They gave to the poor – especially women and orphans – to far-reaching social concerns, educational endeavours and infrastructure such as road repairs. Women also wanted to memorialise themselves in churches, like men, with James writing that physical memorials or legacies outside the church "extended women's public identities within the world they had left" (p66). It is interesting how they wanted to define themselves in their memorials, as daughter, wife or widow. Women who had been married several times were also selective in which husbands they wanted mentioned in memorials.

Chapter Three, 'Women's Work: Vocation, Occupation and Labor' (sic), uses a lot of other evidence about work, and also men's wills which refer to the work of their wives. The author admits that a woman's "overt claim to an occupation was infrequent" (p113) in a will, but finds that it was often possible to discern what her occupation was. Inventories also reveal this. However, with an example of a woman who was an active overseas merchant, she admits that her will acts in a "cautionary capacity against assuming women who do not mention occupations had none", as this woman made no mention of her sizeable dealings. (p146).

Chapters Four, Five and Six look at dispersal of assets in terms of land, money and household possessions. Many women tried to ensure a good future for their own children, siblings' children and disabled relatives through their wills. It is evident that where personal and domestic possessions were concerned, women invested personal as well as intrinsic values in them, and this is replicated in the choices made regarding to whom these possessions were bequeathed.

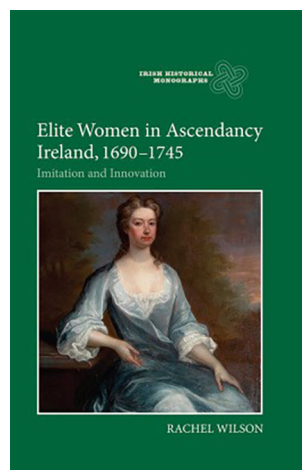
As well as describing the contents of wills James

also makes a number of claims and discoveries. Some of the discoveries in this book are unexpected and intriguing, painting a picture of variety and independence in many ways, but also suggestive of patterns to women's will making. One of the most exciting, and deserving of further research, is that women were acting as lenders and running commercial enterprises in the 1500s, a century earlier than is generally thought. Even lowly-paid servants were lending for profit; one servant's will refers to money still owed to her by two of her former masters.

This book is an interesting read in itself to add to our knowledge of Tudor women. It will in particular be of great use to anyone carrying out research involving reading some women's wills from this period, and wondering if something they have found is common or exceptional.

Rachel Wilson, *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland 1690-1745: Imitation and Innovation*, Irish Historical Monograph Series, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2015, £60, ISBN 978-1-78327-039-2, pp. 208.

Reviewed by Norma Clarke
Kingston University, London



Rachel Wilson observes in the introduction to this very welcome book, that much has been written (and continues to be written) on the English elite of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, increasingly, on its female members. Wilson instances biographies, survey style histories of groups such as court women, and case studies that pay attention to the education, legal position, domestic lives, social, cultural and political roles

of women. And then asks: what about Ireland?

In Ireland, the agenda for recovering and reintegrating women into an overwhelmingly male historical record was, as Wilson notes, laid down by three fine historians: Mary O'Dowd, Margaret MacCurtain, and Maria Luddy. *Elite Women in Ascendancy Ireland 1690-1745: Imitation and Innovation* seeks to follow their example and put women centre stage in a bid to uncover their contribution to Irish history. But because this is Ireland, England's first colony, it is not quite as simple as that. A secondary question – asking how women in Ireland were influenced by their English neighbours – raises difficulties: some of these elite women were themselves their own 'neighbours' in that they were English as well as Irish, or more English than Irish, and even, in the case of Juliana, Lady Burlington, who features largely in this study, never set foot in Ireland at all.

The term 'Ascendancy Ireland' refers to the political settlement that followed the defeat of James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Protestants were in power and Catholics subjected to harsh penal laws that included forfeiture of land and limitations on political participation. The 'elite' were

overwhelmingly Anglican in a nation that was predominantly Catholic – and excluded. Socially, the women whose lives Wilson explores operated in small and tightly bounded circles. The ‘innovation’ promised in the sub-title is hard to discern. Their objectives, like elite women in England, were essentially the advancement of their own families in wealth and status.

Wilson finds agency and responsibilities, especially where widows were in charge of estates or making decisions on behalf of minors. One reason Juliana, Lady Burlington, left such a useful haul of documents is that she conducted all her business by letter. She was an absentee landlord, and there are some queasy moments in Wilson’s otherwise sensitive telling, where the author seems to share the subject’s impatience at tenants who failed to pay their rents. Perhaps this is unavoidable, but the disparity between the wealth of the Burlingtons and the conditions of life for tenant farmers in Ireland bears repeating. We learn about marriage and childbirth, the management of households (very much in the hands of women who would have authority over men in this capacity), social life, political involvement, and philanthropy. The sources are mostly estate records and correspondence from five core families: the Butlers, Boyles, Brodricks, O’Briens and Connollys. Wilson makes good use of them but at times one feels the lack of a view from outside. Mary Delany, whose correspondence has proved so useful to a variety of investigators, tells us about the generous hospitality offered in early 1730s Dublin by Katherine Clayton, wife of Bishop Clayton, but there is a much sourer version of the Claytons in Laetitia Pilkington’s *Memoirs*. How elite women dealt with lesser gentry who broke the rules or fell out of the frame (Mrs Pilkington was accused of adultery and thrown out of her home by her clergyman husband) is part of the larger picture of political manoeuvring that Wilson examines.

Politics for elite women in Ascendancy Ireland resembled that of women in England except that there was less of it – parliament only met every other year – and the personalities whose interest was to be cultivated changed all the time. There was no point in establishing political salons. Direct involvement of the sort reported of Sarah Stafford, in 1690, who deployed her servants as a sort of spy ring accumulating information on enemy movements in the weeks before the Battle of the Boyne, was more likely.

Wilson’s book is part of a splendid series of Irish historical monographs, beautifully produced by The Boydell Press. Originally a Ph.D. thesis, it has the strengths of a well-supervised study: tightly focused and illuminating a particular group through the accumulation of evidence from the archives.

Marie Sandell, *The Rise of Women’s Transnational Activism: Identity and Sisterhood Between the World Wars*,

London: I B Tauris, 2015. £62. ISBN 978 1 84885 671 4 (hardback) pp. xii + 292

Reviewed by Anne Logan
University of Kent

Marie Sandell’s book is a welcome addition to the literature on international women’s organisations, successfully building on the foundational works by scholars such as Karen Offen and (particularly) Leila J. Rupp.

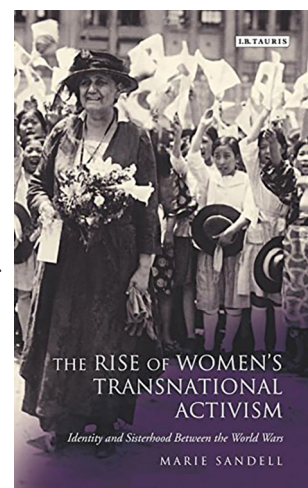
Sandell initially examines the growth of the big

three international women’s organisations from the late nineteenth century onwards: the International Council of Women (ICW), the International Alliance of Women (IAW) and – from 1915 – the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The activities of these major organisations in the interwar period are then described in Part I of the book. So far this is well-trodden ground in the literature, but Sandell adds some important additional elements. For example, she pays

far more attention than earlier writers to the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), which curiously has been neglected other than by historians of women’s higher education. Here the IFUW is the welcome subject of an entire chapter. Sandell also gives initial consideration to some key conceptual issues such as the meanings of ‘transnationalism’ and ‘sisterhood’, in the context of a period when European colonial empires were on the one hand still very much in business, while on the other were facing challenges from insurgent nationalism and new, political conceptualisations of trusteeship. She undertakes a useful interrogation of loosely invoked terms like ‘western’ and ‘eastern’, as well as the concept of ‘feminist orientalism’.

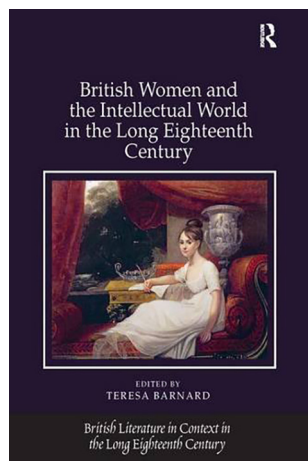
This theoretical framework underpins what is arguably the most original and interesting aspect of Sandell’s research. In Part II she examines – in addition to the IFUW – the international travels of ICW, IWA and WILPF leaders, which she divides into ‘fact-finding’, ‘recruitment’, and ‘support’ phases. The book’s penultimate chapter is especially important as it covers the growing importance in the 1930s of regional organisations, including the Pan-Pacific Women’s Association (PPWA), the All-India Women’s Conference (AIWC) and the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), thus exposing both the extent and the limits of early twentieth-century globalisation. The challenges of interwar global politics could not, of course be avoided by the women’s organisations – notwithstanding their feminist philosophy and belief in ‘sisterhood’ – and there were inevitable, consequential difficulties and tensions. In Europe, the rise of fascism led to the loss of the national sections of the major international women’s organisations; in India (and to an extent, other colonised territories) the struggle for independence contributed to a shift in priorities for many AIWC activists; and everywhere the depressed world economy presented a challenge for all but the most fortunate individuals. That so many organisations continued to survive is perhaps a testament to the important role their activists played in developing and sustaining international feminism. However, such activism was really only an option for the wealthy and educated, in practice only the ‘westernised’ elites where the ‘non-western’ territories were concerned, a point that Sandell underlines in her conclusion.

The book has a very useful – one might say essential, given the bewildering array of organisations mentioned – list of abbreviations at the front, a comprehensive bibliography and a reasonably full index. There are a few minor errors, such as a misspelling of Lady Rhondda’s name, but fewer than I have



seen in other publications lately. Overall, this is a meticulously researched, academic work which makes a distinctive and important contribution to our understanding of women's movements and transnational feminism in the interwar period.

Teresa Barnard (ed.), *British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Press, 2015. £60, 978-1472437457 (hardback), pp. 194
Reviewed by Rachel Wilson
Independent Scholar



Inspired by a passage from Anna Laetitia Barbauld's 1777 poem, *The Rights of Women*, the central concept of this collection is an exploration of how British women viewed and reacted to ideas of women's rights and gender equality within 'male-dominated academic and professional fields' during the long eighteenth-century (pp. 1–2). The book is split into three sections, science, religion and politics/philosophy, each containing three chapters.

Daniel J. R. Grey opens the scientific section with an article which examines the history of smallpox and the advent of inoculations against the disease, through the prism of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's experiences with it and her support for vaccinations. Chapter two, by the book's editor, Teresa Barnard, looks at how women who could not visit or study volcanoes in real life, imagined and depicted them in poetry. Malini Roy's piece then studies Mary Wollstonecraft's views, advice and publications on paediatric science and compares them to the received wisdom of the day.

The section on religion starts with Susan Chaplin's study of Hannah More. Chaplin discusses More's conservative and anti-feminist attitudes before analysing the *David and Goliath* story as depicted in More's book, *Sacred Dramas* (first published in 1782) and ultimately concluding that More was more open to the idea of feminine agency than even she would have admitted. Next, Kaley Kramer takes us on a fascinating journey into the world of Elizabeth Inchbald's 'Catholic novel' *A Simple Story*, published in 1791. Kramer neatly sums up her core argument thus 'Inchbald's text expresses a deeply felt experience of the complexity of Catholic life in Protestant Britain' (p. 105). Last is Natasha Duquette's study of the ways in which dissenting women managed to use poetry and supposedly aesthetic works, to present their own theological ideas to the world through a process of 'veiled exegesis'. She also provides some interesting insights into these women's thoughts on their social responsibilities and their attitudes towards and attempts to encourage prison reform and the abolition of slavery (pp. 118–24).

Laura Meyer begins the final section of the book with an enjoyable chapter on Elizabeth Percy, 1st Duchess of Northumberland, which re-evaluates the Duchess's much

maligned reputation as an artistic and architectural enthusiast and patron. Meyer instead finds her to have been a 'responsive antiquarian' (p. 130) with 'an inclination for the fanciful or romantic' and 'a clear preference for the Gothic and Picturesque over the classical and contrived' (p. 139). Louise Duckling then looks at Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (published in London in 1798) and in particular at the *Introductory Discourses* which accompany it. Baillie's work was initially published anonymously and highly praised, only to then be disparaged (as was she) when she admitted her authorship (p. 144). Duckling though, salutes the Scotswoman as a writer who 'strategically operates beyond the usual constraints of gender' (p. 150). The book finishes with Imke Heuer's chapter on Harriet Lee's work, *The Canterbury Tales*, which was written in conjunction with her sister, Sophia Lee and first published in London between 1797 and 1805. Heuer notes the influence of the Gothic, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars on some of the stories, though it was her unveiling of the *Tales'* intermittent use of a Chaucerian framework and their basis in oral literature and ballads, which this reader found the most interesting (p. 160).

The contributors to this book hail from a variety of disciplines including history, literature studies and philosophy. The result is a collection which is equally interdisciplinary and whose thematic spread and high-quality chapters should render it appealing to scholars from at least an equal number of fields. It has been well organised by the editor so that the chapters complement without ever overlapping with each other, though some more interaction between them would have given the book a more cohesive feel. Although there is some mention of Scotland and of the earlier part of the long eighteenth century, the subjects under examination are predominantly English and lived out their adult lives in the latter half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth, something which those thinking of making a purchase may wish to bear in mind. The book is pleasingly presented, with a select bibliography, a chronology of major literary publications and author deaths during the period, a detailed index and the convenience of footnotes over endnotes.

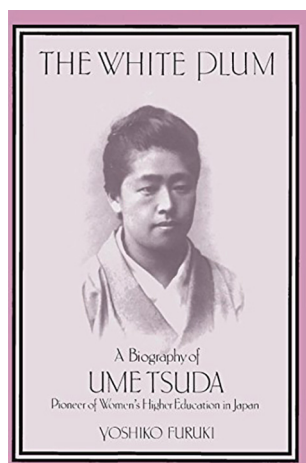
Yoshiko Furuki, *The White Plum: A Biography of Ume Tsuda, Pioneer of Women's Higher Education in Japan*,

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991. 978-0-8248-5339-6 (hardback), pp.xvi + 180

Reviewed by Sarah Guest

Independent Scholar

Yoshiko Furuki presents a detailed exploration of the life of Ume Tsuda (1864–1929) whose determination to advance educational opportunities for women in Japan led in 1900 to the foundation of her school Joshi Eigaku Juku (Women's Institute of English Studies). The school offered a higher level of education previously available in Japan and specialised in the teaching of English; its graduates were the first Japanese women qualified to teach English. Its goal was to encourage independence of thought and to prepare women to strive for and to equip them for gaining equality. The school gained university status in 1948 and continues to thrive today as Tsuda College, renamed in honour of its founder.



The book is structured chronologically over nine chapters. The first four focus on Tsuda's family background and the ten years spent living with an American couple, the Lanmans, from the age of six, in Washington, D.C. during which time she studied at private schools and was baptised as a Christian. In her exploration of Tsuda's early life Furuki incorporates extracts from a set of private correspondence, recently discovered in the Tsuda

College Attic, written by the young Ume to Mrs Lanman between 1882 and 1911. Notwithstanding the methodological limitations of using private letters as historical sources, the letters offer insights to Tsuda's isolation when she returned to Japan at the age of seventeen. The letters reveal her struggle to readjust to a country which she no longer recognised as home, whose language she struggled to communicate in with any fluency, her sense of alienation from customs which she no longer understood and not least the sense of remoteness from her family and from her now married friends. Prominence is given to her frustrated attempts to obtain a post which would make use of the knowledge and skills she had gained during her years abroad. Further chapters examine her career at the government run 'School for Peeresses' teaching the daughters of high ranking Ministers and public figures to which she was appointed in 1885. In her analysis of the fifteen years that Tsuda spent at the school Furuki emphasises her subject's frustration with the view that education was intended to prepare women as respectable wives and good mothers. The study emphasises her determination to use her own education to create new opportunities for women, highlighted in her lamentation, "poor poor women, [...] how I long to do something to better your position" (p.46). Chapters seven to nine examine Tsuda's determination to improve the breadth and quality of girls' education in Japan in the context of her travels to the United States. It was during a sabbatical at Bryn Mawr College that she forged the professional networks and raised the financial support needed to establish her own school.

The study is meticulously researched, the first scholarly biography of Ume Tsuda to be published in English and the first to bring the attic letters to critical attention. The letters are used in such a way as to ensure that Tsuda's voice remains prominent and provides the reader with the space to explore how she defined her sense of self and her professional goals. It is nonetheless unfortunate that greater attention is not given to the historical framework within which Ume Tsuda was operating. There is either insufficient detail on the provision for girls' education or the schools that did exist are criticised for their concern with preparing girls only for marriage. This has the effect of emphasising Tsuda's exceptionality but in doing so it does not sufficiently delineate how her actions fit into wider discussions about women's social and political position. Tsuda also constructs a tension between career and marriage, a tension which Furuki disappointingly does not take apart nor set in the wider context of the choices taken by other women, such as her friend Uryu Shige who combined a teaching career with marriage.

In her study of Ume Tsuda Furuki presents a fascinating account of a determined woman who merits further attention. A more critical and differentiated reading of the attic letters and further exploration of the historical framework within which she operated and the collaboration she fostered with women's colleges in the United States would offer yet further insights to the contribution she made in creating new opportunities for young women in Japan.

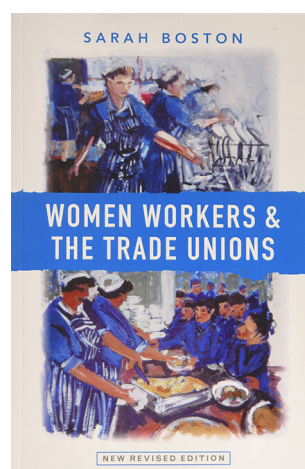
Sarah Boston *Women Workers and the Trade Unions*,

New Revised Edition; London, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 2015, 9781910448038 (paperback)

pp. 466

Reviewed by Cathy Hunt

Coventry University



This book will be familiar to a generation of labour historians and students. Its title is well chosen to reflect an examination of women's position as workers across a range of industrial and professional sectors since the early nineteenth century as well as their vital contribution to the development of the British trade union movement. It first appeared in 1980, was updated in 1987 and it is the third edition, with two new chapters, taking the 'story' into

the twenty first century, which is under review here.

As an active trade unionist, Boston set out to investigate what she saw as 'an obvious chasm between the principles of trade union and labour movements and their practice in relation to women' (p.11). The result is a richly illustrated historical survey, highlighting some of the campaigns that brought the resilience and the solidarity of women to the attention of those who doubted their worth both as workers and as dependable trade union members. Boston confirms women's brilliance at agitating, organising and fighting to improve working conditions. She proves beyond doubt that those whose reaction to mention of women's labour history has been, 'oh you mean the Match Girls Strike and all that', have failed to appreciate that beyond and behind a few well-publicised strikes such as the women chain makers' strike of 1910 or that of the Ford Dagenham sewing machinists in 1968 (and this is not to diminish the historical significance of either), is a continuing story of struggle to ensure women workers' recognition as equals by employers, male colleagues and trade unions alike. She looks beyond protests and strikes to highlight women's position within a labour movement in which they worked hard to remind male leaders that actually it was their movement too. She highlights women workers' economic gains and the build-up of their union membership during periods of industrial transformation, outlining gains made during wartime as well as the blows that fell in post war years, documenting the difficulties women workers faced through economic depression and government anti-union policies.

A sense of progress as well as a continued need to push for equality is evident. The labour movement has come a long way since 1875 when the TUC's Henry Broadhurst declared the proper sphere for wives and daughters to be the home and that unions must work to stop them from 'being dragged into competition for livelihood against the great and strong men of the world' (p.16) - but we are not there yet. Despite the fact that just over half of trade union members are now women, this majority is not yet reflected in the leadership and policy making positions of all unions. It is fitting that Boston bookends her study with quotes from the early twentieth century union leader, Mary Macarthur. In 1908 she encouraged women to recognise that the power of knowledge and organisation gave them the key to the cage door. When her successful National Federation of Women Workers merged with the much larger mixed sex (and male led) National Union of General Workers in 1921, she was confident that within it, women members would 'take as active a part as the men' (p.447). In fact, the autonomy of the women was quickly lost and Boston concludes that the equality then envisaged has still not been achieved within a movement that has been slow to recognise the strength that unity between the sexes brings. Moreover, Macarthur would no doubt be depressed to read that the key issues for women workers remain 'equal pay, low pay, childcare, harassment and discrimination' (p.446) and that, as Frances O'Grady points out in the Preface, insecure employment, sexism in the workplace and 'the motherhood penalty' remain blights on women's working lives.

Although some new titles have been added to the bibliography, there is no space given in the text to acknowledge books that have, since the publication of the first edition (with its opening discussion of the fact that women were, in 1980, by and large, missing from trade union history), strengthened the historiography of women's trade unionism in Britain. This may have been due to space constraints, for there is also a less detailed index than in previous editions and, despite reference in the Introduction to use of primary material and union reports, there is no listing of archival collections, government or trade union publications within the bibliography. This was included in the earlier editions, directing readers to some of the key research material in this field. Additionally a glossary would have prevented me from flicking back through pages (in particular, the later chapters) looking for the full names of unions, regional committees and technical terms. Despite these observations, it is still good to see this new edition of a classic labour history text.

Nicola Wilson, *Home in British Working-Class Fiction*,

Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2015. £60.00, 978 1 4094 3242 5 (hardback), pp. ix + 240.

Reviewed by Vicky Holmes

School of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London

Nicola Wilson's *Home in British Working-Class Fiction* is a significant addition to the burgeoning interdisciplinary study of 'home'. As with a number of recent historical studies of the Victorian and Edwardian working-class experience, Wilson's study of 20th-century working-class Britain examines home as experienced by its inhabitants. Yet, Wilson draws not on autobiography to venture into the various homes lived in

by the working-class, but instead undertakes a close reading of working-class fiction.

Home in British Working-Class Fiction is not so much a book on the material nature of the working-class home, but a book on the meaning and understanding of home reflected in the writings of working-class authors. Moving chronologically through the 20th-century, *Home in British Working-Class Fiction* explores how a changing Britain – through war, economic

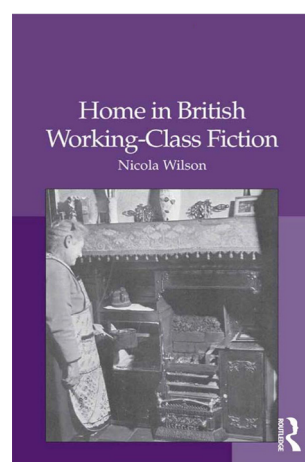
depression, immigration, growing social mobility – and the transformation of working-class housing from the decaying slums of the 19th-century to the isolated suburbs to the 'utopian' high rises – impacted upon the depiction of 'home' in working-class fiction.

Through exploring home, *Home in British Working-Class Fiction* brings women to the forefront of the working-class experience in 20th-century Britain. Wilson's re-reading of classic working-class fictions, such as Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, for example, provides a reinterpretation of women and the prominence of home in these texts. It is, however, the wide range of female writers (both well-known and those that should be better known) that expands upon the changing meanings and experiences of home to working-class women – the housewife, the politically active, and the single mother – throughout the 20th-century. Most noteworthy is *Home in British Working-Class Fiction*'s inclusion of immigrant characters and colonial/postcolonial working-class writers, such as Buchi Emecheta, providing a vital reflection on housing, home, and racial attitudes in the second half of the 20th-century that has hitherto been a neglected area of research in the study of working-class fiction.

Despite the focus upon women in *Home in British Working-Class Fiction*, men are not excluded from the discussion of home. Wilson, for example, explores the impact of social mobility and educational scholarship upon the meaning of home to the working-class male protagonists. Moreover, Wilson's chapter on the Great Depression, 'Home on the Dole in the Hungry Thirties', briefly explores the participation of unemployed men in 'feminine' housework as they struggled to find structure and routine to their day, bringing into question the role of men within the home during this period.

Home in British Working-Class Fiction also provides the reader with an understanding of the development of working-class fiction (as well as film and television) over the course of the 20th century. With each author, Wilson explores, in some detail, their background, influences, writing process, and the challenges they faced in getting published. Notable is the working-class writer's struggle to find a space to write among work and family commitments and how this meant, for some, only producing one or two novels in a lifetime. It also reveals the ebbs and flows of publishing working-class fiction, especially in regards to the rise of feminist publishers and the opportunities this presented to female working-class writers.

In summary, *Home in British Working-Class Fiction*, as Wilson concludes, reveals 'a sense of home that is turbulent and fluid yet also held dear' (p.196) and is a great reference for



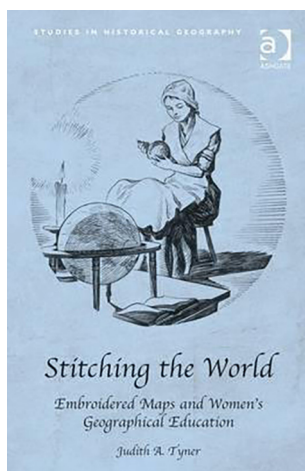
academics (and students) examining both home and class in 20th-century Britain. By tackling the subject of home and class, Wilson's *Home in British Working-Class Fiction* begins to address the gap in the burgeoning interdisciplinary study of home in regards to the working-class and furthermore adds to the current debate as to 'What is Home?'

Judith A. Tyner, *Stitching the World: Embroidered Maps and Women's Geographical Education*,

Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2015. £60, 978-1409426356 (hardcover) pp. xv + 142

Reviewed by Geraldine Perriam

Honorary Research Associate, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow



The title of this interesting book made it a must-read. As an embroiderer, teacher and geographer, I was treble drawn to it. The author is also a needlewoman, one who acknowledges the needlewomen in her family in dedicating this work to them and rightly so. The book's focus is map samplers embroidered by girls in the US and UK, beginning with early samplers created in the

late Eighteenth Century. There is also a narrower focus in a later chapter on embroidered silk globes made at one particular school in Pennsylvania.

It is no surprise to read that such map samplers and embroidered globes have historically not been treated as maps but more as curiosities and, at times, amusing or quirky. Having been made by children and specifically by girls, their work was not considered significant in cartographic terms, however seriously they were regarded by needlework historians. Most map samplers and embroidered globes were, as Tyner points out, made in schools, under the direction of teachers, rather than as individual home projects. One of the strengths of this book is the space devoted to the role of teachers in the production of these pieces. The depth of research into individual schools, named teachers, named pupils and their activity, is also impressive.

Tyner looks closely at the similar and differing traditions of map samplers and embroidered globes in the US and the UK. The emerging identity politics of the newly independent US, as outlined in the chapter entitled 'Stitching a New Nation', wrought a change in education generally and specifically in the teaching of Geography. As the US sought to redefine its place in the world, the ways in which girls learned and stitched Geography, also changed. For British girls, the tradition differed in the use of borders and representations of particular locations. Quakers schools differed again in their approach to map samplers and those produced at such schools were less decorative. In drawing

on the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, Tyner maps the connections between the educations of girls and the growth of educational practices that allowed for girls' intellectual engagement with subjects rather than mere 'accomplishments' such as deportment and other 'finishing' objectives. The author also gives an analysis of the decline in production over decades.

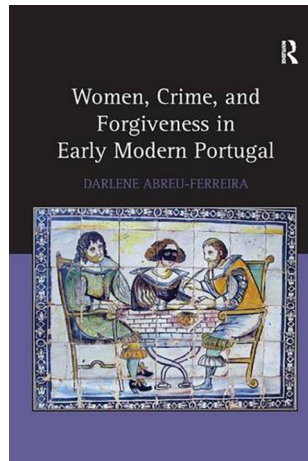
The immediate context in which the samplers and globes were produced is given more depth by the (no doubt exhaustively researched!) use of direct quotes from needle workers themselves and by mothers and teachers. The broader context of where, until the publication of this book, this type of needlework was placed, is considered thoughtfully by the author. As mentioned earlier, most commentary is dismissive of the map samplers and globes *as maps*, despite the intricacy and detail included in many of the samplers. While the author considers that gender bias, in the study of map samplers, is "probably not deliberate" (p.5), I disagree. Deliberate gender bias has been exhibited more generally in what has been traditionally considered worthy of research and what has not and has excluded the work of women in areas well beyond the focus of this book. Disagreement with the author on this point aside, the dismissal of the skill and knowledge demonstrated in map samplers is fortunately redressed in this work.

A welcome inclusion is a series of colour plates reproducing examples of map samplers and embroidered globes. These are worth consulting while reading through the book and are also simply worth looking at closely for the exquisite work detailed in each. Elizabeth Snitch's map of Bedfordshire and a map of a farm in Essex show incredible geographical knowledge as well as needlework skill. Having quite a collection of books on early samplers myself, I found some of the examples were completely new. They demonstrate the tenacity of the author in seeking out and recording such an extensive repository and history.

There is no doubt that this is a work that will be a key source in future studies. The author herself points out that this is only the beginning. What would have enhanced the work would have been more depth in the discussion of identity politics and also, perhaps more analysis of the spatial concerns embedded in the production of this particular needlework itself: its location outside the home in most cases, and within an educational setting.

This is a fascinating book, demonstrating depth of research in the collection of individuals and institutions where the needlework was taught and produced, as well as acknowledging the girls and women who 'stitched the world'.

Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, *Women, Crime, and Forgiveness in Early Modern Portugal*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. £70.00. ISBN: 978-1-472442314 (hardback), pp. 250
Reviewed by Katie Barclay
University of Adelaide



As in many European countries, victims of crime in Portugal had the opportunity to forgive those who had wronged them, leading to the production of *perdão de parte* or pardons asking the court to remove the punishment of those found guilty of crime. Along with the *querela*, the criminal denunciations of victims against those who had wronged them, these legal documents provide fascinating evidence not only on crime and its consequences, but on early modern social relationships. Abreu-Ferreira uses these, along with other supporting documentation, to develop a picture of women's lives in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Portugal. The book is divided into two main chapters – one on physical injuries and homicides and the other on sex crimes. It is accompanied by a several lengthy appendices that provide examples of the evidence under study. The title might suggest that this is a book that seeks to explore women as criminals or victims of crime and to collate a picture of women's relationship to crime. In this sense, it is slightly deceptive; rather it is a book that uses criminal cases to explore women's place in Portuguese society. Their engagement with crime is not irrelevant to this story, but that is not the driver of the narrative; the book's ambitions are larger!

As elsewhere, women were much less likely than men to be the physical aggressors in assault or homicide, and the first chapter primarily focuses on women as victims or as the family members of victims. When issuing a pardon against a criminal, everyone who had an interest in the case had to agree to the pardon (or the criminal may find themselves subject to a later claim for justice by another interested party). This was particularly complex in homicide cases where the victims were the wider family, including wives, children and further kin who had an interest in the deceased's property. *Perdão de parte* then provide important evidence of property relationships in Portuguese society, detailing men and women's work, who owned what within the household, and who was entitled to inherit. Abreu-Ferreira places this evidence in the context of wider property law to build a picture of women as property owners and of income production in their households. Whilst a smaller part of the evidence, she also looks at women's aggression to build a picture of master-servant relationships, women's role in street life and in the market, and the ways that 'unruly' women were

interpreted by early modern observers.

The second chapter looks at sex crime, including adultery, concubinage and rape. Female adultery was a crime in Portugal (unlike for men) and subject to the death penalty. Such cases provided evidence of marital disputes and forgiveness, of suspicious husbands, of cruel mistresses, as well as the complexity of the law where adultery emerged 'accidentally' when people discovered they were married to an original partner. Rape cases provide insight into courtship, female honour and the compensation for its loss. Such evidence builds a picture that is perhaps not surprising in a European context, but helps us to place the Portuguese experience within it.

The nature of how the evidence is presented means that at times picking larger patterns of behaviour out of these vibrant tales and stories is difficult and it would have been useful to have some more guidance on the significance of the case studies to a larger picture of women's experiences. Given the prominence of 'forgiveness' in the title, it might also have been interesting to have had a longer consideration of the significance of the concept to Portuguese society and the ways that the opportunity for forgiveness might shape, as well as reflect, social behaviours, values and opportunities. However, given the scarcity of Portuguese women's history, particularly in English, Abreu-Ferreira provides a useful starting point for scholars in the field, highlights the vibrancy of the subject and the numerous possibilities for further research.

Women's History Back issues

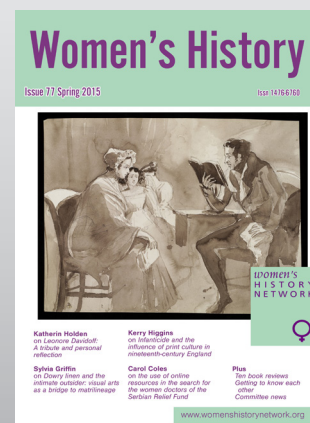
Back issues of *Women's History* (formerly known as *Women's History Magazine*) are available to buy in both digital and print versions for:

£5.00 inc postage (Digital/UK print version)

£6.50 inc postage (Overseas print version)

Most issues are available, from Spring 2002 to the present. Discover the contents of each issue at www.womenshistorynetwork.org/category/magazine/editions/

Order and pay online or email
magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org



BOOKS RECEIVED AND CALL FOR REVIEWERS

The following titles are available for review, so if you like to review any of the titles listed below, please email me, Jane Berney, at bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

You don't have to be an expert to review, if you have a general interest and knowledge of the relevant historical period or territory then that will count for a lot. The ability to summarise a work (within the word limit!) and write interestingly about it is the most important thing. Any suggestions for books to review are also welcome - just email me as above.

Nicola Gordon Bowe, *Wilhelmina Geddes. Life and Works* (Four Courts Press) – Geddes (1998-1955) was part of the Irish arts and Crafts movement and the British stained glass revival

Harry Stone, *That Monstrous Regiment. The Birth of Women's Political Emancipation* (Mereo Books)

Jenifer Roberts, *The Beauty of her Age. A Tale of Sex, Scandal and Money in Victorian England* (Amberley)

Tim Clarke, *The Countess. The Scandalous Life of Frances Villiers, Countess of Jersey* (Amberley)

Nick Holland, *In Search of Anne Bronte* (The History Press)

Penny Starns, *Sisters of the Somme. True Stories from a First World War Hospital* (The History Press)

Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis, *Richmond Barracks 1916. We were There. 77 Women of the Easter Rising* (Four Courts Press)

Joel Lobenthal, *Alla Osipenko. Beauty and Resistance in Soviet Ballet* (Oxford University Press)

Deb Vanasse, *Wealth Woman. Kate Carmack and the Klondike Race for Gold* (University of Alaska Press)

Paul Chrystal, *Women at War in the Ancient World* (Amberley)

Lesley Poling-Kempes, *Ladies of the Canyon. A League of Extraordinary Women and their Adventures in the American Southwest* (University of Arizona Press)

Susanna Rabow-Edling, *Married to the Empire. Three Governors' Wives in Russian America 1829-1864* (University of Alaska Press)

The following are offered for the last time:

Rickie Solinger & Mie Nakachi (eds), *Reproductive States. Global Perspectives on the Invention and Implementation of Population Policy* (Oxford University Press)

Eileen Chanin and Steven Miller, *Awakening Four Lives in Art* (Wakefield Press) - Four Australian women who made their reputation in the arts outside of Australia in the first half of the 20th century

Revolutionary History, *Clara Zetkin. Letters and Writing* (Merlin Press) – Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) was a prominent figure in the international socialist movement and then the communist party in Germany

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (OUP - Oxford World's Classic series)

Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (Yale University Press)

Nina Reid-Maroney, *The Reverend Jennie Johnson and African Canadian History, 1868 - 1967* (University of Rochester Press)

WHN Book Prize 2016

There were a small number of entries this year; and the panel decided to award the prize for 2016 to Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (Manchester University Press). Laura King's *Family Men. Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain 1914-1960* (Oxford University Press) was specially commended.

Right: Natalya Vince receiving the WHN Book prize at the Annual Conference, Leeds



Getting to Know Each Other



Name

Lucy Bland

Position

Professor of Social and Cultural History, Anglia Ruskin University. I have just finished a four-year term as a member of the editorial team of the *Women's History* magazine; I shall miss it.

How long have you been a WHN member?

Since it started!

What inspired your enthusiasm for women's history?

The moment I became a feminist, in my early twenties, I was captivated by women's history. None of it had been taught when I was at school. The more I read, the more I was inspired – work such as Jill Liddington and Jill Norris's *One Hand Tied Behind Us* and the books of Sheila Rowbotham. I had taken sociology as an undergraduate but when I went on to do a PhD in Cultural Studies, I centred on late nineteenth/early twentieth century feminists' involvement in campaigns around sexuality.

What are your special interests?

Up until recently my special interests have been a history of sexuality, of feminism and of eugenics. My PhD resulted in a book: *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885-1914*. With Laura Doan I then edited two historical books on sexology. My latest book is on women in the 1920s: *Modern Women on Trial: Sexual Transgression in the Age of the Flapper*. However, in the last two years I have taken a different direction and I am currently researching the mixed race children of black GIs and British women born in the Second World War. So far I have interviewed twenty of these 'children' (now in their early 70s); there are an estimated 2,000 in number. It is fascinating research but it is the first time I have worked with living subjects—all previous subjects having been conveniently dead! It raises a lot of ethic issues and a huge sense of responsibility in doing justice to their stories.

Who is your heroine from history and why?

I have many heroines. One strand is the early British women rock climbers. As my photograph illustrates, I am a compulsive rock climber and I much admire my foremothers in what was then a very male-dominated sport. These include Lucy Walker (1836–1916) the first woman to climb the Matterhorn, Nea Morin (1905–1986) who climbed widely throughout Britain and France and Gwen Moffat (born 1924) who became the first British female mountain guide. One day I might write a history of these terrific women who set the scene for those who followed. When I was doing my PhD one of my heroines was the wonderful Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, who was enormously active in a wide range of feminist issues, right up into old age, bombarding MPs and the press with daily letters of protest. Opposed to patriarchal marriage, she lived in a free union with her partner until, once obviously pregnant, she was pressurised to marry by Millicent Fawcett. Another heroine is Nancy Cunard who was disinherited from her father's wealth for her radical politics and for having a black American lover. I am drawn to women who were brave and transgressive!

Community History Prize

The Community History Prize had fifteen entries. The panel, which met in July, looked at a strong field of exciting projects that included an oral history on Retired Caribbean nurses and the NHS and a project on War Women on the Home Front undertaken by Tyneside Women's Health, a women only, mental health charity based in Gateshead. It was agreed that the prize would be shared this year between a project undertaken by a community group working with Glasgow Women's Library entitled *Women Making History in West Dunbartonshire*, and a project undertaken by Pupils from Greenhill school, with Narberth Museum entitled *Wicked Welsh Women*.



Women's Material Cultures/Women's Material Environments: WHN Annual Conference Report 2016

Conference Organiser's Report

On 16 and 17 September, Leeds Trinity University hosted the 25th annual Women's History Network conference, consisting of two keynotes, two illustrated talks, and nineteen panels and a total of fifty-one papers. The papers and presentations explored innovative and diverse research, projects and collections about women's material cultures and environments from the medieval period to the twenty-first century.

After a welcome address by Prof. Margaret House, Vice Chancellor of Leeds Trinity University, day one started with the first paper panels. Dr Helen Kingstone chaired the 'Political Object[ion]s' panel and enjoyed 'Rosanne Waine's beautifully illustrated paper [that] brought to life the dangers and potency of wearing tartan' after the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, while 'Bernadette Cahill's case study showed how the American suffrage movement in the 1850s and 1860s was marginalised after the abolition of slavery.'

Following a morning break, there was an eclectic mix of panels. After chairing the panel 'On the Bias: Women's Clothing', Hannah-Freya Blake said it 'demonstrated how much clothing women's bodies is an exercise of economy' and how 'clothing women's bodies are integral to the socio-political histories of different cultures'. Haythem Bastawy chaired the panel 'Women Artists, Architects and Musicians', which he said 'had three superb speakers who discussed three prominent women's unique transnationalism in their lives and works'.

The first keynote plenary was presented by Dr Jane Hamlett, Reader in Modern British History at Royal Holloway (University of London), on 'Using the Material World to Study Gender: The Case of Victorian and Edwardian Girls' Schools'. Dr Kingstone chaired the fascinating keynote that 'showed how late-Victorian girls schools ... aspired in their later purpose-built premises to prove their prestige. They most often did this through a grand school hall, where stained-glass sequences of female historical icons acted as models—and an imaginary lineage—for the pupils.'

Following this were four diverse panels. Josh Poklad chaired the panel on "'The Business of Decoration': Women decorative art entrepreneurs and the material environment in London c.1876–1930" stating that the papers 'collectively served to demonstrate the centrality of women's work to the Arts and Crafts movement and late-century retail practices ... They also successfully highlighted the male-bias inherent in many histories of nineteenth-century art and commerce.'

In an illuminating illustrated talk, Kitty Ross, Curator of Leeds History and Social History for Leeds Museums and Galleries, teased out women's voices from the museum's collections and looked at how museum objects can shed light on women's lives and experiences. Kitty discussed the challenges of finding the voices and histories attached to women's material culture once they had entered the collections, often with minimum or missing information. The first day ended with a wine reception to celebrate the

WHN book and community prize winners.

Day two commenced with a hands-on talk by Ali Bodley, Senior Curator of History and Archaeology, from York Museums Trust. Ali talked about women's material culture in relation to the popular exhibition 'Shaping the Body' at York Castle Museum. Ali very kindly brought objects for the delegates to look at and there were opportunities to try on various replica clothing items, such as Georgian-style shoes and corsets.

Later, Kelly Zarins-Brown, founder of Leeds International Women's Filmmaking Collective, chaired a panel on 'Women's Material Culture as Film, Art and Archives', which provided 'valuable insights into [the panelists'] working processes'. Kelly said 'Our collective discussions at the end of the panel were very engaging—we spoke further about our artistic practices and how we are using them to uncover and present women's personal histories'. The second keynote plenary was presented by Prof. Yosanne Vella, Associate Professor in history pedagogy at the University of Malta, who gave an inspiring presentation on 'Teaching Women's History in History Classrooms'. It provided plenty of food for thought about methods of teaching women's history. Prof. Vella expressed the need for multiple voices to be heard through different sources exploring the varied experiences and histories of different women, not just elite women or those traditionally recognised in the National Curriculum.

After this, there was a choice between two panels. Dr Kingstone chaired the panel 'Giving an Irish Perspective', which 'demonstrated how women's war work and suffrage campaigning during the First World War were rendered invisible behind subsequent Irish nationalism and civil war'. The other panel was on 'The Social Lives of Textile Tools and Practice'. The two papers explored knitting in Communist Poland and lace-making in the Midlands in the nineteenth century. Prof. Rosemary Mitchell commented that 'the two papers illustrated the "submissive" and "subversive" potential of handicrafts identified by Rozsika Parker'.

The day ended with a selection of interesting panels varying from railways, letters and early modern women. Prof. Mitchell chaired the panel on 'Sixteenth Century Women's Material Culture' and commented that all three papers demonstrated that 'Tudor women at all levels found the potential to use material cultures and spaces to express and develop their identities'.

The success of the conference was its diversity. The theme united almost one-hundred speakers and delegates from around the world: from Malta, America, Russia, Italy, Poland, India and Finland. Each provided a wider understanding and knowledge of women's history, material cultures and environments on a global scale. Presenters and delegates ranged from social historians, cultural researchers, literary scholars, artists, filmmakers, museum

curators, archivists, postgraduate research students and independent scholars. Many speakers provided not only an inter- and cross-disciplinary exploration of the theme, but also incorporated a professional perspective of working with women's history material cultures, for example within the film/documentary industry and the museum and heritage sector. This cross-pollination of academics/researchers and practitioners will no doubt flourish and bloom, enriching our exploration and understanding of women's history.

The WHN2016 Conference Committee (Prof. Karen Sayer, Dr Sarah Njeri and Lauren Padgett) would like to thank the Women's History Network steering committee for their support, their Leeds Trinity University colleagues, and all presenters and delegates for their contributions. For those on Twitter, search for #WHN2016Leeds to see conference tweets and photos.

Lauren Padgett
Leeds Trinity University

Bursary Holder's Conference Report

This year's Women's History Network Conference was held in a warm and sunny Leeds, at Leeds Trinity University in the leafy outskirts of the city. Leeds Trinity is a relatively small and new university. It is celebrating its 50th birthday this year and has an excellent Victorian Studies centre, as well as strong links with Leeds Museums and Galleries. These links were made evident by the illustrated keynote lecture given by Kitty Ross, a curator from Leeds Museums. Kitty introduced us to a few of the fascinating objects in her care and investigated their use by and in relation to women. Highlights included a sharply worded letter from a middle-class married woman to a female friend, listing off the attributes she desired in a servant, none of which were particularly pleasant – 'plainness' and docility being top of the list. Kitty ended with an image of her predecessor at the Museum in a scold's bridle, this vicious looking contraption,

which stilled the tongues of gossips, is a reminder of how times have changed and made me grateful that women's voices are now heard more clearly than ever before.

The campus and the warren-like interior of the University buildings were modern and peaceful, partially due to the institution's parochial setting, but also because the new batch of 'freshers' were only just beginning to descend upon campus on Saturday 17th. All the staff and the few students we did bump into were excellent hosts, everyone was incredibly welcoming and helpful. This year's conference topic, 'Material Culture', meant that the talks being given over the two days were particularly fascinating and poignant due to their focus on physical objects, from dormitory beds to stained glass windows. As a Museum Studies Graduate and PhD student of design I was thrilled to receive the conference bursary and travel down from Scotland to my first WHN event. Panel topics were incredibly diverse and included 'Women Artists, Architects and Musicians', 'Early Female Pioneers in Education', and 'Women Collectors and Collected Women'.

The diversity of the papers and the panel sessions is a reflection of the diversity of Material Culture, and we were able to explore both intensely private and personal objects, such as Mary Dawson's own meticulously kept scrapbooks covering her time as Head of Newton Park Teaching College in Bath. We were lucky enough to handle these scrapbooks, as Kate James, who was delivering the paper, very kindly brought them along with her. It was a real privilege to leaf through photographs and even valentine's cards from her students to the forward thinking educator Mary and her devoted dog Olive. Michelle Meinhardt introduced us to the moving story of Lady Alda Hoare, a courageous woman who opened her home, Stourhead House, to recuperating soldiers during WWI. She would sing and play the piano for these men. Her son and heir Harry would join in, until his death from injuries sustained fighting in Palestine in 1917. Lady Hoare had the sheet music she played for the soldiers bound in order to create a private memorial, and annotated them with notes about particular men, who referred to her as 'Mother Stourhead'. We also took a trip back in time to the wilds of medieval Scotland, where Rachel Davies told



WHN delegates trying on replica clothing

us about the representation of women in their own wax seals, using trees and maternal and paternal heraldry to form expressions of their female power and identity in an intensely patriarchal society.

Jane Hamlett's keynote lecture on Friday was a personal highlight, her work on the material culture of the institution was explored here through the prism of Victorian and Edwardian girls' schools. Jane also gave us an excellent introduction to the issues surrounding the study of gender and material culture, providing much food for thought. This year's conference was a great success, and the sheer number of strong papers and the academics and historians behind them are a definite cause for celebration. Congratulations, and thank you to all the speakers and organisers who made this two-day event possible, I hope to cross paths with the delegates again.

Rachael Purse

PhD Candidate, Glasgow School of Art

PhD Student's Report

I have just returned from the Annual WHN Conference, held in this, its 25th year at Leeds Trinity University. The theme chosen for 2016, 'Women's Material Cultures and Women's Material Environments', showcased an enormous variety of scholarship and research, and was an enormously rewarding experience. On a general level, for all who attended, there was excellent hospitality, great company, and a wealth of over fifty fascinating papers. On a more personal level, the conference provided a break after a summer of writing-up my PhD dissertation, the opportunity to expose my own research to valuable scrutiny and the chance to meet some inspiring people.

The theme of 'Women's Material Cultures and Environments' encompassed the worlds of education, property, business, war, social mobility, work, artisan craft, rebellion and scientific discovery. We travelled across nations and continents, sharing research about women in India, Malta, America, Sicily, Ireland, and Great Britain. As always, the environment of discussion was challenging, stimulating, supportive and encouraging in equal measure.

The keynote speeches were provided by Dr Jane Hamlett of Royal Holloway and Professor Yosanne Vella of the University of Malta, each giving an aspect of their research for contemplation. Through the lens of Victorian and Edwardian Girls' Schools, Dr Hamlett showed the ways that material culture can shine new light on Gender Studies. In her talk, Professor Vella posed the big question 'Should Women's History be integrated within general history topics or as a special area on its own?' This is an interesting discussion, particularly in the light of the international nature of the conference itself—we are, in far too many places, a very long way from equality, as any current news report will demonstrate.

The conference's two illustrated talks, from Kitty Ross and Alison Bodley, brought us the museums' perspective with women's voices and the ways that fashion, food and life have shaped the body over the centuries. Through

their collections, at Leeds Museums & Galleries and York Museum's Trust respectively, the speakers gave us the museums' representations of women, what exists, what is missing and what it all tells us. It was particularly revealing (and fun) to be able to handle the reproduction clothes brought by Alison Bodley, and get a feel for objects worn by women in the past. Sometimes this 'history through dressing up' can be dismissed as trivial, but such sensory experience makes it possible to begin a real empathy with the past. I was delighted to see that the eighteenth century shoes had a practical heel.

Several aspects of the conference remain in mind and continue to trigger thoughts and ideas. Delegates made contacts beyond the conference walls, especially through social media. At the conference itself the used book stall was great, with all sorts of treasures to discover, no matter what your field of study. The level of discussion during questions and over refreshments was most helpful, and it was clear that many useful contacts were made and friendships strengthened. Whether an old-hand or a new attendee, this is clearly a highly rewarding network.

The opportunity to hear, share and discuss research always provides new thoughts and unseen connections. The conference provided all this, from Professor Margaret House's (Leeds Trinity VC) opening words to the final papers the next day. The organisers, Lauren Padgett, Professor Karen Sayer, Dr Sarah Njeri are to be congratulated on the smooth running of the event, as well as the organisation in advance.

I leave you with a few quotations which I found thought provoking -

'A sort of official ugliness became a moral value in Communist Poland' (Marta Kargol)

'Lacemaking was unremitting toil and drudgery, and girls learned from the age of five; yet it enabled independence' (David Hopkin)

'Heroic everyday struggles are much more attractive than famous individuals' (Yosanne Vella)

'A woman has a distinctive part to play in the world' (Sian Roberts)

Kate James

PhD Candidate, Bath Spa University

WHN AGM Report, 2016

The AGM was held at the Annual Conference of the WHN at the University of Leeds. The Convenor, June Purvis, announced that the WHN is in a healthy financial state and that it has been another successful year. This enabled a contribution of £1750 towards conference bursaries and, for the first time, £500 was paid towards conference administration costs. A new small grant scheme of £500 has been introduced for holding a one-day conference by teaching and research staff at Higher Education institutions or by staff in Further Education Colleges, museums or heritage sites in collaboration with any one such institution.

Steering Committee membership changes

Lucy Bland, Meleisa Ono-George and Maggie Andrews are leaving the Committee and we have four new members—Gillian Murphy, Stephanie Spencer, Amy Dale (to take up a new role of PGR representative) and Jennie Waugh. All of the new candidates were unanimously elected.

Journal

Women's History has had another successful year and has published two special issues. Kate Murphy has handed over as chief editor to Catherine Lee. Lucy Bland has stepped down and has been succeeded as Committee Liaison Editor by Naomi Pullin. We are currently recruiting for a deputy editor (non-steering committee member) to sit on the editorial board.

Future editions of *Women's History* will be available digitally as a PDF as part of the WHN basic subscription. Please direct any queries about the journal to editor@womenshistorynetwork.org.

Finances

Aurelia Annat reported that our finances continue to go from strength to strength. We have a healthy budget, achieved through long-term growing income from membership and reduction of administrative costs, which has generated funds for a number of activities, including the new small grants scheme and contributions towards bursaries and administration costs for the 2016 WHN conference. We have a balance of £10,659 in our current account and £10,029 in our savings account. The provisional budget for 2016-17 replicates previous years, with the main costs being the: the journal; administrative costs for attendance at the three Steering Committee meetings; and web presence.

Membership report

The Membership Secretary reported that we have 399 members listed. It was noted that the amount of Gift Aid donations by WHN members has not increased this year and only 116 members have completed a Gift Aid

declaration. All members are encouraged to complete a Gift Aid declaration online and are asked to contact Felicity Cawley (the Membership Secretary) if you encounter any difficulties doing this.

Some members are still paying incorrect memberships fees and WHN asks all members to check with their bank that they are paying the correct new fee by standing order. Ideas of how to grow the membership are always welcome, and members are encouraged to contact the Membership Secretary with proposals.

Other changes

It was noted that from next year, the form of the Steering Committee report and accounts will change under the new Reporting and Regulatory Requirements of the Charity Commission, published on 26 June 2016 in respect of small charities. These guidelines require the production of an annual report addressing the charity's 'public benefit' objectives and activities, along with an explanation accompanying the charity's accounts.

Social Media, blog and publicity

It was noted that responses to requests for the WHN blog have been positive throughout 2016 and that all WHN members are encouraged to continue to propose blog posts and to make use of the 'comments' section on the blog posts.

Postcards and bookmarks, as well as WHN banners and tablecloths are available to WHN members to take to conferences or give out at talks/events to publicise the network. Should members wish to have some of these publicity materials, they are invited to email Caroline Bressey.

Next meeting of the Steering Committee and full minutes

The next meeting will be held at 11.30am on 5 November 2016, room N301 IHR Senate House, London. All members are welcome.

The full minutes of the AGM and all the reports are available on the WHN website.

WHN Book Prize 2017

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 that 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 in 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 in September 2017.

Entries (books published during 2015) should be submitted via the publisher by 31 March 2017.

For further information please contact June Hannam, chair of the panel of judges.

Email: bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Community History Prize 2017 sponsored by The History Press

An annual £500 prize for a Community History Project which has led to a documentary, pamphlet, book, exhibition, artefact or event completed between the 1st of January 2016 and 31st May 2017.

To be eligible for the award the project must focus on History by, about, or for Women in a local or community setting. Candidates must submit both evidence of the project in written or photographic form and a 500-1,000 word supporting statement explaining the aims and outcomes of the project.

Individuals or groups can nominate themselves or someone else by 31 May 2017; for further guidance or advice on the application process email Professor Maggie Andrews maggie.andrews@worc.ac.uk

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, *Alana Harris*, email charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

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

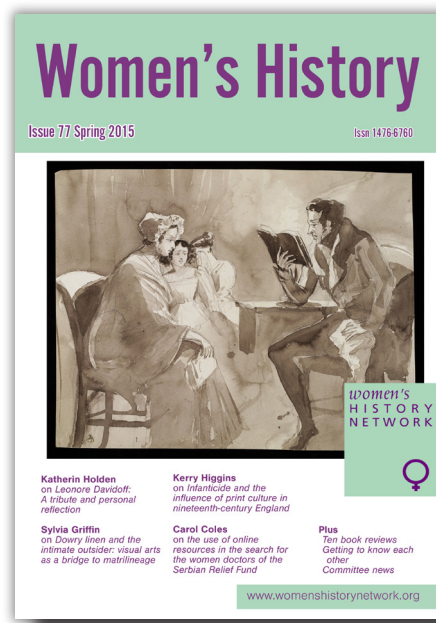
Publishing in *Women's History*

Women's History 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

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at editor@womenshistorynetwork.org



Women's History Network Contacts

Steering Committee Officers:

Membership, subscriptions, Felicity Cawley:
membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to Ms Felicity Cawley, Postgrad Research Student, Economic & Social History, Lilybank House, University of Glasgow, G12 8RT

Finance, Aurelia Annat:
treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, June Purvis:
convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, June Hannam:
bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women's History, Karen Sayer:
ifrwh@womenshistorynetwork.org

Charity Representative, Alana Harris:
charityrep@womenshistorynetwork.org

Newsletter Editor, Gillian Murphy:
newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Blog, Lucinda Matthews-Jones:
womenshistorynetwork.org/category/blog/

Web Liaison and Social Media Co-ordinator, Robyn Joyce:
liaison@womenshistorynetwork.org

Publicity: Stephanie Spencer; Postgraduate Representative, Amy Dale.

Journal Team:

Editors: Jane Berney, Rosalind Carr, Catherine Lee, Naomi Pullin and Rachel Rich: editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For Journal submissions and peer review:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

For book reviews: Jane Berney:
bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

To submit books for review please email the book reviews editor with details of the book to be reviewed.

For journal/magazine back issues and queries please email:
editor@womenshistorynetwork.org

*To join the WHN just go to
www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the instructions.
Payments and Gift-Aid declarations can all be
accessed online as well – see panel on page 14 for further details*

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*, 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. The journal is delivered electronically in PDF form to all members via email. UK based members, however, can elect to receive a printed hardcopy of *Women's History* for an increased membership fee.

WHN membership

Annual Membership Rates *(/with journal hardcopy)*

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Student or unwaged member | £15 / £20 |
| Low income member (*under £20,000 pa) | £25 / £30 |
| Standard member | £40 / £45 |
| Overseas member | £40 |
| Life Membership (includes journal hardcopy) | £350 |
| Retired Life Membership (includes journal hardcopy) | £175 |

Charity Number: 1118201. Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration are all available at
www.womenshistorynetwork.org