



**A University of Sussex DPhil thesis**

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

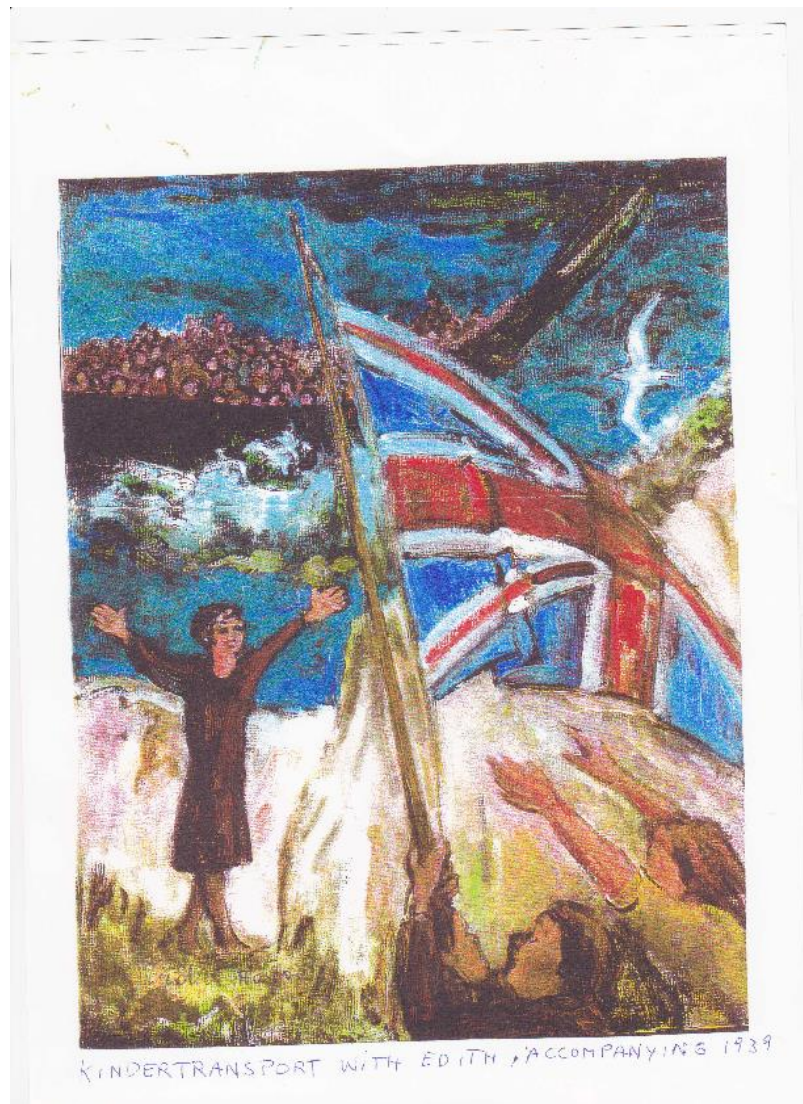
The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

# **A Moral Business: British Quaker work with Refugees from Fascism, 1933-39**

**Rose Holmes**



**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Sussex**

**December 2013**

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

University of Sussex

Rose Holmes PhD Thesis

**A Moral Business: British Quaker work with Refugees from Fascism, 1933-39**

**Summary**

This thesis details the previously under-acknowledged work of British Quakers with refugees from fascism in the period leading up to the Second World War. This work can be characterised as distinctly Quaker in origin, complex in organisation and grassroots in implementation.

The first chapter establishes how interwar British Quakers were able to mobilise existing networks and values of humanitarian intervention to respond rapidly to the European humanitarian crisis presented by fascism.

The Spanish Civil War saw the lines between legal social work and illegal resistance become blurred, forcing British Quaker workers to question their own and their country's official neutrality in the face of fascism. The second chapter draws attention to both the official structures and the unofficial responses of humanitarian workers.

Female domestic servants were the largest professional category of refugees from fascism to enter Britain. Their refuge was largely negotiated by other women, which has not been acknowledged. In the third chapter, I focus on intimate histories to approach a gendered analysis of humanitarian intervention.

Finally, I argue that the *Kindertransport*, in which Quaker leadership was essential, represents the culmination of the interwar voluntary tradition and should be seen as the product of a complex, inter-agency effort.

I argue that the Quaker work was hugely significant as a humanitarian endeavour in its own right. Beyond this evident and momentous impact, the Quaker work should be seen as a case study for the changing role of both voluntarism and humanitarianism between the wars. This dissertation illustrates the ways in which the interwar period saw both the professionalization of the humanitarian sector, and an increasing recognition that governments had to support private charities in their humanitarian responses to international crises.

## Acknowledgements

My supervisors, Paul Betts and Gideon Reuveni, have been consistently positive and supportive. I have appreciated their wise words, and also our supervisions in various pubs and coffee shops around Brighton. I also benefitted immeasurably from the unofficial supervision of Sybil Oldfield and Ted Timms. With their partners, Saime and Gwen, they have offered an inspirational level of kindness and encouragement.

I have been lucky enough to find a real community at Sussex, and have enjoyed the friendship and support of a whole department. I'd like to thank everyone in the History department. Paul Weir, David Geiringer, Becca Searle, Kevin Reynolds, Ben Jones, Nikolas Funke, Tom Akehurst, Sam Shave, Diana Franklin, Lucy Robinson, Owen Emerson, Rhea Edwards, Margaretta Jolly, Natacha Chevalier and Vinita Damodaran have been especially supportive colleagues and friends. I'd particularly like to thank Chris Kempshall for his humour and habitual punctuality. Sian Edwards has been both a stalwart and a star throughout, and I hope that someday we can honour our friendship with something classier than onion rings.

Outside of Sussex, many people gave their time to support this project including particularly Jennifer Craig-Norton, Emily Mason, Brenda Bailey, Jennifer Taylor, Rosemary Bailey and Timothy Newell-Price. I'd particularly like to thank those who shared their own and their family stories. Some of them have asked not to be named, so I would like to thank them, and also Peter Kurer, Charles Hannam, Lenore Davies, Trudi Byrne, Rena Haines, Gisela Faust, Andrew Farrar and David Hughes.

My friends and I have shared endless coffee, wine and nights of decreasingly wild behaviour since the start of this endeavour. I'd especially like to thank Katie Kittmer, Isabelle Amazon-Brown, Alex Fulcher, Emily Marriott, James Gadd, Lisa Gallagher and Alex Jorden who have all been 3am friends for better or for worse.

I benefit from having a large and eccentric family whose company I genuinely enjoy. My parents, Simon and Joanna Holmes and my siblings Mary, Jane and Tom have always been fun, interesting, kind, and there for all the house moves, emotional crises and rants against the system. All the assorted grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins have more than done their duty by expressing genuine and brief interest then offering wine. Guy Roberts-Holmes, Pamela Kea and their children Justin, Pia and Isabelle have been especially kind in their frequent hospitality and games of 'Pictureka'. Becca Conduit has taught me the true value of beetroot, furniture from the street, and being an aunt. My outlaws, team Therrien, especially Sue Therrien, Felix Therrien and Ella Grice, have become part of my family and I look forward to many more sessions putting the world to rights round the kitchen table.

My partner Alex Therrien and I have, together, realised that the world is our lobster and been on an adventure to find it. I couldn't have done any of this without his love and support.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Jennifer Conduit, whose unstinting matriarchal strength, love and wisdom have supported three generations of her family. You've kept the hills alive, Granny, and now you have to hold out for the book.

## Contents

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>i.</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>ii.</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>iii.</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>iv.</b>
<b>Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>vi.</b>
<b>Illustrations.....</b>	<b>viii.</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1.</b>
<b>Chapter One: British Quakers and Humanitarianism between the wars.....</b>	<b>11.</b>
Wealth, Welfare and Quaker ‘Business Humanitarianism’.	
Gandhi’s Goat and Quaker Oats: Quakers, the Press and Public Opinion in the 1930s.	
A ‘Visual Correspondence’: Photography and Interwar Humanitarianism.	
Quaker Women: Speaking Truth to Power.	
<b>Chapter Two: Networks of Intervention, Narratives of Reassurance and the Emergence of Quaker Resistance: The British Quaker response to the Refugee crisis caused by the Spanish Civil War.....</b>	<b>37.</b>
‘Comité de Ayuda a los Ninos u Mujeres en España’: The establishment and initial work of the Barcelona Quaker Mission.	
‘No-one regards Children as Reds or Anti-Reds’: Childhood, Photography and a neutral humanitarian space in Spain.	
Birmingham Quakers and ‘business humanitarianism’.	
The International Commission: professionalising international refugee support.	
A Conflicting Approach? Spanish Exiles and Evacuees.	
Quakers and Basque Refugee Children.	
Evacuating Republican Exiles to Mexico.	
‘La Retirada’ and the ‘Pourrissoirs’ of Southern France.	
The Emergence of Quaker Resistance under the Vichy Regime.	

**Chapter Three: Filling the Vacancy: Women, Domestic Work and Gendered Approaches to the Refugee Crisis.....83.**

Co-ordinating the Quaker Response: The Germany Emergency Committee.

Humanitarian intervention as a form of women's resistance: the Scottish Domestic Bureau.

Mothering the World: Women and Professionalism in Interwar Philanthropy.

Individual Experience of a Refugee Worker: Mary Hughes and the York Refugee Committee.

Filling the Vacancy: Expected Assimilation of the Refugee Domestic Servant.

So What about the Men? Agriculture and Self-Reliance.

**Chapter Four: British Quakers and the *Kindertransport*: Internationalism, Integration and the Voluntary Tradition.....128.**

Organising the *Kindertransport*: Legitimising child immigration.

The Vienna Quaker Centre.

The 'Winton Children': The Prague *Kindertransport* and Misdirected Gratitude.

Photography and the *Kindertransport*: Integrating 'Imagined' Children.

The *Kindertransport* in a domestic context: 'Successful' integration?

**Conclusion.....174.**

**Bibliography.....182.**

## Abbreviations

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
AJR	Association of Jewish Refugees
BCA	Birmingham City Archives
BCC	Basque Children's Committee
BCRC	British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia
FAU	Friends Ambulance Units
FCRA	Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens
FHL	Friends House Library
FRS	Friends Relief Service
FSC	Friends Service Committee
FWRC	Friends Warwickshire Relief Committee
FWVRC	Friends War Victims Relief Committee
GEC	Germany Emergency Committee
IB	International Brigades
IC	International Commission (For the Care of Spanish/Child Refugees)
IWM	Imperial War Museum
IWMSA	Imperial War Museum Sound Archive
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LofNU	League of Nations Union
LPSA	Leighton Park School Archives
LSE	London School of Economics
MO	Mass Observation
MOA	Mass Observation Archive
NA	National Archives
NJC	National Joint Committee



RCM	Refugee Children's Movement
RVA	Refugee Voices Archive
SCIU	Save the Children International Union
SDB	Scottish Domestic Bureau
SDBMB	Scottish Domestic Bureau Minute Book
SRC	Spanish Relief Committee
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
YCA	York City Archives
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

## Illustrations

Cover Image. 'Kindertransport with Edith Accompanying, 1939'.

Image 1. 'Join the Quaker Health Brigade' *Picture Post*, 15 October, 1938.

Image 2. David Low, 'Optimistic Balancer' *The Evening Standard*, 13 January 1939.

Image 3. Two different 'Spain: An Appeal for the Children' publicity leaflets, 1936-7.

Image 4. International Commission Publicity Leaflet, 1939.

Image 5. 'The Children of Spain' International Commission publicity leaflet, 1939.

Image 6. Basque Refugee children on the SS Habana, May 1937.

Image 7. Spanish Refugee Children Interned in the Gurs Camp, 1939.

Image 8. Prisoners at work in vegetable gardens set up by the AFSC at Gurs , 1940.

Image 9. 'There is no future for these children in Germany'. GEC Pamphlet, 1933.

Image 10. 'Those who live in the shadow'. GEC Pamphlet, 1935.

Image 11. 'Christian Help for Refugees from Germany' Pamphlet, c. 1939.

Image 12. 'Who are the Refugees?' GEC Pamphlet c. 1939.

Image 13. 'Kindertransport with Edith Accompanying, 1939'.

Image 14. 'Some of the Children', RCM 1939.

Image 15. 'Their First Day in England', *Picture Post*, December 17, 1938.

Image 16. 'Fine Species of Manhood', Kitchener Camp Committee Booklet c.1939.

## Introduction

*While everybody knows vaguely that the Quakers did wonderful work, including the saving of Jewish refugees, the full extent of their achievement has not been recognised. Neither all of the archive material nor the memories of those helped by the Quakers have been adequately explored, and it is most important that this should be done before the generation of the 1930s disappears.*

*-Eric Hobsbawm, 2009.<sup>1</sup>*

In a letter to a fellow historian in 2009, Eric Hobsbawm, one of the most preeminent historians of the twentieth century and a former refugee from fascist Europe, alluded to the work done by Quakers to support refugees from fascism in the 1930s.<sup>2</sup> There is a vague sensibility among Quakers, refugee support groups and academics working in the field that Quakers carried out extensive projects to support refugees from fascism in the 1930s. There has not, however, been any substantive academic research documenting these projects. This PhD research project could have been an exercise in uncovering lost facts, in bringing clarity to a particular aspect of refugee history and in giving recognition to the Quakers who have not previously been recognised for their work. I wanted, however, to avoid the pitfalls of writing a simplistic hagiography of heroism.

The Quaker work with refugees from fascism was wide-ranging, directed at many different groups of people, and enabled by the grassroots mobilisation of pre-existing networks of ordinary people across Britain who offered their time and money to support strangers in a variety of ways. As such, it should not be seen as a 'rescue' in the sense of a single, focused or strategic event. It was led by experienced relief workers who deployed skills learned through years of Quaker relief projects in Britain and overseas. Quaker work should very much be seen as part of the voluntary tradition and, while this thesis mainly focuses on the Quaker work, it should be borne in mind that the Quakers were part of wider networks of humanitarianism. The Society of Friends worked closely with many other groups and individuals, most significantly the Save the Children International Union (SCIU) and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Many other organisations, both on a national and local level, worked independently to support refugees from fascism. While, rightly, anger has been expressed at the reluctance of the British government to allow refugees from fascism into Britain, many

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jennifer Taylor, 'The Missing Chapter: How the British Quakers helped to save the Jews of Germany and Austria from Nazi Persecution', Privately published, October 2009. P. 10

<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm was not himself supported by Quakers but was interested both as a historian and on a personal level in their work. See Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life* (London: Abacus, 2003 [2002]).

British people *did* act to support refugees, and Quaker work should be seen as at the forefront of this.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis follows Hobsbawm's plea to some extent. I outline the nature and extent of Quaker humanitarian work with refugees from fascism in the 1930s, with particular attention to the practical and intimate nature of this work, as well as to the photography which legitimised it. I argue that the Quaker work should be seen as one part of a crucial middle layer of British grassroots intervention, negotiating between desperate refugees, an uninterested British government and the violent hostility of fascist regimes. In the broader context, this Quaker work, while highly significant in its own right, should be seen as a case study for the changing nature of humanitarianism in the interwar years. As Hobsbawm indicated, this subject has had some research attention. Historians including Kushner and Oldfield have pointed towards the significance of the British humanitarian response to fascism.<sup>4</sup> Recently, Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, Tara Zahra, Ben Shephard and others have emphasised the significance of humanitarianism in both responding to and shaping international relations, particularly in the post-war period. Here, the specific parameters of the Quaker response clearly show that the interwar years, particularly the 1930s, were a period in which humanitarianism was rapidly changing. The increasingly professionalised role of voluntary agencies in negotiating the response to fascism should be seen as a broker for the post-war establishment of international, government-led relief agencies.

Quakerism is a religion where faith is manifested in action, and has a long history of intervening in humanitarian crises. The first chapter gives the background and context by which Quakers were able to rapidly mobilise to carry out humanitarian work. In a British context, Quakerism could be described as generally responding overseas to the worst excesses of British Imperialism, with successful projects in India, Palestine, South Africa and across much of Europe. In addition to this, British Quakers had developed a series of projects to relieve the worst of urban poverty in Britain, Elizabeth Fry's work with prison reform being the

---

<sup>3</sup> Louise London. *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Sybil Oldfield, *Doers of the Word: British Women Humanitarians 1900-1950* (privately published, 2006). Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin, 2012); Jessica Reinisch, "Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads, *Past and Present*, (2013) Supplement 8; Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010).

best-known example. In the American context, of course, the Underground Railroad (which supported escaped slaves) and accompanying transnational abolition projects which involved both British and American Quakers demonstrated both ability and willingness to carry out humanitarian social work despite official illegality.<sup>5</sup> By the 1930s, this long history of practical relief work had gradually created a well-rehearsed system of political humanitarian intervention. I outline the specific mechanisms by which this could take place in the 1930s. These include the long relationship between Quaker business and funding for humanitarian projects (which I term 'business humanitarianism'), the distinct public profile of Quakers, the innovative use of publicity material, and the specific leadership roles of Quaker women. Quaker humanitarian work is, of course, carried out as part of a theological moral framework. Quakerism, while not a dogmatic religion, has core tenets of 'witness', 'inner light' and 'speaking truth to power' to which members are expected to adhere. While I consider theology in this research, I adhere to Mark Freeman's assertion that it is crucial to establish the 'vectors' of the interactions of humanitarian work with wider society and culture, rejecting the insular tendency to study religious groups as a closed theology rather than an integrated public network with clear social functions.<sup>6</sup> I am more concerned with the political implications of non-conformism than the theological roots. In the first chapter, I establish that the Quaker humanitarian endeavour was underpinned by a combination of a particular moral philosophy rooted in the experience of political persecution and supported by the wealth of extensive business structures.

The second chapter explores the practical and political manifestations of the Quaker response to the Spanish Civil War. Farah Mendelsohn, Tom Buchanan and Jim Fryth have established the parameters of the current research on the British humanitarian response to the Spanish Civil War, pointing out that the wider British humanitarian response to Spain was the conduit for a grassroots public expression of anti-fascism.<sup>7</sup> While the British Left was central in providing and supporting an armed response to Franco's fascist forces, Quakers spearheaded

---

<sup>5</sup> Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961).

<sup>6</sup> Mark Freeman, *The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust: A Study in Quaker Philanthropy and Adult Education 1904-1954* (York: William Sessions Ltd., 2004); Mark Freeman, 'Muscular Quakerism? The Society of Friends and Youth Movements in Britain c. 1900-1950', *English Historical Review*, vol. 125 (2010), pp. 642-49.

<sup>7</sup> Farah Mendelsohn, *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*, Quaker Studies Vol. 1 (Lewiston: The Edgar Mellen Press, 2002); Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jim Fryth, *The Signal was Spain: The Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986).

humanitarian projects to support civilians, particularly children.<sup>8</sup> Working in partnership with the Save the Children International Union (SCIU), Quakers were the only British humanitarian organisation to have a permanent base on the ground in Spain. Working with the inter-agency National Joint Committee (NJC) along with other smaller voluntary organisations, Quaker relief workers and doctors organised the evacuation of 4000 Basque children to Britain in May 1937, the first such project. This both preceded and informed the *Kindertransport*, which began only 18 months later, and established that British work with refugees from fascism involved more than providing support overseas. For the first time, refugees who had no means of self-support were allowed to immigrate en-masse into Britain. Most significantly, the work in Spain forced individual relief workers and, by extension, the Society of Friends as a whole, to question the relationship between personal 'witness' and fascism. Political neutrality, for many, was no longer an option which could be reconciled with Quaker values and became little more than a veil behind which extensive humanitarian work could be carried out.

Quaker humanitarian work was also, notably, predominantly led by women. In Chapter Three I argue that the experience of refugees once they reached Britain was intensely gendered. Women refugees were given permits to work as domestic servants and were seen as sufficiently safe to be allowed into the home and were expected to marry, have children, and integrate into British culture. Male refugees, on the other hand, were placed in rural locations, given hard manual labour, and told they would have to re-emigrate as soon as the need for their labour ended. Both male and female refugees were expected to fill the vacant roles of the British working classes, whose labour patterns were changing rapidly. There has been an increasing academic focus by researchers including Lucy Delap, Carolyn Steedman and Selina Todd on the emotional history of domestic service, which should be seen alongside research which explores the professional role of women in the interwar years.<sup>9</sup> The gendered relationship around refuge, I additionally argue, extends to refugee relief workers. Around 20,000 of the refugees who entered Britain in the 1930s (between a third and a quarter of all refugees who arrived in Britain before the war) were young women on domestic service

---

<sup>8</sup> Fyrth, *The Signal was Spain*.

<sup>9</sup> The newly emerging literature on the emotional history of domestic service mainly focuses on the nuances of the experiences of domestic servants and the relationships between servants and employers. Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Interwar humanitarian women-Susan Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010); Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Sybil Oldfield (Ed) *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain 1914-1945* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994).

permits. The limited academic research on this group of refugees has tended to focus on the experiences of the refugee domestic servants, and has ignored the role of the middle-class women who organised their refuge without any administrative or financial support from the British government. Indeed, their response has been characterised by Kushner, the leading historian of the effort, as a 'self-interested response to the servant crisis'.<sup>10</sup> Unlike solidarity, charity *can* be top-down, failing to challenge power relations and forcing humble gratitude from recipients. But not all middle-class women who dispense charity should be dismissed as beribboned Lady Bountifuls, assuaging their consciences by scattering pennies from carriages. The largest Quaker refugee project (in terms of numbers helped) was the complex process of placing women, mostly from Germany and Austria, on domestic service visas. This was done in conjunction with several other voluntary organisations and organised by a team comprised mostly of middle-class women.

Women were also central to the organisation of the *Kindertransport* and to the subsequent caring for refugee children in hostels and private homes. Tony Kushner has established the parameters of the debate around the Jewish experience in Britain and his work, along with that of Bill Williams, has been influential in guiding the *Kindertransport* chapter.<sup>11</sup> In recent years, a group of academics including Andrea Hammel, Bea Lewkowicz, Jennifer Taylor and Anthony Grenville have been researching the *Kindertransport*, focusing mainly on the experiences of the children.<sup>12</sup> As Grenville recently established, while we now recognise the long term impact on former *Kinder*, there has still not been a comprehensive account of the organisation of the *Kindertransport*.<sup>13</sup> While I do not provide that in full here, I do emphasise the significance of the role of British voluntary organisations and detail the exact mechanics of the Quaker voluntary role.

In Chapter Four I establish the centrality of the Quaker role (led by mostly women) to the organisation of the *Kindertransport*. Of the three main instances of refugee relief I detail in this

---

<sup>10</sup> Tony Kushner, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-40' in Kushner and Lunn (eds) *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1990) p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> Particularly Bill Williams, *'Jews and other foreigners': Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz (eds) *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives* (London: Editions Rodopi, 2012); Jennifer Taylor, "Work of modest proportion": Ayton School: One example of the Contribution of the Society of Friends to Saving the Refugees from Hitler in 'I didn't want to float: I wanted to belong to something' *Refugee Organisations in Britain 1933-45* (ed.) Andrea Reiter Vol. 10 Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Institute of Germanic and Romance Languages, University of London (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008) pp. 153-168.

<sup>13</sup> As pointed out by Anthony Grenville, 'Introduction', Hammel and Lewkowicz (eds) *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39*.

thesis, the *Kindertransport* immigration of around 10,000 unaccompanied children to Britain has certainly received the most academic and popular attention. There has still, however, not been a comprehensive account of the organisation of the project.<sup>14</sup> Memoirs, articles, and even academic books adhere to a narrative of gratitude which erroneously thanks the British government for a rescue project that was, in fact, entirely organised, managed and financed by a coalition of voluntary agencies supported by the general public. In the final chapter of this thesis I question the narratives around refugee immigration, arguing that the neglect of the role of the voluntary agencies is representative of a wider tendency to privilege state and individual experience while overlooking the role of the voluntary agencies which negotiate the spaces in between. British Quakers were not solely responsible for the *Kindertransport* but, I establish, the *Kindertransport* could not have happened without them.

This thesis for the first time tells the story of how British Quakers supported refugees from fascism. Part of the reason this story has not been told before is because there is no one-stop basis from which to tell it. Institutional archives of several different voluntary organisations, particularly those at Friend's House Library in Euston, provided background details about those who organised the various projects. I then used local archives and papers held in private collections to look at how these nationally co-ordinated projects were implemented on a local level. Newspapers and magazines provided contextual information and allowed insight into the way refugees were represented, and photographs from news sources are used throughout my thesis. Of course, the work of other historians was also invaluable. While this subject had not been researched in any detail, several people had engaged with it on various levels, and I found the work of Tony Kushner, Sybil Oldfield and Tara Zahra to be particularly useful.<sup>15</sup> Archival and printed sources however, could only take me so far. Ultimately, I felt that when looking at a history which is grassroots and domestic in nature, a grassroots and domestic research methodology needs to be deployed, by which I mean a history which makes full use of cultural sources such as photographs and newspapers, life history sources, and correspondence with people who were involved.

Throughout this thesis I am looking at the intimate history of relief work, both from the perspective of relief workers and the refugees who were supported. When using institutional archives and publications, one is removed from the direct, informal responses of ordinary people. In this particular project, that would have been to ignore the very nature of the

---

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> See especially, Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*; Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*; Zahra, *The Lost Children*.



response. To this end, I have conducted several oral history interviews, engaged in extensive correspondence and used unpublished diaries, memoirs and letters throughout. Many correspondents were found through the connections I made at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex. I also published articles in summer 2011 in both the Quaker newspaper *The Friend* and *The Association of Jewish Refugees Journal* appealing for information.<sup>16</sup> Many of the people who contacted me as a result of these articles were kind enough to share their stories with me. Of course, a consideration of ethics has been crucial when talking about the details of people's lives. I have changed some names and identifying details where requested, although most correspondents wanted me to publish their full stories. As Paul Thompson points out, oral history records the stories of people whose voices have often been marginalised or silenced.<sup>17</sup> Reconstructing the past from stories that have not previously been heard is certainly *part* of what I have tried to do here, and has been a way to tell the parts of the history that archival source did not reach. However, life history is an expanding discipline, which increasingly recognises that seeing oral history purely as alternate history can obfuscate the myriad ways in which myth, memory and cultural frameworks influence the way stories are remembered and told.<sup>18</sup> In short, I have taken the life history approach of seeing the ways people choose to share their stories as equally significant to the stories they tell.

In a more collective strand to the grassroots methodology, I have placed considerable emphasis throughout on the role of the voluntary sector. Voluntary societies are a way of bypassing formal power structures and can act as groups that influence the decision making of elites. Research on the immigration of refugees into Britain in the 1930s has either focused on the approach of the British government or the experiences of the refugees themselves. Both are valid lines of enquiry, but both miss the middle layer of invisible voluntary intervention that liaised between the state and the individual to organise and finance much of the immigration. The refugee crisis of the 1930s sparked a massive humanitarian response in Britain. Many voluntary groups and agencies were involved, with Quakers at the forefront. British voluntary work to support refugees was motivated by a combination of humanitarian and anti-fascist impulses, organised by established business practices and professional relief workers, and amounted to nothing less than a popular front.

---

<sup>16</sup> Rose Holmes, 'Fleeing Fascism', *The Friend*, 11 May, 2011; Rose Holmes, 'British Quakers and the rescue of Jewish refugees', *Association of Jewish Refugees Journal*, June 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> See Margaretta Jolly, "Editor's note", *Encyclopedia of Life Writing, Autobiographical and Biographical forms A-K*, (London, 2001), xi. Jolly points out that life history is a constantly evolving discipline.

This particular popular front was distinctly domestic in nature, perhaps explaining why it has not received significant research attention. British government policy of the time did not prioritise refugees from fascism. Some sympathy was expressed in certain quarters, and there were suggestions that healthy, reasonably wealthy refugees prepared to work could go to parts of the British Empire (apart from Palestine) but in general, there was a distinct lack of support.<sup>19</sup> It was left to British voluntary groups to organise any support for refugees not able to support themselves. The Jewish organisations did a great deal of work to support some Jewish refugees, but what is perhaps surprising is the mobilisation of many ordinary people who expressed sympathy for refugees with whom they did not share either faith or experience. Lacking in resources as ordinary people tend to be, the simplest ways of support were domestic in nature. Having a *Kinder* to sleep in your son's bedroom for a few months, going to a concert by Czech refugee musicians, donating to a Basque child colony, employing an Austrian domestic servant to allow her to escape even though you do your own cleaning; these were all ways in which ordinary people expressed human sympathy and, often, political opposition to fascism.

A deep irony of relief work with refugees from fascism was that much 'rescue' was organised along the same denominational lines as the Nazi persecution. There was an expectation in the humanitarian community that Jewish relief agencies would help Jewish refugees, Catholic agencies would help those who were Catholic, Trade Unions would help those who needed to leave because of their left-wing political activities. The number of people persecuted solely for being Quaker or pacifist was tiny, and Quakers had enough resources to help more. An aspect of this relief work which went unspoken by many of the Quaker humanitarian workers was the Jewish or 'part-Jewish' faith or heritage of a majority of the people helped. The concept of 'non-Aryans' quickly came into play as an inclusive term for those who were being persecuted and was being used in Quaker publicity pamphlets from 1934.<sup>20</sup> By 'non-Aryan', Quakers meant children of mixed marriages, those people who were part-Jewish or secular, or Jewish but also socialist, or Christian and Socialist, or those who were Polish but living in Vienna, or in short all those who could not obviously claim support from another relief agency.<sup>21</sup> This support directed towards 'non-Aryans' rather than Jews was unofficial policy by Quaker relief workers in Germany, but was formalised in Vienna, where the Vienna Quaker Centre was the official base for all those in the 'non-Aryan' category, to which those eligible for Quaker work

---

<sup>19</sup> London, *Whitehall and the Jews*.

<sup>20</sup> GEC Minute Books 1933-1939.FHA.

<sup>21</sup> GEC Minutes, 20 February, 1934. FCRA/1. FHA.

were directed by other relief agencies.<sup>22</sup> In an unpublished PhD thesis, Chana Revell Kotzin criticises the Quakers for the 'non-Aryan' distinction, feeling that it was a way of demonstrating evenhandedness while in reality 'sidelining' issues of racial discrimination.<sup>23</sup> Quakers certainly did not recognise persecution in Europe as a primarily Jewish issue until 1938, and clearly underestimated the capacity of the Jewish relief agencies to support refugees. Quakers dealt with some of the most marginal groups of prospective refugees, and clearly struggled with naming them. The 'non-Aryan' label was at the time and remains today an inconvenient catch-all term reflecting the complexity and the unsatisfactory compromises involved in large-scale refugee relief work.

Frank Prochaska has characterised the development of charities over the twentieth century as, 'swimming into the mouth of a Leviathan'.<sup>24</sup> He is referring to the gradual professionalization of philanthropic endeavour which, while it resulted in huge growth in social provision in Britain, also meant core values could become increasingly compromised. The growth and change in international humanitarianism over the twentieth century has been increasingly explored by historians in recent years. It has been widely accepted that the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919 was a defining moment in this trajectory, ultimately 'extend[ing] imperial control in a less overt form'.<sup>25</sup> In the post Second World War period, the creation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) has similarly been seen as a crucial conceptual turning point, where humanitarianism became a focus of international governmental power struggles.<sup>26</sup> This establishes key turning points in international humanitarianism at 1919 and 1943. But what about the period in between?

In the context of two major shifts which transformed humanitarianism from a series of informal, private ventures to an international government-led framework, the interwar period saw developments in the nature, activities and limits of humanitarian intervention. Time and time again, minutes from the voluntary sector during the 1930s record intense dissatisfaction with the response of the British government to refugees from fascism. Even in the British government's most significant gesture, the giving of permission in November 1938 for the

---

<sup>22</sup> Sheila Spielhofer, *Stemming the Dark Tide: Quakers in Vienna 1919-1942* (York: William Sessions Limited, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Chana Revell Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees from Europe, 1933-1939'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2000.

<sup>24</sup> F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). p. 83.

<sup>25</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, p. 166.

<sup>26</sup> See in particular Rana Mitter and Matthew Hilton (Eds) *Past and Present* (2013) 218 (special supplement on Transnationalism and Global History).

voluntary agencies to organise the mass immigration of children which later became known as the *Kindertransport*, it was explicitly noted that the voluntary agencies were to assume responsibility. Members of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC) were outraged and noted that while they welcomed the announcement, 'At the same time the voluntary organisations find themselves totally unable to accept the implication that the extent to which the rescue of thousands can be organised, temporary refuge provided, and large-scale migration of hundreds of thousands carried out must remain entirely dependent on private effort'.<sup>27</sup>

Between 1919 when the League of Nations was created and 1943 when UNRRA took official intergovernmental responsibility for the redevelopment of Europe after the war, the humanitarian climate altered dramatically. Before 1919, humanitarian work was ad-hoc, piecemeal, and undertaken by private charity. By 1943, it was accepted that governments would take responsibility for international aid. Of course, this does not represent a purely moral position on behalf of governments. As Prochaska identified, 'humanitarian' intervention can, and often does, go hand in hand with political, economic and social control.<sup>28</sup> However, UNRRA did not spring into existence purely from the minds of civil servants. The transformation of the humanitarian relationship was more nuanced and complex than has previously been acknowledged, involving a series of dialogues between governments, humanitarian agencies, the general public and the recipients of aid.

In this thesis, I argue that the Quaker work with refugees from fascism was part of the professionalization and growing confidence of humanitarianism and the voluntary sector between the wars. More outward-facing than before, humanitarian agencies increasingly lobbied governments for financial and administrative support. Hilda Clark summarised the attitude of many leading humanitarian workers when she said, 'the problem is bigger than can be dealt with by private charity'.<sup>29</sup> Despite this conviction, utilising existing networks of business and religion, and capitalising on a good reputation, the increased public role of professional women and a public increasingly receptive to a sympathetic visual correspondence around refugees, Quaker networks were instrumental in supporting the approximately 80,000 refugees from fascism who arrived in Britain before the war.

---

<sup>27</sup> 'Action of Governments and of Private Organisations in Regard to Refugees-Draft Memorandum' 25 November 1938. LMA.

<sup>28</sup> Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*.

<sup>29</sup> GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

Quaker Aid should be defined as a quiet, collaborative manifestation of practical domestic Christianity. Tending to be middle-class and having some means, Quaker humanitarian workers were often politically left-wing without being radical, reformist without being revolutionary. From this position, refugees were supported in myriad ways. This is not to say that many of the people I write about in this thesis saw themselves as humanitarian workers. All over the country, ordinary people donated money to support refugees or provided hospitality. One interviewee told me that, 'it seemed every Quaker family had a refugee in the living room.'<sup>30</sup> The quiet, domestic nature of the refugee work is characteristic of Quaker relief work, and can partly explain why the work, piecemeal and domestic in nature, has not been sufficiently acknowledged up to this point.

The three main chapters in this thesis are organised around the three biggest Quaker refugee support projects in the 1930s in terms of the numbers of people who were helped. The chapters in this thesis should not be seen as representing either a clear delineation or the sum total of the Quaker work. Quaker work with refugees from fascism should above all be seen as supported by networks. This was achieved firstly, and most obviously, by existing Quaker networks which, in a small and wealthy community, were by no means insignificant. Secondly, through the wider networks within the voluntary sector a long history of activism had helped to create, links with other humanitarian organisations, politicians and international partners were forged.

Finally, because the projects were successful they gradually and naturally led to other successful projects and collaborations. Throughout the 1930s and on into the war and afterwards, Quaker relief efforts quietly worked alongside those of other organisations to support those who were forced to leave their own homes and countries by violent hatred. Today, understanding how and why this happened is as relevant as ever.

---

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Trudi Byrne, 20 February 2011.

## Chapter One

### British Quakers and Humanitarianism between the wars

The ability of British Quakers to respond rapidly and effectively to the humanitarian crisis caused by fascism depended on both the long history of Quaker humanitarianism and the specific condition of British Quakerism between the wars. In this chapter, I outline the four specific attributes which allowed Quakers, both individually and as part of networks, to demonstrate their political anti-fascism through participation in a grassroots humanitarian mobilisation. I begin by introducing the concept of Quaker 'business humanitarianism', which is my term and refers to the relationship between Quaker-run businesses and humanitarian structures. I then detail the way Quakers were seen in the British press in the 1930s and argue that their reputation for being generally good, albeit slightly subversive, allowed their political interventions to be carried out beneath the public radar. From seeing to looking, I then outline the 'visual correspondence' which was created using publicity photography. It allowed Quakers to capitalise on increased public visual literacy and represent recipients of aid in such a way as to legitimise their support by the public. Finally, I emphasise the distinct role of Quaker women in all this activity. With a long history of equality and public work, Quaker women took clear leadership roles during the 1930s and, I argue, shaped the nature of refugee support.

#### Wealth, Welfare and Quaker 'Business Humanitarianism'

In 1901, Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's pioneering study of poverty in York was instrumental in changing public attitudes about the causes of poverty, rejecting the idea of the 'feckless poor' and establishing that low wages and poor conditions for workers made it impossible for many to maintain a standard of living above the 'poverty line' (the marker of poverty established by Rowntree).<sup>1</sup> Rowntree was not a maverick, rather he was part of a tradition of Quaker social reform. His contemporary and fellow confectionary industrialist George Cadbury published reports at the same time, many with pioneering content such as his 1906 investigation of women's labour, which was heavily influenced by Sidney and Beatrice Webb and contained such controversial passages as, 'As far as women are concerned, the workers have not shared in the progress of the production of wealth, and are still at the stage where capital is all powerful, and while it does not take all the risks yet takes all the gains.'<sup>2</sup> Cadbury

---

<sup>1</sup> B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2000 [1901]).

<sup>2</sup> Edward Cadbury and M. Cecile Matheson, *Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in An Industrial City* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906). p. 136.

fell short of proposing any truly radical action, suggesting instead that employers should be careful to protect the physical and moral health of their women workers through such measures as lunchtime temperance lessons.<sup>3</sup> Rowntree's Cocoa Works in York similarly prided itself on the care taken of workers, providing pensions and paid holidays long before they were required by law.<sup>4</sup> Quaker industrialists were by no means the only employers seeking to improve the labour conditions of their workers, but had a particular influence due in part to the extensive wealth and connections accumulated over a century of successful business practice.

It is a truism that Quakers are successful at business, but a truism which often reflects reality. An analysis of the religion of people in the financial elite in the United Kingdom showed that, in 1935, 41.67 percent of Quaker men were in the financial elite, as compared to 3.86 percent of Church of England men.<sup>5</sup> In the early part of the twentieth century in Britain, Quakers were by far the highest-performing denomination in Britain in terms of wealth creation. Weber specifically pointed to the success of Quaker business as a combination of a legacy of persecution and 'otherworldliness as proverbial as their wealth'.<sup>6</sup> More recent analysis has moved somewhat away from Weber and highlighted the strength of education and kinship networks as well as the more elusive quality of trust.<sup>7</sup> For Cadbury and Rowntree and other Quaker industrialist families such as the Gurneys, Clarks, Barrows and Frys, wealth creation was not an abstract goal but was closely linked to social duty. Debt was shameful, as was dealing recklessly or dishonestly with employees, customers, creditors or suppliers. Quaker industrialists would live comfortably, but not to excess, and combined professional work with extensive philanthropic commitments.

Wealth, finance and funding must always be considered when looking at histories of charity and voluntary action. Who was paying? Why? How was the money come by? Were there any conditions? None of the Quaker projects with refugees I detail in this thesis would have been possible without the pre-existence of established Quaker business networks, which had long been committed to supporting philanthropic causes domestically and overseas in a

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> B.S. Rowntree papers. Borthwick Institute, York.

<sup>5</sup> D. Jeremy, 'Capitalists and Christians'. Quoted in D. Jeremy (ed) *Religion, Business and Wealth in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1998) p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Weber says, 'National or religious minorities which are in a position of subordination to a group of rulers are likely, through their voluntary or involuntary exclusion from positions of political influence, to be driven with peculiar force into economic activity. Their ablest members seek to satisfy the desire for recognition of their abilities into this field, since there is no opportunity in the service of the State.' Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Routledge: London, 2001 [1930]). p. 37

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy, *Religion*. In particular Chapters 7 and 10.

relationship which I term 'business humanitarianism'. This tradition of philanthropy has a long association with Quaker business and social values which was recognised within Quaker circles in the 1930s. A 1935 article in a Quaker publication noted:

In more recent times the names of Cadbury, Fry, Huntley, Palmer, Reckitt, and Tangye represent not only Quaker commerce, but an ever expanding spirit of reform in industrial practices. These reforms have been concerned not only with methods of business, but still more with the welfare and education of those who are employed.<sup>8</sup>

This self-reflection was by no means removed from practical action. In Rowntree's York Cocoa Works, free on-site dental care was provided for workers (particularly useful in a sweet factory one would imagine).<sup>9</sup> This was accompanied with a drastic turn-around in the company's fortunes after the slump of the 1920s, and dynamic new marketing manager George Harris used American methods to streamline the company's offerings and launch new advertising campaigns.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, at Cadbury's, paternalistic provision of affordable homes at Bourneville for workers was designed to both make their lives cleaner and healthier and to facilitate their working at the new suburban factory.<sup>11</sup>

Domestic reform projects echoed this type of paternalistic industrial concern. The most famous Quaker reform project, Elizabeth Fry's work to improve conditions of prisoners, was immensely successful and helped establish the Quaker reputation for good works. Of course this type of project has latterly been criticised. Foucault would categorise this type of reform work as an inherently bourgeois project. While perhaps well-intentioned, it has the effect of rationalising punishment - punishing more effectively while failing to question the original rationale behind the punishment.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, Quaker domestic reform always operated within the parameters of the dominant system. Most Quaker business and humanitarian leaders fell firmly within the reformist rather than the radical camps. Domestic projects were often organised along self-help, 'back-on-your-feet' lines. A typical example of this is the massive allotment project, developed in 1926 to ameliorate the effects of unemployment. It was marketed very much as a self-help project with the slogan, 'How £1 produces £17: Help the Unemployed to help themselves'.<sup>13</sup> According to Joan Mary Fry in a pamphlet published 1932

---

<sup>8</sup> *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, No 276, October 1935, p. 275.

<sup>9</sup> Lynn Russell and Neil Hanson, *The Sweethearts* (London: HarperCollins, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Alex Hutchinson, *The Cocoa Works, York* (London: Nestle Publishing, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Deborah Cadbury, *Chocolate Wars: From Cadbury to Kraft; 200 Years of Sweet Success and Bitter Rivalry* (London: HarperPress, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1995 [1977]).

<sup>13</sup> 'Allotments Committee Publications' Vol. 1 1930-1947. FHA.



'The Slow Murder of the Dole' the aim was to spare men the 'despair and deterioration of being useless burdens on the community.'<sup>14</sup> The Allotments Committee had an arrangement whereby the government would double all funds donated, and after 1932 started producing practical pamphlets for recipes from produce and how to build sheds/greenhouses from scrap material. An article from *The Times* in 1936 opined, 'Nothing done by voluntary effort to help the unemployed has exceeded in value the allotment scheme of the Society of Friends.'<sup>15</sup>

We see the domestic self-help philosophy extended to overseas humanitarian work. The most striking example of this is Jack Hoyland's work with allotments in Wales extended to projects in Spain during the Civil War.<sup>16</sup> Jack Hoyland, an influential Birmingham Friend, had become involved with the Quaker project to enable unemployed men to grow their own vegetables through sponsorship of a pioneering allotment project which funded land and equipment and provided training. Hoyland took charge of recruiting teams of schoolboy 'diggers' who volunteered to spend school holidays preparing scrubland for planting.<sup>17</sup> Hoyland's concept of what he felt was socialism in action proved successful, and he extended the scheme to organising groups of boys to go to Quaker relief camps in Republican Spain during the Civil War to restore buildings and prepare land.<sup>18</sup> Hoyland felt that this work was part of an endeavour to alter British national identity by working to break down gaps in class and wealth.<sup>19</sup> He evidently considered this egalitarian project to be an international goal, although it was envisaged that the work in Britain would be ongoing for as long as it was needed, while the work in Spain was intended to be a more temporary relief measure. Certainly, though, the core Quaker principle of equality was extended to those in other countries.

British Quakers had used networks and funds to support relief work in the Franco-Prussian war, the Boer War, the Belgian and French refugee crisis in the First World War, the creation of the Friends Ambulance Unit in 1916, German and Austrian famine relief after the war, famine relief projects in Russia in the 1920s, Armenian genocide relief, reports on combating South African racism and missions in China in the 1920s and 1930s. All these projects had involved extensive work overseas and had necessitated the development of professionalised methods of relief work. On an individual level, many Quakers had international connections through the

---

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 20 November 1936.

<sup>16</sup> See Section 'So What about the Men' in Chapter Two for more on this and also the section in Spain

<sup>17</sup> J.S. Hoyland, *Digging with the Unemployed* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1934) John S Hoyland, *Digging for a New England: The Co-operative Farm for Unemployed Men* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936).

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Spanish Relief Committee. FSC/R/SP/1/3. FHA.

<sup>19</sup> Hoyland, *Digging for a New England*.

explicitly international societies such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's Congress and International Peace movements. On an institutional level, there were very strong links with other countries with a Quaker presence, especially the US, the Scandinavian countries and France. Most of the overseas projects had been based on a combination of providing immediate relief, so food and shelter, and on initiating longer-term self-help projects. Activities such as setting up sewing workshops where women could make clothes for their families and to sell, and recruiting local workers to distribute food relief were typical.

Methods of Quaker humanitarian work have recently begun to receive analysis and some theoretical conceptualisation. Ilana Feldman proposes the theory of 'ethical labour' to define Quaker activity in Gaza 1948-50.<sup>20</sup> By this she means the project was held to be of ethical value both in practical and theoretical terms. The ethical aspect was also related to care of the self. Feldman refers to what she terms the 'Quaker Way', a highly specific philosophy of care. Also examining the post-war period, Jenny Carson characterises Quaker work in Germany in the late 1940s as part of a longer Quaker internationalist tradition and emphasises the importance of personal support to Quaker work.<sup>21</sup> Carson also emphasises how Quaker workers in the field realised private philanthropy was inadequate to cope with the need they witnessed. Reflecting on Quaker business practice the term 'Quaker Capitalism' was coined in 2010 by Deborah Cadbury in her book *Chocolate Wars*, a history of the Birmingham Quaker Cadbury family to whom she is distantly related. She defines 'Quaker Capitalism' as characterised by 'puritanical hard work and sober austerity', a reaction to the excesses of nineteenth century wealth creation for personal gain.<sup>22</sup> All these theories examine the combination of theological motivation and practical manifestations in Quaker humanitarian work.

The Quaker response to fascism was different from previous Quaker international humanitarian projects which, while never missionary, relied heavily on the recipients of aid being both foreign and far away. While projects were still rooted in the Quaker Centres in Barcelona, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Prague, for the first time Quaker humanitarian work involved a blending of overseas and domestic projects. It was clear to those involved in co-ordinating the Quaker response that people under threat from fascism needed primarily to

---

<sup>20</sup> Ilana Feldman, 'The Quaker Way: Ethical Labour and Humanitarian Relief' *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 689-705.

<sup>21</sup> Jenny Carson, 'The Quaker Internationalist Tradition in Displaced Persons Camps, 1945-48' in Gatrell and Baron (eds) *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (Basingstoke:Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Cadbury, *Chocolate Wars*. See the Introduction for a detailed exploration of Quaker Capitalism.

leave their countries of origin and, in a profound departure from previous work, Britain was offered as a place of refuge. There is a distinct difference between domestic social reform and large-scale international humanitarian intervention. There is also a tension between industry, missionary work and humanitarianism, as J.B. Priestley aptly remarked when he described Birmingham as, 'sending missionaries out of one gate and brass idols and machine guns out of the other'.<sup>23</sup> A classic criticism of humanitarianism is that it is just the cousin of missionary work, providing guilt money for the excesses of Western capitalism.<sup>24</sup> Recent research has sought to add nuance to this idea, differentiating between the emotional lives of humanitarian workers and the metanarrative of their social role. Alan Lester has argued that missionaries and humanitarians occupied an ambiguous middle ground with the potential to be a position of great power and positive or negative influence. Which depends partly on the viewpoint of the judge and considerably on the personality of individual missionaries and the nature of the networks behind them.<sup>25</sup> Lester argues that while missionary humanitarianism could represent the best or worst of 'British' activity overseas, it continually operated within a tense middle ground, saying that 'humanitarians threatened a rupture between bourgeois metropolitan Britishness and colonial Britishness'.<sup>26</sup> The Quaker work with refugees from fascism certainly threatened a rupture-refugees (albeit from Europe rather than from British colonies) were, for the first time, invited into the bourgeois metropolitan British home.

Quakerism is, of course, a form of non-conformist Christianity. As such, Quaker business humanitarianism should be considered in the context of its religious framework. Weber was wary of Marxist arguments that the economic base of society produced a superstructure and argued instead that Protestantism could give rise to capitalism in aesthetic and religious parameters.<sup>27</sup> For Weber, the building of capital wealth was a sign of ascetic religious self-denial and was rooted in a Calvinist fear of damnation. The public-service side of Quakerism can certainly be seen in the context of asceticism and a fear of the moral consequences of decadence. The intersection between economics and morality was consciously studied by many leading Quakers. In his voluminous personal papers, held at the Borthwick Institute in York, Rowntree frequently refers to the moral problems of modern economics. Hobson and Keynes were his economists of choice, and he kept up to date with the latest debates, often in

---

<sup>23</sup> J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London: Heinemann, 1968 [1934]) p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> See Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Alan Lester, 'British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire' *History Workshop Journal*, No. 54 (Autumn, 2002), pp 24-48.

<sup>26</sup> Lester, 'British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire' p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*.

direct correspondence with the authors.<sup>28</sup> Quaker business leaders in the early years of the twentieth century were innovative in adopting new theoretical approaches, and in professionalising business structures. The implementation of clear managerial structures with well-defined job roles was undertaken across many Quaker businesses at this time, and a manager was particularly valued for both communication skills and social values. In a 1935 report, Lawrence Richardson wrote, 'What we need is to make it clearer and surer that only by serving the community can a person earn his livelihood or secure advancement.'<sup>29</sup> Economic success for Quakers carried with it the moral responsibility of social duty, and leading Quakers felt both business and social duty should be rationalised by the implementation of professional structures.

In more direct ways, Quaker business supported humanitarian work. In 1936, [Benjamin] Seeböhm Rowntree appealed to Quaker chocolate firms to send donations of much-needed milk and chocolate to Spain. Shuttleworth, Rowntrees, several small firms and Dorothy Cadbury on behalf of Cadbury-Frys responded.<sup>30</sup> Dorothy Cadbury was particularly generous, offering a monthly gift of 24 specially-mixed cases of milk and cocoa powder.<sup>31</sup> One 7lb tin of Cadbury cocoa and milk drink [of which there were 12 in a case] made a 200 gram drink for 100 children.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the gift, additional milk, specially formulated for the project, could be purchased directly from Cadburys at cost price. Gifts and purchases of this sort, directly from Quaker business to Quaker humanitarian projects, were commonplace and did not receive any contemporaneous publicity.

At the 'Quakers in Industry' conference in Birmingham in 1938 the aim was to consolidate business and social duty. This view was not restricted to a British perspective, and it was taken for granted that this project would involve international co-operation. Herbert C. Tanner, president, is quoted as saying:

Finance should be put in its right place as servant and not master of industry. This may help us to solve the paradoxical problem of poverty and plenty. No Quaker can share the all too prevalent view that prosperity and scarcity travel hand in hand, or that there can be a question of overproduction until the needs of all have been fully met. This is an international problem and cannot be solved by any country in isolation.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Borthwick Institute, York. Benjamin Seeböhm Rowntree Papers, BSR Box 7, foreign Correspondence.

<sup>29</sup> Friends' Quarterly Examiner, No 276, October 1935 p. 306.

<sup>30</sup> Undated memo. Friends' Service Committee Barcelona Correspondence. FSC/R/SP/3/2. FHA.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Letter Kenty Cooper to Dorothy Thompson. 8 August 1938. FSC/R/SP/4. FHA.

<sup>33</sup> 'The Problems of Industry: Quaker Conference', *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1938.

In the 1930s, Quaker businesses were wrestling over the lines between state and employer provision of social welfare. Large industrialists like the Cadburys and Rowntrees tended to enact a paternalist form of capitalism, providing generous workplace facilities and provisions for their employees while encouraging the state to make these reforms universal. These attitudes were noted by their contemporaries. Lyndall Urwick, the influential management consultant, described Rowntree as ‘the British management movement’s greatest pioneer’.<sup>34</sup> While pioneering, Quaker industrialists were not radical. In his 1921 work, *The Human Factor in Business*, Rowntree acknowledges the desire among ‘more extreme thinkers’ to overthrow the system.<sup>35</sup> He takes a more moderate line, stating that, ‘the overwhelming majority of workers are in favour of evolving a better state of things out of what exists at present, rather than scrapping it entirely and starting afresh. Personally, I agree with that view.’<sup>36</sup> He later goes on to state that he sees industry as a national service, whose conditions should be managed by government legislation.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Quaker humanitarian workers were wrestling over the lines between state and private welfare provision and trying to encourage more government involvement. The humanitarian and business projects were by no means separate. Both domestically and overseas, Quaker businesses in the 1930s were rooted in the concept that wealth creation was inherently linked to social duty. Part of the rationale for making money was to use that money for social good. Repeatedly, Quaker humanitarian appeals were financially backed by Quaker business, both in a formal and informal capacity. The connections between industrial and humanitarian projects were strong on a conceptual and practical level, creating a specifically Quaker form of ‘business humanitarianism’.

This ‘business humanitarianism’ was well-established and continually evolving in the 1930s. However it was entirely removed from the general public perception of Quakers. In the next section I use contemporaneous newspaper and magazine sources to build a picture of the public opinion of Quakers in the 1930s. The entire humanitarian project was enabled as much by what people thought Quakers were doing as what they were actually doing. On the one hand the Society of Friends, drawing from business structures, was increasingly professional, rational and outward-looking. The media representation and public perception was diametrically opposite to this, with Quakers being vaguely seen as slightly odd do-gooders. Far from hindering the success of humanitarian projects, however, this misconception actually

---

<sup>34</sup> Lyndall Fownes Urwick, *The Golden Book of Management: A Historical Record of the Life and Work of Seventy Pioneers* (London: Arno Press, 1979 [1956]). p. 73. It should be remembered that Urwick had been employed by Rowntree as a management consultant.

<sup>35</sup> B.S. Rowntree, *The Human Factor in Business* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1921). p. viii.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 156.

allowed some quite radical humanitarian work to be carried out under the radar of public scepticism.

### **Gandhi's Goat and Quaker Oats: Quakers, the Press and Public Opinion in the 1930s**

*There are few who have not at some time heard of the Society of Friends, the Quakers. Perhaps the name brings visions of pacifism and bonnets, of chocolate and good works, with William Penn and Elizabeth Fry hovering uncertainly in the background. For many that is all, beyond perhaps an association with a certain brand of breakfast cereal.<sup>38</sup>*

*-A. Tegla Davies, 1947*

When Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Britain in September 1931 to attend the Round Table Conferences, his decision to wear the traditional dress of an Indian peasant attracted considerable mystified publicity from the press. The press was also fascinated by the potential whereabouts of the goat from which it was supposed Gandhi got the supply of goat's milk he was known for drinking. A bright spark on Fleet Street decided that the most likely location for Gandhi to keep his goat was the basement of Friends House in Euston, which was the main Quaker Meeting House in Britain, and a press pack began to gather on the doorstep every morning, hoping to get a shot of this elusive animal. Trudi Byrne, who worked as a receptionist at Friends House, remembers Horace the doorman, fed up with the constant harassment of the press pack, telling a group of reporters that this phantom goat was in the basement and directing them to the very darkest, dirtiest corner behind the boilers.<sup>39</sup> After this incident, they were less enthusiastic in their quest.

This somewhat whimsical story nevertheless reveals something about the way Quakers were perceived in the 1930s. Why did the press, in their hunt for a story about Gandhi's goat, decide Friends House was the obvious hiding place? In this section, I outline the public impression of Quakers in Britain in the 1930s which is central to understanding their ability to work with refugees. While in general, Quakers were either ignored or seen as amiable, slightly old-fashioned do-gooders in the British media, there was a distinctly subversive undertone to their representation, partly due to the Gandhi connection, but also due to repeated moments where their particular form of interventionist internationalist humanitarianism came into conflict with the general British self-image as a liberal and democratic country.

---

<sup>38</sup> A. Tegla Davies, *Friends Ambulance Unit: The Story of the F.A.U in the Second World War 1939-1946* (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1947). Prologue.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Trudi Byrne, 15 February 2011.

It is fair to say that Gandhi tended to receive a warm reception among left-wing, pacifist and internationalist sections of British society. His ideas did not, however, meet with universal approval. Emily Greene Balch, pacifist, Quaker and feminist, was critical of Gandhi's 1930 Satyagraha campaigns saying, 'An ultimatum is in essence a war method and issues from a war mentality. One never presents an ultimatum to a friend and if Gandhi does not consider the British as friends-however wrong and however wicked-then he has surrendered something more precious than the non-violence principle-the good will principle.'<sup>40</sup> In *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Niebuhr was critical of Gandhi, pointing towards his boycott of British cotton affecting the working poor, saying that the consequences of nonviolence could themselves be violent.<sup>41</sup> Of course, burgeoning anti-imperialist sentiment in Britain would rejoinder that British exploitation of Indian cotton could itself have similar consequences.

Gandhi did, however, meet a generally warm reception among Quakers. Quaker sentiment on this issue was perhaps expressed most articulately by an American Friend, Richard Gregg, who had spent four years on Gandhi's Ashram. Effectively a response to Niebuhr, Gregg argues that non-violence was transformative; it threw the opponent off-guard and quickly led to long-term social change. In a particularly poetic phrase, he referred to Satyagraha as 'moral jiu-jitsu'.<sup>42</sup> In practical as well as philosophical terms, Quakers had become increasingly involved with Gandhi's work. Settlement pioneer and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) member Hilda Cashmore spent several years in India in the 1920s setting up Ashrams along hybrid Quaker/Buddhist lines.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the most notable Quaker connection was Horace Alexander, who, was involved in lobbying for Indian independence in the 1930s and 1940s and worked closely with Gandhi as an intermediary between Indian and Western powers. Along with his colleague Agatha Harrison, he was later a crucial unofficial diplomat in his role as Quaker humanitarian administrator in India and Pakistan.<sup>44</sup> Much of this work was carried out almost entirely without public knowledge, and has only recently begun to receive limited research attention. However, there was some contemporaneous reporting of Quaker projects in the mainstream British press, and it is to these I now turn.

---

<sup>40</sup> Balch to Mrs. Cousins, 31 July 1930, quoted in Linda Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before 1941* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 102.

<sup>41</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932 [1948]).

<sup>42</sup> Richard Gregg, *Gandhism Versus Socialism* (New York: John Day, 1932); Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence* (Philadelphia, Penn.: J. B. Lippincott, 1934). p. 56.

<sup>43</sup> Oldfield *Doers of the Word*.

<sup>44</sup> Geoffrey Carnall, *Gandhi's Interpreter: A Life of Horace Alexander* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

*The Manchester Guardian* frequently gave a platform to Quaker humanitarian projects, although they were not always identified as Quaker projects. Sympathetic articles focused on allotments for unemployed men, the plight of German and Austrian refugees, and support for victims of the Spanish Civil War. Apart from a brief article detailing the arrest of a Quaker worker in Berlin, the majority of stories in *The Manchester Guardian* were essentially reworded Press releases, usually from leading Quaker humanitarian worker Edith Pye.<sup>45</sup> The stories outline the Quaker work and drafts of several articles later printed in *The Manchester Guardian* can be seen in the archives at Friends House. A lengthy article by Nancy Cunard about the plight of the Spanish refugees evidently got most of the information from an interview with the Quaker doctor Audrey Russell.<sup>46</sup> Another long article details an interview with Pye.<sup>47</sup> Overall, articles in *The Manchester Guardian* which involved Quakers were nearly all about humanitarian work; either the work in Spain, work with refugees from Germany and Austria<sup>48</sup>, or the Quaker report into racism in South Africa.<sup>49</sup> Two exceptions were a book review of a biography of Elizabeth Fry, authored by Hubert Peet, then the editor of *The Friend*.<sup>50</sup> The main political act reported on was the widespread Quaker opposition to the Incitement to Disaffection Bill in 1934 which they felt was an insult to civil liberties.<sup>51</sup>

In *The Times*, a document search reveals that most mentions of the word 'Quaker' are in the hunting section, due to a 'Quaker's Spinneys' on the course of the Cottesmore hunt.<sup>52</sup> A few controversial stories involving Quakers were reported. The story of Beryl Aylward, a Quaker teacher from Coventry dismissed for refusing to take part in Empire Day celebrations was reported, as was the arrest of the relief worker Corder Catchpool in Berlin.<sup>53</sup> The death of young Quaker relief worker H. Bingham in Jerusalem was discussed in several articles.<sup>54</sup> In

<sup>45</sup> 'Englishmen in Berlin: 2 Arrests Yesterday: Charwoman Responsible' *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 April 1933.

<sup>46</sup> Nancy Cunard, 'The Spanish Refugees in France: 100,000 still in Camps', *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 August 1939.

<sup>47</sup> 'The Tragedy of the Flight from Spain: A Helper Returns from Perpignan' *The Manchester Guardian*, 22 Feb 1939.

<sup>48</sup> 'German Refugees: Plight of the non-Aryan: A European 'Untouchable'' *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 Dec 1936; Charles Roden Buxton, 'The German Refugees: Aid Given in France: Desperate Need for Funds' *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 November 1933.

<sup>49</sup> 'Racial Feeling in South Africa: Depth of Feeling on both sides of the Colour Line' *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 Dec 1938; 'Relief work in China: Immense Problems, Quakers' New Proposals' *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 September 1938.

<sup>50</sup> Hubert Peet, 'Elizabeth Fry' *The Observer*, 9 May 1937.

<sup>51</sup> 'The Sedition Bill: Manchester Protest Meeting calls for its Withdrawal' *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 May 1934.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, 'A Good day with the Burton', *The Times*, 10 February 1930.

<sup>53</sup> 'A Quaker Teacher's Dismissal', *The Times*, 29 June 1932; 'Quaker Teacher's Dismissal' *The Times*, 22 July 1932. 'British Subjects Arrested' *The Times*, 5 April 1933.

<sup>54</sup> 'English Quaker's Death in Jerusalem' *The Times*, 19 June 1939.



general, articles which mentioned Quakers tended to be retrospective, on the life of William Penn, for example, to coincide with the 250 year celebration of his life held at Friends House.<sup>55</sup> Or on Joseph Pease, 'The first Quaker MP'.<sup>56</sup> There was an article in 1938 from the Barcelona Correspondent, who obviously knew the Quaker relief workers on the ground, 'in the enchanted land, full of memories of the legend of the Holy Grail, whence soar the peaks of Montserrat, now spearing a fleecy cloud, now solemnly aloof, civil war appears as a curse that should bring to such a paradise the sharp shadow of hunger; but there it is, eloquently vouched for by the queues of pinch-faced children at the doors of the canteens.'<sup>57</sup> This article is almost unbearably sentimental and takes a different tone from *The Manchester Guardian*, does not especially appeal for help. It does however say the Quaker work is 'undertaken on purely humanitarian grounds untinged by politics.' *The Times*, however, did mention two Quaker humanitarian projects. In 1938 it reported the idea of the Kindertransport as a Quaker proposal.<sup>58</sup> It also reported the successes of the Quaker Germany Emergency Committee in helping Christian refugees emigrate.<sup>59</sup>

Of course, the 1930s saw the emergence of a visual picture-based rhetoric, clearly indicated by the success of *Picture Post* which, first published in 1938, was an immediate commercial success. It was estimated that it was read by up to 80% of the British population.<sup>60</sup> The visual rhetoric around Quaker Oats advertising had a real impact on the way Quakers were seen by the general population. In *Picture Post* the most prominent mentions of Quakers were in large innovative advertisements for Quaker Oats which appeared in the magazine each week, as well as in other printed newspapers and magazines. The images in *Picture Post* showed modern young healthy celebrities in large well-designed campaigns. While these advertisements had nothing to do with the religious Society of Friends, they created associations in the minds of readers of Quakers with food, nourishment and tradition. The name 'Quaker Oats' had originally been selected by the founder of the company in 1877 due to its associations with honesty and purity. This was the image the company had sought to maintain in its adverts ever since.

---

<sup>55</sup> 'William Penn' *The Times*, 11 October 1932.

<sup>56</sup> 'The First Quaker MP' *The Times*, 14 February 1933.

<sup>57</sup> 'Starvation in Catalonia: Efforts to Save the Children' *The Times*, 5 August 1938.

<sup>58</sup> 'Non-Aryan Children: A New Proposal' *The Times*, 22 November 1938.

<sup>59</sup> 'Christian Refugees: Quaker Committee's help in Emigration' *The Times*, 11 July 1939.

<sup>60</sup> According to the estimates of the publishers. See the Picture Post Historical Archive online at [www.galegroup.com](http://www.galegroup.com).

The first advert, in the first edition of Picture Post on 15 October, 1938 showed film star Florence Desmond, and encouraged readers to 'join the Quaker Health Brigade'.<sup>61</sup>

**Florence Desmond**  
famous actress  
and film star

SAYS  
"QUAKER OATS  
every day for  
me to be sure"

Ever since  
childhood she has  
known the vital  
importance of the  
Nerve-Nourishing Vitamin B in  
**QUAKER OATS**

WE ALL NEED IT  
to combat nervousness, sleeplessness  
and poor appetite

SHE'S vital—she's alive—she's terrific  
—she's Florence Desmond!  
Seeing her you say "How can she keep  
up the pace?" Well, one thing, she makes  
quite certain she's not going short of the  
tonic, nerve-nourishing Vitamin B. She  
starts each day with Quaker Oats.  
For Quaker Oats, in our mothers' words,  
is "good for you." And now, brilliant  
research has shown why it is good for you.

The tonic vitamin—a  
vital daily need

Quaker Oats is rich in muscle-building  
protein, besides containing phosphorus and  
iron. And—it is especially rich in Vitamin B.  
This mysterious substance is the all-  
too-rare factor in food which is our vital  
safeguard against

Headaches, "nerviness," irritability  
and forgetfulness.  
Loss of weight, strength and appetite.  
Any of these may lead to the gravest  
consequences.

Moreover, children must have Vitamin B  
daily in order to grow normally and healthily,  
with sound constitutions!

Get it in Quaker Oats!

Here's another fact about Vitamin B: the  
body cannot store it up—must have it daily!  
That's why the "Quaker Oats break-  
fast" is the rule rather than the exception  
with all people with sound nerves. Creamy  
and hot—how much nicer than just a cold  
cereal warmed with hot milk.

Ask for Quick Quaker—it's so easy and  
quick to prepare—takes four minutes!

1. Recognise this  
little chubby  
face? Yes, our  
own Florence  
Desmond as a  
baby. Like  
other healthy  
boys and girls  
she was a  
Quaker baby.

2. Hollywood  
fame  
long hours in a  
film studio —  
and still Flo-  
rence Desmond  
has enough  
energy at the  
end of the day  
for gymnastics.  
She's glad of the  
energy her daily  
Quaker Oats  
gives her.

Join the **QUAKER**  
**HEALTH PARADE**

40 Vitalising Breakfasts for 8½d

Image 1. 'Join the Quaker Health Brigade' Picture Post, 15 October, 1938.<sup>62</sup>

In what was still visually innovative, photographs were used instead of drawings. The focus on health was very much of its time. Adverts in Picture Post tended to focus on the health benefits of products, and appealed to the family market. Each week, Picture Post showed a different Quaker Oats advert along the same theme, using a different celebrity including Tommy Lawton the footballer and Carroll Leavis the radio star. The adverts cleverly tapped into three concerns; glamour and celebrity, family health, and modernity. The adverts highlighted that Quaker Oats could be made into a hot and nourishing breakfast in only four minutes, and would ensure health for the whole family, particularly children.

<sup>61</sup> 'Join the Quaker Health Brigade' Picture Post, 15 October 1938.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

This theme of children was most apparent in the only two recurring advertising features, the first of which showed the St. Neots Quadruplets, who had featured extensively in newspapers. The advert attributed their health to the Quaker Oats their mother fed them, and follow-up adverts in subsequent issues showed them growing bigger and stronger. The other innovative child advert featured precocious ringletted child star Shirley Temple. Presenting two new product lines-Quaker Wheat and Quaker Rice-the adverts showed Shirley deliberating over which was her favourite. It offered readers a free photograph of Shirley if they wrote in giving their own favourite.

Again, it's worth underscoring that Quakers didn't have much to do with Quaker Oats, although the company did donate oatmeal to Quaker humanitarian programmes from time to time. Since the company originally took its name on the basis of the impression of Quakers as healthy and pure, it is especially significant that for many people, the adverts had become better known than the religion. In the public imagination, heavy advertising of Quaker Oats created a reciprocal link between Quakers and a kind of healthy, wholesome Puritan existence, which still kept up with modern trends. In addition to this advertising, however, the centre-left editorial tone of *Picture Post* did make occasional reference to Quakers, notably in a feature on the Free Churches in 1939.<sup>63</sup> The article summed up the general attitude to Quakers when it stated:

It is not so much their simple and informal organisation which has made Quakers famous, as their refusal to practice any kind of violence, whether in war or peace, and their astonishing response to human need...today, the Friends' Service Committee carries on the tradition by its work for land Settlement in this country and for the rescue of refugees from Central Europe.<sup>64</sup>

So, how did this wholesome yet subversive print media and visual rhetoric tie in to what the British public really thought? I turned to Mass Observation to gauge an impression of general public opinion of Quakers in the 1930s. MO was mostly interested in Quakers in the context of their pacifism and conscientious objection. A July 1940 study on pacifists did not single out Quakers, apart from one response which said, 'if Conscientious Objectors don't want to kill, they should be made to save life-like the Quakers.'<sup>65</sup> While the general British response to conscientious objectors was fairly negative-a 1940 survey in Fulham found 40% of the people

---

<sup>63</sup> 'The Free Churches', *Picture Post*, 15 April 1939.

<sup>64</sup> 'The Free Churches', *Picture Post*, 15 April 1939.

<sup>65</sup> Mass Observation Conscientious Objection and Pacifism, 1939-1944. Pacifism Interview. SxMOA 1/2/6/3/B. MOA.

surveyed were antagonistic towards them-Quakers did tend to be differentiated.<sup>66</sup> A tribunal judge responsible for deciding who was exempt from military service interviewed in *The Star* said, 'The position of the Friends is well known and they have generously opened their ambulance units to many outside their own body.'<sup>67</sup> The Mass Observation report highlighted that Quakers took widespread knowledge of their pacifism for granted and instead focused their efforts on war relief and support for other conscientious objectors.<sup>68</sup>

The general public impression of Quakers seemed to be pleasant, wholesome and humanitarian, yet alternative, left-wing and indefinably 'odd'. While the newspapers rarely mentioned Quakers, when they did it tended to be in the context of either humanitarianism or slightly subversive political activity, such as strong associations with the Gandhi visit. The visual association with the Quaker Oats adverts was also pervasive, and Quakers tended to be linked with ideas of health and purity. George Orwell, who usually assessed public opinion with blunt journalistic insight, associated Quakers firmly with the Left saying in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 'One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words 'Socialism' and 'Communism' draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist and feminist in England.'<sup>69</sup>

In the 1930s, pacifists were being forced to confront the limitations of their beliefs. In the face of burgeoning imperialist violence across the world, Reinhold Niebuhr and others began to reinterpret pacifism as impotent in the face of social injustice while acknowledging the effectiveness of Gandhian techniques. A dismissal of 'Eastern' religious and cultural practices persisted though, with Niebuhr insisting that Christianity was superior to Buddhism and Hinduism.<sup>70</sup>

---

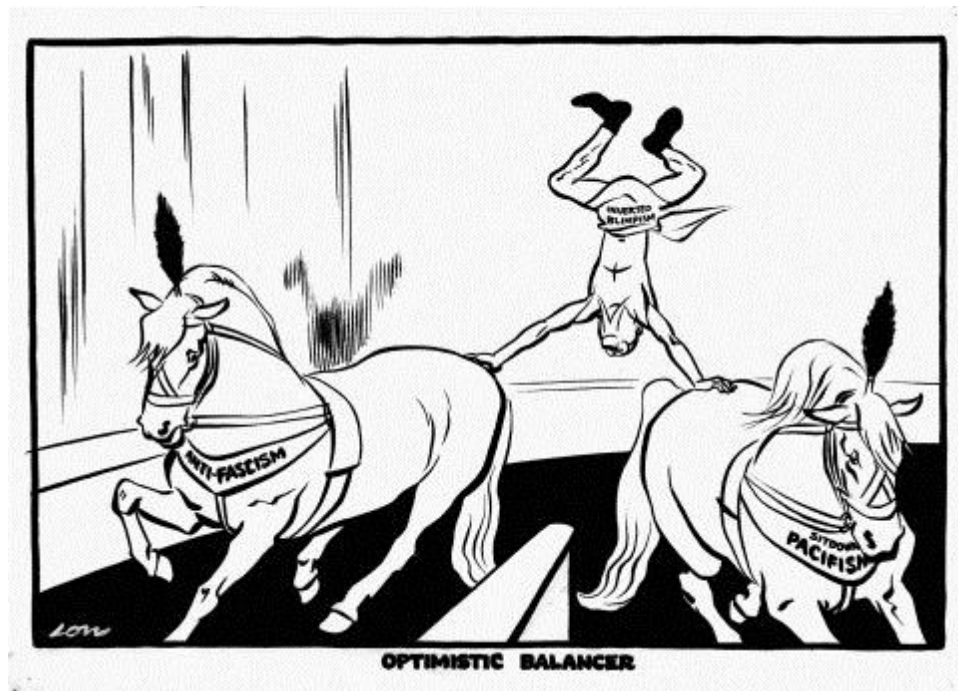
<sup>66</sup> Mass Observation Conscientious Objection and Pacifism, 1939-1944. 'Report on Conscientious Objectors'. June 1940. MOA/TC6/1/A. MOA.

<sup>67</sup> *The Star* 15 April 1940.

<sup>68</sup> Mass Observation Conscientious Objection and Pacifism, 1939-1944. 'Report on Conscientious Objectors'. June 1940. MOA TC6/1/A. MOA.

<sup>69</sup> George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 [1937]) p. 152.

<sup>70</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, "Would Jesus be a Modernist Today?" *The World Tomorrow* 7, no. 3 (March 1929).



**Image 2. David Low, 'Optimistic Balancer' *The Evening Standard*, 13 January 1939.<sup>71</sup>**

Meanwhile in the British context, even Low felt that pacifism, while commendable in theory, in practice simply left the gate open for fascism. The Quakers, associated with pacifism, Gandhi, the wholesome purity of Quaker Oats, good works and a slight air of subversion, indeed trod a line of optimistic balance in terms of their public representation. In October 1931, Gandhi visited the main Quaker Study Centre, Woodbrooke, near Birmingham, invited by his friend and interpreter Horace Alexander, who he described as a 'Friend of India'. To this day, the Woodbrooke Booklet includes a short anecdote about the visit, describing how Gandhi brought his own goat and, in cooking his dinner on an open fire, managed to burn a hole in the carpet. As *The Friend* reported in 2006, however, this is not quite true. 'Indeed, he drank goat's milk, but it was from a local farm animal, collected by the warden's son, Martin Cadbury. His meals were cooked by his own entourage, but no information is forthcoming about damaged carpets. Gandhi, however, did sleep on the floor.'<sup>72</sup> Ultimately, Quakers in the 1930s were able to weather potentially unpopular associations due in the main to a vague public misunderstanding of their role. This public representation was not, however, created without direct intervention from Quakers themselves. In the next section I outline the development of what I term the 'visual correspondence' created by Quaker humanitarian workers which

<sup>71</sup>David Low, 'Optimistic Balancer' *The Evening Standard*, 13 January 1939. DL1411. The National Cartoon Archive.

<sup>72</sup>*The Friend*, 2 October 2006.

utilised the increasingly available medium of amateur photography to create a particular discourse around humanitarian work, specifically about the representation of children.

### **A 'Visual Correspondence': Photography and Interwar Humanitarianism**

While the public representation of Quakers may have been guided by porridge, good works and an air of vague subversion, behind the scenes Quaker humanitarian workers were highly innovative publicists. Although the mainstream media, as detailed above, were not especially interested in humanitarian projects, *The Manchester Guardian* was a notable exception, frequently giving a platform to Quaker work. In addition, the Quaker publication *The Friend* published extensively on humanitarian work. The most striking aspect of the publicity around Quaker humanitarian work in the 1930s was the deployment of a sophisticated visual rhetoric around humanitarian aid in publicity pamphlets and posters. This relied heavily on the business structures, culture of professional advertising and public image outlined in the previous two sections. The use of a carefully constructed photographic rhetoric around refugees was an innovative departure from mainstream press photography and amounted to what I term a 'visual correspondence' between Quaker relief workers, refugees and the British public. Throughout this thesis I use humanitarian photography as source material to emphasise how support for refugees was legitimised. In this section, I outline the context and significance of this concept.

The 1930s have come to be recognised as a 'golden age' of photojournalism. Photojournalists were seen as performing a liberal, humanist and reformist role. This is implicitly accompanied by a heroic narrative about the mythic photographer, seen as an intrepid and daring crusader exposing social injustice. Robert Capa, Dorothea Lange or even Jacob Riis epitomise this image.<sup>73</sup> The photojournalist tradition was often a left-wing endeavour where the moral categories of social reform were linked to class issues and imperialism. The Mass-Observation Worktown project where working-class subjects were photographed by Humphrey Spender, an upper-middle-class, left-wing observer, was emblematic of problems presented by this form of documentary, where the 'anthropology of ourselves' goal of M-O inevitably reproduced dilemmas of class, representation and power. The effects and limitations of documentary photography were contested at the time. The original edition of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, published in 1936, included 32 photographs which were included at the request of the

---

<sup>73</sup> Martha Rosler, 'In, around and afterthoughts on documentary photography' in *Decoys and Disruptions* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2004).

publishers (Gollancz) but were later removed from the text as it was feared they would cause offence.<sup>74</sup> While there were significant challenges presented by this type of photography, it unquestionably represented a change in the way people were represented and imagined.

This socially-minded photography was received by a British population which was increasingly visually literate. Cinema, crucially, was a leisure activity enjoyed across class and social lines.<sup>75</sup> With the simultaneous rise of both cinema and the popular national daily press, mass-produced images became a central part of cultural life in Britain. Crucially, photographic images were now relied upon by the general public to tell stories, entertain, and sell products. Humanitarian photography has not previously been considered as part of this shift but, I contend throughout this thesis, fits into this trajectory. Humanitarian workers consciously sought images for publicity material which would engender public sympathy and promote donations. This, of course, was not new. The *type* of images which it was felt would meet these requirements were, however, radically different from the images which had previously been used in humanitarian campaigns, especially regarding the representation of children.

The first British example of using photography of children as a publicity tool for humanitarian fundraising was the notorious Barnardo's photographs of the 1870s which showed 'before' and 'after' images of children who had been 'rescued' by Dr. Barnardo (the prominent philanthropist who founded the 'Ragged School' in 1867 to care for poor children in East London) and cared for in his London foster homes. They created intense public debate when Dr. Barnardo was taken to court over the images, not because they were manipulated, but over whether Barnardo or the parents of the children 'owned' the right to the image.<sup>76</sup> Barnardo used photographs of children to begin to reorient social welfare as an outwardly commercial venture, tainted with the stamp of advertising which added an element of implied corruption and agenda to photography.

Emily Hobhouse pioneered the use of political-humanitarian photographs of children to 'appeal to the conscience' of Britain in her general campaign against the use of concentration camps in the Boer war. By far the greatest public response was to the shocking photograph of Lizzie van Zyl, a naked and emaciated child. Hobhouse did not take the photograph herself, but she did meet Lizzie in Blomfontein Camp, and sent an uncaptioned copy of the photograph

---

<sup>74</sup> Peter Davison, 'A Note on the Text', Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

<sup>75</sup> Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England*.

<sup>76</sup> See Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-Century Photography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

back to England in early 1901 to be used as a 'case'.<sup>77</sup> Despite controversy over the 'truth' of the photograph based around whether Lizzie's emaciation predated her arrival at Blomfontein, the image was frequently reproduced and became a symbol of British cruelty in South Africa.

Partly due to Hobhouse's groundbreaking work, and partly due to the growing availability of cheap cameras suitable for amateur photographers, images of suffering children were increasingly used in humanitarian appeals from the beginning of the twentieth century. As relief workers taking photographs on the ground, Quakers were at the forefront of humanitarian photography, with Alice Harris in the Congo in the 1910s and Francesca Wilson in Vienna and Russia in the 1920s being leading proponents of the genre.<sup>78</sup> Notably, photographs of naked and starving children in humanitarian campaigns were restricted to children from foreign countries-British children were always shown at least partly clothed.

In 1914, the British government permitted the entry of up to 250,000 refugees from 'Brave Little Belgium' in an unprecedented offer of grudging hospitality. Private philanthropy made up for the lack of government funds, although many of the refugees were middle-class and self-supporting.<sup>79</sup> A massive level of interest among the British public was focused on helping Belgian families, officially under the auspices of the War Refugees Committee but, as Tony Kushner has pointed out, most of the relief work was organised autonomously at a local level.<sup>80</sup> Representations of Belgian refugees in the media did not make a special case for children, except for occasional sentimental human interest stories such as one published in *The Times* in 1914, where a woman who adopted two orphaned Belgian children discovered they were in fact the children of her own long-lost sister.<sup>81</sup> When there was discussion of German atrocities in Belgium, including the notorious and quickly discredited stories of bayoneted babies, the tone of articles included women and children equally as undeserving civilian victims of war.<sup>82</sup>

In 1919, the Save the Children Fund was set up in response to the famine in Germany and Austria resulting from the British Blockade. A conscious decision was made by co-founders Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy Buxton to focus aid on children as they saw child

---

<sup>77</sup> Michael Godby, 'Confronting Horror: Emily Hobhouse and the Concentration Camp Photographs of the South African War', *Kronos*, No. 32 (November 2006) pp. 34-48.

<sup>78</sup> See the entries for both women in Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*.

<sup>79</sup> Peter Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War* (Garland Publishing, 1982).

<sup>80</sup> Tony Kushner, 'Local Heroes: Belgian Refugees in Britain during the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 18:1 (1999), pp. 1-28.

<sup>81</sup> 'A Romance of the War' *The Times*, 7 November 1914.

<sup>82</sup> For example, 'Cavalry Charges. Attack on British Lines Foiled', *The Times*, 27 August 1914.



starvation as an unnatural and barbaric continuation of the war.<sup>83</sup> The use of a controversial image of a starving Austrian baby on the front of a Save the Children Fund pamphlet entitled, 'A Starving Baby and Our Blockade has Caused This' brought a prosecution for Jebb and a great deal of publicity and sympathy for her campaign. The creation of the Save the Children Fund was a turning point in representations of children. Throughout the 1920s, children were increasingly represented in humanitarian photography as innocent victims of conflict, and the trajectory of using children as a non-political humanitarian exception continued.

The 1930s saw a radical departure in humanitarian photography. From showing images of naked and starving children in foreign lands, humanitarian agencies began to appeal to British public sympathy by showing photographs of foreign children looking happy, healthy and, in short, just like ideal British children. In Barthés' definition of the dual elements of photography, the scene, or 'stadium', elicits vague emotion and general understanding. By contrast the 'punctum' of the photograph is the sting, the aspect which makes a personal impact.<sup>84</sup> Humanitarian photographs, in order to be successful in their dual role of raising awareness and fundraising, must make a study of the universal punctum. The aim of photographs of children as reproduced in publicity leaflets is to encourage the viewer to think, 'that could be my child. Deploying photographs of familiar-looking children as a kind of 'universal punctum', a distinct 'visual correspondence' was created by Quaker and other humanitarian organisations in the 1930s, capitalising on increased public visual literacy to engender support for refugees in a clear marketing strategy.

### **Quaker Women: Speaking Truth to Power**

Quaker women were propitiously positioned to be central to work with refugees in the 1930s, given their long history of social engagement. In this section, I give a brief outline of gender within the Society of Friends and outline the significant leadership role of Quaker women in the 1930s. Relationships of kinship, network, sisterhood and partnership are central to understanding women's social and political engagement within Quaker humanitarianism; and I establish here that we need to acknowledge the intersection of emotional lives and political work.

---

<sup>83</sup> See Philip E. Veerman, *The Rights of the Child and the Changing Image of Childhood* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992).

<sup>84</sup> 'stadium' and 'punctum' being Barthés's original terms. See Roland Barthés, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980).

The Society of Friends, formed amid the chaos of the English Civil War, was the first religious sect to embody religious equality, giving women and men equal rights and responsibilities. This was based on the simple principle that there is 'inner light' in every person, regardless of sex, creed, colour or status. Margaret Fell, the wife of founder George Fox, was a prominent preacher, and publication of her book *Women's Speaking Justified* in 1666 has been seen as a milestone in feminist history. Fell believed that to forbid women from expressing the voice of God was to counteract the will of God:

Those that speak against the Power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a Woman, simply by reason of her Sex, or because she is a Woman, not regarding the Seed, and Spirit, and Power that speaks in her; such speak against Christ and his Church, and are of the Seed of the Serpent, wherein lodgeth Enmity.<sup>85</sup>

Women were certainly *persecuted* equally to men in the fervour of persecution experienced by Quakers between the 1660 Restoration and the 1689 Toleration Act.<sup>86</sup> In Bristol, for example, there is evidence to suggest that in 1681 children of Quakers were publicly flogged for holding secret meetings in woodlands while their parents were imprisoned.<sup>87</sup>

Despite the theory, Quaker women did not experience a gender-neutral Elysium. Social conventions inevitably impacted on expected gender roles within the Society of Friends. Indeed, due to the need to marry within the society to retain membership, some women experienced intense pressure around marriage and family. There remained, however, a distinct tradition of vocal and politically active women, both married and unmarried. Even Ruth Fry, who was by no means progressive, took the fact that Quaker men and women worked together as equals for granted, calling it the 'Quaker habit.'<sup>88</sup> Many prominent female social reformers were Quaker either by birthright or conviction.<sup>89</sup>

While this distinct social and political role of American Quaker women is frequently acknowledged, particularly in histories of the feminist movement, details of British Quaker

---

<sup>85</sup> Margaret Fell, *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed of by the Scriptures, All such as speak by the Spirit and Power of the Lord Jesus*, 1666 (Quaker Heritage Press Online Texts, Accessed Jun 10, 2012).

<sup>86</sup> Which responded to public anger by granting some religious leniency to dissenters.

<sup>87</sup> Jim McNeill, 'The peculiar history of the sect known at The Quakers' *Bristol Radical History Pamphleteer* #17.

<sup>88</sup> A. Ruth Fry, *A Quaker Adventure: The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd. 1926) p. 17.

<sup>89</sup> 'Quaker by conviction' is how people who have converted to Quakerism rather than having been born into the faith are known within the Society of Friends.

women's history are rarely explored.<sup>90</sup> Recent work by Sandra Stanley Holton is a notable exception to this and I use her research throughout this project. Holton has drawn particular attention to the significance of female kinship networks among Quaker women. In a resonant half-joke, Quakers often remark they are part of a 'hereditary social club.' This flippant comment belies the depth of group identification. Bonds of sisterhood, whether real or imagined, among non-conformist, pacifist and feminist women in the early part of the twentieth century underpinned the increasing professionalization of social work.

The Society of Friends is a religious organisation, not a group for social or humanitarian work. However, the core principle of 'Speaking Truth to Power' is manifested in a form of social witness, which motivates individual members to raise concerns at Meeting for Sufferings. Other members of the Meeting will endeavour to support the conscience of their co-religionist by forming small voluntary Committees to take such practical interventionist steps as they feel appropriate. Depending on the individuals concerned, and the general sympathy for the particular social issue, the work of a Committee can become a vast national concern or remain a small-scale local issue. Funding operates through a combination of private donation, grants from Friends House and local or national fundraising.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the combination of business and social work which underpins the Society of Friends engenders a specific form of philanthropy which I have termed, 'business humanitarianism.' The wealth of many prominent Quaker families could allow daughters to follow their own interests. This was by no means universal however, either in terms of wealth or permissiveness. While there were many middle class Quakers, by no means all were wealthy. Even the daughters of wealthy families were not necessarily encouraged to leave the security of the home and garden. In a biography of Margery Fry, Enid Huws Jones recalls the struggle Margery Fry and her sisters Joan and Ruth had to be allowed to leave home and pursue careers.<sup>91</sup> The Fry sisters, nonetheless, became remarkably successful in public service and humanitarian work, as did many Quaker women of their generation.

While many people were involved in a variety of capacities, it is fair to say that Quaker work with refugees in the 1930s was guided, organised and led by three women: Hilda Clark, Edith Pye and Bertha Bracey. As none of these women are well-known, even in Quaker circles, it is worth outlining brief biographies here.

---

<sup>90</sup> Notably by Margaret Hope Bacon. See particularly, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986).

<sup>91</sup> Enid Huws Jones, *Margery Fry: The Essential Amateur* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

Bertha Bracey was the Secretary of the Germany Emergency Committee (later the Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens) between 1933 and 1945. This meant she was the director of all Quaker humanitarian projects with refugees during this period. Bracey was immensely well-qualified for this work, being fluent in German through her years as a relief worker in Germany and Austria.<sup>92</sup> The daughter of a Cadbury's worker, Bracey had become a Quaker by conviction in 1911 and had devoted the rest of her career to overseas Quaker relief work. The 1992 commemoration to Bracey said that the relief work was as important in the history of Quaker philanthropy as anti-slavery work or penal reform.<sup>93</sup> This was recognised by Bracey and her fellow relief workers at the time, who felt they were taking a stand against fascism. Her expertise was recognised in the relief community and she became a consultant for UNRRA after the war.<sup>94</sup>

A close family friend, Brenda Bailey, recalls that Bracey often worked to the point of sheer exhaustion. After the breakdown of a relationship in 1936, Bracey suffered a nervous collapse through overwork and emotional strain and was off work for a year.<sup>95</sup> On her return to work she continued to persevere in her work with refugees and pioneered many projects. Perhaps most notably, she was one of five people who persuaded Home Secretary Samuel Hoare to the *Kindertransport* (detailed further in Chapter Four), she was the first relief worker to try to ease conditions of internees on the Isle of Man in 1940, and she commandeered a plane in 1945 to rescue 300 children from Theresienstadt.<sup>96</sup> Bracey was one of a very few leading Quakers who had the ear of statesmen and could arrange meetings. She herself felt that the work with refugees from fascism was essential both because of what she called the 'poison' of fascism itself and because of the responsibility of doing what she could to relieve need where she saw it.<sup>97</sup>

Dr. Hilda Clark was the youngest daughter of the radical, wealthy and influential Quaker Clark family, of Clark's Shoes, and grew up in Street, Somerset. Her mother was Helen Bright Clark, and the family home saw regular visits from abolitionist and suffragist campaigners. Two of Clark's sisters and her mother attended the first Women's International Congress in 1915, and her sister Alice founded the Friends' League for Women's Suffrage in 1912.<sup>98</sup> Edith Pye, born in

---

<sup>92</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>93</sup> Alex Bryan, 'Bertha L. Bracey: friend of the oppressed', *Friends' Quarterly* (January 1991) p. 238.

<sup>94</sup> See her report on the issue of repatriation, Bertha L. Bracey, 'Europe's Displaced Persons and the Problems of Relocation', *International Affairs* Vol. 20, No. 2 (April, 1944).

<sup>95</sup> Interviews with J.E. Brenda Bailey, March 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*.

<sup>97</sup> Bertha Bracey, 4646. IWMSA.

<sup>98</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*, Appendix I.

1876, was from a lower middle-class Anglican family. Her father David was a wine-merchant and Justice of the Peace and her mother became a feminist activist in later life.<sup>99</sup> Pye trained as a nurse, with a specialist interest in midwifery. She evidently excelled in her career and by 1907 was superintendent of London District Nurses.<sup>100</sup> In 1908 Clark and Pye met in London, probably through their medical work. The two women rapidly developed an extremely close affinity. Pye converted to Quakerism in 1908, and the two became members of several Quaker and feminist organisations. Both were members of the militant Women's Social and Political Union, as well as the League of Nations Union, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the Friends' League for Women's Suffrage.<sup>101</sup> Pye was additionally a member of a range of nursing and midwifery bodies, notably the British Midwives' Institute.

Working together and funded by Clark's family money, Clark and Pye devoted themselves to a range of professional humanitarian causes over a 50 year period. Supported by the Friends War Victims Relief Committee (FWVRC) they set up a maternity hospital at Châlons sur Marne in the First World War (fifteen kilometres from the front line) and worked closely with Jebb and Buxton to found the Save the Children Committee in 1919.<sup>102</sup> Clark then co-ordinated famine relief in Vienna for three years, working alongside her sister Alice. In 1928, Pye travelled to China on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in a role of international solidarity and friendship.<sup>103</sup> Between 1928 and 1939, Clark spent a great deal of time in Geneva, in her role as the WILPF Foreign Relations Secretary and League of Nations Women's Committee observer.<sup>104</sup>

The only record we have of Clark and Pye's relationship is scattered among the archives of the various organisations they represented, primarily the WILPF archives and Friends House Library. Pye edited and privately printed a collection of Clark's letters called 'War and its Aftermath' after her death in 1956. After Pye's own death in 1965, these letters were donated to Friends House Library. The letters in the files have been physically cut up and reorganised, and the researcher can see the marks of Pye as she edited the letters, with crossings-out of endearments on the pages corresponding with the edited letters in the book. Her presence is inscribed by the absences, both of her side of the correspondence and of the words of endearment she carefully crosses out.

---

<sup>99</sup> see WILPF archives. LSE.

<sup>100</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*. p. 178.

<sup>101</sup> WILPF Executive Minutes. WILPF1/6. LSE.

<sup>102</sup> Letter dated 9 April 1916, HC to HBC 301/1/1 1908-1916. FHA.

<sup>103</sup> E.M.Pye 'Notes on the Women's Movement in China' Women's International League, 1928 p. 19. LSE.

<sup>104</sup> WILPF Executive Committee Minutes WILPF1/6. LSE.

Relationships, of course, are the crux of this section. The exact nature of Clark and Pye's relationship with each other may be an ephemeral presence in scattered archives, but the strength of their relationships with their feminist and Quaker colleagues are clear in a range of well-documented professional engagements. The interconnectedness of the pacifist and feminist networks through bonds of real or imagined sisterhood in the interwar years is paramount to the organisation of humanitarian work in the period, as is the ability to manifest 'faith in action' through increasingly professionalised work.<sup>105</sup>

Bonds between women active in these organisations often extended to relationships of the kind we would probably describe as partnerships today. Leila Rupp documents close same sex relationships between many women in international women's organisations but asserts that no lesbian relationships as we understand them can be proved.<sup>106</sup> It is no coincidence that Clark, Pye, Bracey and many of their colleagues had relationships with women rather than with men. Clark and Pye are buried under the same headstone in the Friends' Meeting House in Street, Somerset and Clark's surviving nephew Roger recalls his aunt Edie fondly.<sup>107</sup>

Many of the leading women humanitarians of the interwar years including Eglantyne Jebb, Kathleen Courtney, Eleanor Rathbone and Elizabeth Macadam, Hilda Clark and Edith Pye and Bertha Bracey had long-term romantic female attachments, the significance of which has often been overlooked. Adrienne Rich's thesis that lesbian existence, and particularly lesbian feminist existence, has been rendered liminal by scholarship would encourage at least an acknowledgement of the nature of the close companionships many women shared.<sup>108</sup> It is difficult, however, to determine to what extent the tendency for feminist humanitarian women to remain unmarried was an assertion of lesbianism, and to what extent it was a rejection of the limitations marriage could impose on intelligent women. As Sarah Delamont argues, 'celibacy was often a form of revolt against the traditional female sphere.'<sup>109</sup> Personal support networks around women humanitarians often extended to the level of incredibly close companionships of the type we would probably describe as relationships today. As a sect

---

<sup>105</sup> Many organisations, while not officially Quaker, had a heavily Quaker influence and connections. Save the Children is a good example, as is WILPF and the campaign against aerial bombardment. These organisations were all formal organisations which came out of informal bonds and a sense of shared purpose.

<sup>106</sup> Leila J. Rupp, 'Sexuality and Politics in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of the International Women's Movement', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 23, No., 3 (Autumn, 1997), pp. 577-605.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Roger Clark, Street, 10 April 2012.

<sup>108</sup> Adrienne Cecile Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' (1980) *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003, pp. 11-48.

<sup>109</sup> Sarah Delamont, and Lorna Duffin (eds), *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World* (London: Croom Helm, 1978). p. 176.

which did not discriminate on the basis of personal relationships, Quakerism was especially attractive to women who sought companionship with other women and fulfilling social work. Lilian Faderman in *Surpassing the Love of Men* links romantic female friendships to modern notions of lesbianism while arguing that women involved in them probably did not think of themselves as 'inverts'.<sup>110</sup> There are moral and practical restrictions even beyond Faderman's question of self-definition around the historical practice of lesbian-spotting. It is rarely possible to get any kind of definitive evidence as to the exact nature of someone's private life, it is almost impossible to shoehorn past relationships into narrow post-Freudian definitions and, more importantly, it can become a sensationalist distraction from other aspects of a person's life and work. However, to fail to acknowledge the close nature of personal relationships between many leading women in interwar philanthropy is to neglect what may have been a powerful influence on people's work and the way they conceived their motivations.

The nature of their personal relationships aside as, perhaps, it should be, Bracey, Clark and Pye are humanitarian figures who could not have existed twenty years earlier or later. They were part of that generation of women who were the first to go to university and develop independent professional careers.<sup>111</sup> They all campaigned actively for suffrage and they were all involved in international humanitarian projects over long careers. Maude Royden, a close friend of Clark and Pye, and editor of *Common Cause*, a suffrage paper, suggested that, 'women transmute the power of sex and 'create' in other ways by using their maternal impulses to serve humanity.'<sup>112</sup> This idea was replicated in *The Well of Loneliness*, in which Stephen finds temporary respite during the war working in a women's ambulance unit.<sup>113</sup> The classic conception of masculine and feminine spheres pre second-wave feminism is of men working in business, military endeavour and governance, and women focusing on the home, family and small-scale local charitable works (for the middle classes). There has been some recognition among historians that the picture was never this simple but little acknowledgement of the extent to which interwar women reconfigured philanthropy. One could potentially see the Quaker humanitarian work as being a progressive variant of traditional spheres, where the female caring sphere was extended into foreign relief, and men's worldly sphere extended into providing funds for this, or one could, as I do, see it as a distinct third sphere which definitely does not fit into the traditional model. The inclusion of

---

<sup>110</sup> Lilian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: The Women's Press, 1985 [1981]).

<sup>111</sup> Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981).

<sup>112</sup> Royden quoted in Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women who loved Women, 1778-1928* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004) p. 208.

<sup>113</sup> Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2005 [1928]).

specifically unmarried, socially unconventional, Quaker women in the voluntary humanitarian workplace in leadership roles was progressive with significant caveats. It does however reflect the distinctive and rapidly changing nature of women-led increasingly professional humanitarianism in the interwar years.



## Chapter Two

### Networks of Intervention, Narratives of Reassurance and the Emergence of Quaker Resistance

#### *The British Quaker response to the Refugee crisis caused by the Spanish Civil War*

The continued fascination with the Spanish Civil War is based on the repetition of certain narratives, usually in terms of its status as a 'dress rehearsal' for the genocide of the Second World War, or in certain left-wing circles as the venue for the bloody fratricide of the European Left.<sup>114</sup> This is not how it was seen by ordinary British people at the time. The Spanish Civil War provoked a level of humanitarian political agitation on behalf of another country not seen again in Britain until mass protests against the Iraq war in 2003. To inhabitants of a nation largely unconcerned with the conflicts of others, the Spanish Civil War represented an ideological struggle. To those concerned with the rise of fascism, the Spanish Civil War was an heroic example of armed resistance to a fascist foe. To seasoned humanitarian workers, the Spanish Civil War was a direct challenge to long-held principles of pacifism and political neutrality.

The official British response to the Spanish Civil War was ambiguous at best, with a profound reluctance by the Conservative-dominated 'National' government to 'meddle' in Spanish politics. Foreign policy was focused on appeasing Hitler, who rapidly allied with Franco, and offering support to Spanish Republicans was seen as an inflammatory political gambit. A Non-Intervention Agreement was concluded in September 1936. The agreement - which was intended to prevent the flow of armaments into Spain - primarily involved Britain, France, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, but covered 27 states in all. Although Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union flagrantly and repeatedly broke the Non-Intervention Agreement, the British government refused to be drawn into the conflict. In February 1937 the agreement was extended to:

Cover the recruitment in, the transit through, or departure from their respective countries of persons of non-Spanish nationality proposing to proceed to Spain for the purposes of taking part in the... conflict.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> This was a view proposed by Arthur Koestler in *Dialogue with Death* (London: Hutchinson, 1966 (1937)) and discussed by others at the time, and which has since resonated in certain left-wing circles.

<sup>115</sup> Viscount Cranborne, HC Deb 8 March 1937. Hansard vol. 321 cc. 775-8.

The British people meanwhile provided a variety of support for the Republic. While humanitarian aid was not specifically discouraged under the terms of the Agreement, it was clear that people who went to Spain could not expect the support of their government. Mass fundraising and popular support for the Republican cause in Britain allowed several thousand British people to go to Spain as either International Brigaders (who, as combatants, deliberately flouted their government's policy of non-intervention), medical personnel, or in a civilian capacity as relief workers or journalists.

The British Left was the main instigator of public support and fundraising for Spain in Britain, and organisations such as the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and the National Council of Labour focused on sending military and medical support as part of the fight against fascism. Aid work for civilians meanwhile was largely left to the Quakers. Nearly all of the aid workers who went to Spain from Britain were affiliated with the Society of Friends. The exceptions were those working with Save the Children International Union (SCIU) or the National Joint Committee (NJC), and a few private individuals, and on the ground in Spain these relief workers worked closely with the Society of Friends. British Quakers provided the main source of humanitarian support for civilians in Republican Spain. Quaker fundraising and humanitarian work was, above all else, part of a complicated international network of community fundraising, central co-ordination and focused humanitarian relief.

The most comprehensive research on Quaker work in Spain is Farah Mendlesohn's *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*, published in 2002.<sup>116</sup> Mendlesohn details the history of British and American Quaker work in Spain focusing on the 'witness' of relief workers and the work on the ground in Spain. In this chapter, I will build on Mendlesohn's work by examining the links between Quaker work in Spain and fundraising and political agitation in Britain. Quaker correspondence is prioritised in the source material to accurately reflect the dependence of the entire humanitarian project in Spain on Quaker networks. I will also look at issues of neutrality, witness and resistance, and position the Quaker role in Spain and with Spanish refugees in the South of France as part of a distinctively Quaker form of political resistance.

The title of this chapter focuses on networks and narratives. Quaker relief workers relied upon both networks and narratives in different ways. British humanitarian work in Spain reached its apogee with the immigration of 4,000 Basque children, accompanied by their teachers and

---

<sup>116</sup> Farah Mendlesohn, *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*, Quaker Studies Vol. 1 (Lewiston: The Edgar Mellen Press, 2002).

priests, to Britain in May 1937. This was the largest immigration of unaccompanied children into Britain until the *Kindertransport* began the following year. I reposition the Basque immigration as a vital precursor to the *Kindertransport* and argue that the fact the children were accepted into Britain was the result of a carefully constructed visual narrative by the humanitarian agencies involved. Quaker publicity avoided the images of starving children which had been central to humanitarian photography, and instead consistently showed pictures of children being loved, nurtured and cared for. This was part of a deliberate strategy to create what I have termed a 'narrative of reassurance' to optimise fundraising potential and public support.<sup>117</sup>

The British public's response to the Spanish Civil War was clearly distinct from that of their government. While the government contributed no official aid to Spain, and refused military assistance, many people in Britain expressed their political support for the Spanish Republic through what has been termed 'Aid Spain' activity.<sup>118</sup> Quaker work in Spain and with Spanish refugees in France and Britain should be considered as very much part of this movement. The Quaker Friends Service Committee (FSC) and its sister organisation, the Quaker-run International Commission for the Care of Spanish Refugees (IC) were the primary international aid organisations working in Republican Spain. Between September 1936 and January 1939, the FSC's Spanish relief programme instigated a broad and dynamic programme of refugee relief and support, which drew on a long history of Quaker humanitarian work to play a pivotal role in 'Aid Spain' operations. The British Quaker work in Spain was only possible due to a well-oiled network of Quaker relief, which, once activated, co-operated with other relief organisations to capitalise on the groundswell of popular support for Spain. Due to shifting boundaries between aid and intervention, many Quaker relief workers who cared about Spain and Spanish people found themselves transgressing the line between legal social work and illegal resistance.

***'Comité de Ayuda a los Niños u Mujeres en España'*<sup>119</sup>: The establishment and initial work of the Barcelona Quaker Mission**

British Quaker relief in Spain was initiated on the basis of the concern (or 'witness') of a very small group of people. In 1935 Alfred Jacob, an American Friend who had lived in Britain for

---

<sup>117</sup> The concept of 'narratives of reassurance' will be fully explained in section 3 of this chapter.

<sup>118</sup> The term 'Aid Spain' was first used academically by Jim Fyrth, *The Signal was Spain: The Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986). Fyrth adopted the term from the 1930s usage in Communist publications like the *Daily Worker*.

<sup>119</sup> 'Aid Committee for the Mothers and Children of Spain'.

some time, visited Spain with John Harvey, a professor at Leeds University. Jacob, who had a degree in Spanish, was exploring the idea of establishing a Quaker Centre like those in Berlin, Vienna and Paris, which would take advantage of the 'Spanish Renaissance' to introduce Quaker ideas.<sup>120</sup> In 1936, when civil war broke out and the need for refugee relief in the South and East of the country became rapidly apparent, Jacob and his wife Norma, also a fluent Spanish speaker, offered to set up an FSC relief project. The Jacobs were a young, dynamic and politically engaged couple and, in FSC correspondence, one senses a certain reluctance to entrust them with the politically sensitive task of heading FSC work. In a 1989 interview, Norma Jacob recalled that she and Alfred were asked to resign their membership of the Labour Party before being allowed to work in Spain.<sup>121</sup> The Jacobs were, however, so clearly the most suitable candidates that in November 1936 they moved to Barcelona, the city with the greatest refugee crisis, and began to establish Quaker relief operations. The establishment of Quaker work in Barcelona, the heart of the Republican zone, was significant. Throughout the Civil War, not one British Quaker worked in the Nationalist zone. Theoretically, all work was organised along the basis of greatest need, and it was clear that initially this need was greatest in the Republican zone. However, the left-wing views of most of the British Quakers certainly influenced their humanitarian decision-making.

In line with Quaker tradition, the Jacobs were given a great deal of freedom in deciding how to prioritise and run refugee support on the ground. The decision to quickly ally with the Save the Children International Union was not down to the Jacobs, but was a strategic judgement taken at FSC level based on optimisation of resources. The two organisations had long-standing links in part through Dorothy Buxton, the sister of Eglantyne Jebb, co-founder of SCIU and an influential Quaker, and had worked together successfully on many previous occasions. The Jacobs additionally allied themselves with Kendall Park's 'General Appeal for Distressed Women and Children in Spain', which took the form of a small hospital. The three organisations worked very closely together to establish relief operations. Since SCIU had a clear remit of aid for children, and the Park hospital mostly cared for mothers and young children, the Jacobs initially concentrated on helping newly arrived refugee families, especially those with children. From the outset, then, all three aid organisations in Barcelona prioritised children for aid. This was reflected in the name of the Quaker mission, which was, '*Comité de*

---

<sup>120</sup> The 'Spanish Renaissance' was a term often used to describe the atmosphere of education; openness and creativity that many felt followed the establishment of the Second Republic.

<sup>121</sup> Norma Jacob, interview with Karen Lee, 31 March 1989. AFSC archives. Quoted in Angela Jackson, *British Women and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 116.

*Ayuda a los Niños u Mujeres en España* or 'The Aid Committee for Spanish Mothers and Children.'

The Jacobs' initial project began on Christmas Day 1936. Refugees were already arriving at the main railway station at a rate of over a thousand a day, and the Jacobs decided to provide all children with a hot milk drink and, depending on supplies, a biscuit.<sup>122</sup> This was a carefully constructed programme, there could be no claims of political favouritism and it tied in with the convention of the Barcelona mission that children should receive priority for help. Alfred Jacob personally found the ethical aspect of the project troubling. While agreeing that in theory children should be prioritised, he found it painful to restrict the gifts to children, and argued that there was already a culture in Spain where children would receive the best of what there was in a family, with mothers often depriving themselves to feed their families.<sup>123</sup> In the railway station he found older people would stretch out their hands thinking the drinks were for them. It could also be a struggle to make a distinction between older and younger children. The Barcelona railway workers rapidly decided to relax their remit and started giving cocoa, or coffee when it was available, to adult refugees. The Jacobs found this work exhausting; it required meeting every train, day or night, and spending the interim periods organising supplies. They quickly enlisted local support from volunteers, in particular boy scouts and women's groups.

A particularly efficient aspect of Quaker relief work in Barcelona was this use of local workers, not just as translators or distributors, but also in paid positions of real trust and responsibility. Co-operation with skilled local workers maximised efficiency of financial management and distribution of aid. It was inevitably far more effective to recruit canteen workers locally, where no travel or accommodation costs would have to be met and wages received would be spent in the local community, than to fly relief workers out from Britain. Alfred and Norma Jacob were the pioneers of this approach and consistently pushed for recruitment of local workers wherever possible, only accepting British workers with direct experience or skills. This enthusiasm should not be attributed to missionary zeal. Alfred Jacob showed some inclination for conversion; his initial interest in Spain had, after all, been to set up a Quaker Centre. On a personal level, his early letters reporting back to London show his concern that 'the expression of religious consciousness in Spain' was being eroded. He clearly saw conversion to Quakerism

---

<sup>122</sup> On 19 November 1936, 800 refugees arrived on just one morning train. FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

<sup>123</sup> Alfred Jacob letter 19 November 1936. FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

as a way of ending what he called the 'carnage' of civil war.<sup>124</sup> However, he became reconciled with the need for practical aid rather than proselytising, writing a few months later:

I am eager to avoid ulterior motives, because for so many centuries Spain has been the victim of organizations who give one thing in order to gain another, and I am quite content to see the work confined exclusively to relief as long as need be.<sup>125</sup>

He did, however, still nurture the idea that in a Republican Spain, Quakerism would be able to develop. A report written in February 1937 outlined his private wish:

Alfred Jacob believed that under the Republican Government there was such freedom that the religious views held by the Society of Friends would be no bar and he was convinced that there were many Spaniards who would be deeply interested in a church without either priesthood or ecclesiastical buildings.<sup>126</sup>

This view remained very much an unrealised dream for a future Spain. Suppressing any personal inclinations towards missionary zeal, the Friends in Barcelona tried to build links with the local community based on practical aid rather than on religion.

In addition to local workers in Spain, the FSC's principal contact on points of policy was the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJC), which was formed on 23 December 1936 at Friends House with the dual intention of working as an 'umbrella' organisation for the extensive voluntary relief activity which was already taking place, and of acting as a bridge between the machinations of the British government and the petitioning of the people. The NJC was remarkable in its determination to promote politically neutral humanitarian work across party lines. Leading members included the Liberal MP Wilfrid Roberts, the Conservative MP Katherine, Duchess of Atholl, and Isabel Brown, a prominent Communist speaker and community worker.<sup>127</sup> Relief efforts organised by the NJC had to negotiate a complex position, straddling party political issues in Britain and Spain, the Non-Intervention agreement, debates about the 'deserving poor', and synthesising a range of priorities and agendas. It is telling, then, that the NJC decided to work closely with Quaker relief efforts, using the existing FSC team in Spain as agents to recommend projects, co-ordinate efforts and distribute aid.

### **'No-one regards Children as Reds or Anti-Reds': Photography, Childhood and a neutral humanitarian space in Spain**

<sup>124</sup> Alfred Jacob letter 3 October 1936. FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

<sup>125</sup> Alfred Jacob to Fred Tritton 12 February 1937. FSC/R/SP/1/1/. FHA.

<sup>126</sup> Anonymous report on Friends' work in Spain. 17 February 1937. FSC/R/SP/4. FHA.

<sup>127</sup> The 'Red Duchess' of Atholl was a decidedly atypical Conservative MP. Her book, 'Searchlight on Spain', published in 1938 highlights the extent to which she operated against dominant Conservative ideology. Its publication was shortly followed by her resignation.

On December 8 1936 Alfred Jacob wrote to Miss Judith Corcoran of the British Youth Peace Assembly:

Our effort is simply to do the works of peace in the midst of war, affirming the rights of human personality which war denies. It is all that lovers of peace can do at a time like this. We have begun with the children, because no one regards children as Reds or Anti-Reds, and they can be fed and clothed without in the least helping the progress of the war. Moreover, by mobilising masses of opinion on behalf of the children we cut across barriers of party and creed both outside Spain and inside.<sup>128</sup>

Alfred Jacob's letter reveals the explicitly and specifically pacifist, neutral, and propaganda-oriented Quaker approach to child humanitarian relief. By positioning children squarely in a neutral humanitarian space, the FSC Barcelona mission directly inherited from their association with SCIU a new form of child-focused humanitarian relief. The development of this approach can be clearly seen in correspondence and publicity material held in the Friends House archive in Euston, but is perhaps most evident in the photographs and publicity leaflets produced during this period. Despite their aura of objectivity photographs are always created, selected and circulated with human agendas, however worthy, in mind.

At the very beginning of the Barcelona mission, Jacob and Harvey had not identified children as the main focus for relief work. They tended to see refugees as a group as the main focus, and did not feel that children warranted special treatment, indicated by Jacob's reluctance to give drinks exclusively to children at the railway station. This attitude was rapidly altered by the FSC's working relationship with SCIU, as shown in this extract from a joint appeal in the *Times* by the FSC and the SCIU in November 1936:

Sir, the sufferings of the children in the Spanish civil war have been vividly brought to our minds by the reports of the terrible havoc caused among them by bombing from the air. Though we are sure the combatants cannot themselves desire it, there can be no doubt that on both sides, whether in this or in other ways, untold miseries are being inflicted on the child population of this unhappy country, not only by wounds and death but also in shattered nerves and ruined health.<sup>129</sup>

From November 1936, most of the FSC fundraising publicity was centred on children. The most widely circulated leaflet was entitled, 'Spain: An Appeal for the Children' (Image 3) which had five photographs, all of children being fed and cared for by Quakers, and gave financial targets for fundraising on the basis of direct costs. For example, a feeding centre for 800 children

<sup>128</sup> Alfred Jacob to Judith Corcoran, 8 December 1936. FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

<sup>129</sup> Wilfred E Littleboy, Clerk of Yearly Meeting, and Baron Noel-Buxton, President of Save the Children Fund, 'Children in Spain' letter to the editor of *The Times*, 18 November 1936.

would cost £150 a month, or £1 a month to house one child in a colony.<sup>130</sup> With the increased professionalism and commercialisation of Quaker entrepreneurial philanthropy, the focus of the photographs was on the work done rather than the need for the work. Repeated appeals for documentary evidence were sent from Friends House to the Barcelona workers. In a characteristic and revealing request, Fred Tritton wrote in 1937, 'We want everything we can get to make the situation real to us *without stressing the horrors*.'<sup>131</sup>



**Image 3. Two different 'Spain: An Appeal for the Children' publicity leaflets, 1936-7<sup>132</sup>**

This reluctance to dwell on the horrors had two motivations. Firstly, as outlined in the previous chapter, photographs of naked and starving children from foreign countries had been used widely in humanitarian campaigns in Britain since the Boer War. British people knew what a starving child looked like, and it was felt the images had lost sympathy-eliciting shock value

<sup>130</sup> 'Spain: An Appeal for the Children' FSC/R/SP/5. FHA.

<sup>131</sup> Fred Tritton to Alfred Jacob, 24 March 1937. FSC/R/SP/1/5. FHA.

<sup>132</sup> 'Spain: An Appeal for the Children' FSC/R/SP/5. FHA.



and instead put viewers off donating, as they could not identify with these children. The departure of Quaker photography in the 'Spain' leaflets from Emily Hobhouse's imagery of a naked, starving child is dramatic and significant. In Spain, Quakers quite consciously avoided shocking or distressing imagery in their photographs of children. Children were shown looking poor and hungry but happy, with even clearly sick children being cared for in clean hospitals. These leaflets emphasise the work being done, stress it is being done successfully, and clearly state the money needed so it can continue. They consciously decline to 'stress the horrors', and instead create a narrative of reassurance which appeals on behalf of Spanish children in the same way as they would on behalf of British children, avoiding 'othering' the children.

Secondly, in keeping with the official strategy of political neutrality, the Quaker leaflets had to differentiate themselves from the propaganda of the Left, which used shocking images of dead and starving children to galvanise the British public into action. The *Daily Worker's* controversial decision to publish photographs of dead children after the Getafe bombing on 30 October 1936 was no doubt fresh in the minds of decision makers at Friends 'House. The editors of the *Daily Worker* found it necessary to publish a lengthy piece justifying their decision to publish the images, which were contrasted with an image of an English girl playing happily in a sunny garden. Publishing the pictures of the dead children was above all a political gesture by the editors of the left-wing newspaper. They took the risk of upsetting public sensibilities by showing the images, and wanted to draw attention to the civilian consequences of fascist aggression. Ultimately, the *Daily Worker* was in favour of Britain's involvement in an armed response to Franco, and mobilised pictures of dead children in part to galvanise the public in support of this. The publication of this controversial page clearly established that, in this conflict, showing photographs of dead or injured children was to declare your organisation as left-wing. Humanitarian agencies, operating on the principle of political neutrality, chose to represent children in a very different way.

The imagery used by Quaker relief workers was consciously sought. Alfred Jacob wrote, 'it is difficult to get pictures of children arriving because they generally arrive at night, but I shall keep after the ministry of Propaganda, who promised us some. Don't forget that for press publicity and News Chronicle work John Langdon Davies offered his help.'<sup>133</sup> A subsequent letter enclosing the prints outlines, 'The 24 pictures I enclose were done by the Propaganda Dept. and are worthy of careful study. They are all taken in the Stadium of the Exhibition grounds... Some of them I have chosen for the children's faces-perhaps you will feel it

---

<sup>133</sup> Alfred Jacob to Fred Tritton, November 29 1936. FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

worthwhile to use one child as a sort of emblem for this work-a poster, say, with 'This child needs your help.'<sup>134</sup> In addition to getting photographs directly from the Republican propaganda ministry, humanitarian workers also took some of their own photographs and got them from Spanish colleagues.

The only relief worker I have found who reflected on her use of photography was Francesca Wilson, who was a history teacher at Edgbaston C of E Girl's College when she was asked to go to Spain by the FWRC in the spring of 1937.<sup>135</sup> Wilson was a prolific journalist and reporter of humanitarian events and has been credited with pioneering the use of child art as humanitarian propaganda in Britain.<sup>136</sup> Her philanthropic work at home in Birmingham included taking a succession of refugees into her home. She insisted that her motivations for this were a selfish attempt to fill the empty life of a 'bachelor-woman' rather than any greater purpose.<sup>137</sup>

Wilson was funded by the FWRC to travel to the Murcia region of Spain and assess the work which needed to be done. She rapidly joined forces with Sir George Young's University Ambulance Unit and took over the administration of his hospital, recruiting FSC nurses to work alongside existing staff.<sup>138</sup> Horrified by the appalling conditions she saw in Murcia she

---

<sup>134</sup> Alfred Jacob to Fred Tritton, 5 December 1936, FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

<sup>135</sup> Probably by Evelyn Sturge who had worked with her in Vienna in the early 1920s. Wilson had spent a decade between 1916 and 1925 working for Quaker famine relief in Serbia, Vienna and Russia.

<sup>136</sup> A new PhD thesis on Francesca Wilson explores her life and work in great depth, Sian Lliwen Roberts, 'Place, Life Histories and the Politics of Relief: Episodes in the Life of Francesca Wilson, Humanitarian Educator Activist' (University of Birmingham PhD, 2010) It seems clear that Wilson's activism was linked to her upbringing as birthright member of the Society of Friends but she was by no means a traditional sober Quaker; she used to take gin in her tea, smoke, swear, and socialise with the Birmingham Slavonic Society rather than her local Meeting. She was also seen as being agnostic, atheist or ambiguous by friends, Friends and family. In Wilson's case it is difficult to establish whether her Quakerism informed her sense of mission, or whether her affiliation with the Society of Friends enabled her to pursue her humanitarian choices.

<sup>137</sup> Two of the most notable refugees Wilson helped were Nikolaus Pevsner and Nicholas Bachtin, younger brother of Mikhail. The mercurial and melancholic Nicholas Bachtin had lost touch with Mikhail and had no idea of his success in Russia. In the introduction to a collection of N. Bachtin's essays, Wilson wrote, 'Not much is known of Mikhail-he must have been widely read, because as a student in Petersburg in 1914 he was reading Kierkegaard long before he was rediscovered in France. He remained in Russia after the revolution and published a critical study of Dostoevsky which Bachtin found by chance in Paris in 1930.' Wilson was romantically involved with N. Bachtin at various times during their 20-year friendship and they had an intense relationship. See Wilson, Introduction, in Nicholas Bachtin, *Lectures and Essays* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1963) p.2.

<sup>138</sup> Sir George Young set up his hospital on 5 February 1937 after the fall of Malaga. Young took out a personal loan to pay for the equipment and staff. He was later repaid by public appeal and help from the SMAC and General Relief Fund. In urgent need of funds and staff he left Miss Thurston, an administrator, in charge of the hospital while he returned to London. Francesca Wilson consolidated the work of the hospital and encouraged affiliation with the NJC while providing her experience and support to Miss Thurston. FSC/R/SP/4. FHA.

requisitioned a lorry load of supplies from the FSC distribution centre in Valencia and set up a feeding centre which within days fed 2-3,000 children a day.<sup>139</sup> At the request of the FSC in London, the AFSC took over the running of Wilson's Murcia operations while she returned to Birmingham to raise funds and awareness of the situation. She returned triumphantly in August 1937 with 'hundreds of pounds to spend as I liked'<sup>140</sup> which she used to set up 10 sewing workshops. She then visited the Rubí colonies, bringing back glowing reports of the children's progress. She also brought back quantities of publicity material, including photographs, which were widely circulated and used as slides at fundraising meetings in Birmingham. As well as bringing back photographs, Wilson wrote several newspaper articles about the situation in Spain from a personal perspective, some of which were printed alongside her photographs, synthesising humanitarian and press photography.<sup>141</sup>

The Spanish Civil War was the first to be photographed extensively for a mass audience, and narratives created by photographs contributed greatly to impressions of the conflict. Caroline Brothers has analysed British press photography of the Spanish conflict and identified two main discourses. Papers such as the *Daily Mail* were concerned with property and morality, and a typical published photograph would be of a ruined church. Left-wing papers such as the *Daily Herald* concentrated on military images representing the heroic worker/soldier. All papers showed images of women soldiers and photographs of the destruction of Spanish cities by aerial bombardment. Most significantly, British press photographs scarcely featured children at all, with the only photographs which featured children tended to be in the context of a mass of refugees.<sup>142</sup>

FSC photographs which focused almost exclusively on children represented a significant departure from press photography, and, while capitalising on the boom in visual literacy, had more in common with the emerging tradition of documentary photography. Susan Sontag has written that the Spanish Civil War was, 'the first war to be witnessed (covered) in a modern sense: by a corps of professional photographers at the lines of military engagement and in the towns under bombardment, whose work was immediately seen in newspapers and magazines in Spain and abroad.'<sup>143</sup> She also, earlier, wrote that, 'concerned' photography has done at

---

<sup>139</sup> Francesca M. Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos: Recollections of Relief Work in and between Three Wars* (London: John Murray, 1944).

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* p 190.

<sup>141</sup> See Francesca M. Wilson, 'Spaniards in Exile: The Civilian Camp at Argeles' *the Manchester Guardian* May 9, 1939.

<sup>142</sup> See Caroline Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>143</sup> Susan Sontag, 'Looking at War: Photography's View of Devastation and Death' *The New Yorker* Vol. 78, Issue 38.

least as much to deaden conscience as to arouse it.<sup>144</sup> Crucially, photographic images were now relied upon by the general public to tell stories, entertain, and sell products. In the most cynical interpretation, child humanitarian photography capitalised on this to manipulate public sensibilities and further the political agendas of certain organisations. I believe the FSC photographs, while consciously created to fit in with the new public sensibilities, manage to transcend potential anthropological downfalls by virtue of their overt nature and clearly stated intentions. Francesca Wilson, who took many of the most widely circulated images, was not a 'neutral' observer, using the camera as a shield, but an active participant in the communities she photographed.

In addition to the boom in photojournalism, photographic advertising also rose exponentially in Britain during this period, leading to a significant rise in mass 'visual literacy' among the general population. The Spain photographs are an amalgamation of the 1930s left-wing documentary tradition and the tradition of depictions of suffering children in humanitarian photography. On the one hand, as Alfred Jacob recognised, photographs of children were a part of trying to configure a politically neutral space. They were also a publicity-conscious marketing decision. Showing children being cared for had the dual effect of making the children appear familiar and deserving of support, and of emphasising the success of the work being done to protect them. Through association with the SCIU, the FSC mission in Barcelona developed a highly successful humanitarian mission based on a narrative of reassurance around children. This mission was reinforced by publicity, fundraising and committee work done in Britain.

With Save the Children, the Friends' Service Committee was the only British humanitarian organisation to work on the ground in Spain during the Civil War. Its work was, as I have shown, highly significant in directing focus towards the care of children, and in taking and presenting the photographs that would justify this. The outcome, I have argued, was the creation of a consciously non-political and reassuring narrative, where children were presented as healthy and happy in order to legitimise their support by the voluntary intervention of the British public. Perhaps most significantly, however, children were politically neutral. In a political climate where humanitarian aid could breach international treaties and influence matters of state, presenting subjects of aid as healthy, cared for, 'normal' children served the dual function of legitimising aid to the British public while tiptoeing around the hazards of

---

<sup>144</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008 [1977]). p. 67

international diplomacy. In the interwar culture of high visual literacy among the British population, press and publicity photography was consciously used to communicate the politically neutral and non-threatening nature of child immigration. After all, 'no one regards children as reds or anti-reds.'

### **Birmingham Quakers and 'business humanitarianism'**

*'I had always thought of [Birmingham] vaguely as perhaps the most typical product in civic life of nineteenth-century industrialism, as a city of big profits and narrow views, which sent missionaries out of one gate and brass idols and machine guns out of another.'*<sup>145</sup>

*-J.B. Priestley, English Journey*

The initial revenue source for FSC work in Spain was direct funding from the Society of Friends, followed in 1938 by regular contributions from the NJC and the IC. FSC work in Barcelona would have been impossible without the support of a network of co-ordinators and fundraisers at home in Britain, which was led from the FSC's Spain office at Friends House in London and reinforced by several regional committees. The most active regional fundraising committee was the Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting's Spanish Relief Committee, which acted as an umbrella committee for Quakers in Birmingham and the surrounding area<sup>146</sup>. By using the Warwickshire SRC as a case study, I will demonstrate the specifically Quaker form of business humanitarianism that underpinned the relief work in Spain.

In 1938, Birmingham was celebrating its centenary, during the celebrations for which the Bishop of Birmingham publicly stated that the city had prospered due to its religious freedom, 'The city owed more to the Unitarians and Quakers who had influenced its growth than to any other group of men. They had brought into its civic life ability combined with honesty.'<sup>147</sup> By 1936, Birmingham Friends had a solid demonstrable history of public philanthropy and service that was connected with several large Quaker-run family businesses. Many prominent and wealthy Quaker families lived in the area; most notably the Cadburys, but also the Barrows, Albrights and Sturges. The urban poverty of Britain's second-largest city had presented a fertile location for social reform projects for several generations of Midlands Quakers, and individual

<sup>145</sup> J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London: Heinemann, 1968 [1934]) p. 78.

<sup>146</sup> Including the Meetings at Cotterdige, Redditch, Sutton Coldfield, Selly Oak, Coventry, Strichley and Moseley Road.

<sup>147</sup> 'The Birmingham Centenary: Dr. Barnes on City's Debt to Unitarians and Quakers' *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 July 1938.

Quakers held high office in the city. William Adlington Cadbury, Lord Mayor from 1919 to 1921, had cemented the relationship between North Warwickshire Friends and local structures of power and influence.

In early November 1936, Alfred Jacob circulated an appeal for help to Friends in Britain. Quaker workers in Barcelona were desperately short of supplies and could feed as many hungry children as British Friends could buy milk for. The need was apparent, but the funds were not. At the Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting on 10 November 1936, the committee responded to this plea by deputing John S. Hoyland, Evelyn Sturge, Horace G. Alexander and Ethel M. Barrow to form a committee focusing on raising funds for Spanish relief.<sup>148</sup> The choice of four prominent and seasoned local Friends was significant. Alexander, in particular, had very influential contacts and a great deal of experience. He would later go on to work closely with Gandhi in reconciliation negotiations with India.<sup>149</sup> The Friends' Warwickshire Relief Committee (FWRC), raised £318 in the first month of fundraising, and this staggering figure would be multiplied many times over before they had finished.

The entire FSC feeding operation in Barcelona was reliant on products supplied by Quaker firms. It was quickly established that, as in Quaker feeding programmes after the Great War, tinned milk was a cheap, nutritious and convenient food source. There were endless debates over the comparative benefits of condensed milk, which was more expensive and contained less nutritional value, but was far easier to distribute, versus dried milk, which was cheaper and more nourishing but required more facilities to mix with cocoa powder and water and serve.<sup>150</sup> Cadburys solved the problem by offering to manufacture a special blend of dried milk and cocoa powder that just required hot water to serve. One 7lb tin of Cadbury cocoa and milk made a 200-gram drink for 100 children. Using the Cadbury's product, giving a child a daily drink for a month cost 3 shillings. Cadburys mitigated a considerable amount of this cost by negotiating a special discount rate with their suppliers for the FSC dried milk. They supplied the tinned milk and cocoa powder at cost price and supplemented it with regular additional gifts, some of which were used by the Barcelona Friends and some of which the Friends distributed to the Park hospital and local children's colonies run by Catalan authorities. The Cadbury gift varied through the duration of FSC work but averaged 20 cwt of cocoa and milk

---

<sup>148</sup> FC Box 19, ACC 347 Minute book Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting SRC 1936-39. Minute 156. BCA.

<sup>149</sup> See Carnall, *Gandhi's Interpreter*.

<sup>150</sup> The milk debate was a continual source of tension as well-meaning fundraisers in Britain would send cases of expensive condensed milk when all the processes had been adjusted to mix and serve larger quantities of cheaper dried milk.

powder a month.<sup>151</sup> In addition to the milk powder, Cadbury's supplied quantities of broken biscuits from Fry's each month.<sup>152</sup> The Cadbury-Fry gift was by far the biggest boon to FSC work, but many other Quaker manufacturers also donated supplies, including Jacobs and Rowntrees, and (the non-Quaker) Quaker Oats.

The Committee rapidly expanded to cope with the evident public interest in Spain and resultant deluge of donations. Members included Margaret Backhouse, George Cadbury, W.A. and M.C. Albright, Teresa Sturge, Dorothy Lee, Gwen Porteous, Percy Fox and Helen Graham. Meetings were held at 12 Fox Hill, Selly Oak; the home of Margaret Backhouse. From the beginning, the Committee acted as a co-ordinating and liaison body. They took direction on priorities from Friends House, communicated these priorities to a range of local organisations including Soroptimists, the Rotary Club, local authorities and private individuals, and formed local networks to ensure action was taken. The Committee very quickly realised the information they received from Friends House was not sufficient to mobilise a full range of local support. In December 1936, Horace Alexander went to Spain for 10 days to meet the Jacobs and establish what needed to be done.<sup>153</sup> His personal 'witness' allowed him to communicate local aims based on personal and direct experience. This proved incredibly effective at creating and consolidating fundraising opportunities.

In February 1937 Horace Alexander and Ethel Barrow went to see the Lord Mayor to propose setting up a fund for relief, drawing on considerable precedent.<sup>154</sup> They found their reception 'cordial' and discovered the Lord Mayor (Ernest Canning) had many Quaker connections.<sup>155</sup> In May, Alexander and Barrow went to meet him again, this time with Alfred Jacob, but Canning was still reluctant to set up a fund as he was wary of falling foul of the non-intervention committee. This reluctance was rapidly overcome, and the newly-created Lord Mayor's Fund united fundraising efforts across the city. The centrally-co-ordinated fundraising took place principally in schools, cinemas, street collections, flag days and charity balls. Vast amounts of money were raised, of which the majority was initially channelled through the Friends' Warwickshire Relief Committee. It was recognised by Birmingham municipal authorities that the Friends had expertise and workers on the ground to spend Birmingham money judiciously.

---

<sup>151</sup> 1 cwt=100 pounds (metric). The gift ranged between 14 and 24 cwt a month and was supplemented by additional gifts from Bourneville employees and the Cadbury family.

<sup>152</sup> Cadbury's was the dominant partner from a 1919 merger with rival Quaker chocolate firm Fry's of Bristol. See Cadbury, *Chocolate Wars*.

<sup>153</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/1. FHA.

<sup>154</sup> The Lord Mayors of Birmingham had historically presided over charity funds that unified efforts in the city for a particular cause.

<sup>155</sup> FC Box 19, ACC 347 Minute book WNMM SRC 1936-39. Minute from 11 February 1937. BCA.

In July and August 1937 alone, £1065.10.1 was given to the Committee by the Lord Mayor's Fund.<sup>156</sup> Initially the three streams of Committee outgoings were; expenses related to establishing and maintaining two 'Birmingham' colonies for refugee children at Rubí, grants to the FSC and NJC for general relief work, specific grants to individuals for expenses and projects, such as paying for Norma Jacob and Richard Ellis to visit England, and sponsoring Spanish FSC volunteers to study in Birmingham.<sup>157</sup> The Lord Mayor's Fund essentially used the FWRC as agents to recommend suitable projects and distribute funds accordingly.

By far the most substantial financial commitments of the Lord Mayor's Fund and their Quaker agents were their various projects with children. A colony to educate and maintain 85 children was established by the FSC in Spain at Rubí in summer 1937 and funded entirely by donations from Birmingham. Jack Hoyland and Christopher Buckley of Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting organised teams of 'diggers' to go and prepare the colonies in the summer of 1937.<sup>158</sup> Meanwhile, fundraising efforts were so prodigious that a second 'Birmingham colony' with an additional 85 children was founded in September 1937. Maintaining the two colonies cost approximately £1000 a year.<sup>159</sup> Although established and funded through the FSC, the day-to-day running of the colonies was delegated entirely to *Asistencia Infantil*, a Spanish organisation with whom the FSC in Barcelona worked closely.

When the Basque children arrived in England in May 1937, Birmingham fundraising immediately shifted focus to provide support and care for the refugee children. This reflected intense public interest in the children's welfare. Two homes were set up in the city by the Lord Mayor's Fund for Spanish Refugee Children, an offshoot of the main fund. These homes were at Offenham and Elford Hall and housed a total of around two hundred children.<sup>160</sup> George Cadbury took a strong personal interest in these homes and visited regularly. Volunteering to sponsor a child, he was allocated a small boy named Elvio. He soon discovered that Elvio was the youngest of three siblings and, on learning this, offered to sponsor all three children. Becoming fond of the family, he sent them to Quaker boarding schools. They returned for holidays split between the Cadbury home and the colony where they could mix with other

---

<sup>156</sup> FC Box 19, ACC 347, Cash book WNMM. BCA.

<sup>157</sup> The principal Spanish beneficiaries of Birmingham grants were the Ricart family. Domingo Ricart worked closely with the FSC in Spain for several years, which meant he had to flee when the Nationalist forces entered Barcelona. He was given funding to study at Woodbrooke, and assistance to bring his wife and daughter to England. The family later emigrated to Mexico at the instigation of Alfred Jacob's American Quaker colleagues.

<sup>158</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/3. FHA.

<sup>159</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/2. FHA.

<sup>160</sup> See Adrian Bell, *Only for Three Months: The Basque Children in Exile* (Norwich: Mousehold Press, 1996) p. 189.



Spanish children. On finishing school Elvio was given a job at Cadbury's where he worked for a decade. From May 1937 until early 1939, the Lord Mayor's Fund gave 25% of total takings to the Rubí colonies; approximately 50% to the Spanish Refugee Children's Homes, and the remainder was divided between specific grants and contributions to the FSC, BCC and NJC.<sup>161</sup>

The story of the Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting's work in the Spanish Civil War illustrates the networks and tools mobilised by Quaker humanitarian activists during the 1930s. A regular observation made by Quakers in the first half of the twentieth century was that their religion and way of life was in danger of becoming little more than a 'hereditary social club.'<sup>162</sup> While there was considerable self-aware irony in this joke, it also reflected the very real concern that Quakers were becoming an insular group with decreasing influence on social issues. Conversely, the close nature of Quaker networks combined with concerted efforts to reach a wider audience meant that Quaker groups were able to very quickly consolidate their concern into connectivity and activation with other local networks. In Birmingham, the initial Committee of four well-connected local Friends was able to activate the local Quaker network almost immediately and, especially given the influence and wealth of many local Quakers, were by extension able to contact other local groups. Sophisticated PR techniques were used to translate the personal 'witness' of those who had seen the situation for themselves into a broader public sympathy. Perhaps most significantly, the municipal fundraising of the Lord Mayor's Fund in Birmingham was channelled through Quaker agents in Spain, meaning vast sums of money were deployed in direct relief work. Pre-existing British networks of 'business humanitarianism', which was business-like in both contacts and approach, were rapidly mobilised to address a humanitarian emergency in another country.

### **The International Commission: professionalising international refugee support**

This business-like approach to fundraising was also translated into an increasingly professionalised approach to dealing with humanitarian work on the ground. The creation of the International Commission, which has not received any academic attention, is emblematic

---

<sup>161</sup> MS740 Spanish Refugee Children (Lord Mayor's Fund). Box 2, Reports to Committee File. BCA. The fundraising efforts were considerably bolstered by the donations of individual Committee members. The donations book shows 17 people as making regular weekly or monthly contributions; Francis Littleboy donated £10 a month as did W.A. Albright, and most of the Committee donated £1 monthly in addition to extra contributions of money or goods when needed. A special appeal on January 17 1938 saw huge donations from individuals, mostly from members of the Cadbury family. Dorothy Cadbury in particular appears as a regular donor. In July 1937 she donated £100; an amount only surpassed in that month by the Lord Mayor's Fund which gave £635.9.0.

<sup>162</sup> This quotation is most famously attributed to John Wilhelm Rowntree but was, and is still, widely used.

of the professionalization of humanitarian work in the interwar years. By October 1937, a new wave of refugees from Santander streamed towards Barcelona. Barcelona FSC workers tried to anticipate their need, sending a lorry of milk to meet them on the road, but the sheer numbers meant private charity could no longer provide sufficient support. The Republican government, which consistently did as much as possible for refugees, set up several subsidised canteens, but the shortfall was obvious. Edith Pye's response was to establish the International Commission for the Care of Spanish Refugees (IC). The purpose of the IC was to create a space where European governments could donate money to aid Spanish civilians without the risk of breaching their self-imposed non-intervention treaty. Pye liaised with the British Foreign Office, which pledged to donate £10,000 to a neutral, international Committee if Pye could persuade other governments to do the same. Viscount Cranborne, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, authorised the donation and served as joint Vice-President of the IC.<sup>163</sup>

Using the personal connections she had built over 30 years of international relief work, Pye established a central committee under the chairmanship of Judge Michael Hansson of Norway. The first meeting was in December 1937 and approximately a third of the Committee members were Friends.<sup>164</sup> Edith Pye personally wrote to prominent figures including Eamonn de Valera and Jawaharlal Nehru to solicit donations, as well as working with other committee members (who were all seasoned aid workers or internationalists) to request funds from governments. The money flooded in. The UK government eventually donated a total of £25000 plus goods in kind. Part of the success of the IC fundraising was the pledge that money donated by a government would be spent on goods produced within that country. Norway's contribution, for example, was largely spent on the fish-oil supplements for which Norway was the largest and cheapest producer. In total, the IC raised and spent over £500,000 between December 1937 and April 1940.<sup>165</sup>

Meanwhile, in Barcelona, tensions between Dr. Maria Pictet of SCIU and the Quaker workers were growing, principally over Maria Pictet's long absences necessitating Alfred Jacob's constant attendance at the railway station to supervise distribution. Maria Pictet had an

---

<sup>163</sup> Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Salisbury, Viscount Cranborne, was controversial as a staunch imperialist and defender of apartheid. His support of the IC was, however, unflinching and there are suggestions he made considerable personal financial donations to its work. T161/932 Treasury. Contribution by H.M. Government to the International Commission for the assistance of Child Refugees. 1937 Dec 10-1939 Feb 11. NA.

<sup>164</sup> *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge* (1940) No. 22, p. 474.

<sup>165</sup> The UK representatives were T. Edmund Harvey (a Quaker M.P and cousin of John Harvey) Edith Pye herself, Hilda Clark, Audrey Russell and Horace Alexander. *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge* (1940) No. 22, p. 474.

incredibly demanding role and, while the FSC workers could understand her divided attentions, they grew frustrated at her tendency to undermine FSC decisions then leave them to do the day-to-day work. Relationships grew so bad that in summer of 1937 the union between the FSC, SCIU and Park's General Appeal broke down irretrievably and the FSC co-ordinating committee in London reluctantly agreed to pursue separate relief efforts. The FSC and Park continued to work closely together, bolstered by the arrival of several new workers including Elise Thomasen, a Danish Friend who took over the supervision of the canteens.

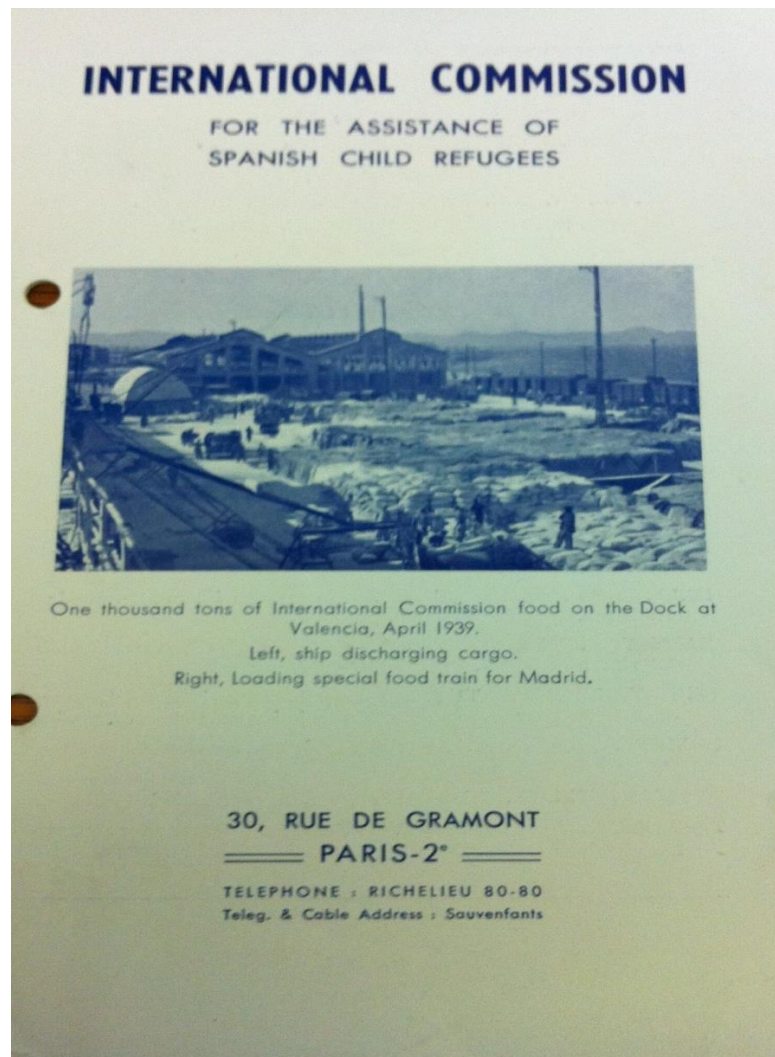
Expanded efforts took their toll on the well-being of the Quaker workers. As food supplies ran increasingly short, the FSC workers were themselves beginning to grow malnourished, and the effort of continual hard work with few breaks caused great physical and mental strain. Edith Pye insisted that workers accept food parcels from Britain and take regular paid holidays. One of the most reflexive and self-aware Quaker workers in Spain was Barbara Wood, who was in charge of the distribution of supplies and based in Valencia. She had taken a job at Friends House as a junior typist specifically to contribute to Spain, and taken a significant pay cut in order to do so; feeling her wages would be approximately £250 a year if she was working in another job. She then volunteered to work in Spain as she spoke Spanish and was told a 'subsistence allowance' of £3 a week would be paid. Once she arrived in Spain payments were unreliable and Wood was under enormous pressure from her work. She recognised, 'it goes against the grain to spend on salaries the money which is subscribed for relief work-on the other hand, without someone here with commercial knowledge and experience and speaking Spanish your relief work immediately suffers.'<sup>166</sup> Wood's letter is indicative of the growing level of business-awareness among the Quaker workers. No longer necessarily privately wealthy, the 1930s generation of relief workers were increasingly professionalised.

From early 1938 the IC became the principal co-ordinating body of relief in Spain. It was fundamentally a Quaker organisation but bore the stamp of international legitimacy and, more importantly, was able to raise vast amounts of money. The 'Amigos Cuáqueros' in Barcelona, who had already worked under the direction of Pye in her FSC role, carried on their work in the dual capacity of FSC and IC workers. The initial aim of the IC was to address the refugee crisis in Republican Spain. The IC defined refugees as 'those who have been forced to leave their homes by circumstances connected with the present war' and sought to provide a hot meal each day for each of 250,000 undernourished refugee children and pregnant or nursing

---

<sup>166</sup> Letter from Barbara Wood to Cuthbert Wigham, 8 August 1937. FSC/R/SP/3/2. FHA.

mothers. The cost of this would be £122,500 for four months.<sup>167</sup> The IC turned the essentially private and voluntary FSC relief work into an outward-facing, business-like humanitarian concern.



**Image 4. International Commission Publicity Leaflet, 1939.**<sup>168</sup>

The establishment of the IC galvanised the Barcelona team. An influx of money combined with international publicity meant relief work could be greatly expanded. The commonly acknowledged primary need was for milk. Nationalist forces had taken much agrarian land and production was down by 40%.<sup>169</sup> Four 'canteens' for refugee children were established at Sans, Carmen, San Andres and Gracia. The canteens provided a litre of milk, a tin of condensed or dried milk or a packet of food every two days provided the recipient had a certificate card

<sup>167</sup> FSC/R/SP/2/3. FHA.

<sup>168</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/2. FHA.

<sup>169</sup> As outlined in the Quaker publicity pamphlet by Norah Curtis and Cyril Gilbey, *Malnutrition: Quaker Relief in Austria 1919-1924 and Spain 1936-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944).

issued by an inspector. Each card would be valid for two weeks.<sup>170</sup> These canteens were run in close co-operation with Spanish social services and municipal authorities. Along with the milk and food, children received regular medical check-ups, with particular attention on anaemia, scabies and rickets. In addition to the feeding centre in Barcelona, Friends gave financial support for the upkeep of communities of orphaned or abandoned children. An organisation named 'Ayuda Infantil' administered these colonies. The FSC gave £1 per month per child for five colonies of fifty children each.<sup>171</sup>

The IC which, unlike the FSC, did not have to adhere to codes of Quaker political neutrality was able to take an approach to publicity material which was more shocking and more overtly political. The most shocking were those which focused on the suffering of children such as Image 5, which shows an obviously emaciated child being held by a woman, presumably the mother, who looks drawn and weary. This image, unfettered by having to draw children into a neutral humanitarian space, is able to subvert narratives of reassurance to deliver the message that this suffering is wrong, and the pamphlet outlines details of the work done to remedy this situation. Other publicity leaflets, such as Image 4, emphasise the work done by IC staff. The caption on the front of this leaflet details 'one thousand tons of International Commission food on the Dock at Valencia, 1939,' emphasising the professionalism and success of the existing relief schemes. The difference between FSC and IC publicity materials can be explained largely by the intended audience. IC leaflets were designed for governments, large-scale philanthropists and relief organisations and were not representative of a single organisation and, as such, were less cautious about the message they conveyed.

---

<sup>170</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/2. FHA.

<sup>171</sup> Curtis and Gilbey, *Malnutrition* pp. 55-56.



**Image 5. 'The Children of Spain' International Commission publicity leaflet, 1939.** <sup>172</sup>

Additional funds raised by the success of IC international fundraising meant more British workers were needed to co-ordinate distribution of supplies. The permanent workers, Norma and Alfred Jacob, Elise Thomasen and Barbara Wood were joined by Kanty Cooper, a Spanish speaker, sculptor and experienced aid worker, and Robert Wheeler. Independently wealthy and with no need to work, Wheeler gave large amounts of time, money and supplies to the FSC effort including a truck, a van, aluminium cooking utensils, £1500 and use of his home in Britain as a colony for Basque refugee children. Dr. Audrey Russell, a specialist in nutrition and puericulture, and a junior doctor, Martin Herford, also joined the team. Richard Rees, who worked for the IC in a voluntary capacity after having initially gone to Spain as an International Brigade ambulance driver with his friend Robert Wheeler, took on some of the responsibility of

---

<sup>172</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/2. FHA.

supply and distribution.<sup>173</sup> The amount of work done under the leadership of such a small relief team is quite staggering. In December 1938, at the peak of the FSC feeding efforts, there were ten British relief workers supported by hundreds of Spanish relief workers and volunteers.<sup>174</sup> At no time were there more than 20 workers, even including consultative figures such as John Harvey.<sup>175</sup>

By 1938 the FSC workers had, somewhat half-heartedly, tried and failed to secure visas for Nationalist Spain. Having been refused they continued to focus their efforts on the Republican area around Barcelona. The American Friends' Service Committee (AFSC) had a foothold in Nationalist Spain and distributed some supplies there amid tensions about Nationalist appropriation of Quaker goods<sup>176</sup>. As the Nationalist zone had the majority of agricultural land and a much smaller number of refugees the need there was simply not so great. This, fortunately for many of the British Quaker workers, meant they did not have to challenge their own political sympathies, which became increasingly Republican. In a Spanish radio interview Alfred Jacob directly criticised the British government's role in the conflict, saying, 'Our neutrality is not the neutrality of the non-intervention committee. That would be a neutrality of not doing anything. We work for Spain, for her civil population, for her children especially.'<sup>177</sup> Mendlesohn has contrasted the FSC and AFSC approaches in Spain, concluding that the FSC came closest to achieving a mode of operations suffused with a unified 'Quakerly' liberal theological concern while, perhaps because of a more disparate and evangelical form of

---

<sup>173</sup> Richard Rees, *A Theory of my Time: An Essay in Didactic Reminiscence* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1963) Chapter 7.

<sup>174</sup> While the FSC's work in Catalonia was spearheaded by the team in London, Quaker communities around the world contributed greatly to the efforts. Danish Friends regularly sent significant donations of milk and clothing. The San Andres Canteen was known as the 'Norwegian Canteen' and all milk distributed there was a gift from Norwegian Friends. It was operated by Signe Fredholm.

<sup>175</sup> To give a snapshot on the distribution of labour, in September 1938 Alfred Jacob worked with four Spanish helpers on office work; A McCowan, J Richards and Rosa Poy were in charge of the colonies; there were four Spanish finance workers; Kanty Cooper and a team of Spanish volunteers ran the canteens; Domingo Ricart and four Spanish helpers ran the refugee canteens; Richard Rees, Dermot O'Donovan and five French and Spanish helpers organised purchasing and stores; Dr. Russell organised medical and puericulture centres with about 3 or 4 helpers. FSC/R/SP/1/4. FHA.

<sup>176</sup> For a detailed comparison of FSC and AFSC work see Mendlesohn, *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*, particularly Chapter Four. Mendlesohn concludes that AFSC co-operation with Nationalist social agencies risked legitimising the Nationalist cause while FSC workers managed to retain political neutrality despite Republican sympathies.

<sup>177</sup> Transcript of Jacob radio interview. Date unknown (probably 1938) FSC/R/SP/4/1. FHA.

Quakerism resulted in a more politically fragmented unit, the predominant tone of the AFSC was American-ness.<sup>178</sup>

This disparity of approach was not replicated in publicity material, which was strikingly similar, mainly because the two organisations shared a focus on children. With finances tight (and a set of photographic prints costing around \$150—a twentieth of the AFSC’s entire monthly budget for Spanish operations) the two units shared publicity material.<sup>179</sup> The AFSC were, however, keen to move away from the narrative of reassurance favoured by the FSC. Director of the AFSC’s ‘Spanish Child Feeding Mission’ John F. Reich repeatedly asked for more harrowing images, such as in this letter of 1939, ‘I am quite anxious to secure photographs of current activities. Please send me pictures of undernourished children, such as appears on the back of your last folder. I have simply nothing of the sort.’<sup>180</sup> Appeals of this type did not meet with success, however, and the two organisations continued to share predominantly reassuring publicity photographs.

Together with the Catalan authorities, Spanish workers, and AFSC colleagues, the FSC/IC Barcelona team achieved a staggering feat of humanitarian work. Between February and July 1938 alone, 500,000 rations were distributed in Catalonia.<sup>181</sup> By November 1938, 20,000 children were living in IC-funded colonies.<sup>182</sup> By combining Quaker peace testimony with a unified sense of mission, professionalising relationships with business funders, and adapting social concern to focus on children, with the financial support this approach encouraged, FSC workers under the leadership of the Jacobs, Edith Pye and Fred Tritton, and with IC funding, had created a ‘neutral’ humanitarian space within which they could bring direct aid to the Spanish Republic.

### **A Conflicting Approach? Spanish Exiles and Evacuees**

The mass immigration of 4000 Basque children to Britain in 1937 represented a dramatic volte-face in the direction of British philanthropic activity towards children. As I have argued above, the Quaker focus on children in Spain was a manifestation of a new humanitarian strategy of

---

<sup>178</sup> Farah Mendlesohn, ‘Denominational Differences in Quaker Relief Work during the Spanish Civil War: The Operation of Corporate Concern and Liberal Theologies, *The Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2000.

<sup>179</sup> Letter from John Reich to Dorothy Thomson, 23 September 1939. A set of pictures from William Finley cost \$150 and this was about the usual cost for a set of prints, with a set of copies costing an extra \$30-\$40. FHA. FSCR/SP/2/1. The FSC budget for Spain was \$3000 a month.

<sup>180</sup> Letter from John F. Reich to Dorothy Thomson, 30 March 1939. FSC/R/SP/2/1. FHA.

<sup>181</sup> FSC/R/SP/1/4. FHA.

<sup>182</sup> FSC/R/SP/2/3. FHA.



prioritising children. Between the 1840s and as late as 1967, and encouraged by successive government policies, up to 150,000 of Britain's 'problem' children had been deported by Barnado's and other charities. During this time, child migrants into Britain had only been encouraged to arrive as part of small family units. In this section, I outline the extent to which the highly significant immigration of 4000 unaccompanied Basque children was enabled by Quaker organisation. I contrast the treatment of the Basque children to the treatment of adult Republican exiles during the same period, to highlight the specific and privileged humanitarian role newly awarded to children.

### **Quakers and Basque Refugee Children**

On 26 April 1937, Guernica, Bilbao and the surrounding region were heavily bombed by German aeroplanes. The towns were surrounded by heavy steel and mining industry but were themselves civilian rather than military targets. The bombing caused international outcry and Picasso's painting 'Guernica', completed very shortly after the annihilation of the city, is seen by many as the artistic epitome of the tragedy of modern warfare.<sup>183</sup> Even prior to the bombing, the NJC had been lobbying the British government to allow the evacuation of Spanish children in military areas. Bronwen Lloyd-Williams and Lydia Gee were sent by the FSC to report on conditions in Northern Spain. Official FSC policy had always held that children could be best helped by relief work in Spain and being kept together with their families. The report sent by Lloyd-Williams and Gee convinced the FSC and the NJC that an exception *must* be made for the children of Bilbao:

A sense of tragedy overhangs Bilbao. The streets are crowded with hungry, haggard looking people, the cafés with occupants who sit reading before bare tables, the only drink available being camomile-tea and whisky. White bread and meat have not been seen for weeks, fruit and vegetables are a rarity, and the staple diet is beans and rice... They [the people] are proud and did not willingly ask us for help, but here and everywhere else there was one poignant appeal-'Take our children away. Save them from the horrors of this war.'<sup>184</sup>

Children here are represented as pure and innocent victims. It is no coincidence that the first mechanised aerial bombardment of civilian housing directly resulted in the first mass immigration of unaccompanied children into Britain.

---

<sup>183</sup> 'Guernica' was commissioned by the Spanish Republican government and was displayed around the world to staggering popular acclaim.

<sup>184</sup> B. Lloyd-Williams and L.M. Gee, 'The Beleaguered North', in Jim Fyrt with Sally Alexander (eds.) *Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991). p. 221.

Far from being encouraging, the British government was not even informed of the imminent arrival, as minutes of a Cabinet meeting held on 5 May show:

In the course of the discussion [on the bombing of Guernica] the Minister of Health [Sir Kingsley Wood] asked if any information had been received by the Foreign Office as to the evacuation of children from the danger zone. Enquiries had been made from outside to the department as to 4,000 children who, it was alleged, would be arriving in the country within the next few days.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Anthony Eden] thought that any such arrival was unlikely... The First Lord of the Admiralty [Samuel Hoare] stated that the reports of the numbers of refugees varied very much. One suggestion was that the claim that 4,000 children were shortly to arrive in this country was being made in order to stimulate subscriptions to a fund that was being raised for this purpose.<sup>185</sup>

After repeated petitioning, the Foreign Office had agreed to allow 4000 Basque children, accompanied by their teachers, priests, and nurses into Britain provided the NJC would meet the entire financial cost of their upkeep and that their stay would only be temporary. Eleanor Rathbone's recent biographer Susan Pedersen says Eleanor Rathbone, Wilfred Roberts and Vincent Tewson of the TUC persuaded the government to allow the Basque refugees in.<sup>186</sup> This seems likely, and all three of these figures were certainly heavily involved in the subsequent support of the children. Given their extensive experience of relief work in Spain, it was decided that the Quakers would be best-placed to organise the selection and embarkation of the children from the Spanish end.

Leah Manning of SMAC and Edith Pye on behalf of the FSC were sent by the NJC to Bilbao to arrange for the evacuation of the children to England. The first 2000 children were due to travel in summer 1937, with the rest to follow a few months later. Before allowing entry into Britain, a Foreign Office proviso was that the children should be screened for infectious diseases before selection for the voyage. The delegated doctors, Russell and Ellis were both employed and sent by the FSC. Dr. Richard Ellis was a Friend who was an Assistant Physician for children's diseases at Guy's Hospital in London. During his time in Spain, Ellis became so convinced of the physical and physiological damage to children of being involved in modern warfare that he later wrote, 'total war as it affects the child may be considered as an infectious disease'.<sup>187</sup> Dr. Audrey Russell was an extremely experienced nutritionist and puericulture expert based at University College Hospital in London who had worked in the East End and

---

<sup>185</sup> Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 5 May 1937, CAB/23/88. NA.

<sup>186</sup> Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) p. 287.

<sup>187</sup> Richard W.B Ellis, 'Effects of War on Child Health' *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 1, No. 4544 (Feb. 7, 1948), pp. 239-245.

with the FSC in Barcelona. Edith Pye had employed Russell on behalf of the International Commission despite concerns from the Spain Committee that she was not '100 percent Quaker' and she rapidly became a senior IC consultant.

After medically screening the children amidst heavy artillery bombardment, Russell and Ellis recommended unequivocally that all 4000 children should all be taken to Britain at once. The physical bodies of the refugee children were scrutinised intently, and were the site for justification and debate over their migration. *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* between them published four detailed articles on the Basque children (two by Ellis and Russell from Spain and two from doctors based in England) and two lengthy letters on the subject from Pye and Russell between May 1937 and December 1938.<sup>188</sup> Ellis and Russell's articles stressed the 'whiteness' of the Spanish children, 'Many have light brown or even red hair, a few are blue-eyed, and very few could be described as swarthy. Their facial colouring would usually pass for that of a sunburnt English child.'<sup>189</sup> The fact the children were Basques was significant- Tom Buchanan has found that the British concept of the Basques was as moderate, pious and civilised victims of the Civil War, as opposed to the stereotypical 'incompetent and lazy...cruel and violent...and highly individualistic' Spaniard.<sup>190</sup> The positive nature and self-help approach of the Spanish family units were also praised, 'The women showed admirable courage and spirit and a scene of intense activity centred around a running brook in the station yard, where children were being vigorously scrubbed, brushed, and combed, and in a few hours the whole yard was gay with newly washed garments drying in the sun.'<sup>191</sup> The bodies of children were shown as pure-washed in fresh Spanish spring water, and only contaminated

---

<sup>188</sup> Audrey E. Russell, 'Children in Catalonia' (Correspondence) *The Lancet*, 17 December 1938, p. 1437; Edith Pye, 'Refugees in Catalonia' (Correspondence) *The Lancet*, 6 August 1938 pp. 339-340; Richard W.B. Ellis and Russell, 'Four Thousand Basque Children', *The Lancet*, 29 May 1937 pp. 1303-1304; Richard W.B. Ellis and Audrey E. Russell, 'The Refugees in Catalonia' *The Lancet*, 16 Oct 1937 pp. 929-938; Richard Taylor, 'Typhoid Fever in the Basque Refugee Camp' *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 4006 (16 Oct 1937), pp. 760-761; H.C. Maurice Williams, 'The Arrival Of the Basque Children At the Port of Southampton' *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 1, No. 3988 (12 June 1937), pp. 1209-1210. Incidentally, Drs Ellis and Russell married in 1941 and adopted two orphaned Basque children. Ellis served in the RAF in the Mediterranean during the Second World War before returning to medical practice and publishing the still-acclaimed book, *Diseases in Infancy and Childhood* in 1951.

<sup>189</sup> Richard W. B. Ellis and Russell, Audrey E., 'Four Thousand Basque Children', *The Lancet*, 29 May 1937 pp.1303-1304.

<sup>190</sup> See Tom Buchanan, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss and Memory* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007). p. 5.

<sup>191</sup> Ellis, Richard W.B. and Russell, Audrey E., 'The Refugees in Catalonia' *The Lancet*, 16 October 1937 pp. 929-938.

with the 'infectious disease' of war. Of course, this is linked to pre-existing interwar public concern over the physical health of the urban poor in Britain.<sup>192</sup>

Dr. Russell took charge of liaising with municipal authorities and parents to arrange the immediate departure of the *SS Habana* on 21 May 1937. The evacuation was seen as a hostile act by Franco and, directly flouting the British non-intervention treaty for the only time during the war, the *Habana* received protection from two British destroyers until it reached neutral waters. Apart from the diplomatic intervention of the British government to 'save' Jessica Mitford, who had eloped with her cousin Esmond Romilly to Bilbao in February 1937, escorting the *Habana* was the only direct intervention the British government made in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>193</sup> The welfare of children and the virtue of debutantes were evidently the sole exceptions to the non-intervention pact.

Once the children arrived in Britain and were housed in temporary accommodation at Stoneham, near Southampton, Quakers took a more marginal role. Amid huge public interest, the Basque Children's Committee (formed of members of the NJC, SMA and FSC) encouraged charities, private individuals and communities to form small colonies to care for groups of children. Hundreds of colonies were set up across the country, primarily by the Catholic Church (which took 1200 children) and the Salvation Army. The Society of Friends decided to officially remain focused on relief within Spain so did not officially run any homes, but many Meetings and Quaker individuals offered support. Adrian Bell's book *Only For Three Months*, which is based on interviews with former Basque refugees and the adults who cared for them, outlines many instances of the type of support given.<sup>194</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska. "Raising a Nation of 'Good Animals': The New Health Society and Health Education Campaigns in Interwar Britain." *Social History of Medicine*, 20 (1) (2007); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska. "Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41(4) (2006).

<sup>193</sup> Jessica Mitford, *Hons and Rebels* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1977).

<sup>194</sup> The example of The Grange colony in Street highlights the social networks involved in the care of the Basque children. In spring 1937 Fenner Brockway, who had a long association with Quakers dating from his Conscientious Objection in the Great War, had hit upon the idea of running the Nationalist blockade of ports in Northern Spain. With the Basque delegation in London, he raised considerable amounts of money for this project which never came to fruition. Some of the funds were diverted to support Basque refugee children in England. Reginald Reynolds, a supporter of the original scheme, asked his cousin Roger Clark for help. Clark's shoemaking firm therefore donated The Grange to house child refugees for two years which, according to Brockway's preference, housed the children of Anarchists. See Bell, *Only for Three Months* p. 73.



**Image 6. Basque Refugee children on the SS Habana**

The most widely reproduced images of the Basque refugee children was this shot (Image 6) of the *SS Habana*, which was published in almost every British newspaper and is still used to illustrate articles about the children. While it was a press photograph and not a publicity shot, it entirely reinforces the narrative of reassurance established in the medical journals and Quaker photos from Spain. The children were safe aboard the large protective ship. Other photographs show the children in groups playing, or eating. They are innocent, happy, ordinary children. The way in which the Basque children were represented by FSC publicity goes a long way towards explaining why there was such a high level of public support for their welfare.

Despite public sympathies, money to care for the Basque children soon ran short. As their stay extended past the planned three months, the children had to perform folk dancing and record songs to raise funds for their care. The BCC organised huge fundraising concerts to raise money and persuaded the black American singer Paul Robeson, who was immensely popular, to donate the proceeds from his song, poignantly named, 'Sometimes I feel like a Motherless Child,' towards their welfare.<sup>195</sup> The BCC would only return children to Spain when there was a clear request by their parents, many of whom were themselves refugees in France. At the end of the Civil War 2000 children were still in Britain and many had nowhere safe to go. Reluctant to antagonise Franco in the face of looming world war, the British Government encouraged the children to return to Spain and, with funds dwindling, only about 400 children remained at the outbreak of World War.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>195</sup> Incidentally, Robeson's mother, who died in a fire when he was a very young child, had been a Quaker.

<sup>196</sup> Most of these children settled in Britain long-term and were eventually granted citizenship.

It is clear Quakers spearheaded the organisation of the evacuation from the Spanish end, using their local expertise and specialist relief workers to select children and negotiate with parents and Bilbao authorities. The Quaker peace testimony, which had evolved into an imperative for social welfare in Spain, saw war as a disease from which pure children needed to be rescued. However, this was not to be done in a politically charged or alarmist way. Instead, the narrative of reassurance, as seen in publicity photographs, was repeated in the pages of medical journals. 'These foreign bodies are safe', the English public was repeatedly told, 'and they are not that different from us anyway. Why, some even have red hair.' Photographs of groups of smiling children waving from the deck of a newly-scrubbed boat, or playing football in a camp in Southampton resembled images of a Scout camp and reinforced the veil of politically non-threatening neutrality behind which Quaker work operated.

The immigration of the Basque refugee children demonstrated clearly that with a two-pronged approach from voluntary agencies - dealing with both government and representation - it was possible to get large numbers of refugees out of war-torn countries. It also proved that the British people were keen to be generous hosts to those deemed or depicted as worthy of rescue from fascism. In contrast to the newly-privileged role of European children, who were carefully positioned as politically neutral to sanction their entry into Britain, there was no question of adult Republican refugees being allowed entry.

### **Evacuating Republican Exiles to Mexico**

British Quakers were heavily involved in an additional, lesser-known migrant scheme for adult Republican refugees. Alone among the world's leaders, General Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico offered sanctuary to Spanish political refugees. Left-wing and sympathetic to the goals of the Republic, Cárdenas had provided financial and diplomatic support for the Republican government since 1934. He also offered political sanctuary to an unspecified and potentially unlimited number of adult Republican refugees.<sup>197</sup> As there were up to 160,000 Spanish Republicans in long-term exile, mostly in France, after the Civil War, the Cárdenas scheme was a window of hope. While Cárdenas was eager to provide a permanent home for expatriate Republicans, the funds to prepare and equip ships to transport refugees were not forthcoming.

---

<sup>197</sup> See Sebastiaan Faber, *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico, 1939-1975* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002). The only other world leader to offer sanctuary to adult refugees was Rafael Leónidas Trujillo of the Dominican Republic who explicitly offered refuge in an attempt to 'whiten' the local population and earn the respect of the West. Although Trujillo's offer was ignored, it was not so anomalous as it may seem, given that throughout this period, and until 1967, 'orphaned' British children were still being sent to the colonies, mainly Canada and Australia, as 'good white stock'. See the BBC Radio 4 four-part documentary series, 'The Child Migrants' aired in 2003.

Through Dr. Frank Tannenbaum, a Columbia University professor and a close friend of Cárdenas', the FSC and AFSC agreed to organise and finance the voyage providing Cárdenas would accept responsibility for the Spanish refugees once they arrived in Mexico.<sup>198</sup> Howard Kershner wrote in his memoir that the voyage was financed by 'a private organisation in London' and clothes and supplies for the passengers were provided by Quakers.<sup>199</sup> Jim Fyrth attributes the organisation of the voyage to Robert Wheeler and the Quaker MP Thomas Edmund Harvey, who visited R.A. Butler at the Foreign Office and persuaded him to fund the scheme.<sup>200</sup> Reports held at Friends House archive make it clear the evacuation was organised mostly by the FSC, IC and NJC with additional funding and support from the British Committee for Refugees from Spain and the Foreign Office.<sup>201</sup>

After intense negotiations between representatives of the International Commission, the French government and the Mexican Ambassador, the S.S. *Sinai* sailed from Sete in France, the nearest port to the IC base in Perpignan, for Mexico in April 1939 with 1800 refugees on board. The exact administrative mechanics of the voyage are not clear but letters in the Friends House archive refer to the difficulties of assembling, food, shelter and departure of Spanish evacuees on the *Sinaia*,<sup>202</sup> and it is clear that FSC/IC workers along with Spanish refugees organised the voyage from Perpignan. The extent of Quaker involvement is made clear by the make-up of 'observers' aboard the vessel for the twenty day voyage. Apart from crew, the only four non-Spaniards aboard were Richard Rees of the IC, William Brebner of the FSC, Nan Green (a Communist aid worker who had been recommended by Leah Manning due to her command of Spanish and general ability), and David 'Chim' Seymour, the acclaimed Magnum war photographer who recorded the voyage for 'Life' magazine.<sup>203</sup>

It seems clear that the FSC organised the practical details of the voyage on the ground in France and was also heavily involved in fundraising and political negotiation. Once the SS *Sinaia* docked in Mexico, Richard Rees was in charge of working with Mexican authorities to ensure the refugees were housed and fed. He reported an 'astonishingly good' reception by

---

<sup>198</sup> Letter Dr. F Tannenbaum to John F. Reich, 10 May 1939. FSC/R/SP/2/1. FHA.

<sup>199</sup> Howard E. Kershner, *Quaker Service in Modern War* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1950) p.122

<sup>200</sup> Fyrth, *The Signal was Spain*. p.303.

<sup>201</sup> See Richard Rees' reports dated 19 June 1939 and 5 July 1939. FSC/R/SP/4/3. FHA.

<sup>202</sup> See FSC/R/SP/4/3. FHA.

<sup>203</sup> Nan Green, *A Chronicle of Small Beer* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2005). Seymour's photo diary of the voyage was published in 'Life' magazine on 17 July 1939. He was also invited by President Lázaro Cárdenas to photograph the refugees as they made new lives in Mexico. His 'Mexican Suitcase' photographs were later published in *Life* and *Paris Match*. From Mexico, 'Chim' travelled to the U.S. where he was trapped by the start of the war. In 1948 Chim published a book of war photography featuring children which had been commissioned by UNICEF and was entitled 'Chim's children'.

the Mexican authorities and felt Cárdenas would accept as many refugees as could be funded.<sup>204</sup> Two subsequent ships were organised by the IC and FSC-the *Ipanema* with 995 passengers and the *Mexique* with over 2000. Both arrived safely in July 1939. Sadly the war started before fundraising for any more vessels could be mobilised, and remaining exiled Republicans were trapped in France.

The contrast in Quaker involvement in these two schemes is striking. The FSC and IC were keen to help political refugees who had no hopes of returning to live in Spain to a place of safety in Mexico, but were hesitant about focusing resources on the unprecedented concept of evacuating children to Britain when so many needed help in Spain. Official FSC (and IC) policy insisted that children could best be helped by food relief work in Spain and by being kept together with their families. Relief workers on the ground in Spain objected strongly to the evacuation on the grounds of cost and of the children's wellbeing.<sup>205</sup> In this, they were in agreement with SCIU, whose secretary Lewis Golden predicted that the children would decline, 'physically, morally and mentally' in Britain.<sup>206</sup> The question of why the FSC/IC were so involved in planning and executing of the evacuation of the Basque children despite the objections of its own workers was answered by Frederick Tritton (Chair of the FSC's Spain Committee) in January 1938. Tritton wrote to Alfred Jacob (who was incensed at the evacuation), 'We of course realise that it is much more economical to send food into Spain, but the psychological value of having the children here would be very great.'<sup>207</sup> Quakers co-ordinated the temporary evacuation of Basque children with other voluntary agencies as a public relations exercise to raise interest in and support of the main work in Spain. The evacuations to Mexico, on the other hand, were directly organised by the FSC and IC. Policy with regard to the evacuation and resettlement of refugees remained discretionary according to judgement on the need of each group of refugees.

### **'La Retirada'<sup>208</sup> and the 'Pourrissoirs'<sup>209</sup> of Southern France**

<sup>204</sup> See Richard Rees' reports dated 19 June 1939 and 5 July 1939. FSC/R/SP/4/3. FHA.

<sup>205</sup> Alfred Jacob in particular wrote several angry letters to Fred Tritton on the subject. See FSC/R/SP/1/5. FHA.

<sup>206</sup> Lewis Golden reference from Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). p. 110.

<sup>207</sup> Frederick Tritton to Alfred Jacob, 19 January 1938. FSC/R/SP/1/5. FHA.

<sup>208</sup> 'The Retreat'. Term used by Republican exiles to describe the movement to France.

<sup>209</sup> Literal translation 'the place where objects are rotting'. The only historian of Gurs concentration camp, Claude Laharie, used this word to describe the camp. Claude Laharie, *Le Camp de Gurs 1939-1945: Un aspect Meconnu de l'histoire du Bearn* (Biarritz: Atlantic Publishing Company, 1993).



Tragically, and just as IC food relief operations brought nutritional intake in Republican Spain to a sustainable level, Barcelona fell to Nationalist troops on 26 January 1939, virtually ending all relief programmes overnight. Fearing fascist reprisals, hundreds of thousands of civilians, political activists, soldiers and International Brigaders fled towards the border with France. Refugee columns were strafed by German and Italian aircraft and any men of military age apprehended by Nationalist troops were liable to be shot on sight. Edith Pye called the behaviour of the Nationalist troops towards refugees a 'systematic policy of terrorism and destruction' and authorised an emergency grant of £1000 from the IC to support refugees fleeing into France.<sup>210</sup> All four Quaker-owned lorries were converted into mobile units for hot food and drinks with two stationed on each side of the border. Two additional lorries were converted into mobile hospitals where some help could be given to the sick and wounded.<sup>211</sup> Approximately 200,000 hot rations were given out by FSC workers during the flight over the Pyrenees.<sup>212</sup>

The FSC workers also had to flee. They had been accused by Nationalist officials of being a 'Red organisation which helps Red children' and did not feel safe in Franco's Spain.<sup>213</sup> In addition, the vehement personal anti-fascism of nearly all the FSC workers would not allow them to perform any aid work for which a fascist government might try to take credit. The FSC Barcelona team crossed the Pyrenees in early February 1939 and began working with Republican refugees on the French side of the border. The team comprised Norma Jacob, Kanty Cooper, Audrey Russell, William Brebner, Donald Darling, Dorothy Morris, Robert Wheeler, Jacinta Landa, Domingo Ricart and Lucy Palser. At this stage they were officially working for the IC rather than the FSC but the two organisations were so closely linked by this time as to be indistinguishable.

On arrival in France, Spanish refugees were entirely at the mercy of the generosity of the French people and government. The Pyrénées-Orientales region of France was a poor rural area and, with government assistance slow to materialise, the majority of Spanish refugees were physically segregated from mainstream society and placed in appalling conditions in a number of makeshift refugee camps. This was not, however, comparable to the experience of the Basque children in colonies across Britain. Most of the camps had no shelter, food or

---

<sup>210</sup> Pye's report on conditions in Spain, 16 February 1939. FHA. FSC/R/SP/4/1. FHA.

<sup>211</sup> Spain Report 1936-1949, FSC/R/SP/5. FHA.

<sup>212</sup> FSC Spain Leaflet, FSC/R/SP/5. FHA.

<sup>213</sup> As described in Muriel McDiarmid's book on her work in Barcelona. Muriel McDiarmid, *Franco in Barcelona* (London: United Editorial Ltd., 1939).

sanitary facilities and refugees often slept on exposed, damp sand.<sup>214</sup> In response to the shifting crisis, Edith Pye swiftly changed the name of the IC to the International Commission for the Assistance of Child Refugees and diverted all IC resources to providing support for Spanish refugees in France. The name change was clearly a tactical move as the IC focused less on child refugees in France than they had in Spain but were in need of a greater degree of political protection, especially once the war broke out. FSC/IC workers operated as the main humanitarian agency in a politically unstable region on the basis of their own political neutrality, which was doubtful at best.

Modern research on memory and the Spanish Civil War stresses the amnesia which accompanies many memories of the aftermath of the Civil War.<sup>215</sup> However, given the comparative lack of archival sources on the experiences of Republican exiles, memory narratives give some insight. It is striking how many stories mention the aid given by Quakers in the region. Rosemary Bailey, who has interviewed many former Spanish refugees, was struck by stories of the quiet efficiency of Quaker workers. 'They seemed to be everywhere, discreetly offering care where it was needed and, even more discreetly, escape to thousands of desperate people.'<sup>216</sup> G. Scott Soo, who has studied Republican exile narratives, also notes the frequency with which former refugees mention the Quaker supplies they received.<sup>217</sup>

FSC workers themselves, however, were absolutely disillusioned with what they saw as the inadequacy of their efforts. Robert Wheeler and William Brebner worked in the men's camps. Both suffered from exhaustion and deep disillusionment with their work. Wheeler wrote in 1939, 'I get more and more convinced that we are wasting our time. This is not a matter for private societies like the International Commission supported by a small amount of conscience money from various governments. The only thing that can possibly do any good is large scale

---

<sup>214</sup> Pablo Casals, the world-renowned cellist, joined what he called the 'procession of sorrow'. Casals was wealthy enough to avoid the damp sand and barbed wire of the refugee camps in which the majority of his compatriots found themselves but, during visits, he was so appalled at the 'Dante's Inferno' he witnessed he devoted the rest of his life to extensive fundraising for Spanish refugees. Albert E. Kahn, *Joys and Sorrows: Reflections by Pablo Casals* (Macdonald: London, 1970).

<sup>215</sup> See, for example, Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy* (trans. Mark Oakley) (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

<sup>216</sup> Rosemary Bailey, *Love and War in the Pyrenees: A Story of Courage, Fear and Hope 1939-1944* (London: Phoenix, 2009) p. 49.

<sup>217</sup> See Gregory Scott Soo, 'Exile, Identity and Memory: Representations of Spanish Republicans in the Southwest of France' (DPhil, University of Sussex, 2005).

Government action for mass evacuation to Mexico and to the colonies. It is much too big for all the various private and semi-private societies to meddle with.’<sup>218</sup>

With ‘large scale government action’ not forthcoming, Quaker workers needed to do the best they could to alleviate conditions as they found them. The Toulouse IC workers have been criticised for a level of political naivety which has been described as tantamount to collaboration.<sup>219</sup> The inherent assumption by Quakers was that the situation in the camps was so dire that everything possible must be done on the ground to alleviate suffering. This sometimes meant they could miss the bigger picture of the encroaching Nazi threat. Hillel Kieval, who has studied the efforts of various organisations to evacuate children from French camps, claims the Quakers were often a ‘stumbling block’ in plans for evacuation.<sup>220</sup> Perhaps remembering their experience with the children from Bilbao, individuals in the FSC and AFSC felt the huge amounts of money involved in evacuating a few children could be better spent in improving the conditions in the camps for the majority. Kieval’s accusation draws heavily on the official account of Quaker work and ignores the *unofficial* work which many Quaker workers were carrying out with the encouragement of their supervisors.

Helga Holbek was in charge of the Toulouse branch of the International Commission which operated officially as a branch of the AFSC and organised all the Quaker relief in the South of France between 1939 and 1945. Holbek herself was neither American nor Quaker-she was a Danish travel agent and internationalist whose talents had been recognised by Edith Pye when she appointed her as head of the IC France division in 1939. In fact, of around 10 AFSC staff there was only one American and one Quaker. Funding and direction came primarily from the IC with some AFSC support. The nomenclature was in essence a shield to allow the workers to operate under the guise of Quaker and American neutrality. The British FSC workers who had entered France from Spain with the refugees had to leave for their own safety when France surrendered. Despite the strong advice for non-neutral passport holders to leave France, Pye, Brebner, Darling and Russell stayed for several more months to hand over their work.<sup>221</sup> The American and European Quaker workers, although given the choice to leave, opted to stay and negotiate their role as aid workers in a permanently shifting political climate.

---

<sup>218</sup> Letter from Robert Wheeler to Dorothy Thompson 23 April 1939, FSC/R/SP/3/4. FHA. Incidentally, Wheeler was very popular with the women in the FSC and when he married his cousin in June 1940 there were a few sighs of regret in letters between his female colleagues.

<sup>219</sup> Hillel J Kieval, ‘Legality and Resistance in Vichy France: The Rescue of Jewish Children’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 124, No. 5 (10 October 1980).

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* p. 352.

<sup>221</sup> FSC/R/SP/3/4. FHA.

### The Emergence of Quaker Resistance under the Vichy Regime

In his groundbreaking work on Vichy France, Robert O. Paxton said resistance had three prerequisites, a clear target, hope, and an acceptance of lawlessness.<sup>222</sup> This was why it attracted the young and those who were already outcasts. In the section I question whether the extensive Quaker underground refugee support movement in the South of France can be characterised as resistance. The FSC and IC workers (operating under the 'neutral' AFSC auspices) certainly maintained hope in the 'inner light' they believed could be found in everyone. Their target was not to attack any particular group, but it could be argued that supporting refugees and saving those whose lives were at risk would constitute a positive target. Their relationship to lawlessness was, as I will explain, ambiguous. Overall, Quakers could perhaps be shoehorned into a definition of resistance activity. I feel that to do so would be to mistakenly misrepresent their very specific role, and will propose that their work constituted more a form of subversive and obstinate oppositionism - a specifically Quaker resistance.

Permission to carry out the Quaker work after the German invasion of France was engineered by Toot van Oordt, the only Quaker working in the Toulouse office. Toot van Oordt was from a very wealthy Dutch aristocratic family and had been actively involved in Quaker work for several years. Van Oordt obtained permission for IC operations in the South of France from the head of the local German police who had been fed *die Kvekersuppe* as a child and so looked favourably on Quaker work.<sup>223</sup> The legitimacy given to the Toulouse branch of the IC as a humanitarian organisation allowed a level of illegal activity to go on in plain sight. Augustin Callebat, a significant figure in early *résistance* activity in the Toulouse region, shared office space with the 'Quaker' team and worked with Synnevesdt and Holbek to secure false documents for hundreds of people who needed to hide, primarily Jewish children and those wanted by the Gestapo.<sup>224</sup>

A crucial account of the work done by the Toulouse Quakers is given in the memoirs of Alice Resch Synnestvedt who was a young Norwegian nurse working with the team. Synnestvedt recounts how she was specifically told by Helga Holbek that she had to choose between working for the Quakers and for the *Résistance* as she could not do both. However, she also

---

<sup>222</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001 [1972]) pp. 291-292.

<sup>223</sup> Alice Resch Synnestvedt, *Over the Highest Mountains: A Memoir of Unexpected Heroism in France during World War Two* (Pasadena, California: Intentional Productions, 2005).

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

tells of several occasions in which she participated in covert operations with Helga's full knowledge. In one instance she took four Jewish children to the Swiss border and smuggled them across.<sup>225</sup> It took several attempts and she could have been arrested and faced the death penalty at each one:

[From 1942] until the liberation, we worked almost daily, hiding both adults and children and securing false identity papers and ration cards. But all of this was done on the sly, even among those of us in the office. We were a neutral, non-political organisation after all, and foreigners to boot. We had to be very, very careful not to compromise our work in the camps and for French children.<sup>226</sup>

Synnestvedt has been credited with rescuing at least 206 children, at grave risk to her own safety. Along with Helga Holbek, she was honoured as a Righteous Gentile in 1983. The personal credit to Synnestvedt and Holbek, while deserving, overlooks the combined efforts of the entire Quaker team in Toulouse.

There is a paucity of research on French concentration and deportation camps. Official records are far from comprehensive and many were destroyed amid post-war accusations of collaboration. Most of the available research depends on oral histories combined with fragments of archival information. The most comprehensive account is Claude Laharie's accomplished history of the camp at Gurs, and this section relies heavily on his research. The many thousands of Spanish Republican soldiers, civilians and International Brigaders who had fled to Southern France and been interned in Gurs were joined in October 1940 by the first Jewish deportees from Germany, the 6,500 Jews of Baden. By the end of 1942 Gurs had evolved into the main deportation camp in France. In the winter of 1940, the Quakers and fellow humanitarian organisation Secours Suisse were already agitating for improvements to Le Gurs. Working in tandem, Secours Suisse concentrated their efforts on children and pregnant women, feeding about 100 people a day. To put this into perspective, Laharie has calculated the extra rations given by the Quakers and Secours Suisse between January 1941 and November 1943 were the same quantity as the subsistence rations given by camp command during the whole of 1943.<sup>227</sup> Voluntary organisations therefore increased the food supply within the camp by approximately a third, focusing their efforts on the neediest. The missionary motivation, of which there are traces in Friends' work in Barcelona, seems to have been entirely absent at Le Gurs. The only religious conversions were Catholic, and Laharie

---

<sup>225</sup> Children under 16 were safe in Switzerland without papers as refugees if they were able to cross the border.

<sup>226</sup> Synnestvedt, *Over the Highest Mountains* pp.127-128.

<sup>227</sup> Laharie, *Le Camp de Gurs*. p. 353.

attributes this to the fact the camp priest gave out sardines.<sup>228</sup> The Quakers and Secours Suisse continued their work at Gurs until the camp closed in November 1943. On 5 April 1943, a camp report stated that the Quakers had distributed 800,000 rations of 60 grammes of pulses.<sup>229</sup>



**Image 7. Spanish Refugee Children Interned in the Gurs Camp.<sup>230</sup>**



**Image 8. Prisoners at work in vegetable gardens set up by the AFSC at Gurs.<sup>231</sup>**

Images 7 and 8, which are two of the very few surviving photographs of Quaker work, were taken by AFSC workers and donated to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Image 7 is clearly a part of the narrative of reassurance around child welfare. The children are smiling, look healthy, are being fed, and are in no evident danger. Image 8 conforms to the IC's tradition of showing the work done, in this case showing the work done by prisoners with 'AFSC' support.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* p. 212.

<sup>229</sup> The French definition of pulses encompasses dried or canned vegetables as well as beans.

<sup>230</sup> Spanish Refugee Children Interned in the Gurs Camp. USHMM Picture Archive.

<sup>231</sup> Prisoners at work in vegetable gardens set up by the AFSC at Gurs. USHMM Picture Archive.

Gurs was by no means the only camp in which there was a Quaker presence. At Rivesaltes, Quakers distributed 50 grams of rice per head at least four times a week by the summer of 1941.<sup>232</sup> The IC and the Jewish relief organisation OSE worked together to get almost all the child inhabitants removed from Rivesaltes and placed into their own children's homes or private foster care.<sup>233</sup> Vichy policy on the internment and deportation of children was not clear until the summer of 1942. Relief organisations initially exploited this in order to get official permission to remove groups of children from the camps and spirit them away into private foster care. When it became clear that children were explicitly included in deportation orders, clandestine efforts to spirit children away from the camps by whatever means necessary were continued under the veil of established relief work.<sup>234</sup>

Mary Elmes, an Irish IC/FSC worker, was officially in charge of the International Commission's programme of cultural work within the concentration camps which included establishing schools, art projects and libraries. Under the cover of this work, for which she was given permission by German authorities, Elmes is known to have smuggled at least four children from Rivesaltes camp in the boot of her car.<sup>235</sup> Her involvement in additional *résistance* activity is rumoured but unsubstantiated. She was arrested by the Gestapo under suspicion of clandestine activities and held prisoner for six months before managing to negotiate her release. Upon being released she immediately returned to work despite the threat of further persecution.<sup>236</sup> It is clear that among the Quaker workers in the South of France, personal anti-fascism and humanitarianism led them to exploit their officially neutral political space to engage in systematic rescue work. This was so secretive it is still not known in Quaker circles and has led to fundamental misunderstandings such as those expressed by Kieval, about the Quaker role in the region.

The covert activity of Quaker workers in the South of France at this time extended to the establishment of what amounted to a small underground railroad. In 1934 Dr. Hilda Clark, concerned about the numbers of refugees fleeing into France, had used family money to purchase a small farmhouse, La Coume des Abeilles<sup>237</sup>, in the Pyrenees, above Perpignan. Clark and Pye installed Pitt and Yves Kruger, German anti-Nazi intellectuals, as custodians of the farmhouse. The initial idea was to create a self-sufficient agrarian refugee community, but

---

<sup>232</sup> Kieval, 'Legality and Resistance in Vichy France'. p. 349.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.* p. 357.

<sup>235</sup> Mary Elmes' papers are held in the municipal archives at Perpignan.

<sup>236</sup> Elmes survived the war and settled in France after *libération*.

<sup>237</sup> 'The Valley of the Bees'.

events saw the purpose of the farm alter rapidly in the ensuing years. Between 1934 and 1938 Hilda Clark had persuaded her nephew, Nicholas Gillett, and his friends, who included a young Denis Healey, to stay at La Coûme in their summer holidays.<sup>238</sup> The young volunteers helped the Krugers with farm work and were most impressed with the hospitality they received.<sup>239</sup> When Spanish refugees flooded into the region in early 1939, the Krugers and their Quaker friends quickly realised the farm's secluded location and history of young visitors could be put to advantage. La Coûme became a temporary refugee hostel for lone child refugees. Mary Elmes sent the first Spanish children there in summer 1939.<sup>240</sup> They were followed by 10 Jewish girls who Yves Kruger accepted at Edith Pye's request.<sup>241</sup> Eventually, 20 children lived with the Krugers, working on the farm and enjoying a relatively peaceful life. In addition to the sheltering of Jewish children, La Coûme became a staging point on the escape route for many people fleeing France into Spain.<sup>242</sup> It is impossible to believe that this was done without the knowledge of Clark and Pye, who maintained close links with the Krugers, provided financial assistance and still owned the farm.

Pitt Kruger was arrested by the Germans in 1944 under suspicion of helping 'undesirable' refugees and other *résistance* activity<sup>243</sup>. He spent time in German concentration camps then was forced to fight the Russians as they advanced on Berlin. He was captured by Russian troops and sent to a POW camp near Leningrad, only returning to France in July 1948. After his capture, Hilda Clark gave the farm outright to Yves, who managed to keep going with the assistance of refugee volunteers. After the war, La Coûme was turned into an international peace and educational resource centre.

New Spanish research emphasises the extent to which individual Quaker workers became deeply involved in illegal activity as the political situation in the South of France rapidly

---

<sup>238</sup> Nicholas Gillett, *Abolishing War: One Man's Attempt* (Published online at <http://insearchofpeace.net/node/23>, 2004) Retrieved April, 2011. In this memoir Gillett refers to Pye and Clark as his 'aunt and cousin'. It is not clear whether this was a misunderstanding of their relationship or an euphemism.

<sup>239</sup> Denis Healey returned to volunteer for a second year and kept in touch with the Krugers before losing touch with them during the war. In 1970 he made a trip to see whether the Krugers were still there and was delighted to find the school. See Denis Healey, *The Time of My Life* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989).

<sup>240</sup> Synnestvedt, *Over the Highest Mountain*.

<sup>241</sup> FSC/R/SP/4/4. FHA.

<sup>242</sup> For information on La Coûme see Bailey, *Love and War* p. 249.

<sup>243</sup> Rosemary Bailey has interviewed the Kruger's daughter Jamine who is sure Pitt was denounced by the Curé of Mosset. See Bailey, p. 319.



changed.<sup>244</sup> Château de Larades in Toulouse opened for Spanish refugees in 1939 and was the biggest and most stable Quaker-run hostel in the South of France. Cesareo De la Cruz y Gomez remembers his family going to the Quakers for food when they were starving. Husband, wife and three children (the youngest only a few months old) had left the camp at Argèles sur Mare to work on a farm for subsistence. Cesareo remembers his gratitude at being treated with humanity and invited to sit on a chair to eat. It made him 'rejoice that we are people again.'<sup>245</sup> When the war started, many of the Spanish refugees were able to find factory work and become self-sufficient. From 1941, Larades was used to house Jewish children who had been spirited away from the camps. When Toulouse was evacuated due to bombing in 1944 the IC/FSC workers obtained forged papers through *résistance* connections for all the Larades children, who were then intermingled with the chaotic evacuation of children from Toulouse. The story of Larades indicates the way Quaker work in the area started as legitimate relief work but then, through the shifting parameters of legality, became covert *résistance* activity.

The work of the IC 'Quakers' in the South of France illustrates the growing realisation among many Quakers that peaceful mediation was not, for many individual consciences, an adequate way of mitigating the humanitarian crisis caused by European fascism. The burgeoning politicisation of many Quakers increased as the Nazi threat became clearer, leading many individual workers to translate their personal 'witness' into a call to arms. This resulted in an uncomfortable tension between private illegal humanitarian work and the official Quaker neutrality which legitimated it. Mary Elmes' arrest and six month imprisonment highlights the precarious nature of the Quaker role, and reinforces the ambiguity of the position of individual aid workers.<sup>246</sup> The chasm between official Quaker neutrality and unofficial actions, which had been steadily widening since the start of Quaker relief in Spain, became so vast in the South of France that the IC effectively functioned as an unassailable cover for individual resistance. In France, as in Spain, the focus on child refugees acted as an extra level of political cover.

## Conclusion

Alfred and Norma Jacob remained in Spain after all the other relief workers had left. They felt an enormous sense of personal responsibility for the Spanish people, particularly those who

<sup>244</sup> For example see Rose Duroux, 'La ayuda de Noruega e Suecia' in Alfonso Guerra (ed) *El Exilio de los Niños* (Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 2003).

<sup>245</sup> Cesareo De la Cruz y Gomez, *Mis Campos de Concentracion* (Somosierra: Gráficas Ceyde, 1978).

<sup>246</sup> Varian Fry's celebrated work helping political, intellectual and artistic refugees to escape from the Marseilles region operated under a cover provided, in part, by the Quakers in the area. They gave him meal tickets which he handed out; providing him with a cover for his covert operations. See Varian Fry, *Surrender on Demand* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1997 (1945)).

had helped with relief efforts, and were very critical of their own contribution. A 'highly confidential' report from Norma Jacob in the Friends House Archive regrets that Quakers had not been able to get into a position where they were trusted by Nationalist forces and so were not able to provide any political mediation, 'we have no reason to be satisfied with what we have done in Spain. Perhaps the least we can do is stay here and go down with the people we couldn't save.'<sup>247</sup> Alfred Jacob came perilously close to fulfilling his wife's pessimistic prophecy when he was declared a 'persona non grata' by the fascist authorities on June 30, 1940 and spent a week in prison. He was only released at the instigation of the British Consul on the condition he, Norma, and their two children immediately leave Spain.<sup>248</sup> Norma Jacob grew to believe that Quaker work was incompatible with totalitarianism. Based on her experience in Spain, she wrote in 1940 that totalitarianism posed such limitations on personal freedom that to operate personal Quaker 'witness' became almost impossible.<sup>249</sup> In order to spread the Quaker message in a totalitarian state, it has to be so diluted as to become at best irrelevant and at worst counterproductive. Quakerism is an essentially democratic conscience, and can only function in a country which at least pays lip-service to ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity.

In 1936 Julian Bell, then working as a professor of English in China, wrote to E.M. Forster:

Non-resistance means suffering the full power of fascism. And fascism means not only violence, but slavery, and will not only kill and torture, but will destroy all chances of reasonable or Christian opposition (this is the answer to Quaker pacifism) and will do its best, with violence and propaganda, to harry out of the world all liberal and humane ideas and men.<sup>250</sup>

Many Quakers privately agreed. The Spanish Civil War forced Quakers to re-evaluate their opposition to war in the light of entirely new forms of totalitarianism and warfare. Spain tested political neutrality and individual witness to the limits. Hubert Peet, the editor of the Quaker newspaper *The Friend* who had been imprisoned for his conscientious objection in WW1 had a son, John, who fought with the International Brigades. This did not attract censure in Quaker circles or cause any debate about his father's position. In contrast, letters expressed sympathy with Peet's anxiety over his son and FSC workers in Spain were asked to look out for

---

<sup>247</sup> Norma Jacob, 'Death in the After-War, 1940, FSC/R/SP/4/4. FHA.

<sup>248</sup> With a bursary from the FSC, the Jacobs spent a year studying at Pendle Hill before setting up a co-operative commune in Vermont.

<sup>249</sup> Jacob, 'Death in the After-War'.

<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Fyrth, *The Signal Was Spain*, p. 93.

John.<sup>251</sup> Bell's statement also forces a reconsideration of what is meant by 'resistance'. Hilda Clark's nephew Nicholas Gillett writes that, even as he was working in France, Germany and South Wales with refugees, he questioned the extent to which helping refugees counted as working against war.<sup>252</sup> However, definitions about what constitute resistance are vague and ambiguous. Robert Paxton has called the French Resistance 'dispersed and protean...by nature like the elephant and the blind men.'<sup>253</sup> Humanitarian organisations which could, and did, incur the wrath of German or Vichy forces should be included in this definition. Not to include these organisations would be to imply there was a unified and consistent resistance movement which considerably overstates and romanticises events. For many Quaker aid workers, their work transitioned from legal social work to illegal activity by the shifting parameters of acceptable behaviour.

The consequences of Quaker work in Spain were profound. The central theological tenet of pacifism and extensive involvement with peace campaigning had led many Quakers to broadly align themselves with the British government's policy of appeasement. Confronted with the realities of a fascist regime, many Quakers re-evaluated their stance on peace at all costs. The phenomenal scope of Quaker relief work in Spain and France was a statement against non-intervention and a repudiation of appeasement. On the ground in Republican Spain, individual relief workers were forced to consider, as Norma Jacob did, the conflict between private 'witness' and public neutrality. Nearly all concluded that public neutrality served predominantly as a form of 'engineered permissiveness', allowing humanitarian work to take place within an agreed code of political silence and using the concept of neutrality as a veil behind which covert resistance could take place.

While Quaker work had long prioritised refugees, relief work in Spain was the first instance where children had been awarded equal priority status, with child refugees being the most important category for assistance. The evacuation to Britain of 4000 Basque children, which would not have happened without Quaker influence and involvement, was groundbreaking. The concept of Britain offering refuge to unaccompanied children was unprecedented, and set a crucial precursor to work with refugees from Nazi Europe, most importantly the *Kindertransport*. It is important to underscore that the work with Basque refugee children was *sanctioned* rather than *commissioned* by the British government. A complex network of voluntary civic organisations leapt into the ambiguous space for aid that this provided. The

---

<sup>251</sup> John Peet (1915-1988) survived the war although he was seriously wounded. He became a Reuters journalist and defected to East Germany during the Cold War.

<sup>252</sup> Gillett, *Abolishing War: One Man's Attempt*.

<sup>253</sup> Robert O. Paxton, 'Did the Resistance Matter?' *The New York Review of Books*, 14 August 1980.

Quaker position with regard to the evacuation of unaccompanied children was intricate. Many within the Society of Friends, most notably Edith Pye, were uncomfortable both with the idea of removing children from their parents for an unspecified period of time, and with the intense concentration of financial and logistical resources on a few children. Concerns arising from the British Basque experiment led Quakers to discourage a similar evacuation of Jewish children from Vichy France, a course of action which was determined for good reason, but which had tragic consequences. The blending of work for Spanish and Jewish child refugees mirrored the overlapping work with Spanish, Jewish and 'non-Aryan' children in Britain. This humanitarianism which overarched denominational lines was almost unique to Quakers.

The relationship between Quaker philanthropy and industry reached its nexus during this period, when the family-run Quaker companies which had been steadily increasing in revenue and power since the Industrial Revolution were at their most profitable yet still retained family ownership and philanthropic values. Due to active involvement in local Quaker communities, fundraisers had access to the people at the top of the companies who had power to make decisions. The aid mobilised in Birmingham by Cadbury-Fry and sent to Barcelona is an example of the impact Quaker industry could have on humanitarian aid. This atmosphere of what I term 'business humanitarianism' was tangible to relief workers like Richard Rees, who was attracted to work with the Quakers (after having been an IB ambulance-driver) by this efficiency. He later recalled:

In this shadowy and impalpable but all-pervading reign of terror the business-like Quaker organisation was an oasis of sanity. Its atmosphere was not particularly inspiring, but it was almost the only foreign organisation in which you knew for certain that everybody had a definite job and was doing it and in which there are no nondescript hangers-on with nominal jobs or none but who nevertheless seemed to be in some mysterious way 'on the inside'. It was the one organisation in which you felt sure that nobody was a Stalinist 'heresy-hunter'.<sup>254</sup>

The establishment of the International Commission by Edith Pye in 1937 was a direct consequence of a growing awareness that the relationship between enterprise and humanitarianism would have to be officially acknowledged. Quaker work in Spain and France shows recognition that charity could no longer be the remit of small, voluntary groups or dependant on the decisions of a few workers. Large, centrally co-ordinated, international organisations were the only way forward. The dissolution of the relationship between SCIU and the FSC in Spain revealed the inherent problem of basing a mass-scale relief programme on personal witness. It is not reasonably possible to criticise anyone else's actions when they

---

<sup>254</sup> Rees, *A Theory of my Time* pp. 105-106.

are being informed by their own personal moral code. Personal witness supported by effective administrative and corporate structures works exceedingly well at a grassroots level but becomes untenable when the relief work develops into a corporate structure in its own right. The IC, which operated as a sister organisation of the FSC and was Quaker in all but name, reflects a shift in the way Quaker work was organised; from grassroots 'witness' to business humanitarianism.

The British public was galvanised to support civilians and combatants in Spain in a variety of ways. Jim Fyrth's groundbreaking book, *The Signal Was Spain*, published in 1986, drew necessary attention to the extent of support for Republican Spain in Britain. He called the fundraising and political mobilisation, 'the nearest thing to a People's Front that came about in Britain' and credits the 'Aid Spain Movement' with creating a core network of politically aware and organised public leaders in Britain.<sup>255</sup> This analysis was criticised by Tom Buchanan who emphasised the diversity of the many different movements involved in campaigning for Spain in his 1991 book, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* and a series of journal articles. As Buchanan says, the very term 'Aid Spain Movement' is misleading, as it implies there was a unified organisational structure behind the efforts.<sup>256</sup> In response, Jim Fyrth argued that Buchanan's research privileged archival sources over lived experience, thereby overlooking the participatory nature of theoretically disparate campaigns.<sup>257</sup> While Buchanan correctly establishes that the term 'Aid Spain' is misleading, there was inarguably a phenomenal political and humanitarian grassroots movement across Britain. By contrast, there was almost no public support for Nationalist forces. Small pockets of support were largely motivated by religious protectionism and came almost exclusively from sections of the Roman Catholic community. As Fyrth points out, even Mosley's Blackshirts refused to send funds to Franco.<sup>258</sup>

Quaker work in Spain must be seen in its political and humanitarian context. Well over a thousand separate committees with tens of thousands of members from Aberdeen to Aberystwyth and Newquay to Norwich worked for the relief of civilian victims of the Spanish Civil War. They were never going to have a consistent perspective. However, the unprecedented success of fundraising reveals a strong public empathy with the Republican

---

<sup>255</sup> Fyrth, *The Signal was Spain*. p. 22

<sup>256</sup> Buchanan, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement*.

<sup>257</sup> Jim Fyrth, 'The Aid Spain Movement in Britain, 1936-39' *History Workshop*, No. 35 (Spring, 1993), pp. 153-164.

<sup>258</sup> Fyrth, *The Signal was Spain*. p. 192.

cause and a political mobilisation across the class divide. The Quaker work is undoubtedly part of a much wider British public anti-fascist sympathy for Spain.

It is, however, distinctive in several ways, most obviously by its uniqueness. It is worth underscoring again that the Quaker team was the only British humanitarian organisation working on the ground for civilians in Republican Spain. Quaker work in Spain and France was an essential precursor to overlapping FSC work with refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. It forced individuals and, by extension, the Society of Friends as a whole, to question the relationship between personal 'witness' and fascism. Political neutrality, for many, was no longer an option which could be reconciled with Quaker values and became little more than a veil behind which extensive humanitarian work could be carried out.

Spain, while not quite a 'faraway country about which we know nothing', remained very much a foreign country in the British public imagination, despite comprehensive efforts among Left-wingers and humanitarians to make Spanish people, particularly children, seem familiar.<sup>259</sup> This chapter has established both the mechanisms and relationships (personal and political) by which Quakers could mobilise to co-ordinate humanitarian work in Spain. I have argued that, for many of those involved, humanitarian intervention was by no means 'neutral' and was often a form of resistance to fascism. But what did those same humanitarian workers do when those violently targeted by fascist regimes sought refuge in the metropolitan British home? In the next chapter I explore the context surrounding the migration of the single largest professional grouping of refugees to enter Britain before the second world war – female domestic servants – and argue that the humanitarian response to them was led by women, and amounted to a political response to fascism.

---

<sup>259</sup> Tom Buchanan, "A Far Away Country of Which we Know Nothing'? Perceptions of Spain and its Civil War in Britain, 1931-1939'. *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1993, pp. 1-24.

### Chapter Three

#### Filling the Vacancy: Women, Domestic Work and Gendered Approaches to the Refugee Crisis

Between 1933 and 1939 up to 20,000 Jewish, 'non-Aryan' or politically active women from fascist Europe entered Britain on domestic service permits. Women domestic servants were the largest single professional category of refugees from fascism to enter Britain, totalling between a third and a quarter of all refugees in the country before the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> The majority of these women were quite unused to domestic service but used the perceived need for their labour in order to flee persecution. Young women were seen as being the most 'assimilable' category of refugee, whose labour was needed as British working class women and girls increasingly shunned domestic service for better-paid and less restrictive forms of work. As such, young women on domestic service permits were tolerated by government policy that, although not explicitly welcoming to 'refugees', permitted the recruitment of *servants* from Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Domestic servant immigration in the late 1930s was enabled by the Ministry of Labour having, in 1935, relaxed controls on the numbers of foreign servants allowed to enter Britain.<sup>3</sup> Recruiting foreign servants nevertheless remained a time-consuming and bureaucratic process for those seeking to employ a refugee maid. Each domestic servant had first to be recruited through personal or agency connections. A lengthy permit application had to be filled out by the putative employer, and then processed by Ministry of Labour or the Home Office, which assumed responsibility for procedures of entry from 1938. In January 1939, the Home Office was issuing approximately 600 permits a week.<sup>4</sup> When the permit application was approved, travel and terms of employment had to be arranged. To what extent was all this effort a pragmatic response to the 'servant crisis', tapping into a European supply of desperate refugees, and to what extent it was a humanitarian effort by the women involved?

---

With particular thanks to Professor Edward Timms for helping me translate the German sources in this chapter, most especially the Traude Bollauf book.

<sup>1</sup> Tony Kushner, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-40' in Kushner and Lunn (eds) *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1990) pp. 49-61.

<sup>2</sup> London. *Whitehall and the Jews*. p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> The controls had only been established in 1931. See Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> Traude Bollauf, *Dienstmädchen-Emigration: Die Flucht jüdischer Frauen aus Österreich und Deutschland nach England 1938-39* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010) p. 107.

This chapter focuses on the role of women in negotiating refuge for other women. Women's leadership in this area is not a surprise. As Sybil Oldfield has pointed out in 'It is Usually She' (taking her title from Eleanor Rathbone), humanitarian workers with refugees were usually women.<sup>5</sup> Domestic service immigration has been increasingly discussed in recent years after a long silence or 'muting' around the subject. However, there is a chasm in the literature between research on the experiences of women domestic servants and broader histories of domestic service in twentieth century Britain. Research on the emotional experiences of the refugees by Kushner, Brinson and Bollauf should be seen alongside research on the history of domestic service by Delap, Todd and Steedman.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, the gendered nature of the professional and humanitarian relationships around service should be recognised. Domestic service relationships were managed by women, and were organised along clear gendered assumptions around domesticity and labour.

In this chapter I first set out the role of the Quaker Germany Emergency Committee, and use the changing nature of the publicity pamphlets produced to argue that the GEC guided Quaker policy centrally while volunteers in local committees did much of the work. I then move from a national policy perspective to a more local perspective. The minute books of the Scottish Domestic Bureau (SDB), run by Quaker and Jewish women in Edinburgh, show a group of women clearly expressing their political anti-fascism through humanitarian work. I move on to contextualise this case study by examining the changing nature of women's philanthropic role in the inter-war years, which saw women's charity work becoming increasingly professional and skill-based, while remaining maternalist in rhetoric. The next section moves to an individual perspective on relief. The SDB minute books show the importance of networks to humanitarian intervention, but they do not give emotional insight into relief work. From a national policy perspective, I shift to a local case study using the letters and diaries of Mary Hughes, a Quaker relief worker in York. Her recorded experiences show the deeply political and personal nature of relief work on an individual level.

---

<sup>5</sup> Sybil Oldfield, 'It is Usually She: The Role of British Women in the Rescue and Care of *Kindertransport Kinder*' *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume 23, No. 1, Fall 2004, pp. 57-70.

<sup>6</sup> Tony Kushner, 'An Alien Occupation: Domestic Service and the Jewish Crisis, 1933 to 1939' in *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) pp. 90-119. Charmian Brinson, 'A Woman's Place?...German Speaking Women in Exile in Britain, 1933-1945' *German Life and Letters* 51:2, April 1998; Bollauf, *Dienstmädchen-Emigration*; Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Selina Todd, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain 1900-1950' *Past and Present* no., 203 (May 2009). Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).



In the final two sections I focus on the experiences of the refugees. I show that women refugees on domestic service permits were expected to, quite literally, fill the vacancies left by working class girls by working in service, marrying and having British children. While this chapter mainly focuses on the significance of women leading efforts to support other women, the gendered nature of refugee support extended to expectations around refugee men training for agricultural work. Women refugees were sufficiently 'safe' to be allowed into the home and were expected to marry, have children, and integrate into British culture. The final section outlines Quaker agricultural projects for refugee men, which built on inter-war self-help projects for unemployed men. Male refugees, by contrast to the women, were placed in rural locations, given hard manual labour, and told they would have to re-emigrate as soon as the need for their labour had expired. Both men and women refugees were expected to fill the roles of the British working classes, whose labour patterns were changing rapidly.

While the most significant interventions for women refugees on domestic service visas were carried out by the Domestic Service Bureau, Quaker women were instrumental in organising domestic service permits for other women including as local volunteers, international researchers, and in policy-forming roles as relief workers. They were able to do this because of the increasingly professionalised role of the female social reformer/relief worker in the interwar years. Refugee organisations only helped a small proportion of the refugees fleeing fascist Europe, with most making their escape unsupported. However the role of refugee organisations as mediators could be crucial. In this chapter, I make the case that, for the Quaker women who were involved in recruiting refugee domestic servants, middle-class anxiety about the 'servant crisis' was often utilised as a legitimating screen behind which they carried out radical humanitarian intervention.

### **Co-ordinating the Quaker Response: The Germany Emergency Committee**

*'With regard to the United Kingdom, the number of refugees which Great Britain can agree to admit, either for a temporary stay or for permanent settlement, is limited by the capacity of the voluntary organizations dealing with the refugee problem to undertake the responsibility for selecting, receiving, and maintaining a further number of refugees.'*

*-The Times, Tuesday November 22, 1938.<sup>7</sup>*

Quaker concern for refugees from fascism began in March 1933 when the Germany Emergency Committee was established at the instigation of Bertha Bracey who was secretary of the Committee for the duration of its existence and had previously spent ten years working

---

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 22 November 1938.

on Quaker projects with German and Austrian youths.<sup>8</sup> The bitter irony was that, twenty years on from Bracey joining the child-feeding project in Vienna, the children rescued then had now become persecutors. Bracey was fluent in German, experienced with international relief work, and so seemed the natural choice for secretary of the GEC. At the beginning, work was extremely fragmented but largely focused on helping people find respite and relief within Germany and Austria. The work was based on small-scale local projects and utilised the Quaker principle of what seasoned relief worker Francesca Wilson called 'rooting rather than planting'; that is, in utilising local projects and workers rather than imposing a new structure.<sup>9</sup> An example of this is the rest home at Bad Pyrmont which was established in late 1933 to provide a subsidised holiday for people who had been in prison, made unemployed, or were otherwise suffering the stress of persecution.<sup>10</sup> Gradually, the focus of the GEC shifted to offering refuge in Britain rather than relief in Europe, notably on projects to place women domestic servants and offer foster care for children.

Quaker efforts to place domestic servants began in 1933, escalating gradually as the need for refuge increased. Throughout the 1930s the relief work undertaken by members of the Society of Friends was co-ordinated and guided by the Germany Emergency Committee, which in 1942 became the Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens (FCRA). The pamphlets produced by the GEC show how policy and emphasis evolved and a close examination of the publications reveals a series of illuminating policy shifts, which responded to the changing situation and to the perceived responsiveness of the public. At least 18 pamphlets were published between 1933 and 1940. When examined in conjunction with the surviving minute books, which give figures and reveal internal discussions and debates, a shifting focus is revealed, which broadly transitioned from appealing to political empathy, to a nurturing attitude towards the vulnerable, and ended by emphasising self-help for refugees. The GEC-produced publicity pamphlets deliver a strikingly consistent public representation of the Society of Friends, which reinforces a religious and maternalist discourse. They contrast strikingly with the minutes for the period 1933-1939 which reflect a liberal and intensely practical agenda, rarely mentioning religion. Edith Pye, the author of several of the pamphlets, was an accomplished propagandist. She was on the publicity Committee for WILPF<sup>11</sup> and was experienced in getting her views published in newspapers, notably *The Manchester Guardian*, as articles.

---

<sup>8</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*. pp. 27-28.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos*. Chapter 9 discusses the work in Spain.

<sup>10</sup> Another early project was relief work undertaken in Paris in conjunction with Germaine Melon-Hollard and L'Entr'aide Européenne.

<sup>11</sup> From 1930. WILPF Executive Committee Minutes. WILP 1-7. WILPF.

The first pamphlet produced by the Committee in November 1933 entitled 'The German Emergency' (see Image 9) explicitly stated the Committee's intentions to work primarily with 'non-Aryan' Christians and with the politically persecuted, claiming they were more at risk than Jews as the Jews benefitted from their community within Germany and excellent Jewish international assistance. Of the five case studies given in the pamphlet, all are of people with Quaker-sounding tendencies. For example, d) was dismissed from a job for attending a Friendship Camp in England, and e) was imprisoned for openly avowed pacifism. There was an element of trying to appeal to Quaker readers' empathy and subtly linking this persecution to the legacy of Quaker persecution.<sup>12</sup> The pamphlet further appealed to empathy by prominently displaying photographs of children, despite the fact there was little emphasis on aid for children at this stage.



**Image 9. 'There is no future for these children in Germany'. GEC Pamphlet, 1933.**<sup>13</sup>

A 1934 GEC pamphlet stated, 'The problem is not wholly a Jewish problem. The Jewish Relief Organisations have done magnificent constructive work, but there are thousands of non-Jewish refugees, who are penalised for holding liberal, pacifist, or left wing political convictions.'

<sup>12</sup> 'The German Emergency', November 1933, Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

For these no world-wide organisation exists.<sup>14</sup> At this stage, the general consensus that relief should be organised broadly along the same denominational lines as persecution was still evidently accepted. The Quaker focus was therefore on pacifists and left wing refugees and there was an assumption that Jewish organisations would take on the caseload of Jewish refugees. But the original focus on supporting pacifists and socialists soon changed as the GEC rapidly realised the extent of persecution against Jews and began to support 'non-Aryan' refugees. Later, the GEC would work increasingly closely with Jewish relief organisations as the urgency of escape became apparent. By 1938, the suitability of Austrian applicants for domestic permits was assessed either by the *Kultusgemeinde* (Jewish communal organisation in charge of emigration from Austria) or the Society of Friends. The Co-ordinating Committee was to have set up an Austrian office to deal with this from October 1938 but plans never materialised so it was left to private organisations.<sup>15</sup>



**Image 10. 'Those who live in the shadow'. GEC Pamphlet, 1935.**<sup>16</sup>

Emotive imagery of children continued to be displayed on pamphlets, even when they were not the focus of GEC support. The presentation in Image 10, which was published in 1935, is a strikingly Catholic and maternal image, with the vulnerable and ethereal woman and child figures presenting a haunting spectre. It is unclear whether the woman is supposed to be mother of the child, unable to help it, or the face of the caring reader/relief worker; looking

<sup>14</sup> 'Facing the Second Winter', 1934, Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>15</sup> London. *Whitehall and the Jews* p. 79.

<sup>16</sup> 'The Society of Friends Appeals for those who live in the Shadow' December 1935 Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

down lovingly on the toddler. The child, like most of the children in Quaker publicity photographs, looks content and well-cared-for, but its positioning in a snowflake hints at its vulnerability. The December release of this pamphlet offers a seasonal explanation for the positioning of this red-clad snowflake-child, doomed to life in the shadows. It is especially striking given that at this stage the focus of the GEC was on relief and emigration for adults.

Between 1933 and 1938, the GEC's focus was on supporting domestic service permits for women, and organising temporary stay permits for men and families, on the proviso of re-emigration. In a 1936 pamphlet, re-emigration was an accepted necessity. 'A certain proportion can be re-trained, provided with tools and settled in European countries without disturbance of the labour markets there, Others must be sent overseas, and in recent months we have sent individuals and families to the Paraguay, Chile, Mexico, Ecuador, South Africa, the Argentine, where definite jobs or the prospect of work and a new livelihood awaited them.'<sup>17</sup>

A widely distributed pamphlet from 1937 entitled, 'The plight of the refugee'<sup>18</sup> makes Quaker policy explicit. With a poignant cover photograph showing a forlorn child with the emotive caption, 'he may not play in the public park'<sup>19</sup>, the pamphlet goes on to state the policy:

There is a ray of hope for some of these unhappy people. With the permission of our own and other Governments and the co-operation of employers and others, the Society of Friends is able to settle refugee domestic workers and certain other skilled workers in posts in this country where they will not displace British labour; to send children to schools; to arrange for the training of young people; to help manufacturers set up factories where presently hundreds of thousands of British workers will be employed; to train boys of 16 to 18 years of age in agricultural work prior to emigrating them to one of the Colonies; to help self-supporting groups of land workers to settle in this or other lands; to emigrate older workers to the United States, South America or the Colonies, provided they are given hospitality while waiting in this country to go on elsewhere. (Often this is necessary owing to quota regulations.) NO REFUGEE MAY BECOME A CHARGE ON PUBLIC FUNDS.<sup>20</sup>

As this pamphlet makes clear, the responsibility for actually organising the immigration of domestic refugees was devolved from the government to voluntary organisations, and then further decentralised from Friends House to a network of voluntary regional committees. The complexity of the resultant operation is made clear by a pamphlet published the following year asking people to give hospitality or employ a maid. The pamphlet, while Quaker produced,

---

<sup>17</sup> 'What can be done', 1936, Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>18</sup> 'The Plight of the Refugee', 1937. Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

gives the addresses of 15 different organisations which supported refugee domestic servants on an A5 sized leaflet.<sup>21</sup>

In 1938, the focus of the GEC dramatically shifted from relief to rescue, motivated by worsening persecution and enabled by the five previous years of building connections and establishing patterns of work. Following the *Anschluss* on 12 March 1938, the GEC merged with other smaller committees that had been set up to deal with Austrian and Czech refugees. Throughout 1938, the GEC struggled to cope with a greatly increased demand for support, balancing the various projects amid a constant shortfall of funds. By 1938 the various voluntary organisations that supported refugees were disparate, chaotic, and buckling under increased pressure. Complex permit requirements were costly and time-consuming. In this context, employing women on domestic service permits required the smallest intervention from the GEC (being largely decentralised to regional Committees), allowed thousands of women to enter the country, and cost nothing to the Society of Friends. This is epitomised by a widely distributed 1938 pamphlet, 'A plea for Austrians in Need.' In the section, 'How you can help' points 1)-5) are requests for funds. Point 6) is 'Find a domestic job for a woman or married couple'. Domestic service was by 1938 given an absolute priority in GEC work until the focus changed to rescuing children with the start of the *Kindertransport* following *Kristallnacht* on 11 November 1938.<sup>22</sup>

The GEC worked extremely closely with the Domestic Council for German Jewry to organise domestic permits for women. The Domestic Bureau of the Domestic Council was an interfaith committee, which dealt specifically with women refugees on domestic permits.<sup>23</sup> Quakers were represented by extremely senior GEC officials including Bertha Bracey, Elizabeth Howard, Alice Nike, Hilda Clark and Edith Pye who worked for non-Aryan and political refugees alongside representatives from the Catholic Committee, The British Council for Refugees from Czechoslovakia and the Trades Unions Congress while the Jewish Bureau handled cases of Jewish refugees.<sup>24</sup> In March 1939, under pressure from Hilda Clark, the Jewish and non-Jewish sides of the Domestic Bureau were finally merged.<sup>25</sup> By July 1939 the newly affiliated Domestic Bureau was regarded as the expert body to the extent the Ministry of Labour officially handed

---

<sup>21</sup> Helping Refugees-Do you know what to do?', 1938, Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>22</sup> 'A Plea for Austrians in Need', 1938, Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>23</sup> Domestic Council for German Jewry, 27 July 1939. Wiener Library.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs Margrieta Beer and Edward Quinn represented the Catholic Committee, Mrs Ormerod the British Council for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, and Beatrice Bessant the Trades Unions Congress.

<sup>25</sup> Minute 1310, GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

over all responsibility for immigration of maids with the stipulation it applied only to maids in private residential domestic service and would end 'if it should become evident that saturation point has been reached and that bringing in of further refugees may lead to the displacement of British subjects or of foreigners already resident in this country.'<sup>26</sup> The Domestic Bureau had officially taken over responsibility for all domestic service permits and applications. The Domestic Bureau was heavily reliant on Hilda Clark's reports from the Vienna Quaker Centre which were regularly cited as sources of information in the minutes.<sup>27</sup>

At the Meeting for Sufferings on 2 Dec 1938 Hilda Clark reported, 'the need was far greater than could be dealt with by the voluntary organisations and that financial assistance from governments was necessary.'<sup>28</sup> Repeated petitioning was ultimately successful and the work of the Society of Friends with refugees became supported largely by the Baldwin Fund and government grants from January 1939. Bertha Bracey later saw 1938 as a turning point. She had expected that the work of the GEC would gradually decline from this point, but instead saw a massive surge in need as, 'the work of rescue went on with growing intensity'.<sup>29</sup>

The income of the GEC derived largely from allocation of existing Quaker funds, the Quaker Shilling Appeal and general donations either for general or specific purposes. The Committee also handled the money given for guarantees, which at the May 1939 audit by Norman Nicholson amounted to £30,339.<sup>30</sup> This holding of Guarantee money was a huge undertaking as it opened the Society of Friends to a potential liability for failure of guarantees of up to £66,900. The Nicholson audit prompted a re-evaluation of the situation by GEC chairman Herbert Rowntree, who concluded that the problem was far too great to be dealt with by charitable organisations and required urgent government intervention. Government assistance was not directly forthcoming, but large grants from the Baldwin Fund filled the funding gap, with £27,500 in the period Jan-June 1939 that represented well over half the total GEC income of £42,900.<sup>31</sup>

Before the start of 1939 when a sizeable donation from the Lord Baldwin Fund allowed a collective move to Bloomsbury House, disparate voluntary organisations had dealt with the processing of domestic service permits and recruitment of servants entirely according to their

---

<sup>26</sup> Minute 31 July 1939. Domestic Council for German Jewry, 27 July 1939. Wiener Library.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* See Minute 31 March 1939.

<sup>28</sup> GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

<sup>29</sup> Bertha L. Bracey, 'A Ten years' Survey: 1933-1943' Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>30</sup> GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

<sup>31</sup> Financial Statement Jan-June 1939, GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

own agendas, maintaining separate links with the Home Office and the Ministry of Labour. At this point, bowing to pressure from the voluntary organisations, the government effectively transferred all responsibility for organising domestic permits to the cluster of voluntary organisations that occupied Bloomsbury House.<sup>32</sup> At the beginning of February 1939 the GEC moved into the third floor of Bloomsbury House, which had been provided by the Baldwin Fund to consolidate refugee support, with about one hundred staff. Other organisations such as the Domestic Bureau and the Movement for the Care of Refugee Children were also based at Bloomsbury, which meant that there was a good level of co-operation between agencies. The Domestic Bureau sent green cards that were sent to organizations across Europe to distribute appropriately. When the European organisations found a candidate for the card, the Bureau applied for a domestic permit. The paperwork and pressure on voluntary organisations was immense. On 27 June 1939 the GEC agreed with the Domestic Bureau to support refugees who were unwell or for other reasons unable to carry out the domestic work for which their permit authorised them.<sup>33</sup>

On the outbreak of war, concern in the GEC rapidly shifted towards supporting those refugees who were interned and/or deported to Canada or Australia, and to supporting children. There was an initial concern for the 7,000 domestic servants who were dismissed from their British jobs within a few days of the outbreak of war, and for other stranded refugees. The government gave a grant to the Central Council for Jewish Refugees and the Christian Council to maintain any destitute refugees<sup>34</sup> and the focus of the GEC moved away from domestic servants, many of whom rapidly found work in factories or the forces and became self-supporting. In the 1940 minute book there is only one minute relating to Domestic Servants, which expresses a concern that some were not being treated fairly by employers. A decision was taken to offer support on this matter to the Domestic Bureau.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that by this stage responsibility for domestic servants had been shifted back to a localised level. This was perhaps exacerbated by the fact that the Baldwin Fund source of income ended on the outbreak of war.<sup>36</sup>

The Germany Emergency Committee continually emphasised support for refugees from fascism, and increasingly assumed an interdenominational relief role as the urgency of escape

---

<sup>32</sup> Kushner, 'An Alien Occupation: Domestic Service and the Jewish Crisis, 1933 to 1939'.

<sup>33</sup> Minute 1366 GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

<sup>34</sup> 'The Present Position of the Refugees', 1940, Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>35</sup> Minute 1456 12 March 1940 GEC Minute Book 1940. FHA.

<sup>36</sup> 3 October 1939 Minutes, GEC Minute book, 1939. FHA.



for Jewish refugees in particular became increasingly apparent. This support, while ostensibly politically neutral, was rooted in a deep anti-fascism and a desire for a humanitarian expression of international fraternity. It was also guided, organised and led by a committee comprised of mostly women. Women's role in the interwar years has been a subject of much recent re-evaluation, with historians questioning the nature and extent of a putative 'backlash' towards gender-based domesticity.<sup>37</sup> While the GEC offered centralised guidance and publicity, in regional committees across Britain humanitarian work with refugees became a way for women to express their political opposition to fascism.

### **Humanitarian intervention as a form of women's resistance: the Scottish Domestic Bureau**

The GEC provided centralised guidance and leadership on refugee relief. Much of the day-to-day work of supporting refugees, however, was done in local committees, set up on a voluntary basis by people all over the country. A typical committee would be comprised of a small group of people, usually mostly women, who already knew each other and had worked together previously on humanitarian causes. It is worth bearing in mind that Quakers were by no means the only people active in these committees. Of course, the focus of this section is on the Quaker work, and I have certainly found that Quakers were involved in nearly every refugee committee I have found records for. Localised and unofficial, it is often challenging to trace the work of a committee, but I have been able to obtain the unpublished minute books of the Scottish Domestic Bureau which offer a local perspective on the implementation of national policy. I have used the minute books to examine the motivations of and challenges faced by those women who took on the unpaid and unglamorous job of supporting refugees.<sup>38</sup> The minute books demonstrate quite clearly that for the women who worked for the Scottish Domestic Bureau, their motivation cannot be dismissed as self-interested and was, simply, to offer support to refugees in the best way they could.

The first meeting of the Scottish Domestic Bureau was at 28 Stafford Street in Edinburgh, which was a Quaker Meeting House, on 1 August 1939. It came out of a need to create a central organisation and administration body for those concerned with supporting refugees seeking domestic service work. The initial Committee was formed of six women; two Quakers, three Jews, and Mrs Hedi Born, who was a non-practising Viennese Jew who had become a Quaker. Olive Ludlam and Elizabeth Farrar were good friends. They and their husbands had,

---

<sup>37</sup> See for example Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England*.

<sup>38</sup> With thanks to Andrew Farrar, who kindly allowed me to use the minute books that are in his possession, and also shared details of his family history.

together with another family, set up a small Quaker Meeting in early 1939 on Stafford Street. All three families had young children and the Meeting grew rapidly, quickly becoming the main Meeting in Edinburgh.<sup>39</sup> It is likely that Olive and Elizabeth met Hedi Born through her attendance at Meeting. In autumn of 1937, Hedi Born had become a Member of the Quaker Meeting. She was a secular Austrian Jew and had moved to Edinburgh as a refugee in 1936 with her husband, scientist and later Nobel Prize winner Max Born. Her husband Max's biographer, Nancy Thorndike Greenspan, says that Hedi's spiritual consciousness had been awoken by attending Quaker Meeting, and that she was also attracted to Quaker ideas of social justice.<sup>40</sup> Her husband described her as a, 'Quaker and an absolute pacifist'.<sup>41</sup> Gregarious, well-connected, and deeply concerned with helping refugees leave Europe; Hedi quickly became a stalwart member of the Edinburgh Meeting. Violet Oppenheimer, another member of the Bureau, had moved from Glasgow to Edinburgh in early 1937, met Hedi Born through academic networks, and had rapidly become active in the humanitarian community.

The first official meeting of the Domestic Bureau came out of a need to formalise pre-existing work that had been done informally with refugee domestic servants. A rationale for the committee was proposed, 'functioning through a co-ordinating committee representative of refugee organisations in Scotland.' The refugee organisations represented in the Bureau included the Scottish Christian Council, the Scottish National Council for Refugees and the Glasgow Jewish German Aid Committee. The Domestic Bureau would take over all the administrative and financial responsibility pertaining to the recruitment, employment and support of refugee domestic servants from these Committees, thereby avoiding duplication of work and maintaining a specific expertise. The Domestic Bureau was a formalised and professional organisation that was responsible for managing all domestic service refugee aid work in Scotland. It was specifically outlined that the Bureau, 'shall continue to be anonymous and shall be run, impartially, for the benefit of Jews and Christians alike.'<sup>42</sup> There was a constant emphasis on the interfaith nature of the Bureau, which implies there had been some previous tension around denomination in refugee work. The membership of the committee reflected the interfaith nature of the refugee work, and was roughly evenly split between Jewish and Quaker women, with a fluctuating membership of approximately twelve women.

---

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Andrew Farrar, 22 January 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Nancy Thorndike Greenspan, *The End of the Certain World: The Life and Science of Max Born* (Chichester: Wiley, 2005) p. 219.

<sup>41</sup> Max Born. Quoted in Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1992 [1969]) p. 468.

<sup>42</sup> Scottish Domestic Bureau Minute Book (SDBMB), 15 November 1939.

There were additionally three men actively involved, two of them husbands of committee members. The importance of family networks to Quaker projects has been emphasised by Holton, and the Scottish Domestic Bureau is characteristic in the way it mobilised connections of family and friends.<sup>43</sup>

The main function of the Bureau quickly became the management of a Domestic Training Hostel at 77 Colinton Road, Edinburgh. The Hostel housed an average of 17 women and girls at any given time and employed three members of staff, two of whom were themselves refugees.<sup>44</sup> Although it was ostensibly a training centre, the Bureau explicitly recognised that the purpose of the hostel was to be used by refugee domestic servants as a place of holiday or when out of work.<sup>45</sup> The Hostel was funded by subscriptions from Bureau members and private donations initially, but funds were obtained from the Scottish National Council for Refugees, which itself received large donations from various religious organisations.<sup>46</sup>

In 1940, the remit of the Hostel was expanded to cover girls who had come to Britain on the *Kindertransports* and now needed to support themselves financially. The Bureau anticipated that about half of the *Kinder* would have to go into domestic work, and planned to change the role of the Hostel to house these girls for training once they reached the age of sixteen.<sup>47</sup> There was also discussion of setting up an emigration fund to help girls go to America, where it was felt they might have a better chance of finding non-domestic work. There was an increasing concern for the welfare of the refugees, especially as they could not access public funds if they became ill and could not work:

In view of the fact that many of the older women are feeling the nervous strain of doing domestic work in a strange country, and using a new language and that one or two have completely broken down, it was suggested that vocational therapy might help them to recover their balance and to support themselves if permission was given to sell their work.<sup>48</sup>

The Hostel became, more than ever, a place of respite for refugees on domestic service permits who were unable to work, and also unable to access any public funds for their support.

---

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> SDBMB. 15 November 1939.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 1 December 1939.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 15 November 1939.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 12 March 1940.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 1 April 1940.

Concern over inability of refugees to access public funds was regularly expressed at Bureau meetings.<sup>49</sup>

In June 1940 an Emergency Meeting of the Bureau was called in response to refugees being expelled from protected areas, which included Edinburgh and much of the East coast of Scotland. This meant all the refugee domestics in Edinburgh had to give up their jobs, move elsewhere, and find new employment. Some of the women were interned on the Isle of Man as enemy aliens. This changed the Bureau's remit and working practices overnight. It was decided to try to support all the refugee domestics with whom the Bureau had contact in moving to Glasgow.<sup>50</sup> The Society of Friends in Glasgow found accommodation for 15 shillings per person per week, which the Bureau agreed to cover until the refugees were able to find work. There was contention on this matter, with some members pointing out that many British people who were moving away from restricted areas were supporting themselves out of savings, but it was eventually agreed that the need of the refugees to save whatever money possible from their wages to support their families was paramount. It was also agreed that the Bureau would undertake to store money and belongings for the refugees until they found new homes.<sup>51</sup> Possessions were stored in the Quaker Meeting House on Pleasance Street.<sup>52</sup> A new Glasgow refugee committee was established, with Dr. Marjorie Anderson of the YWCA as chair and Mrs. MacAaughty of the Society of Friends as secretary. The hostel was moved to Glasgow, and continued to house an average of seventeen refugees at any given time.<sup>53</sup>

From that point on, the work of the Bureau in Edinburgh changed, and it became focused on supporting interned refugees on the Isle of Man. Elizabeth Farrar visited the Isle of Man internment camp in November 1940, probably with Bertha Bracey, secretary of the GEC, who was the first campaigner to visit the Isle of Man to petition for improved conditions. Elizabeth Farrar reported back to the Bureau that 'their' women were relatively comfortable and well-kept.<sup>54</sup> Efforts were still made to support the physical and mental health of the internees. The Bureau sent Christmas cards in 1940, along with a gift of a calendar to the Glasgow hostel.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 12 March 1940.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 13 June, 1940.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 24 June, 1940.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 9 January 1943.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 2 September 1941.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 12 November 1940.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 10 December 1940.

With the refugees moved to Glasgow or the Isle of Man, and with Hedi Born, a driving force behind the work, having resigned as Chair in April 1940, the nature of the Bureau changed. Many of the people in the Bureau were also active in the Refugee Children's Committee to the extent that meetings were arranged to ensure those who served on both Committees could attend.<sup>56</sup> Henry Ellis, one of the few men involved in the Bureau, was the Scottish representative for the Refugee Children's Movement, the umbrella organisation which oversaw the *Kindertransports*.<sup>57</sup> Violet Oppenheimer was active on the Movement for the Care of Children Committee.<sup>58</sup> It was perhaps inevitable that the focus of the volunteers shifted to the immediate needs of the refugee children in Edinburgh. The Bureau did, however, still provide funds for the Glasgow hostel, which were raised by the Quaker Meeting and among Jewish community groups. The Bureau also managed to get some funding from the Scottish National Council towards the running of the Hostel, although when there were problems with this funding Olive Ludlam paid for it herself.<sup>59</sup>

In 1942, Elizabeth Farrar's husband Stanley got a post as the General Secretary of the Northern Friends Peace Board and, with their two children, the Farrars moved to York.<sup>60</sup> This coincided with a further decline in Bureau work. Throughout its existence, the Bureau depended on pre-existing networks of friends and family. Elizabeth and Stanley Farrar and their friends Olive and Ernest Ludlam and Hedi Born had all met at Quaker Meeting. Through her links with the Jewish community in Edinburgh, Hedi Born was able to invite her friends Violet Oppenheimer and Mrs Levitt. Other members were linked to these founder members through either the Quaker Meeting, the small Edinburgh Jewish community or through Hedi Born's friends at the university. As Sandra Stanley Holton has established, 'networked family', by which she means connections of family and close friends, among Quaker women was the key to their national and international social and political mobilisation.<sup>61</sup> Using the example of the Priestman-Bright family, Holton shows how these networks can lead to radicalism. The Scottish Domestic Bureau clearly illustrates the significance of personal politically motivated networks to humanitarian intervention.

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 4 March 1942.

<sup>57</sup> Instructions for the Guidance of Regional and Local Committees. RCM/2793/03/04/01. LMA.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 28 April 1943.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 2 February 1943.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Andrew Farrar, 22 January 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, *Quaker Women: Personal Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1780-1930* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Discussions over whether to close the Bureau entirely began in early 1943, but it was envisaged that refugees would continue to need support in finding domestic jobs after the war, and that the expertise of Bureau volunteers should not be lost.<sup>62</sup> The Committee was renamed the 'Scottish Domestic Bureau for Refugees and After-Care Committee' in March 1944.<sup>63</sup> In late 1945 it was decided that, despite earlier expectations of a surge in work after the war, there was not enough to do to justify the continued existence of the Bureau.<sup>64</sup> Hedi Born emphasised that refugees should, once naturalised, begin to rely on British institutions rather than voluntary agencies.<sup>65</sup> The Bureau did, however, remain nominally in existence until November 1946 to support women with whom there were established relationships on the basis that, 'it would not be right to close doors without being satisfied that our people would be cared for.'<sup>66</sup> In November 1946, the final meeting of the Bureau was held in Glasgow. It was decided that further enquiries from former refugees about domestic work were to be referred to private employment agencies and notices were sent to *The Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Jewish Echo* and *The Friend* to announce the closure.<sup>67</sup>

When incorporating the experiences of the women who constructed and mediated the relationships between mistress and maid, the complex emotional and practical narratives around humanitarianism become apparent. The minute books clearly show that the women who ran the Scottish Domestic Bureau were acting from deeply held political motivations. They did not see themselves as employment workers and their work with domestic servant refugees can by no means be characterised as a 'self interested response to the servant crisis'.<sup>68</sup> Rather, the minute books show the Bureau was conceived and managed entirely as a refugee welfare organisation; providing advice on immigration, help finding employment, and assistance with accommodation and funds as well as emotional support.

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 2 February 1943.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 14 March 1944.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 2 October 1945.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 11 December 1945.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 15 October 1946.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 8 November 1946.

<sup>68</sup> As implied in Tony Kushner, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-40' and in Kushner and Lunn (eds) *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1990) p. 56.

So, why has the extent of British women's support for refugees from fascism not been discussed in analysis of the British response? Penny Summerfield has written of the 'muting' of women's narratives in the context of a dominant masculine cultural expression.<sup>69</sup> Certainly, there has been little research on the extensive women-led humanitarian work with refugees in the period leading up to the Second World War. The first full-length study on Eleanor Rathbone's work with refugees was only published in 2010.<sup>70</sup> As Sybil Oldfield has pointed out, the interwar years saw a distinctive feminist anti-militarism, in which internationalist humanitarianism became a model of war-resistance.<sup>71</sup> The Scottish Domestic Bureau is an example of a group of mostly women expressing their opposition to fascism and their support for refugees utilising the only legal loophole available to them. It is nothing less than an example of women expressing their political resistance through humanitarian channels.

### **Mothering the World: Women and Professionalism in Interwar Philanthropy**

In a landmark speech in Geneva in 1920 to mark the eighth Congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance, Maude Royden stood at Calvin's former pulpit and suggested that, 'women transmute the power of sex and 'create' in other ways by using their maternal impulses to serve humanity.'<sup>72</sup> *The New York Times* reported that Royden was 'warmly congratulated' for her speech which was followed by an address from Carrie Chapman Catt.<sup>73</sup> Maude Royden, pacifist and socialist lecturer, campaigner for ordination of women and pre-war editor of 'The Common Cause', was a popular and influential leader in interwar feminist pacifism and had clearly struck a chord with her speech. It is worth remembering that many among Royden's audience of women had had to resign themselves to a probable post-war future of childless spinsterhood. She was exhorting them to turn the maternal instincts which war had robbed them of into a campaign for a sisterhood of international peace, equality and humanity. As the photographs in the publicity pamphlets in the first section of this chapter show, Quaker relief fundraising deliberately appealed to a maternal, nurturing instinct in the public, even if this was not necessarily linked to the nature of the work done.

---

<sup>69</sup> Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) p. 28.

<sup>70</sup> Susan Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

<sup>71</sup> Sybil Oldfield, *Women Against the Iron Fist: Alternatives to Militarism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989).

<sup>72</sup> Maude Royden quoted in Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women who loved Women, 1778-1928* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004) p. 208.

<sup>73</sup> 'Suffragist Speaks in Calvin's Pulpit' *The New York Times*, 6 June 1920.

Concurrent and connected with a distinctly maternalist interwar humanitarian discourse was a developing professionalism in women-led relief work. In *The New Philanthropy*, published in 1934, Elizabeth Macadam, part of the first school of criticism about charities and voluntary bodies, and Eleanor Rathbone's companion, wrote that since around 1910, the development of a new co-operation between voluntary and statutory social work had transformed the field. Macadam, herself a feminist, internationalist and social worker, wrote that, 'The enfranchisement of women set thousands of women, before the war absorbed by the struggle for the vote, free to throw themselves into the efforts for international disarmament when their war work was relinquished.'<sup>74</sup> Macadam recognised the new opportunities that the interwar years presented for women's political and social engagement.

The interwar years saw female philanthropic effort rise above the stereotype of jumble sales and whist drives and become an increasingly professionalised and organised movement epitomised by Macadam's clear treatise. Over the following decade, many of Macadam's recommendations were implemented and the humanitarian sector, long dominated by women in voluntary roles, became increasingly professionalised. The formation and success of the 'Save the Children International Movement' (created and led by sisters Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton) in 1919 was emblematic of this new women-led professionalised era in philanthropy. The interwar years began to see women's philanthropic role becoming that of policy makers rather than supportive campaigners following male leaders.

The channelling of the 'maternalist' impulse into charity work rather than direct political action has been criticised by feminist historians.<sup>75</sup> This, however, overlooks both the political nature of certain instances of humanitarian intervention and the increasingly professionalised nature of charity work. It is also overly simplistic to assume that just because women employ metaphors of caring and motherhood to talk about their relief work, that the ensuing work is inherently informal and domestic in nature. There was undoubtedly a disjuncture between the maternalist rhetoric, which women presented publicly, and increasingly professional structures of relief. This phenomenon of women's radical political interventionism does not fit the dominant historiography which emphasises the strength of the 'backlash' rhetoric prevalent after the First World War promoting women's place as being in the home. Deirdre Beddoe famously argued that it would not be going too far to say the climate was anti-feminist

---

<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934) p. 270.

<sup>75</sup> Pat Thane, 'Women and Political Participation in England, 1918-1970' in Thane and Breitenbach (eds) *Women and Citizenship in Britain and Ireland in the Twentieth Century: What Difference did the Vote Make?* (London: Continuum, 2010).



between the wars.<sup>76</sup> As many women were dismissed from their wartime jobs, there was a backlash about getting women back into the home, exemplified by over 60 new women's magazines, many focusing on the home. Even among feminist historians there has been a tendency to see the interwar years as part of a hiatus between two waves of feminism. As recent work by Carol Dyhouse, Claire Langhamer, Adrian Bingham and others has established, the 'backlash' rhetoric is too simplistic and we need to consider the more nuanced ways in which women's self-expression changed in the interwar years.<sup>77</sup>

While it is true that many women did return to the home after the war, the tightly laced rigours of Edwardian femininity were, while not freed, certainly loosened. The Edith Cavell effect where, in certain circumstances, women's bravery could be celebrated, was a direct result of the war. Women's self-expression was freed from certain expectations. Ruth Adam saw the period as a mass mobilisation of the 'superfluous woman' who created a 'sex revolution' in the 1920s, in which male strength and virility but also, crucially, female strength and fortitude was celebrated.<sup>78</sup> The vote, of course, was won in stages from 1919; women for the first time were given a formalised political voice and voters proved themselves willing to elect female representatives. The achievements of pioneers such as Lady Astor or Amy Johnson were widely celebrated.<sup>79</sup> To stretch the metaphor, the corsets never went back on.

On an individual level, many of the women involved in interwar humanitarianism were active in women's organisations and international politics. Eleanor Rathbone's victory after a 30 year campaign for family allowances to be paid to mothers of young children remains one of the landmark moments in British welfare history. She did not, however, subscribe to the notion of women as mere subjects of social reform. Rathbone felt that women should be conscripted in the same way as men and believed that 'equal citizenship should bring with it equal responsibilities'.<sup>80</sup> This combination of Victorian liberal politics, religious non-conformism and feminism was a historically specific combination that was manifested in many high-profile women in the interwar years. Among prominent women like Eleanor Rathbone, Mary

---

<sup>76</sup> See Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989).

<sup>77</sup> Carol Dyhouse, 'Women Students and the London Medical Schools, 1914-1939: The Anatomy of a Masculine Culture', *Gender and History*, 10 (1998); Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Adrian Bingham, 'An Era of Domesticity'? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain' *Cultural and Social History* 2004; 1: 225-233.

<sup>78</sup> Ruth Adam, *A Woman's Place, 1910-1975* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977 [1975]).

<sup>79</sup> Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

<sup>80</sup> Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) p. 312.

Sheepshanks, Ellen Wilkinson and Virginia Woolf, membership of three organisations; WILPF or another feminist group, the League of Nations Union and a non-conformist sect was common.<sup>81</sup> The feminist and suffrage movement that had been painfully gaining momentum for 70 years in Britain by 1918 had clearly borne some fruit.

Even the back-to-home rhetoric was accompanied by a new sense of organisational vigour. The formation of the Women's Institute in 1915, for example, was a genuine attempt to provide a formal support network for women living in rural areas. It was also explicitly designed to encourage women to be more actively involved in food production at a local and national level.<sup>82</sup> At least some part of the rationale behind domestic columns in the new women's magazines was to make women's lives easier and recognise the complexity of their labour. Granted, some of this was a kind of stylised repression similar to that identified by Freidan in 1950s America but it also offered women community and the steady acknowledgement of the skills and social legitimacy involved in 'women's work'.<sup>83</sup>

Often, work which was actually very professional and outward-facing in nature was spoken about in terms of caring and women's natural nurturing role. It is difficult not to imagine that the rhetoric some way acted to conceal the changing nature of women's professional engagements. In his groundbreaking study of gender in the popular press between the wars, Adrian Bingham records that men were expected to be chivalrous warrior heroes while women were praised for motherhood, 'national efficiency' and femininity in appearance and behaviour.<sup>84</sup> Even Eleanor Rathbone resolutely stuck to her belief that motherhood was the natural role of women, writing in 1917, 'the majority of women workers are only birds of passage in their trades. Marriage and the bearing and rearing of children are their permanent occupation.'<sup>85</sup> These tropes of motherhood and caring could be easily adapted to justify professional social work. Image 10 earlier in this chapter, for example, shows a nurturing image of a woman gazing lovingly at a small child, presumably eager to care for it. In reality, the women who produced this leaflet were professional humanitarian workers with years of

---

<sup>81</sup> Rathbone was a WILPF and L of N U member and a Unitarian and later humanist. Sheepshanks was a WILPF and L of N U member and an atheist. Wilkinson was a feminist, L of N U member and a Methodist. Virginia Woolf was a member of several women's groups, L of N U, and was a humanist. Biographical information from Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*.

<sup>82</sup> Maggie Andrews considers the WI to be part of a 'practical' feminism, seeking to improve women's lives in small ways. Maggie Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997).

<sup>83</sup> See Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 2010 [1963]).

<sup>84</sup> Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain*.

<sup>85</sup> Eleanor Rathbone, 'The Remuneration of Women's Services' *Economic Journal* 27:105 (March 1917).

international experience who were in relationships with other women and did not have children.

Martha Vicinus has argued persuasively that in the nineteenth century women had had to disguise their desire for interesting and useful work outside the home under the rhetoric of Christian charity and virtue. She termed this the 'cloak of self-sacrifice'.<sup>86</sup> The classic conception of masculine and feminine professional spheres pre second-wave feminism is of men working in business, military endeavour and governance, and (middle class) women focusing on the home, family and small-scale local charitable works. There has been some recognition among historians, for example Davidoff and Hall, that the picture was never this simple but there has been little acknowledgement of the extent to which interwar women reconfigured philanthropy to incorporate important female leadership roles and wage labour.<sup>87</sup> One *could* see interwar women's philanthropic humanitarian work as being a progressive variant of traditional spheres, where the female caring sphere was extended into international humanitarianism, and men's worldly sphere extended into providing funds for this. Alternatively one could see it as a distinct third sphere in which women cast off the 'cloak of self-sacrifice' through increasingly professionalised encounters.

The new women's movement was explicitly internationalist. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, founded in April 1915, sought to extend friendship and peace overseas while trying to shed the missionary associations of this kind of work. At an early meeting, one minute captures the vigour, values and optimism within the group:

[A] discussion took place in which it was emphasised that to join the Labour Party would limit our scope outside it; that our best work even for labour is to convert the middle classes, and that international feminism as such has a very great contribution to the whole current of world politics and in education a strong progressive feminist movement is urgently needed and that this is just the moment and the chance for our Society.<sup>88</sup>

The impact of women's informal or voluntary work, and informal networks of education and support, such as those that could be provided by the WI, has often been overlooked. Prochaska has called charity work a 'lever' by which women opened doors to education and

---

<sup>86</sup> Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985) p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

<sup>88</sup> WILPF Executive Committee Minutes WILPF 1-2. LSE.

the professions.<sup>89</sup> This, as with much of the interwar women's movement, predominantly involved middle-class women. As novelists such as Tressell and Gaskell have documented, in working class communities, charity and voluntary work tended to take the traditional format of localised and informal practices; helping a bereaved or unemployed neighbour, looking after a sister's children, organising a collection for a widowed colleague, putting together food parcels for a struggling family.<sup>90</sup> The impulse of benevolence was there; it just was not manifested in official or professionalised structures. It took a certain amount of wealth first to be able to employ a servant (Rowntree placed the cut-off point for his assessment of the working classes on anyone who could afford a servant) and secondly, have the leisure to be able to serve on committees.<sup>91</sup> Helena Swanwick's autobiography, published in 1935, acknowledges that the early women's movement did not do enough to include working class women.<sup>92</sup>

A new generation of professionally reformist women, whose lives were often centred on their personal and professional relationships with other women, was extending the hand of pacifism, socialism and solidarity internationally. In the interwar context of exaggerated tropes about masculinity and femininity, anxieties about labour and employment and the dramatic redefinition of women's public role, for a middle class woman seeking to do some public good, arranging for well brought up and assimilable refugee girls to be brought over to work in an area for which there was demand was an absolutely ideal form of voluntary work, congruent as it was to the maternalist emphasis which legitimated women's social work.

### **Individual Experience of a Refugee Worker: Mary Hughes and the York Refugee Committee**

The Scottish Domestic Bureau was an example of a smaller regional committee acting autonomously to carry out humanitarian refugee work. This should be considered in the light of both the national guidance framework offered by the GEC and wider trends towards a discourse of women humanitarians that, while domestic and maternalist in rhetoric, was increasingly professionalised and political in reality. The next section moves towards a more specific emotional analysis by looking at the personal history of one woman. This section uses the unpublished diaries and correspondence of one relief worker, Mary Hughes from York.

<sup>89</sup> Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*. p.227. The number of women seeking university education rose between the wars. See Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex?*.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2005 [1914]) Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (London: Penguin, 2003 [1848]), Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973 [1854]).

<sup>91</sup> See Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study in Town Life*. Also, Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress: a Second Social Study of York*.

<sup>92</sup> Helena Swanwick, *I Have Been Young* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1935).

While her personal emotional response to her refugee work is highly relevant, Mary still worked within the framework of her several intersecting networks, including her family, the local refugee committee and the York Quaker community. The personal here should not and cannot be divorced from the political.

Mary Hughes was born in 1886, and was a member of the Quaker community in York. The York Meetings were dynamic, and heavily influenced by the presence of the Rowntree family's successful Cocoa Works and two Quaker schools in the small city.<sup>93</sup> Mary was, according to her son David, a reserved woman, who had been largely occupied with raising her two children.<sup>94</sup> In the 1930s, however, she became increasingly involved with Quaker social work. She had been very active in working with Basque child refugees and organising food relief campaigns for Spanish Republicans.<sup>95</sup> She also co-founded and was instrumental in running the York Refugee Committee. A series of letters from Mary Hughes to her husband and children from 1938-42 survive. They detail the nature of her relief work with refugees and, supported by additional archival material, give a picture of the nature of day-to-day work involved in supporting refugees at this time. The 'servant crisis' was manifest in the work of the York Committee as a political expedient that facilitated interpersonal refugee support.

In November 1938, shocked by reports of *Kristallnacht*, Mary Hughes and some Quaker friends set up the York Refugee Committee. Membership fluctuated over the few years of the Committee's existence, but approximately half the members of the Committee came from the Quaker community.<sup>96</sup> Following guidance from Friends House, the Committee decided to focus primarily on placing domestic servants. Mary Hughes was 'hospitality secretary', and as such was responsible for finding guarantors and host families for adult and child refugees and jobs for prospective domestic servants, as well as organising some permits for nurses.<sup>97</sup> Mary herself acted as a host to several women for short-term stays and to two children for a longer period of time. She also took a huge financial risk by giving several personal guarantees that she did not in fact have the money to fulfil.<sup>98</sup> The Committee found that finding guarantors

---

With especial thanks to David Hughes for sharing his family papers and engaging in correspondence.

<sup>93</sup> Bootham School was (and remains) a boys' day and boarding school and The Mount was a smaller girls' day and boarding school.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from David Hughes to Jennifer Taylor, 16 March 2011.

<sup>95</sup> In January 1939 she cashed in her shares to send £5 worth of food on the Yorkshire Food Ship to Barcelona. Letter from Mary Hughes to Barbara Hughes, 24 January 1939.

<sup>96</sup> Based on cross references from Mary Hughes' personal correspondence and the York Refugee Committee Minutes.

<sup>97</sup> Notes entitled 'Memories of Refugees in York', David Hughes, 30 July 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Letter from John Hughes to Barbara Hughes, 20 Feb 1939.

was the most challenging aspect of their work as the minutes state, 'The difficulty of the £50 guarantee seems to be the great stumbling block.'<sup>99</sup> Mary Hughes was also negotiating to get people into the country. She had 81 people on her list in March 1939 for whom the Committee was trying to find accommodation. She found the most difficult aspect of her work finding homes for people to stay in, writing, 'I feel every Quaker home ought to be ashamed if it hasn't one refugee at least-but will they come forward? No! Some of course we can always rely on.'<sup>100</sup>

Nearly all the adult refugees were placed as domestics, and in a few cases sent for training as nurses at The Retreat, a private Quaker psychiatric hospital just outside York.<sup>101</sup> The personal connections of Committee members were crucial in finding work for domestic servants. Minutes record that once domestic servants had been placed with employers, they usually had little to do with the Refugee Committee, being largely independent. The unaccompanied child refugees and male refugees who were not allowed to work therefore occupied much of the Committee's time. Despite being the largest group of refugees supported by the Committee, women domestic servants are therefore the least present in the records.

The main ongoing efforts of the Committee were split between setting up a hostel for adult Czech political refugees, who were mostly Socialist or Communist young men, and finding homes and guarantees for children, single women and the occasional family. Mary Hughes ran the Czech hostel, which mostly housed political refugees, at a cost of 8/6d per head per week, raised through donations.<sup>102</sup> After discussion by the Committee, the refugees at the Hostel were prevented from holding political meetings as it was felt that this would compromise their position.<sup>103</sup> As a gesture of conciliation, the Committee encouraged the refugees to establish a Mandolin band instead. The formation of this orchestra may have been motivated by concerts given at the Rowntree theatre in 1937 by Basque children, who had raised a considerable sum of money for their own sustenance in this way.<sup>104</sup>

Child refugees were often given places at Bootham Quaker School for boys or The Mount, the equivalent girls' school. For example, Harry Baum, who had boarded with Mary Hughes as a foster child and become extremely close to the family was offered a place at Bootham. The

<sup>99</sup> York Refugee Committee Minutes. Entry 14 March 1939. Acc. 404, YCA.

<sup>100</sup> Mary Hughes to Barbara Hughes, 19 Jan 1939.

<sup>101</sup> York Refugee Committee Minutes. Acc. 404, YCA. The Retreat still operates today as a mental health facility run on Quaker principles.

<sup>102</sup> York Refugee Committee Minutes. Entry 16 May 1939. Acc. 404, YCA. The political refugees included Boyer the Czech Communist National Leader.

<sup>103</sup> York Refugee Committee Minutes. Entry 4 July 1939. Acc. 404, YCA.

<sup>104</sup> *York Evening Post* Friday 4 November 1938.

headmaster Donald Gray wrote to Mary Hughes saying, 'It is quite clear to me that Harry Baum is a boy for whom we should do all we can... we shall pay whatever you can't raise... do not enter him for a scholarship, we shall simply make a grant.'<sup>105</sup> This was not an uncommon practice. Special refugee rates were introduced at Bootham in 1933, and in May 1939 there were four pupils at special rates.<sup>106</sup> Overall, from 1933-1943, sixteen refugee pupils studied at Bootham, of whom around half received some kind of grant, bursary or free lodging.

It was a similar story at The Mount, which was a very small school of around 100-120 girls with a reputation for being extremely enlightened. There were no refugee pupils until 1939 when five girls started.<sup>107</sup> The financial records show the fees of the refugee girls were written off with the explanation, 'rebates and allowances borne by the school' to a total sum of 227 pounds, 9 shillings and sixpence.<sup>108</sup> The school seemed to see itself as in *loco parentis* even when the girls had left. Marianne Grun was given a grant of 35 pounds from the Joseph Rowntree Trust when entering her training as a nurse in Dublin in 1938 and promised 25 pounds each subsequent year.<sup>109</sup> She had to return her grant, however, as she was not accepted on the course as an 'enemy alien'.<sup>110</sup> Her younger sister Irene was awarded two leaving scholarships as an 'Hons Causa' to enable her to go to dental school.<sup>111</sup> Several years later, when the girls' father was financially secure, he repaid the scholarship money to the school.<sup>112</sup> In an unpublished biography of the Mount's headmistress, Ellen Catherine Waller, E.L. Ramsay indicates this concern was motivated by a deep sense of what was right.<sup>113</sup> Irene Grun, who worked as a dentist for many years, felt The Mount was 'ahead of its time in its enlightened attitude to women', and attributes the emphasis on supporting the education of refugee pupils to the emphasis on independence for women.<sup>114</sup>

In some cases, women refugees were able to obtain permits as domestic servants after their children had gained entry on the *Kindertransport*. Marion Wolff, who had arrived from Vienna on one of the first *Kindertransports* in December 1938, lodged with a childless Quaker couple, Walter and Jessie Robson in York. With the support of the York New Earswick Meeting, the

---

<sup>105</sup> Letter from Donald Gray to Mrs Hughes, 1 June 1943. Bootham School Archives.

<sup>106</sup> School finance book, 1939. Bootham School Archives.

<sup>107</sup> Mount School archives, MOU 1/4/1/46. Borthwick Institute.

<sup>108</sup> The Mount Admissions Register 1904-1942, MOU 6/1/1/1/5. Borthwick Institute.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph Rowntree Trust Files, MOU 2/9/6/2/2. Borthwick Institute.

<sup>110</sup> Author's correspondence with Irene Kurer. 15 October 2012.

<sup>111</sup> Mount School Archives, MOU 1/4/1/50. Borthwick Institute.

<sup>112</sup> Correspondence with Irene Kurer. 15 October 2012.

<sup>113</sup> Unpublished biography of Ellen Catherine Waller by E.L. Ramsay, undated (c.1950). Borthwick Institute.

<sup>114</sup> Correspondence with Irene Kurer. 15 October 2012.

Robsons obtained a domestic permit for Marion's mother and she arrived three weeks before the start of war.<sup>115</sup> Marion recalls that her mother and Jessie became lifelong best friends.<sup>116</sup>

It is clear from Mary's letters just how many local, national and international connections had to be drawn on for each individual case. She wrote in 1939 after listing her daily tasks, '[Y]ou see how long it takes and how very personal it all is. I think I have a bit of a power of persuasion and I work it hard I can tell you!'<sup>117</sup> Secretary Dorothy Ditcham exchanged correspondence with the Quaker Centre in Vienna about particular cases.<sup>118</sup> Most notably, in spring 1939, Tessa and Jean Rowntree, both young women from the wealthy Rowntree Quaker family, went to Prague along with Mary Penman, sister of Philip Noel-Baker to work with political refugees.<sup>119</sup> Finding the situation volatile and dangerous, they made contact with Doreen Warriner, the co-ordinator of British refugee work in Prague, and escorted several trainloads of children back to England. This involved bribing border guards and lying to officials.<sup>120</sup> Inevitably some of the children's accommodation arrangements fell through on arrival so, not knowing what else to do, Tessa brought one boy back to York where the Refugee Committee provided 'care and oversight' for him while the Rowntree family paid for his education at Bootham.<sup>121</sup>

Mary Hughes is described by her son David as being a 'naturally timid and retiring person' but the work with refugees seems to have given her enormous drive and vitality.<sup>122</sup> From a letter to her daughter in February 1939, 'I'm living a queer different life just now-you can't think how different!...But I have my part of the job in thorough working order now I'm glad to say.'<sup>123</sup> It is clear from Mary Hughes' letters that she saw her work as being entirely a humanitarian endeavour. A letter from John Hughes, who was supportive of his wife's work, directly compares the work done by the York Committee to the Underground Railroad in America saying, 'All that we can do does no more than touch the fringe of the problem, but it is like what they called the 'Underground Railroad' in America...So it is now, and one by one these poor people are got out of misery, cruelty and degradation.'<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> Marion Wolff, correspondence with Peter Kurer, March 25 2007.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Letter from Mary Hughes to Barbara Hughes, 7 February 1939.

<sup>118</sup> York Refugee Committee Minutes. 4 July 1939. YCA.

<sup>119</sup> Jean Rowntree Obituary, *The Telegraph*, 5 March 2003.

<sup>120</sup> Elisabeth 'Tessa' Cadbury, 14205. IWMSA.

<sup>121</sup> York Refugee Committee Minutes. 4 July 1939. YCA.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from David Hughes to Jennifer Taylor, 16 March 2011.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from Mary Hughes to Barbara Hughes, 7 February 1939.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from John Hughes to Barbara Hughes, 20 February 1939.



John Hughes' 'Underground Railroad' comment is a striking analogy. While mostly focusing on practical details rather than broader pictures, memoirs and letters by Quaker relief workers often mention the historical legitimacy given to the Quaker humanitarian role. In his 2004 memoirs, one American Quaker relief worker, Howard Wriggins, felt this historical legitimacy was a great source of stress, 'When you introduce yourself as a Quaker, especially before refugees, there is a degree of confidence or expectation that is often shaking...One often feels a sense of inadequacy, of not being able to fulfil expectations.'<sup>125</sup> In documents that were intended to be public facing, like Francesca Wilson's 1944 memoir, aimed at informing post-war reconstruction, there was notably little mention of religious motivation, beyond saying who belonged to certain denominations.<sup>126</sup> Joan Mary Fry's *In Downcast Germany* is perhaps most typical in mentioning previous Quaker humanitarian projects solely in order to legitimise current or future projects. Bertha Bracey, when asked in an interview what her motivation was answered:

In the main [we helped refugees] at their request, [they knew to come to us] because we had various centres and of course they came to Friends because again they had known of the Quaker feeding after the First World War and they had met Friends...without preaching and propaganda of enquiries [which] were made it was up to us to share with them our fundamental beliefs, Never to proselytise. If you are going to give wholly; you have got to give deeply. There has got to be a deeper relationship rising out of faith.<sup>127</sup>

For Bracey, as perhaps for John Hughes and others, motivation was entirely linked with the social responsibility engendered by a personal interpretation of Quakerism, with historical legitimacy serving to strengthen that position.

On June 12 1942 John Hughes died following a prostate operation.<sup>128</sup> Mary was only 56 but her own health had begun to deteriorate. The refugees' need for support was decreasing and she took a less active role in the Committee. She did however keep in contact with many of the people she had supported, and maintained close contact with the two children she had fostered until her death in 1955. Her children continued a lifelong relationship with their foster siblings.<sup>129</sup>

Mary Hughes unequivocally saw the women placed as servants by the York Committee as refugees for whose benefit she was engaged on a mass rescue endeavour. Mary, however, was

---

<sup>125</sup> Howard Wriggins, *Picking up the Pieces from Portugal to Palestine: Quaker Refugee Relief in World War II, A Memoir* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004).

<sup>126</sup> Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos*.

<sup>127</sup> Bertha Bracey 4646. IMMSA.

<sup>128</sup> Notes entitled 'Memories of Refugees in York', David Hughes, 30 July 2006.

<sup>129</sup> Notes entitled 'Memories of Refugees in York', David Hughes, 30 July 2006.

not a 'rescuer' but, as her son David has pointed out, an ordinary woman who got involved. She saw the work as a job based on a strong sense of social justice and was prepared to make immense personal commitment to her responsibilities. She wrote to her daughter in January 1939, '...this week I really have a mountain of things to do and hardly know how I get through a day! It is too much for me I know-but I'd rather die doing too much than too little. Not that it's any good if things aren't well done...But once you get behindhand a day with this refugee work then it's hopeless trying to catch up on it.'<sup>130</sup> Mary's letters and diaries show unequivocally that her motivations were not those of a middle-class woman seeking cheap domestic labour. Rather, she was an ordinary woman motivated by a strong sense of anti-fascism and shared humanity, supported by local and international refugee support networks, and deeply committed to helping as many refugees as she could.

### **Filling the Vacancy: Expected Assimilation of the Refugee Domestic Servant**

*Cannot hear of a house-parlourmaid. Ethel, on the other hand, can hear of at least a hundred situations, and opulent motor-cars constantly dash up to front door, containing applicants for her services.*

*-E.M. Delafield, Diary of a Provincial Lady<sup>131</sup>*

Until 1939, domestic service remained the largest employer of young women in Britain.<sup>132</sup> Working-class women, however, were increasingly reluctant to undertake domestic work. It was poorly paid, incredibly hard work and offered limited opportunities for either career advancement or a social life. Between the wars, discussion of a 'servant crisis' and anxiety over recruiting reliable servants was a familiar topic of conversation in drawing-rooms across the country. In this context, as Traude Bollauf has pointed out, the employment of German and Austrian girls as 'au-pairs' became increasingly commonplace from the late 1920s, providing a template for the later immigration of refugees from Germany and Austria.<sup>133</sup> The women who came to work as domestic servants were expected to quite literally fill the vacancy left by working-class British girls. In addition to providing cheap domestic labour, their admittance into the middle-class home also represented a set of expectations as to their assimilability. The young women admitted on domestic visas were expected to become British through work, with potential marriage and children also considered appropriate by the government and voluntary agencies. The British response to refugee domestic servants has been characterised

<sup>130</sup> Letter from Mary Hughes to Barbara Hughes, undated but late January 1939.

<sup>131</sup> E.M. Delafield, *Diary of a Provincial Lady* (London: Virago Press, 1984 [1930]) p. 41.

<sup>132</sup> Young women meaning aged 14-24. Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950*.

<sup>133</sup> Bollauf, *Dienstmädchen-Emigration*.

as middle class self-interest 'refined by a humanitarian response'.<sup>134</sup> Tony Kushner, the leading historian in the field, has condemned the British government's policy as 'more designed to meet the demands of middle-class women in this period', ironically marginalising the massive women-led voluntary efforts which, despite uninterested government policy and utter lack of funding, were key to finding employment for other women. This is not to say that Kushner is unaware of the complex relationships between refugee and British women. In a short piece elsewhere Kushner, writing with Katherine Knox, recognises that the refugee organisations, their hands bound by the employment market and anxieties over refugees 'taking our jobs', were, 'grimly determined to keep the women scattered and in service'.<sup>135</sup> The immigration of around 20,000 women on domestic service visas, who represented between a third and a quarter of all refugees from fascism in Britain before the war, has received very limited academic attention. Kushner has written the most comprehensively on the subject, and these women have also been mentioned in recent histories of domestic service.<sup>136</sup> This section sets out how young refugee women were expected to 'fill the vacancy' of British working class girls leaving service and places their experience as part of a very gendered set of expectations as to their futures.

Permits for refugee domestic servants had to be obtained by a British employer. As employing servants was predominantly the responsibility of women, the 'mistress' of a given household was usually responsible for making the decision to bring over a refugee domestic. This decision would have been influenced by a range of factors; the need for cheap labour; the difficulty of obtaining 'reliable' British staff; humanitarian motivations, and the desire for a 'superior' servant who could pass on skills such as piano playing to children. This decision, once made, would have usually been supported by one of a range of voluntary Committees specifically set up to help householders recruit refugee domestics. A case study of one of these agencies, the Scottish Domestic Bureau, is provided earlier in this chapter. While these voluntary agencies, overwhelmingly staffed by women, were operating from humanitarian motivations, the same was not always true of employers. Once the refugee housemaid had taken up her post, the voluntary agencies (if they had even been involved in the first place) were largely absent;

---

<sup>134</sup> Kushner, 'An Alien Occupation-Jewish Refugees and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-1948' p. 562.

<sup>135</sup> Tony Kushner and Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2001 [1999]). p. 158.

<sup>136</sup> See Kushner, 'An Alien Occupation-Jewish Refugees and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-1948'; Kushner, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-40 ' *Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Kushner Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide* and Delap, *Knowing Their Place*.

meaning the experience of domestic work was about the relationship between the servant and her mistress.

The nature of these relationships has only recently begun to be seriously examined. Work by Kushner, Kushner and Knox, Charmain Brinson, Anthony Grenville, Moore and Caesteker, and Traude Bollauf has, in the last ten years, begun to form a real body of research. A 2008 front-page article by Anthony Grenville in the *Association of Jewish Refugees Journal* (AJR) epitomised the research findings and prompted an impassioned debate in the pages of the magazine.<sup>137</sup> Headlined, 'Underpaid, underfed and overworked', the article drew attention to the 'thankless drudgery, of acute loneliness and homesickness and of being barred from normal participation in family life and activities' experienced by refugee domestic servants.<sup>138</sup> The tone of the article drew a heated response from readers in subsequent issues. Many former refugee domestic servants and family members agreed that they worked extremely hard in difficult conditions, yet attention was drawn to the fact that British servants worked just as hard, and many refugees were treated kindly by their employers. The general tone of responses can be summarised by one correspondent, 'I cannot help thinking, 'Better a living abused domestic servant in England than a dead one in Auschwitz.'<sup>139</sup> The Grenville article draws attention to the fact that, 'Many of [the servants] were from comfortable middle-class homes and found the indignities of life as a domestic intolerable, though they were probably treated no worse than other servants, including servants in their own previous middle-class households in Vienna or Berlin.'<sup>140</sup> In his own research, Grenville is deeply critical of what he calls the 'callous and inhuman' treatment of refugee servants by British employers, saying that all too often, employers 'ignored the emotional trauma of their forced emigration and their anxious separation from endangered families at home.'<sup>141</sup>

But how did refugee domestic servants relate to their work? As the AJR article on the subject indicates, a narrative of gratitude and thanks dominates discussion of the issue of the treatment of refugees in Britain. Women feel uncomfortable complaining about having been made to wash floors in Surrey when they are now fully aware of what the alternative would have been. This is reinforced by formal and informal interviews I have conducted with women

---

<sup>137</sup> The *AJR* (*Association of Jewish Refugees Journal*) is a popular and widely read magazine among former refugees, their families and other interested people.

<sup>138</sup> Anthony Grenville, 'Underpaid, underfed and overworked: Refugees in domestic service' *AJR Journal* Volume 8 No. 12, December 2008.

<sup>139</sup> *AJR Journal*, Volume 8 No. 13 February 2009. Letter to the editor from Bronia Snow.

<sup>140</sup> Grenville, 'Underpaid, underfed and overworked'.

<sup>141</sup> Anthony Grenville, *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-70: Their Image in AJR Information* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

who came over as teenaged *Kinder* but were subsequently asked by their 'hosts' to do chores. Unless directly asked, none of the women I interviewed mentioned this aspect and, when I brought it up, the women all stressed how the work was unpleasant but necessary. One woman, Lenore Davies, said:

When that [being asked to do chores] arose I did it. I didn't complain...I was much older than the average 13 and I knew what was going on and if somebody wanted me to do the washing up and peel the potatoes I did it. I didn't actually complain. I had been brought up to do everything that needed to be done in the household. My grandmother had always said you should know how to do everything. Hopefully, you never need to do it, so I did it. I wasn't frustrated in that way. I didn't think it was beneath me or whatever. When my headmistress expected me to do her washing I thought this was a bit much but I did it.<sup>142</sup>

Lenore hints at the class element of shame, which she didn't feel herself but was aware others might.

Since the 1970s, it has been argued in sociological studies that the two main characteristics of the mistress-servant relationship were 'deference' and 'defiance'. In a recent paper, Selina Todd argues that *detachment* is a more appropriate framework in which to comprehend servant's relationships to their work and employers.<sup>143</sup> In the many memoirs of former refugees, and in interviews held in the Imperial War Museum, there are very few which do more than mention domestic work in passing, suggesting that most women saw it as a transitory stage in their lives. Domestic service was usually a brief, unsettling and traumatic period which many women probably wanted to forget. For most women in retrospect, domestic service appeared to be simply the temporary means by which they could leave one life and enter the next.

The 'detachment' hypothesis, while compelling, cannot single-handedly explain the lack of an established narrative by which former women domestic servant refugees can talk about their experience. Certainly, there is not an established forum or narrative by which women can talk about their experiences as domestic servants. Ostensible grateful pragmatism can conceal real uncertainty about expressing trauma without wishing to sound ungrateful for 'rescue'. In addition to this dislocation is the lack of a standard template story that women can use to talk about this period of their lives that was often uncertain, stressful and brief.

---

<sup>142</sup> Interview with Lenore Davies 28 March 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Selina Todd, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain 1900-1950' *Past and Present* no., 203 (May 2009).

Charles Hannam, in his acclaimed three part autobiography about his experiences as a child refugee, outlines his elder sister Margot's work as a domestic servant.<sup>144</sup> Margot was from a middle class family, and was unused to domestic service. When she arrived to meet her new employer Mrs Stevenson in 1939 they were wearing the same tailored grey suit.<sup>145</sup> Margot instantly disliked her employer and the two women clashed repeatedly. Margot worked hard to get her younger brother out of an agricultural camp and into school, but did not make similar efforts for her own education. In later life, Margot spoke about her work as a housemaid quite often, using humour to tell funny stories about her employment.<sup>146</sup> Charles feels that Margot's early marriage to a much older man was prompted in part by her fear of being unemployed or vulnerable.<sup>147</sup> Margot's whole world had been turned upside-down and the desire to recreate the stability and security represented by marriage and family must have been strong.

This sense of a rapid and dramatic shift in consciousness is also articulated in Lore Groszmann Segal's *Other People's Houses* which is essentially a second hand memoir, a grown woman's account of her childhood experience as a *Kinder* and her mother's parallel experience as a domestic servant.<sup>148</sup> While the father, unusually, had a male domestic permit, he is a shadowy presence in the book. It seems as though he was struck by crippling depression and physical illness and was incapable of carrying out his duties. He was allowed to live-in on condition that his wife carried out his work in addition to her own. Class is a constant theme, and while the mother adapts with fortitude to domestic work, the father is not able to adjust from his professional life in Vienna to being a gardener. The Groszmann story seems to reinforce the idea that women were more flexible and assimilable, but also exhibits an underlying expectation about women's responsibility for domestic labour and compliant attitude towards it.<sup>149</sup>

Pam Taylor's influential study of relationships between mothers and daughters in service perceptively points out that, 'wifely giving is clearly the model for servant subordination.'<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Charles Hannam, *A Boy in Your Situation* (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1977); Charles Hannam, *Almost an Englishman* (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1979); Charles Hannam, *Outsider Inside* (London: Alpha Press, 2008).

<sup>145</sup> Correspondence with Charles Hannam, 23 September 2012.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 13 October 2012.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* 29 October 2012.

<sup>148</sup> Lore Segal, *Other People's Houses* (London: The New Press, 2004 [1964]).

<sup>149</sup> London, Whitehall and the Jews.

<sup>150</sup> Pam Taylor, 'Daughters and Mothers-maids and mistresses: domestic service between the wars' Chp. 5 in Clarke, Critcher and Johnson (Eds) *Working Class Culture: Studies in history and theory* [CCCS Publication] (London: Hutchinson, 1979) p. 134.

Historically, service had always been seen as good preparation for a woman's married life.<sup>151</sup> The assumption was that women were in charge of the home. This granted a certain freedom to the mistress of a household when it came to matters of who to employ to do the housework that she could afford not to do herself, but similarly created fractures in women's relationship with other women. First-wave feminist campaigners made explicit correlations between the conditions of oppression women faced in marriage and society and the conditions of domestic servants. This did not automatically lead to cross-class sympathy however and the Mrs Banks cliché of going out chaining oneself to the railings while another poorly-paid woman was at home looking after the children remains.<sup>152</sup> Recent emotional histories of domestic service have pointed towards the symbiotic parent and child relationship between mistress and maid.<sup>153</sup> All live-in servants were under the protective 'guardianship' of employers, who had the right to dismiss servants at will, dictate what they read or whom they spoke to and inspect their belongings. Refugee domestic servants stepped in to this complex series of expectations and relationships.

Another facet of domestic refugee life alluded to by the readers of the AJR is that former refugee domestic servants felt they had been treated no differently to their British colleagues. Corroborating this assertion, the employment pattern of refugee domestic servants mirrored to a notable degree the pattern of British servants. Research on women's work in the interwar years suggests that young women tended to prefer factory or clerical work to domestic work, citing the long hours, low pay and lack of social opportunity that live-in service offered.<sup>154</sup> When women did enter service, they would often leave as soon as an opportunity for other work presented itself. Young women from poor rural backgrounds tended to use service as a stepping-stone into a town or city and, from there, would attempt to find another job. As Margaret Powell pointed out in her 1969 autobiography, domestic service between the wars was hard, poorly paid work where you sacrificed all personal freedom. Powell felt no girl with the benefit of an education would work as a maid.<sup>155</sup> The majority of refugee women who had obtained a domestic job in order to get their permit worked in a series of service jobs from the time they entered Britain until around 1940 or 1941 when permit requirements were relaxed and refugee women were able to obtain war work in factories or nursing or clerical work (if, of

---

<sup>151</sup> See Davidson and others.

<sup>152</sup> R.L Travers, *Mary Poppins* (London: HarperCollins, 1998 [1934]).

<sup>153</sup> See primarily recent work by Light, Delap and Steedman.

<sup>154</sup> See authors including Taylor, 'Daughters and Mothers' and Delap, *Knowing Their Place*.

<sup>155</sup> Margaret Powell, *Climbing the Stairs* (London: Pan Books, 1969).

course, they were not interned). Vera Levick, for example, was representative in working as a domestic until she was able to get a work permit for an office job.<sup>156</sup>

Once refugees were in Britain, the pattern of domestic work paralleled that of British servants, with the main differentials being class tensions and constant stress over trying to obtain permits for family members still in danger. Some middle-class Jewish women who worked as domestic servants experienced the 'servant crisis' on several levels- as part of the pan-European anxiety about obtaining 'suitable' service, then when some of their own family servants had to be dismissed under the Nuremberg laws, then when their own survival depended on a willingness to scrub strange floors in a strange country. The experience of Ira Rischowski is indicative of these tensions. Ira was a trained electrical engineer who had to leave Germany in 1935 due to her political activity. After living in Prague for a year she got a domestic permit to Britain through friends and worked in the Sussex countryside for a year. She moved to London specifically to access the Jewish and Quaker agencies at Woburn House as she was desperate to get her two young daughters out of Germany. Through connections she was able to obtain scholarships at a Catholic school for her children. For herself, she struggled with the monotony of domestic work and was delighted to be invited to attend meetings of the Women's Engineering Society. She left service as soon as she was able to obtain other work.<sup>157</sup>

There were inevitable anxieties around the continued employment of refugee domestic servants on the outbreak of war, with some stories of women being dismissed as their employers worried about the potential security risk they posed. The Domestic Bureau was aware of this tension, and in 1940 published a pamphlet 'Mistress and Maid' which was intended to give practical advice for both refugee domestic servants and their employers. The pamphlet gives practical instructions on work, from legal employment terms to communication and cultural issues, for example, 'In this country it is good manners to speak and walk quietly, both in the house and in the street and public places. You will notice that the mistress usually states her requirements in the form of a request. This should be carried out at once as an order. It is not correct to argue with a mistress.'<sup>158</sup> Women were encouraged to be quiet, meek, subservient and obedient in addition to hardworking. After the outbreak of war the Domestic Bureau was required to maintain former domestic servant refugees who were unable to work. In July 1940 these amounted to 2650 cases, about half of which were being

---

<sup>156</sup> Vera Levick, 16637. IWMSA.

<sup>157</sup> Ira Rischowski, 4296. IWMSA.

<sup>158</sup> 'Mistress and Maid: General Information for the use of Domestic Refugees and their Employers', Issued by the Domestic Bureau, Bloomsbury House, April 1940. Wiener Library.



taken over by the Assistance Board. Unspecified mental health problems were one of the main reasons given for former servants being unable to work, indicating the levels of stress many women experienced.<sup>159</sup>

It was expected that refugee women would work for a few years then either marry, in which case they would rescind their alien nationality and become British, as would future children, or perhaps they would return to Germany or Austria. The class and cultural backgrounds of many refugee women could make it difficult for them to adjust to work as a servant. However, there is no evidence that they had a significantly different experience as employees than any working class British woman in the same job. Indeed, the very basis for their employment was the expectation that they would rapidly assimilate to fill the social role of the working class British girls who had rejected domestic work. This rejection was, in fact, unconsciously copied, and the majority of refugee women, too, left domestic work at the first opportunity in order to seek marriage, alternative employment, or education.

The continuum between pre-existing notions of domestic service and expectations around the assimilation of refugee domestic servants is clear. While the women who came to Britain as refugees on domestic visas were generally better-educated and more middle-class than their British counterparts, the expectation was that they would adapt to, literally, fill the vacancy of maid. To the voluntary agencies it was painfully apparent that the granting of domestic service visas to young single women prepared to scrub floors in a strange country was by no means a satisfactory response to escalating fascist violence in Europe. It was, nonetheless, one of the very few means by which women could legally enter Britain, and this route was exploited by Quakers and other voluntary agencies, not as a middle-class response to the servant crisis, but as part of a clear strategy to provide refuge to around 20,000 women.

### **So What About the Men? Agriculture and Self-Reliance**

This chapter has concentrated so far on the role of women in negotiating refuge for other women. While the female gendered relationship represents a significant and underexplored area, this investigation should not neglect the role of men on both sides of the humanitarian relationship. The role of Quaker men in the interwar years, ostensibly somewhat vulnerable due to the legacy of wartime conscientious objection, remained highly influential. Public figures such as Josiah Wedgwood, George and Edward Cadbury and B. Seebohm Rowntree were innovative and paternalistic leaders, promoting their particular form of what I have

---

<sup>159</sup> Minute 18 July 1940. Domestic Council for German Jewry, 27/7/39. Wiener Library.

termed 'business humanitarianism' in the changing context of interwar domestic and international relations. Male refugees were, in a similar manner to women on domestic service visa, permitted into Britain specifically to fill the perceived gap left by working class British men who had chosen better-paid urban work over agricultural work.<sup>160</sup>

Due to a tax on indoor male domestic servants and the perceived feminine nature of the work, male domestic servants were in low demand in Britain, with the exception of a few gardeners and butlers for wealthy homes or Oxbridge colleges.<sup>161</sup> The number of men on domestic permits therefore was very small compared to the numbers of women, many of whom were employed along with their wives on married couple permits like the Groszmanns. Delap points to the real gendered tensions around the employment of male servants, especially as the 'mistress' of the house was supposed to manage the staff.<sup>162</sup>

This is not to deny, however, the existence of a series of gendered relationships around the immigration of male refugees. The closest equivalent for men to the woman-dominated domestic service permit was the agricultural permit, which, while given to some women, was mostly granted to men along equivalent lines. A British farmer seeking to employ a foreign labourer had to fill out a lengthy permit form and submit it to the Home Office. The prospective immigrant, meanwhile, had to organise travel arrangements and negotiate an exit permit. With the exception of solvent male industrialists or those who were able to enter by their own professional arrangement (for example academics who were able to obtain a university job), men on agricultural permits were the largest professional grouping of refugees.<sup>163</sup> Most of these men had not worked on the land prior to their immigration and, again like the women who worked as domestic servants, most of these men saw the experience of working on the land as a transitory period necessary to facilitate their immigration. Of course, the focus on agriculture also reflected the Zionist story in Germany so would have been familiar to many Jewish men, who may well have seen their agricultural work in Britain as a preliminary to further emigration to Israel. In fact, the projects with unemployed men may not have been entirely uninformed by the Zionist project, as Quaker leaders John H.

---

<sup>160</sup> Many historians have written of the 'drift from the land' in interwar Britain. See, for example, the classic work by Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain* (London: Penguin, 1990 [1982]).

<sup>161</sup> The long-standing annual tax on male indoor domestic servants (which was 15 shillings in 1930) was abolished in 1937 but had had a significant impact on gendered expectations of employment in service. See Delap, *Knowing Their Place*.

<sup>162</sup> Delap, *Knowing Their Place*.

<sup>163</sup> There was a significant amount of help available for refugees seeking academic posts, most significantly from the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. See R.M. Cooper (ed) *Refugee Scholars: Conversations with Tess Simpson* (Leeds: Moorland Books, 1992).

Robson (pioneer of allotments for the unemployed) and Francis Sturge had travelled to Palestine in 1934 to try to encourage British government mediation between Jewish refugees and Palestinians.<sup>164</sup> The positioning of men on agricultural permits was, however, not quite as guided by external forces as domestic service permits. It was, in fact, integrated into a pre-existing concern for the development of British agriculture, which had been a matter of debate in Quaker circles since the mid-1920s.

There were two strands to this concern, first and most significantly was a practical concern for providing work and sustenance for unemployed men. This movement was initially inspired by Pierre Ceresole's *Service Civile Internationale*, which started working with unemployed miners in 1931 in Brynmawr.<sup>165</sup> This effort evolved from a concern to help the unemployed, particularly in mining. Joan Fry and others had already formed a Committee called the 'Industrial Crisis Committee' in May 1926.<sup>166</sup> Through the connections of Marian Parmoor and Joan Fry, the Committee was able to contact Ramsay MacDonald and other senior government officials within a week of its formation to express their concern.<sup>167</sup> Fundraising began in earnest and a range of schemes was financed. In September 1928 the name was changed to reflect the specific interest in former mining areas, particularly those in South Wales. The Committee was renamed the 'Coalfields Distress Committee'.<sup>168</sup> Several projects were funded through an increasingly successful publicity programme including hostels, food and clothing. By 1930 the focus of the Committee had shifted exclusively to the self-help project of providing allotments, seeds and tools for unemployed men. According to Joan Fry the aim was to spare men the 'despair and deterioration of being useless burdens on the community'.<sup>169</sup> This policy continued throughout the 1930s and proved immensely successful, guiding national policy on the issue and helping over 120,000 families.<sup>170</sup> An article in *The Times* in 1936 stated, 'Nothing done by voluntary effort to help the unemployed has exceeded in value the allotment scheme of the Society of Friends.'<sup>171</sup>

A series of smaller projects ran alongside the work of the Allotment Committee. Jack Hoyland, a prominent Birmingham Friend, recruited teams (or what he called 'gangs') of schoolboy

<sup>164</sup> 'Jew and Arab in Palestine: Causes of Immigration' *The Manchester Guardian*, November 5 1934.

<sup>165</sup> An as yet unfinished PhD thesis from Lesley Acton at UCL is exploring the work of the Friends' Allotments Committee in more detail.

<sup>166</sup> Industrial Crisis Committee Minutes. TEMP MSS 99/3. FHA.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* Minute 19 May 1926.

<sup>168</sup> Coalfields Distress Committee Minute 12 September 1928. TEMP MSS 99/3. FHA.

<sup>169</sup> In a pamphlet published 1932 'The Slow Murder of the Dole'.

<sup>170</sup> See Allotments Committee Publication Vol. 1 1930-1947 066. FHA.

<sup>171</sup> 'Help from the Land', *The Times*, 20 November 1936.

diggers to spend summer holidays working on community projects in areas of high unemployment. Hoyland recognised that the money the boys paid in lodging to unemployed families was of more benefit than their labour, but hoped the project served as a form of what Hoyland termed 'Franciscan service', a form of socialism through action whereby the gesture of solidarity in practical support would contribute towards breaking down class barriers and building a more equal society.<sup>172</sup>

The second concern was a business-oriented and scientific interest around the education and training of rural workers. Several schemes were set up to promote increased agricultural professionalism, motivated in part by anxiety over British food self-sufficiency in an uncertain international climate, and a manifest belief in the importance of educating workers. One project for which documentation remains is the Avoncroft College scheme, established by Edward and George Cadbury in 1926 as an agricultural sister to Fircroft, the Bourneville Training College. The concept was inspired by a 1924 visit to Denmark during which the Fircroft trustees were impressed with the level of professionalism and knowledge of the Danish farmer.<sup>173</sup>

In the late 1930s Seebohm Rowntree moved away from a focus on the manifestations of poverty to examine the potential of agriculture to ameliorate the effects of unemployment on urban poverty. Rowntree's efforts culminated in the 1938 report with Viscount Astor of 'British Agriculture: The Principles of Future Policy'.<sup>174</sup> The two main recommendations of this report were state research into agricultural methods, and investment into workers' co-operative schemes in the form of loans; reflecting the combining of the two forms of agricultural concern. Quaker agricultural work with refugees, then, was not an explicit aim but a side product of a wider pre-existing concern around agriculture and poverty.

The British government saw male refugees as more 'problematic' and less assimilable than women.<sup>175</sup> With the exception of wealthy industrialists who were welcomed to the areas of Britain in need of 'regeneration' (provided they could extract their capital from the Reich) and teenage boys (who tended to be classed as children and even given priority on the *Kindertransport* due to the perception they were in more danger of being sent to concentration camps after the Jewish men had been rounded up on *Kristallnacht*), male

---

<sup>172</sup> Hoyland, *Digging with the Unemployed* ; Hoyland, *Digging for a New England*. Hoyland also mobilised teams of schoolboy diggers to go to Spain in 1936.

<sup>173</sup> See Avoncroft College, Reports 1926-1936 Accn 47553. FHA.

<sup>174</sup> Viscount Astor and Seebohm Rowntree, *British Agriculture: The Principles of Future Policy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939 [1938]).

<sup>175</sup> See London and Kushner.

refugees were seen as difficult to manage.<sup>176</sup> This perception extended to the voluntary societies, who found it harder to raise funds and support for male refugees. There was additionally a residual viewpoint in which women and children were seen as victims in need of rescuing, while men were the protagonists of violence and conflict. It was generally easier to raise funds for projects involving women and children while men were expected to be able to look after themselves.

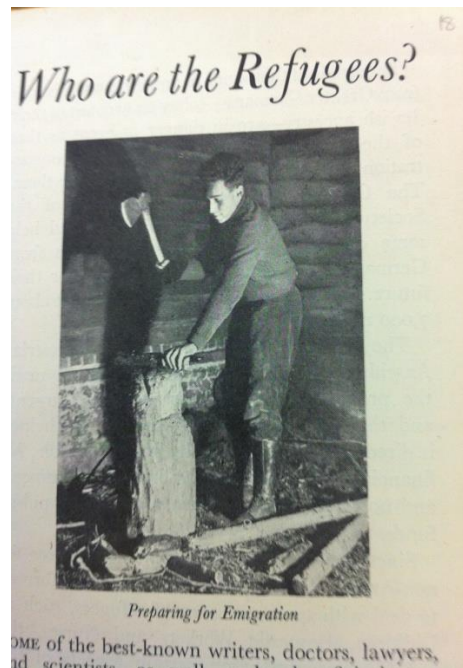
Consequently, after 1938, Quaker agricultural work mainly focused on training boys aged 16-18 who had entered Britain on child permits in various small-scale projects. As with domestic service for women, for most boys this was an interlude; something they spent between a few months and a year doing as a prelude to finding other work. As with domestic servants, Quaker agricultural work with refugees can be difficult to trace as it often depended on both complex networks and private endeavour. As funds were rarely elicited by public donation, few pamphlets were produced. One atypical pamphlet shows details and photographs of an agricultural training scheme for refugees in Flint Hall Farm, Hambledon, near Henley. There the Society of Friends worked with the YMCA to give refugee boys under 18 three months agricultural training then find them a job on the land. 50 boys had already benefitted. The pamphlet stresses the boys are 'sons of judges, doctors, professors, manufacturers and others', presumably in an attempt to convince the reader of their middle class respectability and consequent deserving of funds.<sup>177</sup> The image on the front cover of the pamphlet shows two healthy-looking young men posing with a calf in a very English-pastoral country scene.



<sup>176</sup> See Herbert Loebel, 'Government-financed Factories and the Establishment of Industries by refugees in the Special Areas of the North of England 1937-1961' University of Durham: MPhil dissertation, 1978.

<sup>177</sup> See pamphlet 'Christian Help for Refugees from Germany' Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944. Acc. 066.34. FHA.

**Image 11. *Christian Help for Refugees from Germany* Pamphlet, c. 1939.**<sup>178</sup>



**Image 12. *Who are the Refugees?* GEC Pamphlet c. 1939.**<sup>179</sup>

Another pamphlet 'Who are the refugees?' reinforces the paradigm of male self-reliance. The image on the cover shows a young and healthy man chopping wood over the caption, 'preparing for emigration'. This image reinforces the image of a self-reliant masculinity while promoting the idea that male refugees could be useful in agricultural professions. It also and perhaps most significantly, reassures that the refugees will be leaving the country as soon as possible.

Male refugees often undertook agricultural training as a prerequisite to emigration to Australia or Canada. This was the experience of Dr. Martin Eggert, a German mathematician.<sup>180</sup> Through a longstanding family connection with Roger Carter, the FSC representative in Berlin, he arranged for his Jewish fiancée, Elenore Wedell, to obtain a domestic post in Jordan's, Buckinghamshire, in early 1939. Owing to his anti-Nazism and refusal to break his engagement to Elenore, Eggert himself had to leave Germany. The correspondence relating to obtaining Dr. Eggert's permit and employment is lengthy and involves at least a dozen correspondents.

<sup>178</sup> 'Christian Help for Refugees from Germany' Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944, Acc. 066.34. FHA.

<sup>179</sup> 'Who are the Refugees?' Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944, Acc. 066.34. FHA.

<sup>180</sup> Correspondence relating to Dr. Martin Eggert. Private Collection belonging to Philip B. Hunt.

Eventually, Dr. Eggert was able to obtain work on a farm owned by family friends of the Carters. He worked on the land for a year, marrying Elenore in the interim, until he was interned in June 1940.<sup>181</sup>

There were some organised schemes that trained adult male refugees. Geoffrey Fawcett, a teacher at Leighton Park School, was a volunteer at an agricultural camp in Cornwall which started in the summer of 1939 and was housed in a burnt out former mansion at Carclew.<sup>182</sup> Refugees were trained by mostly pacifist Quaker and International Volunteers Service Party volunteers in house painting and horticulture. Fawcett says this work became 'somewhat irrelevant' as most of the refugees were interned in March/April 1940.<sup>183</sup> There were some ideological conflicts surrounding the camp. John Hoare, the manager, 'found Carclew more of a refugee camp than he had expected and thought desirable'<sup>184</sup> and Quaker volunteers clashed with IVSP volunteers over the IVSP's imposition of traditional gender roles when allocating tasks, to which some Quaker volunteers objected.<sup>185</sup> As Hoare's minuted comment indicates, the Carclew scheme had been conceived as a Quaker agricultural project, and had become a de facto refugee training camp by accident rather than design.

The project, however, did continue and evolve through the war. The managers, John and Marjorie Hoare, some of the refugees and a skeleton staff of volunteers moved to another abandoned mansion, near Spicelands Meeting House camp in Uffculme, just outside Cullompton in Devon. Spiceland Quaker Training Centre at Blackborough House trained Quaker relief workers throughout the war.<sup>186</sup> The majority of trainees were men who were conscientious objectors yet wished to carry out useful work such as first aid, repairs to essential buildings or farm work.

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have charted the development of a particular ethic of Christian manliness during the nineteenth century. The Christian man was upright and strong, reliable in business, yet caring. He would campaign against slavery and bloodsports and was not ashamed to spend time with his children.<sup>187</sup> The social effect of constructions of British masculinity has additionally been explored in the John Tosh and Michael Roper edited volume

---

<sup>181</sup> Letter Elenore Eggert to Mr and Mrs Parnell, 27 June 1940, Correspondence relating to Dr. Martin Eggert. Private Collection belonging to Philip B. Hunt.

<sup>182</sup> Stanley Smith, *Spiceland Quaker Training Centre 1940-1946* (York: William Sessions Ltd., 1990).

<sup>183</sup> Record 4663, recorded 17 January 1980. IWMSA.

<sup>184</sup> Spiceland Minutes. From Smith. p10.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* p 8.

<sup>186</sup> Hubert C. Fox, *Spicelands Friends Meeting House: Its Historical Background* (Southampton: Pearson and Lloyd Publishers, 1995 [1959]).

<sup>187</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

*Manful Assertions* that stresses the multifaceted implications of emotional expression within the family.<sup>188</sup> Quaker work with both male and female refugees adhered in no small part to Protestant values of self-reliance, and the work with male refugees, as with the work with unemployed men, stressed the importance of self-help and independence.

Quaker agricultural schemes were conceived as restoring the pride and masculinity of unemployed men and pre-existed the exodus from fascist Europe.<sup>189</sup> The focus on agriculture reflected an interwar idealisation of the countryside as a place of purity and sanctity away from the dirt and corruption of the city.<sup>190</sup> The process of de-urbanising and making Jewish men physical could additionally be seen as a means of assimilation. There was also an element where, for Quaker men emasculated by the legacy of wartime pacifism, this humanitarian effort was part of returning to the Quaker heyday of prominent Christian masculinity in the commercial world. Most significantly though, the disparity in the treatment of male and female refugees is indicative of a deeply gendered response to the refugee crisis. Women were accepted into the metropolitan home (albeit as cleaners of it) and expected to settle, marry and bear British children. Men, by contrast, were held at arm's length, sent away into the countryside for farm work, and expected to re-emigrate (probably to the colonies) as soon as the need for their labour had expired.

## Conclusion

A brief report in *The Manchester Guardian* in February 1939 sums up the gendered nature of the Quaker response to refugees. It tells the story of a young couple who had entered Britain illegally after smuggling themselves in on board a ship, 'the couple had been looked after by the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends who would continue to do this. It was proposed to train the husband for agriculture and the wife as a domestic servant and after a period to emigrate them to a suitable place where employment could be found for them.'<sup>191</sup> There are no details of this case, in which the couple appeared in Old Street Magistrate's Court threatened with deportation, in the records of the Germany Emergency Committee.

The entry of up to 20,000 refugee women into the complex British servant relationship was assimilation under pressure of circumstance based on a series of highly gendered assumptions

---

<sup>188</sup> John Tosh and Michael Roper (eds) *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>189</sup> 'Unemployed as Poultry Farmers: Success of Quaker Scheme' *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 August 1933.

<sup>190</sup> See, classically, Howard Newby, *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England* (London: Hutchinson, 1979).

<sup>191</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, 24 February 1939.



and transactions by governments, voluntary organisations and individuals. The resultant social and interpersonal relationships were, inevitably, as individual and contradictory as the people they affected. Some women had extremely negative experiences of domestic service while others, such as Marion Wolff's mother in York, found rewarding friendships with their employers. It seems that for the majority of refugee women servants, as for their British counterparts, domestic service was a transitional stage from which they tried to detach. The crux of this chapter has been in exploring gendered relationships around domestic service, explicitly those between mistresses and servants; the refugee and the 'rescuer' (inverted commas stressed), committees and network of women and friends, colleagues and partners; and implicitly those between voluntary workers and the state.

As the section on men points out, the entire refugee relief operation was based on gendered assumptions, namely, that women and children were more vulnerable and deserving of support. Where men were helped, it was on the understanding that this help was temporary, a kind of 'get back on your feet' boost. The support given by the Society of Friends was rooted in a combination of these gendered social assumptions common to society as a whole, and in pragmatism necessary given the speedy response time required. With the overstretched and under-resourced Ministry of Labour at full capacity, the larger voluntary organisations assumed a semi-official status. Their word was listened to and they were given much of the work of screening applicants that should, in theory, have been done by government departments. In fact, bowing to the volunteers' greater knowledge and experience, government departments often took recommendations on policy from the voluntary organisations.

Given the experience and professionalism of many Quaker women relief workers, it is important to acknowledge that they consciously realised the placing of women as domestic servants was seen as acceptable by society, so they exploited it to get as many people out of Germany and Austria as possible. It is dismissive of the tireless efforts of many women such as Mary Hughes to diminish their work as self-interested along with the government response. There is a tendency, even when the efforts of women are recognised, to sneer at them as being sickeningly middle class and incompetent. In fact, many of the women who guided and implemented Quaker policy were not housewives saturated by jumble sales and jingoism, but highly professional and experienced relief workers with an impressive record in both practical relief work and international policy-making.

In the interwar period, women's philanthropic work increasingly allowed them to cast off the 'cloak of self-sacrifice' and don an unashamedly professional, if still often unpaid, mantle.<sup>192</sup> Unsurprisingly, given the long history of prominence in social welfare issues, Quaker women were often at the forefront of this work. Building on kinship and professional networks, the tradition of Quaker social work gained an increasingly formalised foothold in guiding government policy. Public concern over the 'servant crisis', and the understandable reluctance of working-class British women to work as domestic servants, were both used as a legitimising tool to facilitate the mass immigration of desperate and endangered women refugees.

---

<sup>192</sup> 'cloak of self-sacrifice' term from Vicinus, *Independent Women*. p. 16.

## EXODUS

For all mothers in anguish  
Pushing out their babies  
In a small basket

To let the river cradle them  
And kind hands find  
And nurture them

Providing safety  
In a hostile world:  
Our constant gratitude.

As in this last century  
The crowded trains  
Taking us away from home

Became our baby baskets  
Rattling to foreign parts  
Our exodus from death.

Lotte Kramer, *Black over Red*, 2005.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sybil Oldfield (Ed) *Kindertransport*, Before and After: Elegy and Celebration. Sixty Poems 1980-2007 by Lotte Kramer (Centre for German Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, 2007).

## Chapter Four

### British Quakers and the *Kindertransport*: Internationalism, Integration and the Voluntary Tradition

In June 1989, a group of middle aged people met for a reunion in a leisure centre in London. Some had met before, but many were strangers to each other, there on the basis of a shared childhood experience. A letter from the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was read out:

I am pleased and proud that the Government of the time offered you refuge and help following the dreadful persecution you suffered in Germany and Central Europe. You came to us as homeless children, and grew up to enrich the life of this country with your courage and fortitude.<sup>2</sup>

This letter implied first that the British Government had organised the *Kindertransport* and secondly that the experience of the *Kinder* had been one of rescue for which they should express thanks. Twenty five years on, the *Kindertransport* is still usually discussed as a narrative of gratitude and redemption in a body of research born out of the experiences of childhood suffering and a desperate search for adult virtue. This narrative overlooks the complex and multiagency nature of the British efforts to organise the *Kindertransport*. As one of the leading historians of the period has recently pointed out, we still do not have a comprehensive account of how the *Kindertransport* was organised, financed and managed.<sup>3</sup> This chapter outlines the previously unresearched but vital Quaker role in the *Kindertransport* and argues that we need to recognise the role of voluntary agencies in its organisation and funding.

The *Kindertransport*, organised with great urgency as a response to *Kristallnacht* in late 1938 and 1939, remains the single biggest immigration of unaccompanied children to Britain to date. The Quaker role in it was crucial and complicated, but has often been over-simplified or ignored. The *Kindertransport* should be understood as a watershed political moment where the government accepted the political recommendation of a coalition of voluntary agencies without accepting any administrative or financial responsibility. This had happened before on a much smaller and more limited scale with the Basque refugee project and the immigration of domestic servants (see chapters two and three). In those instances, however, the government had retained more oversight while not assuming even any potential financial liability.

Permission for the *Kindertransport* was obtained by a joint delegation of Jewish and Quaker refugee workers on 21 November 1938, after several other similar proposals had been turned

---

<sup>2</sup> Reunion of *Kindertransport* Souvenir Brochure 50th Anniversary 1939-1989.

<sup>3</sup> Grenville, 'Introduction' in Hammel and Lewkowicz (eds) *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39*.

down.<sup>4</sup> The permission did not necessarily represent an immediate softening of the attitude of the British government towards refugees after *Kristallnacht*, as subsequent proposals were also turned down. Rather, as I argue in this chapter, it represented the ability of the voluntary agencies, which had become increasingly professionalised in the interwar years, to legitimise the immigration by convincing the government that they were capable of assuming the organisational and financial responsibility for such a scheme. This legitimacy was obtained in part by a Quaker team in Germany, who were able to investigate the desperate situation at a point when it was no longer considered safe for British Jews to travel to Germany. The Quaker Centre in Berlin served as a point of contact for Jewish and political refugees seeking to leave Germany. The Quaker centre in Vienna had a more direct association with the *Kindertransport*, and operated as the base in Austria for the selection and administration for all 'non-Aryan' *Kinder*, as well as supporting thousands of other escapees.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, the 'non-Aryan' classification was widely used among British voluntary agencies. It referred to refugees from fascism who were not culturally Jewish and so could not access Jewish relief structures. This encompassed people who had Jewish heritage but were secular or part of another faith, as well as people who were part Jewish but were also being persecuted for their political beliefs. Quaker relief structures prioritised 'non-Aryan' refugees as it was considered these people did not have access to other support. However, this did mean that *Kindertransport* children were categorised as either Jewish or 'non-Aryan' when the reality was often more complex. It should also be recognised that this distinction cannot be removed from British preconceptions about those 'deserving' of more support. The way the *Kinder* were represented in photography and the media is indicative of these distinctions, and this is a theme throughout this chapter, as it has been throughout the thesis.

It has not always been clear in the literature whether the term *Kindertransport* refers just to the official immigration of 10,000 children from Germany and Austria under the umbrella organisation the Refugee Children's Movement (RCM), or whether the 669 Czech children whose immigration was separately organised by the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC) should also be included. As part of the section on the humanitarian work in Prague, I emphasise the crucial work of the BCRC and suggest that we should move away from a hagiography of Nicholas Winton and begin to understand the *Kindertransport* as a complex project organised by a coalition of voluntary agencies. Of course, we also need to

---

<sup>4</sup> I will detail the meeting in more detail later in this chapter, but Bertha Bracey, Ben Greene and Philip Noel Baker (who was also a serving Labour MP) represented Quaker organisations and Herbert Samuel and Lola Hahn-Warburg represented both Jewish organisations and the RCM.

recognise that these voluntary agencies were limited in both their scope and approach. In the section on photography and assimilation I emphasise the careful visual correspondence created around the refugee children. In the era of *Picture Post* and the 'Golden Age' of cinema attendance, photography was crucial to the way refugee children were imagined. The voluntary agencies created a clear narrative of reassurance around the children, which was also reflected in the criteria used to select children in the first place.

Extending this idea, I move to a localised case-study by looking at the experience of children who came as refugees to Leighton Park Quaker boarding school, focusing in particular on Karel Reisz, one of the most famous *Kinder*. This serves as an example of the highly individualised and complex ways in which Quaker networks supported child refugees once they had arrived in Britain and also emphasises a continued concern about the 'successful' integration of *Kinder*.

The previous chapter pointed out the gendered aspects to the immigration of domestic servants and agricultural workers, arguing that we need to consider the fact it was nearly always women who employed domestic servants and organised their refuge. Similarly, the driving forces behind organising the immigration of the *Kindertransport* children were women. Bertha Bracey for the Society of Friends, Elaine Blond and Lola Hahn Warburg, Dorothy Hardisty at the Refugee Children's Movement and, of course, the pioneering woman MP Eleanor Rathbone were all crucial leaders. In the RCM, which was the main umbrella organisation behind the *Kindertransport*, of 43 workers at Bloomsbury House, plus 12 later regional secretaries, all but seven were women.<sup>5</sup> Those who cared for the children in their homes on a day to day basis were mostly women, and have mostly been forgotten. Foster mothers, good, bad or indifferent, were a central part of the experience of most *Kindertransport* children, and to a large extent the success of the *Kindertransport* rested on the shoulders of all these women.

The previous chapter addressed the issue of domestic work as an escape route for young, often Jewish, women. After very young children, who were often seen as potential adoptees for childless families, the most desired *Kinder* among prospective adoptive families were teenage girls who were often expected to help with the housework. The *Kindertransport* was by no means conceived as an extension of domestic service immigration; nevertheless the Refugee Children's Movement was aware of the potential vulnerability of girls to exploitation. The notes given to RCM volunteers who assessed the suitability of a home for a child indicate

---

<sup>5</sup> General Purposes Committee Papers, 1940-42. RCM ACC/2793/RCM/5. LMA. As discussed by Oldfield, *"It Is Usually She"*.

an awareness of this issue. After the eight key questions regarding names, ages, occupations of potential foster parents, question nine, 'Is a maid kept?' is poignant, indicating a real concern that refugee girls would be treated as unpaid servants.<sup>6</sup>

The experience of the *Kinder*, while not the main focus of this chapter, should be recognised throughout. The *Kinder* can be discussed as a cohesive group to some extent, but it should be borne in mind that each child had an individual experience, and that these children were, both politically and personally, in an extremely vulnerable situation. An interview I carried out with Trudi Byrne, who was a teenager when she came to England from Munich in July 1939 highlights the extreme vulnerability of the *Kinder*. In this extract, Trudi is speaking of her life after she was evacuated with her school:

And it was quite difficult for me to get settled in with an English family. One of the big reasons was... I don't know whether you know, but the government used to give a very small amount for each evacuee to the people with whom they were staying. Well, everybody else's parents paid extra but there was no extra for me so I was treated like a servant in most places. In one place, I don't know whether I have told you this before, I was even put up to sleep in the greenhouse on top of a house which was very near the station and the train drivers used to see me lying in bed and blow their whistle and wave. And of course to try and get dressed without being seen, I had to do it between trains and so on. It was quite a job and very embarrassing.<sup>7</sup>

Memoirs about the *Kindertransport* often emphasise the success of former *Kinder*, which seems to be equated with successful integration to British life, stressing the difficulty of early childhood while emphasising gratitude for 'rescue' and subsequent life in Britain. In this context, Trudi's recollections about her poor treatment by foster carers are unusual within the dominant narrative about the *Kindertransport*, while by no means unique in memoirs.<sup>8</sup>

The early literature around the *Kindertransport* mainly took the form of memoir or collective memoir that details the remembered experience of the now adult 'children'. Following the 1989 reunion of former *Kindertransport* children organised by Bertha Leverton and the acknowledgement of the *Kinder* as a distinctive group of refugees, there was a second wave of memoirs in the 1990s that began to form a body of literature on the experience. In the last 10-15 years, academic research has begun to interpret the memoirs of former *Kinder* and has

---

<sup>6</sup> Instructions for the Guidance of Regional and Local Committees RCM ACC/2793/03/04/01. LMA.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Trudi Byrne, 15 February 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Bertha Leverton and Shmuel Lowerton (eds.) *I Came Alone: The Stories of the Kindertransports* (London: Book Guild Ltd., 1990).

understood the *Kindertransport* largely as a psycho-social phenomenon resulting in successful acculturation. Reliance on memoirs to inform our understanding of the *Kindertransport* can present a challenge to historians seeking to uncover the organisation of the project. Children do not understand the administrative mechanics of a journey taken at the age of seven, much less do they remember forty, fifty, or sixty years later when they come to write their memoirs. And if their parents had not survived they could not remind them of any details.

Most of the people who gave their time, money and emotional support to the *Kinder* did so through a deep-seated sense of what was right. To some extent, the *Kindertransport* experience can only be truly understood at a personal level, and as much of the historiography on the subject has established, individual case stories do give a deeply moving and compelling perspective. However, personal stories can only take us so far. We need to analyse the *Kindertransport* as a watershed moment in *mass public* voluntary humanitarian intervention, of which the Quaker work was an extremely significant part.

### **Organising the *Kindertransport*: Legitimising child immigration**

People organising the *Kindertransport* had to tread a delicate line. The voluntary agencies had to navigate the disapproval of the British government, the scepticism of some of the British population about refugees, the administrative pressures around organising and financing such a monumental project, and the desperation of parents wanting their children to be safe. Above all, the project had to be seen as legitimate to all interest groups. Quakers worked with several other groups in Britain to organise the *Kindertransport*, most notably the Jewish Refugee Committee and the RCM, and the entire project was reliant on pre-existing international humanitarian networks. In this section, I outline the Quaker role in getting permission for the *Kindertransport* and in organising the scheme from Berlin. I point towards the extensive co-operation between the voluntary agencies that reluctantly assumed a pseudo-governmental role in order to finance, organise and ultimately legitimise the immigration of 10,000 children.

1938 saw a dramatic shift in the focus of Quaker work as the danger on the continent escalated. Bertha Bracey, the Secretary of the Friends' Germany Emergency Committee, had felt that the GEC might be able to wind down in 1938, but instead, 'the work of rescue went on with growing intensity'.<sup>9</sup> Where previously it had been anticipated that work would take the form of projects on the ground, it now became apparent that the need was on helping emigration as a matter of urgency, especially that of children. As established in chapter One,

---

<sup>9</sup> Bracey, 'A Ten years' Survey'. FHA.



Quakers have attained a widespread trust in their humanitarian endeavours through a combination of ethical business practice and self-fulfilling historical legitimacy, which was informed by a widespread public knowledge of Quaker non-intervention, pacifism, and social work. This international network of trust had a particular history in Germany. In Her '10 year survey', an invaluable account of the work done by the GEC, Bertha Bracey says that between March 1933 and March 1938 the GEC focused on building up European links and networks. Most of the work done was small-scale work on the spot which depended on the funding and selection of local refugee workers.<sup>10</sup>

The Quaker Centre in Berlin had been founded in 1919 explicitly to help restore peaceful relationships between Britain and Germany.<sup>11</sup> *Quäkerspeisung* at that time had been a massive child-feeding programme organised by British and American Quakers with money from various organisations including the Hoover. The Quaker feedings, organised by a team of British and American Quakers, began on 26 February 1920, and by that summer were providing a daily meal to 630,000 mothers and children. At the height of the programme, in June 1921, Quaker programmes operated in 1,640 feeding centres, which provided daily meals for more than 1 million people, in particular children between the ages of 6 and 14.<sup>12</sup> William R. Hughes, who was involved in Quaker projects in Germany throughout the interwar period, points out that Quakers were given too much credit for *Quäkerspeisung*, as they organised it on the ground, but contributed almost none of the funding.<sup>13</sup> Hughes may be right, but nonetheless Quakers enjoyed a good reputation and a privileged position in both Germany and Austria largely due to the legacy of this work. Hans Schmitt's book *Quakers and Nazis* emphasises the significance of the *Quäkerspeisung* to later work with refugees. He points out that the children who were in receipt of this aid would, ironically, have been exactly the right age to become indoctrinated young Nazis in 1939, and implied that the memory of the feeding may have in certain cases ameliorated cruelty towards Quakers, although he also emphasises the fact that the domestic Quaker community in Germany was tiny.<sup>14</sup>

The Quaker community in Germany had fewer than 300 members. Anna Sabine Halle has

---

<sup>10</sup> Bracey, 'A Ten years' Survey'. FHA.

<sup>11</sup> In early 1939 plans were afoot to set up Quaker Centres in Amsterdam and Budapest in addition to the existing Centres in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Barcelona. GEC Minute Book 1939-40, Minute 18 April 1939. FHA.

<sup>12</sup> Hans A. Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997) p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> William R. Hughes, *Indomitable Friend: Corder Catchpool 1883-1952* (London: Housmans, 1964 [1956]).

<sup>14</sup> Schmitt researched this book to contextualise his own experiences as a child refugee supported by Quakers in Holland, which he details in his memoir. Hans A. Schmitt, *Lucky Victim: An Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times, 1933-1946* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

conducted the most comprehensive study of their work, which she has characterised as showing a 'sober awareness of the limits of their ability for concrete action towards the National Socialist regime.'<sup>15</sup> The German Quakers, many of whom had been members of the Social Democratic Party, tended to support the persecuted in individual ways. Halle and Brenda Bailey, whose parents were prominent German Quakers and who herself was a teenager at the time, both point towards the hiding of persecuted people in Quaker homes and the death of Elisabeth Heims, who voluntarily accompanied a group of Jewish girls in her care to a concentration camp, as emblematic of Quaker work.<sup>16</sup> Brenda Bailey's research in particular, which uses her mother's diaries as source material, emphasises the anti-authoritarian nature of German Quakerism and the unofficial nature of Quaker resistance work. Brenda's mother Mary Friedrich, according to her diaries, personally helped fifty-nine people to escape. Thirty-eight are fully named and were mainly helped by her. The remaining twenty-one it seems were referrals from Mary to Bloomsbury House.<sup>17</sup> Writing in 1944, Joan Fry confirmed this view, saying that after long examination of conscience, 'it was impossible for this small number of [German] Quakers to be neutral in the matter [of Jews]'.<sup>18</sup>

The Quaker Centre in Berlin was the centre of Quaker activity in Germany. Founded in 1919 as a base for *Quäkerspeisung*, it was headed from 1931 by Corder Catchpool, an experienced relief worker and First World War conscientious objector. Catchpool, his wife Gwen and four children had the personal remit of trying, as much as possible, to prevent another war. Their official brief was to support and encourage German people working for peace and make friends with Germans, which was why they sent their children to German schools. They were also supposed to support German Quakers, recalls their daughter Jean.<sup>19</sup> Alongside Catchpool, the main British Quaker relief worker in Germany was William R. Hughes whose role was rather more ambiguous. He was directly charged from 1933 with supporting people who were being persecuted, and distributed at least £100 a month in from Quaker funds in discretionary grants to pacifist and left-wing activists.<sup>20</sup> Catchpool and Hughes both came under criticism both in Germany and in Britain for their work. Elizabeth Fox Howard, an experienced Quaker relief worker was arrested at the German border in August 1935, carrying documents that apparently implicated both men. Hughes slipped out of Germany, although he subsequently

<sup>15</sup> Anna Sabine Halle, *Quäkerhaltung und-handeln im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland* (Bad Pyrmont, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> J.E. Brenda Bailey, *A Quaker Couple in Nazi Germany: Leonhard Friedrich Survives Buchenwald* (York: William Sessions Limited, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 97-103.

<sup>18</sup> Joan Mary Fry, *In Downcast Germany, 1919-1933* (London: Edgar G. Dunston and Co, 1944).

<sup>19</sup> Jean Corder Greaves 16835. IWMSA

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of G.E.C. 1933-1935. FCRA/1. FHA.

returned on several occasions.<sup>21</sup> The Gestapo arrested Catchpool, his home was searched, and he was questioned for 24 hours. He was pronounced an 'enemy of Germany', accused of sheltering Jews and Communists and told to leave the country.<sup>22</sup> Recently released MI5 files reveal that Catchpool had also been watched by British security services since 1917, which included being interviewed by an MI5 officer posing as a passport official.<sup>23</sup> It was concluded that his 'pacifism was unaccompanied by evidence of more noxious activities' but the file remained open and periodically updated until his death in 1952.<sup>24</sup>

Once Hughes and the Catchpools had been made to leave Germany, German Friends led by Hans Albrecht staffed the Quaker Centre. Along with distributing relief funds, the Quaker Centre was a base for several groups, including a lively youth group. Gisela Faust, who was a young Quaker in Berlin in the late 1930s, remembers that the young Jewish or 'non Aryan' Christians who attended the Quaker Youth Group were able to get places on the *Kindertransport* and then subsequently get their families out with the aid of English Quakers.<sup>25</sup> Halle also points to the fact that those affiliated with the youth group were active in supporting the emigration of Jews, despite the fact that there are no figures remaining to substantiate this.<sup>26</sup>

After *Kristallnacht*, it was evident that the situation for Jewish people in Germany was even more desperate than before. Ben Greene, a cousin of the author Graham Greene and an experienced Quaker relief worker, was asked to go to Germany as part of a team of five Quakers to investigate the situation on behalf of the GEC.<sup>27</sup> Greene travelled through Holland with Joan Clapham, Jim Forrester, Apollina Rissik and William R. Hughes, who possibly travelled under a false identity.<sup>28</sup> Immediately upon arrival in Berlin, Greene was arrested by the Gestapo, officially on a 'currency irregularity' and confined to his hotel for four days.<sup>29</sup> Greene spoke fluent German [he had a German mother] and had considerable experience organising

---

<sup>21</sup> Hughes, *Indomitable Friend*.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Corder Greaves 16835. IWMSA.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Corder Pettifor Catchpool, KV2/2829. NA.

<sup>24</sup> Memo 20 July 1920, KV2/2829. NA.

<sup>25</sup> Gisela Faust, 'Züge in das Leben-Züge in den Tod: Letztes Denkmal in Hoek van Holland enthüllt' *Quäker: Zeitschrift der deutschen Freunde*, Number 1. January/February 2012, pp. 26-29.

<sup>26</sup> Anna Sabine Halle, 'Die Gedanken sind frei' Eine Jugendgruppe der Berliner Quäker 1935-1941 (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> The only significant research on Ben Greene was published in 2011 as part of a wider research project about the notable Greene cousins who included Ben, the author Graham Greene and the BBC Director General Hugh Greene. Jeremy Lewis' excellent book has been invaluable here. Jeremy Lewis, *Shades of Greene: One Generation of an English Family* (London: Vintage, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> GEC Minutes 22.11.1938. FHA.

<sup>29</sup> Lewis, *Shades of Greene*. pp. 211-213.

relief projects, notably working in famine relief in Russia in 1923. He was not, however, inconspicuous, being six feet eight inches tall and physically imposing. Something of a maverick, Ben disagreed with the rest of his Quaker colleagues that emigration was the only way to support German Jews. He favoured instead the idea of running relief programmes within Germany and returned in December 1938 to discuss implementation of his plans-first trying to support the Jews who had been expelled to the 'no-man's land' on the Polish border.<sup>30</sup> He, however, entirely misread the situation, writing to Harry Bohle in March 1939 that, 'The serious conditions are past and all relief is available now that is needed.'<sup>31</sup>

The Quakers worked closely in Germany with Wilfred Israel, a young man from a prominent and wealthy Berlin Jewish family [although he had an English mother, Amy née Solomon] who had first become involved with Quaker projects when he volunteered to help Dr. Elisabeth Rotten with food shipments in 1919. Dr. Rotten called him, 'a model of what high-spirited youth may be'.<sup>32</sup> Strongly opposed to war, he began at this point to cultivate links with British pacifists and liberals. It was Wilfrid Israel who urged Ben Greene and his other Quaker contacts to get as many children as possible out of Germany. Shepherd says, 'with the help of Quakers and leading British Jews he [Israel] launched the exodus of 10,000 children to England.'<sup>33</sup> This may be an overstatement, but Israel was certainly a crucial contact in Berlin whose information and advice underpinned the Quaker recommendation to help the children escape.

Bertha Bracey's report on the work of the GEC details the history of the Quaker investigation of the situation in Germany following *Kristallnacht*:

It was clearly not possible for a Jewish organisation to undertake the task [of investigation], and at their request, the Germany Emergency Committee selected five persons to go into Berlin, make contact with one of the few Jewish men leaders not in prison or concentration camp [Wilfrid Israel]. Under the direction of this man, the investigators went into various regions...gave financial relief where it proved possible and financially necessary, and returned to London to report.<sup>34</sup>

Bracey's ten year survey report did not identify Israel as the informant but she later confirmed

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 215. As outlined in the introduction Ben Greene's naive commitment to 'peace at any price', even after witnessing the violence of *Kristallnacht*, later led to his involvement with fascist politics and imprisonment.

<sup>32</sup> Naomi Shepherd, *Wilfrid Israel: German Jewry's Secret Ambassador* (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Limited, 1984) p. 31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 146.

<sup>34</sup> Bracey, 'A Ten years' Survey'. FHA.

in a letter in 1981 to Shepherd that it was him.<sup>35</sup>

Brenda Bailey, who was a lifelong friend of Bertha Bracey, quotes a 1986 letter from Bracey about the organisation of the *Kindertransport*:

When the Jewish refugee Committee could not risk sending a Jewish delegation, we sent five Quaker workers to Berlin to confer with Wilfred Israel, who directed them to different areas to work alongside the Jewish women doing welfare work, and helping the younger people for whom emigration possibilities still existed... Ben Greene, who was one of the five people in the Quaker mission, came back to London after a few days, and went with me [and three others] to talk to Lord [Herbert] Samuel and the Home Secretary [Samuel Hoare, in the morning of 21 November]. Parliament, sitting that night, authorised emergency permits to admit 10,000 children.<sup>36</sup>

When the Quaker report was brought back to London, it was decided to go to see Samuel Hoare to ask for permission to organise an evacuation of children from Germany and Austria. This was not entirely sprung upon the government, who had been discussing immigration of refugees in cabinet meetings. In the cabinet meeting on the 16 November, for example, there had been extensive discussion of the refugee question, largely centred on the political pressure from America to settle refugees. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Viscount Halifax:

[H]oped that it might be possible in the course of the next day or so for us to lend our support to fairly wide promises of help to the Jews. For example, we might undertake that we would make some locality in the Empire available for Jewish settlement. He attached great importance to this matter from the political point of view.<sup>37</sup>

One misconception that has been repeated is that Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary who finally urges Parliament to give permission for the *Kindertransport* to go ahead, did so purely because of his personal Quakerism.<sup>38</sup> Hoare had made no secret of his Quaker family connections (he was connected to the Barclays and the Gurneys) and, when introducing his Penal Reform Bill as Home Secretary, he had emphasised his shared ancestry with Elizabeth Fry.<sup>39</sup> Much was made of his Quaker connections, with a six-page *Picture Post* article in 1939

---

<sup>35</sup> Shepherd, *Wilfrid Israel*.

<sup>36</sup> Bailey, *A Quaker Couple in Nazi Germany* p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Cabinet Meeting Minutes. 19 October-21 December 1938. CAB 32/96, NA.

<sup>38</sup> Most notably in Barry Turner. Barry Turner, *...And the Policeman Smiled: 10,000 Children escape from Nazi Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> In the second reading of the Criminal Justice Bill on 29 November 1938 Hoare gave a potted history of criminal justice reform saying, 'Then came my own great-great-aunt, Elizabeth Fry. Elizabeth Fry was the first woman social worker in this country, and it is interesting to note that it was in the field of penal reform that women's work first started in this country. She was a very remarkable lady and a very decided lady. She would not take "No" from anyone.' House of Commons Debate. 29 November 1938. Hansard vol .342 cc. 267-377.

linking his perceived liberal social policy to his Quaker heritage.<sup>40</sup> While publicly his Quaker lineage was acknowledged, I have not, however, found any references in Friends House archives from the 1930s to indicate he had any particular connection with Quaker policy or policy makers. He certainly cannot be included with the Quakers MPs such as Josiah Wedgwood or T. Edmund Harvey who campaigned on social issues. He did, however, give some money to the Refugee Children's Movement, and his cousin Jean Hoare was a voluntary refugee children's worker in Czechoslovakia. His decision to give permission for the *Kindertransport* cannot simply be attributed to his Quaker background, but it would be fair to stress that he *was* actively connected to Quaker humanitarian circles, which would certainly have made it easier for Quaker leaders to petition him over the *Kindertransport* and other issues. It is significant that it was assumed in the media and by subsequent research that Hoare's Quaker connections would have influenced him. As outlined in Chapter One, the depiction of Quakers in the British media in the 1930s was dependant both on an assumed historical virtue and an association with contemporary internationalist dissent. In this context, reporting of Hoare's involvement had more to do with perceptions of Quaker humanitarianism than with his actual role as an intermediary.

In the House of Commons Debate in the morning of 21 November Neville Chamberlain had put discussion of 'the refugee question' on hold as it would be discussed in the afternoon session.<sup>41</sup> That same morning, Herbert Samuel, Philip Noel Baker, Lola Hahn-Warburg, Bertha Bracey and Ben Greene went to meet Samuel Hoare. He lent his support to the temporary immigration of children from the continent, provided that the voluntary agencies would be responsible for their upkeep. Hoare referenced Greene's recommendations in his afternoon speech in the Commons on the issue:

I saw this morning one of the representatives of the Quaker organisations, who told me that he had only arrived in England this morning from a visit to Germany and a visit to Holland. He inquired of the Jewish organisations in Germany what would be the attitude of the Jewish parents to a proposal of this kind, and he told me that the Jewish parents were almost unanimously in favour of facing this parting with their children and taking the risks of their children going to a foreign country, rather than keeping them with them to face the unknown dangers with which they are faced in Germany.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Kingsley Martin, "The Life of Sir Samuel Hoare." *Picture Post*, 25 November 1939.

<sup>41</sup> House of Commons Debate 21 November 1938. Hansard vol. 341 cc1313-7.

<sup>42</sup> House of Commons Debate 21 November 1938. Hansard vol. 341 cc1428-814286. He is clearly referring to *Kristallnacht*.

That evening in the Commons, there was another lengthy debate on the issue. Initially the discussion was framed around making land available in the Colonies. After repeated interventions from Philip Noel-Baker and Josiah Wedgwood who, with Eleanor Rathbone, were tireless Commons agitators on the issue of refugees, Hoare spoke again of the delegation which had come to see him:

I had, only this morning, a very valuable discussion with Lord Samuel and a number of other Jewish and other religious workers who were co-operating together in attempting to mitigate the sufferings of their co-religionists. They came to me with a very interesting proposal about the non-Aryan children. They pointed back to the experience during the war, in which we gave homes here to many thousands of Belgian children, in which they were educated, and in which we played an invaluable part in maintaining the life of the Belgian nation. So also with these Jewish and non-Aryan children, I believe that we could find homes in this country for a very large number without any harm to our own population.<sup>43</sup>

Permission for the *Kindertransport* was then granted, on the condition that these children would be the sole responsibility of the voluntary agencies and would be no cost, financial or administrative, to the British government. The Society of Friends, however, was not satisfied in the government's self-absolvment from responsibility. Hilda Clark reported to the Meeting for Sufferings on 2 December 1938 about the threat to people in Europe. She felt at least a million were in danger and, 'she considered that the need was far greater than could be dealt with by voluntary organisations and that financial assistance from governments was necessary.'<sup>44</sup>

Despite private reservations, the joint Quaker and Jewish delegation on 21 November 1938 had presented what must have seemed like a perfect solution in this context. It would allow the British government to be seen to be doing something in the most visible and emotive possible way, bringing in trainloads of children, without risking any political capital or costing any money or time, as the entire administrative and financial responsibility would be borne by the voluntary agencies. This was not indicative of a softening of government attitudes towards refugees. A proposed further emigration of 10,000 children to Palestine was declined in a cabinet meeting on 14 December as it was felt this would cause tension with the Palestinian population.<sup>45</sup>

The government's role in backing the *Kindertransport* was not, however, entirely symbolic. In January 1940, the government decided to allocate funds to the voluntary agencies which

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Minute 2 December 1938. GEC Minute Book 1939-40, FHA.

<sup>45</sup> Cabinet Meeting Minutes. CAB 32/96, 19 October-21 December 1938. NA.

supported refugees. A £100,000 grant (at least £5, 257,000 today) was given to the Council for German Jewry and the Christian Council and £20,000 grants (at least £1, 051,400 today) were made available to provincial committees which chose to apply.<sup>46</sup> A quotation from an official letter received by the Quaker Germany Emergency Committee is included in the minutes:

In putting forward this scheme of assistance, the Government asks voluntary organisations to do their utmost to prevent refugees from becoming a charge on Public Assistance, and to maintain the voluntary assistance in kind and in service which has hitherto been given to refugees by way of guarantees, hospitality and service.<sup>47</sup>

By May 1940, the self-proclaimed main organisations working with refugees, namely, the Jewish Refugees Committee, the Germany Emergency Committee, the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany and The Domestic Bureau, planned to present a joint petition to the government asking for major reforms to the policy of internment. It is worth noting that, with the GEC and the JRC being Quaker and Jewish respectively, the Movement and the Domestic Bureau's memberships were also largely composed of leaders from within the Quaker and Jewish communities, and several people had active roles in more than one of the committees.<sup>48</sup>

The *Kindertransport* should be seen as the culmination not just of the Quaker or Jewish traditions of philanthropy, but of the increasingly influential and *professional* voluntary sector in the interwar years. As Mazower has recently pointed out, the creation of the League of Nations galvanised internationalism; taking the old idea of moulding a 'civilised' world and changing it to fit the paradigm of a 'society of nations.'<sup>49</sup> Traditionally, church and missionary groups had cared for refugees on a small, localised and informal scale. Increasingly, however, these groups were realising that this was not enough, and that governments also had a responsibility towards civilian relief. In organising the *Kindertransport* just before the war, the voluntary agencies were carrying out the kind of mass-scale intervention that, from the creation of UNRRA in 1943, became the responsibility of inter-governmental organisations. The operational mechanics of the *Kindertransport* between Berlin and London already reveal an increasing legitimisation of official non-neutral humanitarian responses (for those deemed deserving).

---

<sup>46</sup> Using the Measuring Worth values of £1 in 1938 being worth at least £52.57 in 2011. Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present," MeasuringWorth, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Minute 23 January 1940. GEC Minute Book 1939-40, FHA.

<sup>48</sup> Minute 23 May 1940. GEC Minute Book 1939-40, FHA.

<sup>49</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*.



### The Vienna Quaker Centre

In Berlin, Quaker work helped to get permission for the *Kindertransport* but was not officially involved with the administration, although it did help many individuals and families. In Vienna, the role went further, and the Vienna Quaker Centre was instrumental in organising the selection of children for the *Kindertransport* in addition to being a major source of relief for persecuted people in Austria.

The *Kindertransport* was organised rapidly and effectively in response to *Kristallnacht*, when the immediacy of the danger faced by those considered Jewish under Nazi legislation became clear. Initially, priority was given by the newly-formed Refugee Children's Movement to the children perceived to be in the most danger, mostly orphans and teenage boys. This strategy, however, rapidly changed as organisers wanted children who, according to their own definitions (of which more later) would integrate easily into British life. Curio has established that a deliberate policy of selecting children who would 'give a positive impression and thus...support further emigration' was rapidly implemented.<sup>50</sup> Although the British government had set no official upper limit on numbers of child immigrants, the voluntary associations under the RCM umbrella had limited funds and staff. It was immediately clear that not all children whose parents wanted them to come would be able to do so. A process of selection was clearly going to be necessary and rapidly assumed two strands.

First selected were the children who, through their own connections (whether family, business, through friends or a school), were able to get a British person to stand as guarantor on their behalf. The £50 sum (at least £2, 628.50 today) required as a guarantor was vast. Many people and organisations that acted as guarantors did not actually have the money to back up their promise.<sup>51</sup> These children were usually, although by no means always, fostered by the people or groups who had stood surety for them. Being able to find a private guarantor was often a sign that children were from a middle class and well-connected family with international friends and an ability to write in English. A degree of selection by class is obviously implicit in this.

---

<sup>50</sup> Claudia Curio and Toby Axelrod, "'Invisible' Children: The Selection and Integration Strategies of Relief Organizations," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 23, no. 1 (2004), 48.

<sup>51</sup> Using the Measuring Worth values of £1 in 1938 being worth at least £52.57 in 2011. MeasuringWorth, 2013.

Secondly, the European aid committees nominated by the RCM chose children without guarantors. In Vienna this was done jointly by the main local Jewish organisation the *Kultusgemeinde* and the Society of Friends. The *Kultusgemeinde* would deal with the selection and administration of the Jewish children and the Society of Friends with the 'non-Aryan Christians', that is, those who were categorised as Jewish by Nazi race laws but who did not have connections to the Jewish community. The Society of Friends also supported the children of socialists and pacifists, who were around ten percent of the children given places on Quaker *Kindertransports* from Vienna.

The Quaker International Centre in Vienna had been established in 1919 as a famine relief centre administered jointly by British and American Quakers. Considerable goodwill had been built up among the local Austrian population through these projects although few Austrians joined the Quaker Meeting, partly attributable to a reluctance to proselytise. Bertha Bracey later attributed much of the influence of the Vienna International Centre to the legacy of the feeding projects:

We are a very very small religious society and although actually even in that time I remember getting a letter actually from Heydrich even some of the leading Nazis would sometimes do things because they remembered Quaker feeding between the wars, you see, when they were the children receiving this.<sup>52</sup>

The Quaker feeding programme in Vienna at its peak had provided up to 64,000 hot meals a day under the leadership of Hilda Clark and Edith Pye.<sup>53</sup> Clark worked in a dual capacity both as a Friend and as a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); she used connections from both organisations to support her work. The project involved giving out ration cards to the most undernourished children following a medical examination then distributing fortnightly tins of milk and other rations such as cocoa or flour where available.<sup>54</sup>

In 1924, Emma Cadbury, an American Friend who was a leading member of WILPF, had moved to Austria under a scheme to help TB sufferers.<sup>55</sup> She had then taken charge of the Centre where she remained as director until 1940.<sup>56</sup> Although Cadbury had initially worked under the

---

<sup>52</sup> Bertha Bracey, 4646. IWMSA.

<sup>53</sup> Pye (ed.) *War and its Aftermath*.

<sup>54</sup> Fry, *A Quaker Adventure*.

<sup>55</sup> By 1934, Cadbury was the main point of contact for WILPF in Austria. See WILPF Executive Committee Minutes, Volumes 10-21, LSE.

<sup>56</sup> Sheila Spielhofer, *Stemming the Dark Tide: Quakers in Vienna 1919-1942* (York: William Sessions Limited, 2001). pp. 140-141.

auspices of the American Quaker fund, by the early 1930s the British Friends' Service Committee had taken charge of the Centre from a funding and directional perspective. In 1938, immediately following the annexation of Austria, Hilda Clark returned to Vienna in order to help Cadbury and the existing team set up a relief office within the Vienna Centre under the leadership of Ethel Houghton, who had also worked in the earlier child feeding programme.<sup>57</sup> Clark identified the urgency of the situation, writing in June 1938, 'Clearly no Jew is safe'.<sup>58</sup> It rapidly became clear that the Vienna work was closely linked to the work in Germany and was brought under the auspices of the GEC.

When people started asking the Quaker International Centre for help to leave Austria, Cadbury decided to give priority to those who would have no other recourse, so Catholics and religious Jews were often advised to go to their own organisations.<sup>59</sup> Cadbury and her team of between seven and twelve Quaker volunteers oversaw all the selection and administration relating to supporting the emigration of refugees including 'non-Aryan' children on the Vienna *Kindertransport*. When Norman Bentwich visited Vienna on behalf of the RCM in August 1939, he recognised the significance of the Quaker Centre, writing, 'The work of emigration is organised, with remarkable thoroughness and devotion, by the 'Kultusgemeinde' for the full-Jews and by the 'Society of Friends' for the half-Jews.'<sup>60</sup> Bentwich's report presented an incredibly bleak picture of life in Vienna, outlining the abject poverty suffered by the remaining Jewish population. He unequivocally recommended emigration as the only possible hope for these people, with any food relief only acting as temporary respite.<sup>61</sup>

The Vienna Centre provided a report to their head office (the Germany Emergency Committee in London) in August 1939, which detailed emigration statistics between 15/3/1938 and 28/8/1938. During this five month period the Centre had directly supported the emigration of 2,048 people including, 567 single Men, 527 married men, 494 men with families, 353 single women, 38 widows, 118 widows with families and 311 children.<sup>62</sup> The statistics only included those who were helped directly by the Centre, so did not include informal Quaker connections or children who went with the 'special action for children' [*Kindertransport*].

---

<sup>57</sup> Houghton had additionally worked with the British Trades Union Congress to support Socialists in Vienna. Bracey, 'A Ten years' Survey'. FHA.

<sup>58</sup> Hilda Clark to Edith Pye, 11 June 1938. In Pye (ed.) *War and its Aftermath*. p. 115.

<sup>59</sup> Spielhofer, *Stemming the Dark Tide*.

<sup>60</sup> LMA. Norman Bentwich, Report on a Visit to Vienna, 17 August 1939, RCM, ACC/2793/01/05/04.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Vienna Centre Emigration Statistics 15 March 1938-28 August 1938, Germany Emergency Committee Minutes 1939-1940. FHA.

On 31 August 1939, the Vienna Centre provided a separate report to the Friends' Service Committee in London giving statistics for the emigration of non-Aryan children. 644 children 'travelled with the transports of the Society of Friends', 283 'travelled alone or through our intermediary', and there were 172 children 'whose registration was annulled, who were of Mosiah religion etc.'<sup>63</sup> The report pointed out that, 'Of the children who emigrated about 450 were over 14 years of age, about 50 children were under 6 years of age. The emigrated boys between 14-18 years mostly got agricultural training.'<sup>64</sup> As the emigration work of the Vienna Centre ceased on the outbreak of war, it is fair to assume this report represents a comprehensive picture of the work done by the Centre. So, the Vienna Quaker Centre directly handled the details pertaining to the emigration of six hundred and forty-four children on the *Kindertransport*, including selection of children and finding appropriate foster homes. Ethel Houghton, one of the workers, later recalled the 'heart-rending' nature of the work she undertook, and said the most difficult part of her work was the experience of watching the parents at the railway station saying goodbye to their children, in the knowledge this may be the last time they would see them.<sup>65</sup>

Lenore Davies was a thirteen-year-old Viennese girl in 1938. Her family were secular Jews, and she recalls:

[T]he Jewish Kindertransport was not interested in me because my parents were not connected to the community. So someone must have told us about the Quakers and I do not remember why. [T]here was a Quaker centre in Vienna and certainly we got in touch and because of Kristallnacht my father went to Dachau. He came out actually and survived but he went to Dachau, so at the time I ticked all the boxes because being at the [girls' grammar] school, and the school only took the top students, and my father was in concentration camp, so I ticked the right boxes to be included and I was interviewed by the Quakers. I spoke a little English because we got English at school and I had some private tuition so I ticked another box.<sup>66</sup>

Lenore got a place as one of thirty children from the Quaker Centre who had places on the *Kindertransport* that left Vienna on 10 January 1939 and arrived in England on 12 January. The Quaker children were all in one carriage together, and Lenore recalls that they all had foster families arranged for them, apart from her and one other girl, who hoped to go to the same

---

<sup>63</sup> Report from the Vienna Centre to the GEC, GEC Minute Book 1939-40, Report dated 31 August 1939. FHA.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Lawrence Darton, *An Account of the Work of the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens First Known as the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends 1933-1950* (Issued by the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, 1954) p. 51.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Lenore Davies, 28 March 2011.

place as her siblings. The escort for the Quaker carriage was Dorothy Cadbury, of the English branch of the family. When Lenore arrived in England, knowing no one, a temporary foster home was arranged for her with a lady in Twickenham. Lenore recalls that:

[U]nfortunately we really just didn't hit it off. It was a mismatch from beginning to end. She regarded refugees as people who were desperate and hungry and no clothes and saying yes thank you for everything that happened and she had no idea people might have come from a professional background, had been reasonably well-fed, had a number of clothes because the only thing I could bring with me was clothes and mother had said, you know, she furnished me with any number of clothes so that nobody would have to buy them for you.<sup>67</sup>

Lenore was referred back to the Society of Friends in Bloomsbury House, who put her in contact with Roy McKay, who at the time was chaplain of Alleyn's College, Dulwich.<sup>68</sup> McKay was setting up a refugee hostel in Dulwich and Lenore became the first resident, although the hostel was in theory for adults. She was sent to Honor Oak School in Peckham Rye whose headmistress was on the committee in charge of the hostel. When war began, Lenore was evacuated with the school and lost touch with the committee and Bloomsbury House. She was treated from that point on as if she was a British orphan evacuee. Reflecting on being effectively alone during this period (her parents had managed to get to South America), she says:

A thirteen year old who is on her own has a lot of nerve because she knows that if she doesn't she isn't going to get anywhere. I was a survivor.... I was much older than the average 13 and I knew what was going on and if somebody wanted me to do the washing up and peel the potatoes I did it. I didn't actually complain. I had been brought up to be able to do everything that needed to be done in the household.<sup>69</sup>

After finishing school, without any money to be able to apply for further education, Lenore volunteered for the WAAF, 'as a result of that I of course got my education paid and I got my dual nationality at the end.'<sup>70</sup> Finally able to go to university after the war, Lenore read Physics and, after working in Trinidad for several years and being reunited with her parents in 1947 in Caracas, she moved back to England and became a teacher.<sup>71</sup> Lenore's experience is indicative of the constant negotiations around integration and survival necessary for a child alone in a foreign country. Being slightly older and more perceptive than many of the other children when she left Vienna, Lenore has a clear impression of the reasons for her selection and the

---

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Oliver Hunkin, 'Obituary: Canon Roy McKay', *The Independent*, 19 November 1993.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Lenore Davies, 28 March 2011.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Lenore Davies, 28 March 2011.

administration of the voyage and an awareness of the 'box ticking' that was a necessary part of her selection.

It was not only children who were enabled to escape on the Vienna *Kindertransport*. Edith Horton, who was 18 in 1939, was recruited as an adult 'helper' through the Quaker Centre. She recalls:

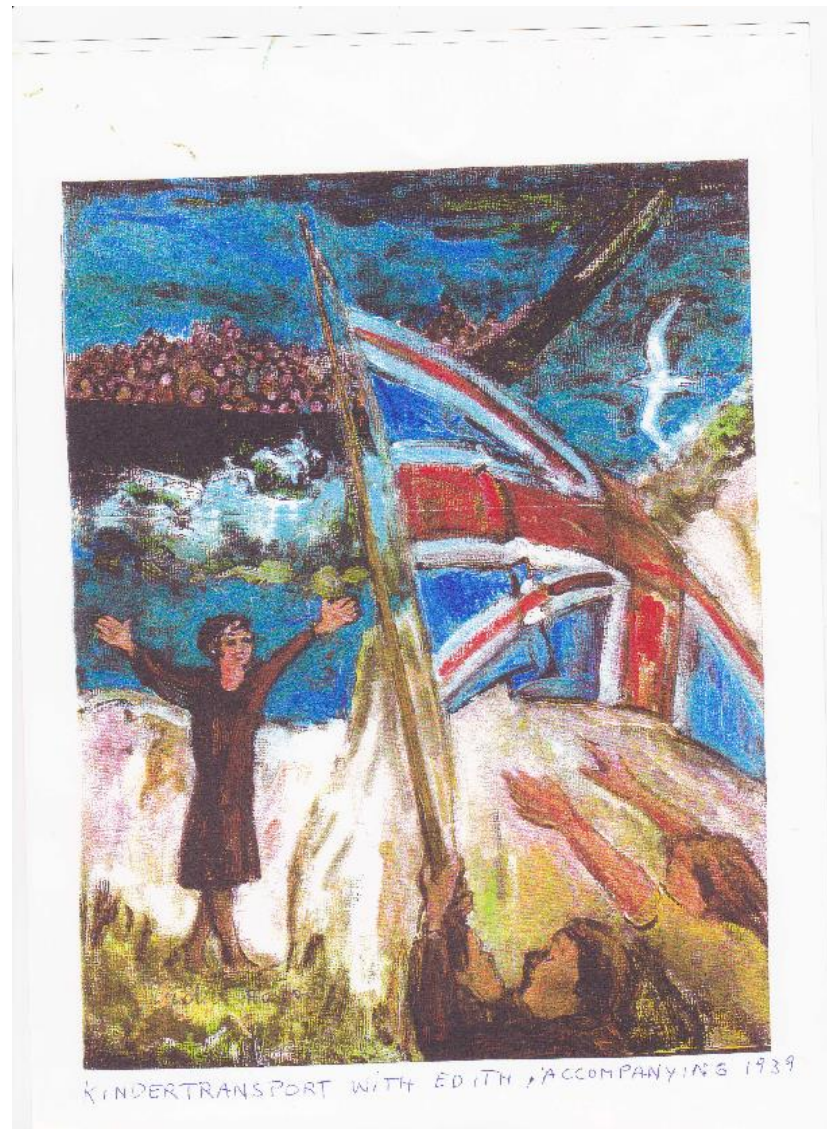
I had been dismissed from my job in a couture establishment and had placed an advert in the Daily Telegraph asking for a position as a dressmaker in England. I had a good knowledge of English acquired at school. I received 2 replies. A lady called Hilda Winn whose husband was in the Merchant Navy wanted to help me come to England, the only way was to obtain a domestic permit, but she offered to help me find a job in my trade after arrival.<sup>72</sup>

Through Edith Cadbury at the Quaker Centre, Edith Horton was able to get a place working as a supervisor to young children aged 2-12 on a *Kindertransport* train organised by the Quaker Centre, which allowed her to travel to take up her domestic position. She recalls feeling absolute relief at being able to leave Austria. On her arrival, her guarantor Hilda Winn proved extremely welcoming. In line with many of the women whose experiences I discussed in the previous chapter, Edith was not expected to carry out domestic work but was supported by Hilda Winn in her trade as a designer and later lecturer in textile design.<sup>73</sup> Image 13, which was painted by Edith some years after she arrived in Britain, expresses the joy and relief she felt at entering Britain. It also illustrates the problems around memory and gratitude that I shall discuss in the next section of this chapter.

---

<sup>72</sup> Correspondence with Edith Horton, June 2013.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*



**Image 13, 'Kindertransport with Edith Accompanying, 1939'.<sup>74</sup>**

Edith's beautiful painting (which she also gave me permission to use as the cover to this thesis) makes it very apparent how easily relief to be safe in Britain could be translated into gratitude to the British government rather than to the British people and voluntary agencies.

The *Kindertransport* from Vienna ended with the outbreak of war, but the work of the Vienna Centre continued. After Emma Cadbury left Vienna, Margaret Jones, another American, took her place in February 1940 with the reported aim of helping Jews who did not belong to any other Jewish organisation to leave.<sup>75</sup> With escape, however, becoming increasingly difficult, the Centre concentrated on providing food relief for the increasingly poor Jewish citizens, and

<sup>74</sup> Private collection of Edith Horton, 'Kindertransport with Edith Accompanying, 1939' date painted c. 1970s.

<sup>75</sup> Spielhofer, *Stemming the Dark Tide*. p. 140-141.

others who were persecuted. Kathe Neumayer, an Austrian Quaker, continued the work of the Vienna Centre after the departure of most of the British and American staff despite contracting budgets and increased levels of risk. Hans Albrecht, the Clerk of the Berlin Meeting, wanted the Berlin and Vienna centres to operate as centres for spiritual worship and abandon relief activities as he felt they put all Quakers under suspicion.<sup>76</sup> Neumayer and Albrecht were in great opposition over this issue but Neumayer ultimately won the point, and the Vienna Centre continued quietly to provide food relief throughout the war.

Thus, the Quaker Centre in Vienna provided a base for the selection, administration and organisation of the *Kindertransports* for so-called 'non-Aryan' children and food relief for anyone in need while the *Kultusgemeinde* did the same for children considered Jewish. The irony of relief and escape being organised along the same racial lines as Nazi discrimination is palpable. For both organisations, the criteria by which children were selected is a thorny issue, and has become increasingly so over time. I will discuss these problems in more detail in the section on photography, but I must point out that, working under extreme pressure and unsupported by government funds or guidance, the voluntary workers did what they could with the resources available to them, and were inevitably influenced by the practical consideration of getting as many children out in time as they could. While the work in Vienna was difficult, the division of labour was relatively straightforward.

In Prague, however, the organisation of humanitarian work was bewildering in 1939 and it has become even more so over time, with the public hagiography concerning Nicholas Winton having obscured the deeply political nature of the Czech relief work.

### **The 'Winton Children': The Prague *Kindertransport* and Misdirected Gratitude**

Nicholas Winton has been widely praised for his extensive work in rescuing 669 children from Czechoslovakia in a parallel Prague-based *Kindertransport*. Since the Esther Rantzen 'This Life' BBC programme in 1988 that brought him to public attention, he has become well known as the 'British Schindler'.<sup>77</sup> Winton makes a good hero. He is genuinely modest, unassuming, and has repeatedly sought to share his accolades with his former colleagues. Recently, though, as

---

<sup>76</sup> Spielhofer, *Stemming the Dark Tide*. p. 155.

<sup>77</sup> For example see Jonathan Romain, 'A salute to the 'British Schindler' as he turns 104' *The Guardian*, 17 May 2013, Neil Tweedie, 'The unsung British Hero with his own Schindler's List' *The Telegraph*, 17 May 2013.



he has accepted a knighthood, turned 104 and been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, his personal reluctance to accept praise has become irrelevant. The myth is bigger than the man.

As Anthony Grenville has pointed out in the *Association of Jewish Refugees Newsletter*, this too-convenient acclaim of Winton as a rescuer is misleading and obscures the true nature of humanitarian work in Czechoslovakia.<sup>78</sup> The way the Winton story has been told conceals the collaborative and political nature of the role of British volunteers in Prague. In this section, I reposition the nature of work in Czechoslovakia as a complex collaboration between several different voluntary agencies and individuals. Work in Prague began with the formation of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia in 1938. The BCRC was an umbrella organisation for several small groups that had already been supporting Czech refugees, with Margaret Layton as Secretary. The three larger organisations concerned with Czech refugees rapidly joined; the Society of Friends; the News Chronicle Fund, and the Labour Party.<sup>79</sup> Margaret Layton was the sister of Lord Layton, and most of the BCRC funding came from the *News Chronicle* fund. The initial priority of the BCRC was in supporting Sudeten Social Democrat men and their families to leave the country as a matter of urgency following the escalation of Nazi violence against political opponents.

Quakers had been active in financially supporting German and Austrian refugees in Prague since 1936, when Friends there, helped by some funding from the GEC, were supporting 430 non-Jewish and 260 Jewish refugees.<sup>80</sup> Mary Penman, sister of the Labour MP Philip Noel-Baker and an experienced Quaker relief worker, had travelled to Prague in the autumn of 1938 to begin work with refugees. She had rented an apartment using her own money, which then served as a base for other relief workers. The work was initially intended to provide relief where possible, particularly to Sudeten Social Democrats and help to facilitate emigration. It had got off to a slow start, and the workload seemed overwhelming until the arrival of Doreen Warriner invigorated their efforts.

Doreen Warriner would make a troublesome saint. A staunch feminist and internationalist who was interested in Communism, she worked as a lecturer in economics at UCL. In recently released MI5 files, it has been revealed that British security services had been watching her intently over her suspected Communist contacts, to the extent of tapping her telephone and

---

<sup>78</sup> Anthony Grenville, 'Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and the Winton Children', *AJR Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 4, April 2011.

<sup>79</sup> NBCRA Executive and General Committee Minutes, HO 294/50. NA.

<sup>80</sup> GEC Minutes, 18.5.1936. FHA.

intercepting her post.<sup>81</sup> Warriner helpfully wrote a detailed and incredibly informative account of her time working in Czechoslovakia, 'A Winter in Prague', which I use extensively here.<sup>82</sup> Warriner had turned down a prestigious Rockefeller scholarship in order to go to Prague in November 1938 out of a desire to do something to help.<sup>83</sup> She had £150 (at least £7, 885.50 in today's money) from Save the Children International Union, £300 (at least £15, 771 in today's money) raised from colleagues and friends, and the intention of helping 250 prominent Social Democrats leave the country.<sup>84</sup> On arrival, she introduced herself to Mary Penman, and the two women immediately began working together.<sup>85</sup> One gets the impression that Penman provided the contacts and Warriner the drive. Warriner was a Labour Party member and formed a good working partnership with William Gillies and David Grenfell, who were administering Labour Party and *News Chronicle* funds for Czech relief. *The News Chronicle*, under the chairmanship of Lord Layton, had launched a public appeal to raise funds for Czech humanitarian relief. Much of the money raised was administered through the BCRC, of which Layton's sister Margaret was secretary. It is worth noting here that, at this early stage, all the British humanitarian work in Czechoslovakia was being carried out by leftist organisations, which worked closely together on the ground.

Official work with Czech children was enabled by the 21 November 1938 announcement that the British government would allow a certain number of unaccompanied children into Britain. In response to this, Margaret Layton, the secretary of the BCRC, began contact with the Inter-Aid Committee and the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany and Austria [two organisations which would imminently merge to become the RCM, the acronym I will use here]. Margaret Layton became interested in the RCM's plans for immigrations of unaccompanied children and wrote to Warriner in Prague suggesting a similar plan.<sup>86</sup> Warriner was positive about the idea and, given her own massive workload, delegated the fledgling scheme to Martin Blake, a new volunteer.<sup>87</sup> Nicholas Winton, a young stockbroker on a skiing holiday, joined his friend Martin Blake in Prague to see what he could do to help. He quickly proved to be a passionate and dynamic addition to the team. Warriner was impressed with Winton and

---

<sup>81</sup> Doreen Warriner MI5 File. KV6/83. NA.

<sup>82</sup> Doreen Warriner, 'A Winter in Prague' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (April, 1984) pp. 209-240.

<sup>83</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*. p. 261-263.

<sup>84</sup> Using the Measuring Worth values of £1 in 1938 being worth *at least* £52.57 in project spending terms in 2011. Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present," MeasuringWorth, 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Warriner, 'A Winter in Prague'.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from Margaret Layton to Doreen Warriner, 17 December 1938, HO 294/53. NA.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Doreen Warriner to Margaret Layton, 28 December 1938, HO 294/53. NA.

Blake's quick assumption of leadership over the task and wrote to Layton, 'Winton is doing really splendid work for the children, and I have asked his employer to let him stay for another two weeks.'<sup>88</sup> She also wrote on 28 December, 'Blake has taken over the completion of the lists [of children] and will inform you.'<sup>89</sup> Winton and Blake certainly used their initiative to set up the official children's section of the BCRC but it is worth underscoring again here that the financial records of the BCRC clearly show that the Children's Section administered by Winton was an official subsidiary section, in the same way that other Committee members were responsible for administering other sections. Winton took ownership of the project to evacuate children, in the same way that other relief workers had responsibility for specific schemes or lists, but he was always acting under the auspices of the BCRC.

While the BCRC was keen to use the opportunity presented by the 21 November announcement in the House of Commons to get as many vulnerable people out of Czechoslovakia as possible, its members were angry at what they saw as a continued abdication of governmental responsibility towards refugees. In a memorandum intended to be on behalf of all the voluntary organisations working with refugees, the Committee welcomed the decision on 21 November but:

At the same time the voluntary organisations find themselves totally unable to accept the implication that the extent to which the rescue of thousands can be organised, temporary refuge provided, and large-scale migration of hundreds of thousands carried out must remain entirely dependent on private effort.<sup>90</sup>

The danger faced by those they were trying to help was clear to the BCRC, as a January 1939 letter from Eleanor Rathbone shows. Rathbone, who was in Prague as part of a government committee writes, 'I have just returned from a six day visit to Prague. The situation is extremely menacing.'<sup>91</sup> Rathbone recommended immediate evacuation of politically endangered men. There was no mention as yet of Jews or children as a particular concern.

As the situation worsened, more relief workers volunteered. Trevor Chadwick was a teacher who left his post in Dorset to undertake work in Prague. Chadwick's son has recently written an informative book about the work of the BCRC, writing in part to 'debunk' the idea that it was all Winton's work.<sup>92</sup> Chadwick was in Prague between February and June 1939. He was

---

<sup>88</sup> Doreen Warriner to Margaret Layton, 12 January 1939, HO 296/53. NA.

<sup>89</sup> Doreen Warriner to Margaret Layton, 28 December 1938, HO 294/53. NA.

<sup>90</sup> 'Action of Governments and of Private Organisations in Regard to Refugees-Draft Memorandum' 25 November 1938. LMA.

<sup>91</sup> Eleanor Rathbone to the BCRA, 20 January 1939, HO 294/39. NA.

<sup>92</sup> W.R. Chadwick, *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees, 1938-39* (Leicester: Matador, 2010).

involved in many aspects of the work, but particularly in the scheme to evacuate the children. He left rather rapidly; with the implication the Gestapo were a little too interested in him for forging travel documents.<sup>93</sup>

Warriner recalls that it was on David Grenfell's suggestion she asked the young Quaker worker Tessa Rowntree and her cousin Jean to begin escorting trainloads of refugees to Gdynia where they could take ships onto England.<sup>94</sup> Tessa Rowntree had been volunteering at the Vienna Quaker Centre when Emma Cadbury, the Director, told her that help was urgently needed in Prague. Tessa, whose father Arnold Rowntree had been the pacifist MP for York between 1910 and 1918, immediately travelled to Prague and made contact with Mary Penman.<sup>95</sup> Tessa and Jean escorted several trainloads of refugees to the Russian and Polish borders in late 1938 and early 1939 and then took trainloads of children back to Britain in the Czech *Kindertransport*. As mentioned in the section on York in Chapter Three, Tessa even brought some children back to her family home to be fostered when previous plans fell through.

The situation in Prague became even more fraught and dangerous after the Nazi invasion of the remainder of a weakened Czechoslovakia on 16 March 1939. The voluntary workers in Prague associated with the BCRC began to work with increasing urgency. Beatrice Wellington, who was originally an independent aid worker working with Sudeten Social Democrats but had become officially associated with the Quakers, organised her relief work strictly in order of the Gestapo lists she had managed to obtain.<sup>96</sup> Tessa Rowntree similarly felt that the humanitarian workers she worked with used the criterion of who seemed most in danger to decide who to help first, although they could never help all those who they thought needed it. She remembers Beatrice Wellington as very brave under considerable pressure. There was one incident when a refugee appeared with a pistol and was going to kill himself and everyone else in the room. Beatrice walked up to him and talked him into giving up the pistol. They hid it in Doreen Warriner's room under a pile of sanitary towels then threw it off the Charles Bridge. Another time, Nazis were tapping Beatrice's phone and the operator sent a bunch of flowers saying how brave she was. Beatrice was questioned several times by the Gestapo and, Tessa feels as a result of this, ended up in a mental hospital.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Warriner, 'A Winter in Prague'.

<sup>95</sup> Elisabeth 'Tessa' Cadbury 14205, rec. 7 May 1994. IWMSA.

<sup>96</sup> Beatrice Wellington to Margaret Layton, 21 June 1939, HO 294/54. NA.

<sup>97</sup> Elisabeth 'Tessa' Cadbury 14205, rec. 7 May 1994. IWMSA.

All the humanitarian workers in Prague slipped over the line between humanitarianism and political resistance, Winton included. Warriner and Wellington were both questioned by the Gestapo, and Warriner had to return to Britain in April 1939 after R.J. Stopford informed her that he had seen a card in her name signed by the Consul in Katowice, implying she was next in line to be arrested by the Gestapo.<sup>98</sup> Tessa Cadbury recalls smuggling Jewish possessions out with her and lying to border guards about documents. She and Doreen Warriner spent a whole day in a hotel room ripping up the real passports of political escapees who had been given false identities and flushing them down the toilet.<sup>99</sup>

What is clear from the records is that the humanitarian workers in Prague were a collection of individuals and representatives of organisations who came from very different backgrounds and levels of experience. Perhaps the only thing they shared was a committed anti-fascism and desire to support those most in need. The efforts of the alliance of politically motivated individuals and organisations engaged in helping refugees have been vastly oversimplified in favour of an inaccurate hagiography of Winton. The problems with the Winton story are indicative of the wider problems around misdirected gratitude for the *Kindertransport*.

To date, the literature around the *Kindertransport* has mainly taken the form of memoir or collective memoir that details the remembered experience of the now adult 'children'. Early accounts included Karen Gershon's 1966 collective autobiography, *We Came as Children*, which uses over 30 different accounts organised thematically under headings such as 'The Reception Camps' and 'New Homes' to piece together a picture of the whole while recognising the essential individuality of each child's experience. It is, however, misinformed about the organisation of the voyage, saying only briefly that it was a scheme organised by Youth Aliyah.<sup>100</sup> Lore Segal's *Other People's Houses*, a fictionalised memoir first published in 1964, similarly dealt with the personal impact of such a traumatic early childhood on a family without outlining in detail how the family came to Britain.<sup>101</sup> Charles Hannam's *A Boy in Your Situation*, first published in 1977, also remembers his own experience over how the escape was organised.<sup>102</sup> Marion Berghahn in her groundbreaking book *Continental Britons*, which

---

<sup>98</sup> Warriner, 'A Winter in Prague'.

<sup>99</sup> Elisabeth 'Tessa' Cadbury 14205, rec. 7May 1994. IWMSA.

<sup>100</sup> Karen Gershon, *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography* (London: Victor Gollancz Limited, 1966).

<sup>101</sup> Lore Segal, *Other People's Houses* (London: The New Press, 2004 [1964]).

<sup>102</sup> Charles Hannam, *A Boy in Your Situation* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1977).

addressed issues of refugee assimilation for the first time, referred merely to 'private initiative' when mentioning the organisation of the immigration.<sup>103</sup>

Following the 1989 reunion of *Kindertransport* children organised by Bertha Leverton and the acknowledgement of the *Kinder* as a distinctive group of refugees, there was an emergence of memoirs in the 1990s, which began to form a body of literature on the experience. Memoirs such as Blend's *A Child Alone* or Gissing's *Pearls of Childhood* followed a pattern of outlining a childhood in Germany, Austria or Czechoslovakia, followed by a detailed account of the journey to Britain and the experience of being fostered and adapting, and ending with a brief account of later life.<sup>104</sup> *Into the Arms of Strangers*, the influential 2000 book and accompanying film of the same name, provided a variety of stories about the *Kindertransport*, largely from the perspectives of the children.<sup>105</sup>

In most of these memoirs of former *Kinder*, there is a tendency to give thanks for providing refuge. This is an entirely understandable impulse, however the former *Kinder* are not always clear to whom their gratitude should be directed. Successive governments incorrectly taking credit for the scheme have taken up the gratitude. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote a foreword to the leaflet produced and distributed at the first *Kindertransport* reunion in 1989 (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) that implied the *Kindertransport* had been organised as an official project by the British government.<sup>106</sup>

Both Louise London and Tony Kushner, seeking to question this problematic narrative of gratitude and establish how the *Kindertransport* was organised, have been somewhat critical of the role of the British government. London says it is overly simplistic to see the *Kindertransport* as humanitarian, as those organising it knew most of the children's parents would die, it was seen as introducing 'good white stock' at a time of declining birth rate, and that people felt children would be easier to assimilate.<sup>107</sup> London of course has an extremely valid point about the perception of children as easier to integrate, and there was certainly

---

<sup>103</sup> Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 1988 [1984]).

<sup>104</sup> Martha Blend, *A Child Alone* (London, Valentine Mitchell, 1995); Vera Gissing, *Pearls of Childhood* (London: Robson, 2007 [1989]).

<sup>105</sup> Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000) and Mark Jonathan Harris (dir.) *Into the Arms of Strangers* (2000).

<sup>106</sup> Reunion of Kindertransport Souvenir Brochure 50th Anniversary 1939-1989.

<sup>107</sup> London. *Whitehall and the Jews*. p. 121.

rhetoric from the government about using the children to populate the Empire. Overall, London says, the British government 'subordinated humanitarianism to Britain's national interest'.<sup>108</sup> Tony Kushner's work broadly characterises the British response to refugees as protectionist and isolationist.<sup>109</sup> He points to the British liberal democratic tradition as being contradictory, influenced by complex forms of attitudes towards Jews, and ultimately self-interested in its response to the refugee crisis in the 1930s, calling it, 'self-interest (that is of the middle classes) refined by a humanitarian impulse'.<sup>110</sup> He includes the response of Anglo-Jewry in this 'self-interested' bracket to some extent, saying that the response of middle class Jewish women was 'philanthropy mixed with a heavy dose of self-interest'.<sup>111</sup>

London and Kushner have identified a deep seam of self-interest in the response of the British government to the refugee crisis in the late 1930s and have carried out ground-breaking and influential research on the subject. Their interventions are significant in moving away from the tendency to privilege the experience of the former *Kinder* over a structural analysis of the project. However, their approaches do not always fully differentiate the role of the British public and the voluntary agencies from that of the Government. While aspects of their approach could (and should) certainly be critiqued, the voluntary agencies can fairly be categorised as having a response that was humanitarian in nature. The question of hagiography still hangs heavy over the *Kindertransport*. With London and Kushner we rightly reject a post-dated celebration of the British Government over a project for which they explicitly denied responsibility at the time. But who does this leave to canonise? Amid great public interest and a clamour for answers, Nicholas Winton has been cast in the role of the 'British Schindler': a man who acted heroically alone to rescue hundreds of children.

Winton was in Prague for just three weeks, before the German occupation. He accompanied no trains, made no travel arrangements, never encountered the Gestapo or any personal danger, did not use his own money, and, most importantly, did not act alone. He was the desk-based architect of a plan which, when extensively supported by the BCRC and implemented by others in Prague, successfully rescued 669 children in a project which should be seen alongside the *Kindertransports* from Germany and Austria organised by the RCM. That is a considerable and commendable achievement. However, when you consider that 15,000 refugees were helped to escape by the BCRC, Winton's achievements must be contextualised.

---

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* p.1.

<sup>109</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*.

<sup>110</sup> Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice*; Kushner, *We Europeans?*; Kushner, 'An Alien Occupation'.

<sup>111</sup> Kushner, 'An Alien Occupation'.

While criticising (with reason) the response of the British government to refugees from fascism, we need to be careful not to obscure the role of often politically left-wing voluntary agencies. The hagiography that has gone on around Nicholas Winton is dangerous and misleading. It takes the natural impulses of child survivors to want to express gratitude for a rescue about which they remember little and misdirects it towards a single figure, who becomes depicted as a 'saintly rescuer'. Winton is well-cast in this role. He is a genuine and humble person, who did not seek public acclaim for his extensive work. He is also white, male, British, middle-class, articulate, extremely long-lived and has never expressed any controversial political views, all factors which render him unique among the Prague workers and make him a 'safe choice' for a simplistic hagiography. History, however, is rarely this neat and simple. While Winton should be celebrated for his work, it is crucial that his role is taken in context. The real humanitarian work in Czechoslovakia was chaotic, complex and deeply political. It saw a disparate array of humanitarian workers trying to do the best they could in dangerous circumstances. Many of them became deeply dispirited with their work, feeling that they could do very little without significant governmental support, and painfully aware that they were offering a short-term emergency solution which did not address the long-term needs of refugees.

### **Photography and the *Kindertransport*: Integrating 'Imagined' Children**

In his attempts to find foster homes in Britain for the Czech children, Nicholas Winton had small cards produced, each with photographs and brief particulars of six children. Prospective foster families were given a card and instructed to select their favourite child. Winton received criticism for this approach at the time, with some saying it was too business-like, and children should not be advertised in the same way as washing machines. However, when he reflected on his methods later, he stood by his approach. Muriel Emanuel writes, 'Some people objected to such a measure saying that it made the whole venture seem horribly commercial, but seeing the photos helped enormously to place the children and that was what mattered most.'<sup>112</sup>

Claudia Curio has established that children were chosen in Vienna based on 'their expected ability to integrate into a new environment.'<sup>113</sup> As Curio points out, children could not prove their suitability through job, financial or education credentials in the same way prospective adult refugees could, and were instead judged by their family background. Curio argues that

---

<sup>112</sup> Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002), p. 76.

<sup>113</sup> Claudia Curio, 'Invisible' Children: The Selection and Integration Strategies of Relief Organizations, *Shofar*, Volume 23, Number 1, Fall 2004 p. 41.



this resulted, after an initial chaotic phase in which selection was based on urgency, in criteria based on a synthesis of need and on what volunteers in charge of selection considered children's potential for successful immigration into British life. Curio, borrowing from Kushner, calls these children 'invisible' children-that is, those who were selected to integrate smoothly into British life. There is clearly a racial element to this. The Quaker Centre in Vienna was genuine in a desire to prioritise those 'non-Aryan' children who could not get help elsewhere. However, this meant that children who were not too 'Jewish', in culture and appearance tended to be selected. Antisemitism, as has been established by other researchers, was widespread in Britain during this period.<sup>114</sup> There was also a clear link between antisemitism and anxiety over refugees, even child refugees, 'taking our jobs'.<sup>115</sup> Children were selected according to what the volunteers felt was attractive to potential foster families. This was based on the actual prejudices and stereotypes of the workers and the perceived prejudices and stereotypes of potential foster parents. Often it was the fair children with dimples and curls who were selected. Children with glasses were advised to remove them for photographs, and children with a physical disability were rejected out of hand. Vera Gissing remembers she was chosen because the daughter of her potential foster family 'liked her smile' from 6 photos of children they were given to choose from.<sup>116</sup>

Moving past Curio's concept of 'invisible' children selected to assimilate, I prefer to think of the child refugees as 'imagined' children selected to integrate- those whose chance at life was, as Lenore Davies recognised as a girl of thirteen, based on a series of assumptions about them gleaned from a form and a photograph. It is to photography I wish to turn again now. The forms and photographs sent to the Vienna Centre by desperate parents have not been preserved but from using the press and pamphlet photographs of *Kindertransport* children, it is possible to build an impression of what was desirable in a refugee child and hence what were the criteria used by the voluntary agencies.

The first annual report of the RCM reflected on the difficulties posed by selection:

Thousands of letters from all parts of Germany and Austria were received by the Movement, letters begging for help, enclosing photographs and particulars. Many were so touchingly written that it required a hard heart to consign them to files and indexes; yet, how were we to know which children to take since we could not take all? We obviously could not adopt the principle of, 'first write, first come', and how were we to be sure that all the details in the letters were absolutely correct? It was decided

<sup>114</sup> Notably Kushner, whose *Persistence of Prejudice* is the key text on antisemitism in Britain.

<sup>115</sup> Mass Observation Antisemitism survey 1939-1951. SxMOA1/TC62 Box 1. MOA.

<sup>116</sup> Vera Gissing interview 22 April 2006, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive. USHMM.

that the only equitable method was to rely entirely on the judgement of the committees in Germany, except in the case of those children for whom guarantees were signed in England.<sup>117</sup>

And yet the RCM was in an impossible position. Their ability to save significant numbers of children depended entirely on their ability to place the children they had already helped escape. And there was a self-fulfilling dual emphasis to this process of selection. The types of children who were represented - healthy, happy, attractive and educated - in these photographs *were* the children picked for fostering at Dovercourt. The RCM'S own annual report, produced in 1939, reproduced images of smiling and happy children who should be cared for.

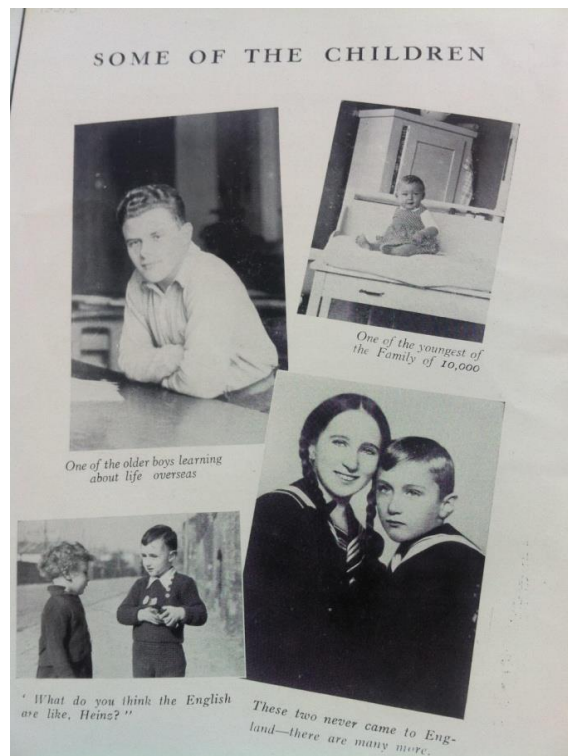


Image 14. 'Some of the Children', RCM 1939. <sup>118</sup>

The voluntary agencies were not unaware of the problems of selection. Veronica Gillespie, who worked at Bloomsbury House, later reflected on the impact of the images of children on the workers, 'The identity cards, complete with photographs, were kept in the children's dossiers in Bloomsbury House, where I then worked. The photos were touching. Somehow

<sup>117</sup> Movement for the Care of Refugee Children from Germany, Ltd, First Annual Report November 1938-December 1939, RCM, ACC/2993/03/04/04/1. LMA.

<sup>118</sup> 'Some of the Children', Movement for the Care of Refugee Children from Germany, Ltd, First Annual Report November 1938-December 1939, ACC/2993/03/04/04/1. LMA.

each young face seemed to be saying, 'I am a gentle, well-loved, lovable child'. And that was really true of most of them.'<sup>119</sup>

These were the considered responses of aid workers directly involved with the children rather than the general public, whose opinions would largely have been based on publicity material and the media. As I have shown in the previous two chapters, the Society of Friends and other voluntary agencies had already been gradually creating a reassuring image of refugee children through their judicious use of photography in campaign material. Image 9 (see further discussion in the previous chapter) from a 1933 GEC pamphlet of Jewish children playing music illustrates the visual reassurance which voluntary agencies had been building up throughout the interwar period. This was contrasted with the text, which starkly emphasised the danger facing the children, 'there is no future for these children in Germany'.<sup>120</sup> This somewhat cynical representation of children by the voluntary agencies was certainly problematic in the way it manipulated images to create an idealised view of children while stripping away the emotional and political realities of their situation. The voluntary agencies felt this conscious misrepresentation of children was the only way to persuade the British public to tolerate their immigration.

The majority of the British public had little idea of what to expect from child refugees beyond their existing prejudices and preconceptions. The extensive publicity around the arrival of the Basque children only eighteen months earlier must have been fresh in the minds of people, and it was perhaps even more important in this instance that there was no public outcry against the arrival of the children. With the extreme urgency necessitated by the dangerous political situation, publicity around the *Kindertransport* was initially limited to reactions in the popular press, as there had not been time for voluntary agencies to create and distribute leaflets specifically for the *Kindertransport*.

*The Times* made relatively little mention of the child refugees. The plans for the *Kindertransport* were briefly recorded as a Quaker proposal, but in general, articles tended to focus on Commons Debate over the issue or, more frequently, debate over whether Jewish children would be allowed into Palestine or other parts of the British Empire.<sup>121</sup> Articles

<sup>119</sup> Veronica Gillespie, 'Working with the 'Kindertransports' in Oldfield (ed) *This Working-Day World*.

<sup>120</sup> 'There is no future for these children in Germany'. GEC Pamphlet, 1933. FHA.

<sup>121</sup> 'Non-Aryan Children: A New Proposal' *The Times*, 22 November 1938; 'Refugee Jewish Children Adoption Plan For Palestine', *The Times*, 21 November 1938; 'Helping Jewish Refugees British Board's Gratitude, Cooperation Offered', *The Times*, 21 November 1938.

downplayed immigration into Britain, for example on 22 November 1938 rather than reporting the announcement of the immigration of children into Britain, *The Times* debated at length the potential for immigration to British Guiana or Kenya, before stating that 11,000 refugees had entered Britain since 1933 and that the potential for more was limited by the capacity of the voluntary organisations.<sup>122</sup> The paper did, however, celebrate the success of the Baldwin Fund, announcing that '150,944 For The Refugees' had been raised in December 1938.<sup>123</sup>

*The Manchester Guardian*, on the other hand, printed many articles expressing the importance of caring for these children, including appeals to adopt older children who were less in demand than younger children and articles emphasising the importance of the British role in international refugee support.<sup>124</sup> *The Manchester Guardian* was the newspaper of choice among Quakers and leading Quakers were in regular correspondence with the editor. In late 1936, for example, Bertha Bracey had set up a meeting with the editors of *The Manchester Guardian* and the *Morning Post* to discuss their coverage of the work of the Germany Emergency Committee.<sup>125</sup> Josiah Wedgwood's famous open letter to Samuel Hoare comparing turning a blind eye to the plight of refugees to slavery was printed in *The Manchester Guardian*.<sup>126</sup> A correspondent's report on the Dovercourt camp emphasised the innocence and purity of the children despite their sufferings, 'the irrepressible child life is wholesome and sweet in spite of everything.'<sup>127</sup> There was a particular interest in local Manchester efforts to support the children, and several articles welcomed the arrival of groups of children to the Manchester area.<sup>128</sup> While there were not usually images of refugees, two pictures were used to illustrate the arrival of the first boat of children. One was of a child looking forlorn holding a doll, and the other was of a table of children eating breakfast at Dovercourt.<sup>129</sup>

*The Daily Mirror* also took a sympathetic tone to the children, particularly choosing to emphasise the sentimental nature of their plight. In an article reporting the arrival of the first children on 2 December 1938 the correspondent wrote, 'A pretty dark-haired [code for Jewish]

<sup>122</sup> 'Future Of Jew Refugees', *The Times*, 22 November 1938.

<sup>123</sup> '150,944 For The Refugees', *The Times*, 19 December 1938.

<sup>124</sup> 'The Young Refugees: Adopting an Adolescent', *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 February 1939; 'British help for Jewish refugees: Our Full Share in International Effort', *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 November 1938.

<sup>125</sup> Minute dated 2 November 1936. Minutes of G.E.C. 1936-38 FCRA/2. FHA.

<sup>126</sup> 'Refugees from Germany: Col. Wedgwood's Plea', *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1939.

<sup>127</sup> 'Refugee Children: Life in a Camp', *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 January 1939.

<sup>128</sup> For example, 'Refugee Children find Warm Welcome in the Rain', *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 December 1938; 'Jewish Refugee Children: First arrivals in Manchester today from Harwich', *The Manchester Guardian*, 29 December 1938.

<sup>129</sup> 'Refugees from Germany', *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 December 1938.

child from Berlin told me, 'we shall be happy here. You are very kind.' Her eyes clouded as she added, 'I do not know where my father and mother are.'<sup>130</sup> Some panic was expressed about immigration, as evidenced in the 1939 headline, 'Britain becomes Dump for the Nazi Exiles' but this was targeted at profiteering by captains of trawlers rather than refugees themselves, for whom sympathy was consistently expressed.

*The Daily Mail* had a mixed response to the immigration of refugee children. Reporting on the proposed immigration of children, it was emphasised that this was part of a Socialist motion, but pride was expressed that Britain would offer sanctuary.<sup>131</sup> When the first group of children arrived, a journalist noted that, 'their dulled faces brightened at the sight of England. Certainly Britain will do her part in sheltering them. But quick sentiment must not hurry us into shouldering too heavy a share of the Jewish refugee problem.'<sup>132</sup> Generally, it was recognised in the editorial tone that there was considerable sentiment towards refugees, however this was framed with a heavy concern for British interests. When writing about children, considerably more sympathy was expressed than for adults, although this was still situated within a nationalistic discourse. There was a sympathetic report in November 1939 about Gerhart Walter Lowenberg who had killed himself aged just 16. It was attributed to his persecution by Hitler (and not to the fact he had been forced to attend an Aliens Tribunal the week before).<sup>133</sup> Gratitude from refugees was reported, for example a piece in November 1939 quoting a refugee saying, 'we shall never forget the wonderful people with the warmest hearts-strange English people who received us with open arms.'<sup>134</sup> Overall, *The Daily Mail* was consistent in refusing to subordinate human sympathy to the national interest.

Perhaps surprisingly, relatively few photographs of the children were published in papers. A notable exception was the newly created and already immensely popular *Picture Post*, which on 17 December 1938 published a three page special on the arrival of the children, entirely affirming what I have termed the 'narrative of reassurance' around child immigration.<sup>135</sup> The headline photograph is of three handsome teenage boys looking curious yet a little scared and sad, and is captioned, 'Their First Day in England'.

<sup>130</sup> 'Children Nazis Hate Land Here', *The Daily Mirror*, 3 December 1938.

<sup>131</sup> Percy Cater, 'Temporary Home for Jews in Britain' *The Daily Mail*, 22 November 1938.

<sup>132</sup> 'Yesterday', *The Daily Mail*, 3 December 1938.

<sup>133</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 25 November 1939.

<sup>134</sup> 'Refugee gives thanks for England', *The Daily Mail*, 18 November 1939.

<sup>135</sup> 'Their First Day in England', *Picture Post*, 17 December 1938, Issue 12, pp. 56-58.



Image 15. 'Their First Day in England', *Picture Post*, December 17, 1938.<sup>136</sup>

The article goes on to detail comforting elements of the children's characters such as their loyalty to family and their intelligence, and emphasises how well they will fit into their new lives. It is balanced roughly between outlining the hardships they faced unfairly and the comfort in the 'holiday chalets' they now occupy. Looking at the images, it is clear that this transport was mostly comprised of teenaged boys from the first, chaotic, emergency stage of the *Kindertransport* rather than photogenic younger children who would come later, yet the narrative of reassurance is still used. Emphasising how the children had been in a virtual prison, the article includes many details that would be familiar to British families. Pictures of Ping-Pong tournaments, preparing hot-water bottles, all the *minutiae* of caring for children, are shown throughout. The strength of the children's characters and the closeness of their family bonds are also emphasised. A photograph of a boy writing a letter using a folding chair as a makeshift table is captioned, 'His First Letter Home. He has hardly got here yet, but already he is huddled over the chair, writing to the father and mother he had to leave behind.'<sup>137</sup> The article ends with a revealing justification for the children's presence:

Some of these children have seen the Berlin orphanage, which was their home, set fire to over their heads, and had to race for their life as the room came crashing in. Not all have been in danger, but all have known what it is to suffer month after month for a crime they did not commit. They have been taught that they are outcasts. Other

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

children have been told they should not speak to them or play with them. Now all that is over. And what has been done in kindness is likely to prove sound policy as well. The children are lively, sturdily built, intelligent. They, and the others who come over after, will help to fill up those empty spaces in the Empire, which are at present in need of men and women equally to develop and defend them.<sup>138</sup>

The assumption, visually and rhetorically, was very much that these children were suitable for integration into British life and culture. The opinion that these children would become 'defenders of Empire' was not widespread among relief workers, but was commonly expressed in the press and by the government. To this end, the British government's official reluctance to support refugee children was belied by the diversion of considerable funds. In spring 1939, £220,000 (at least 11, 570, 000 in today's money) of the approximately half a million raised by the Baldwin Fund was set-aside for the RCM.<sup>139</sup> Until Oct 1941, the RCM depended on the grant from the Baldwin Fund. At this point it became clear the fund would soon be exhausted and the Home Office was applied to. It agreed to give 18/- a week (at least £47.32 in today's money) for children living with foster parents and the like.<sup>140</sup> In Oct 1941 the RCM also received a government grant of 75% of its administration costs.<sup>141</sup>

Some relief workers from British Jewish organisations were deeply concerned over the assimilation of children, and were particularly worried about a potential loss of Jewish faith and identity. Leaders such as Rabbi Schönfeld were suspicious about the lack of concern for ensuring Orthodox children were placed in Orthodox homes. Schönfeld even went so far as to express the belief that unless suitable *Jewish* foster homes or hostels could be found, it would be preferable for children to stay in Europe.<sup>142</sup> Other relief workers felt that it was of the utmost urgency to get as many children safely to Britain as quickly as possible, and issues such as religious observation could be sorted out later. It was an intractable difference of opinion and tensions are apparent in all the archive files. The RCM was certainly at great pains to emphasise that it was a non-denominational organisation that was not related to proselytising, missionary work or any attempt at conversion.<sup>143</sup> Dorothy Hardisty, the General Secretary of the RCM, emphasised that to her the physical and emotional safety of the children was more

<sup>138</sup> 'Their First Day in England', *Picture Post*, 17 December 1938, Issue 12, pp. 56-58.

<sup>139</sup> Currency conversion. Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present," *MeasuringWorth*, 2013.

<sup>140</sup> Currency conversion, *Ibid*; Refugee Children's Movement, Ltd. Third Annual Report, 1941-42, RCM, ACC/2793/03/04/04/3. LMA.

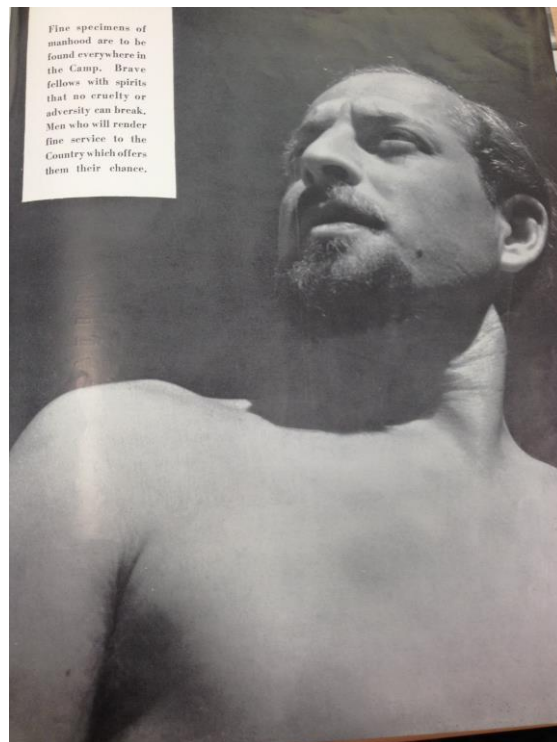
<sup>141</sup> John Presland (Gladys Bedit) *A Great Adventure; The Story of the Refugee Children's Movement*, July 1944, RCM, ACC/2793/03/04/11. LMA.

<sup>142</sup> Turner, ...*And the Policeman Smiled*.

<sup>143</sup> RCM 2993/03/04/04/1 Movement for the Care of Refugee Children from Germany, Ltd, First Annual Report November 1938-December 1939. LMA.

important than religious observation.<sup>144</sup> In reality, the religious observance of the children was simply not as important to the majority of humanitarian workers as their survival, and it is clear that many children's religious education was simply ignored by the RCM and left up to foster carers to organise, with inevitable mixed results.

Visual reassurance was not limited to representations of child refugees. In 1939, the Kitchener Camp Committee, in an attempt to reassure the local population to the presence of the camp, an agricultural training facility for refugees, produced a glossy booklet. The booklet was filled with photographs which emphasised how healthy and happy the refugees were, and how productive they were being. Accompanying text emphasised that the refugees would re-migrate in due course. This camp was mostly filled with young men who were depicted as virile and hardworking. The picture shown below is representative of the style of the booklet.



**Image 16, 'Fine Species of Manhood', Kitchener Camp Committee Booklet c. 1939<sup>145</sup>**

A Mass Observation observer interested in opinions about refugees showed the booklet to several people and recorded their responses. While a few respondents were deeply critical of the presence of any refugees, one said, reflective of the majority, 'I think it's very nice. Good

<sup>144</sup> Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*. p. 93.

<sup>145</sup> Kitchener Camp Committee booklet, c. 1939, SxMOA/TC25/1/c Political Attitudes and Behaviour, 1938-56. MOA.



pictures. Like *Picture Post*'.<sup>146</sup> The responses show a surprising amount of sympathy towards the refugees and admiration for their work, although this admiration is often directed towards the glossy quality of the booklet.

This extension of the reassuring narrative to adult refugees engenders a question about the nature of the complex relationship between selection, representation and integration. Clear visual communication of what was wanted in a child refugee was expressed in publicity around the *Kindertransport*, as it was in the criteria for selection of the children by voluntary workers. The children were supposed to be educated, sturdy, well adjusted, bright, and above all able to integrate successfully into British life. The RCM and other voluntary organisations, including the Quakers, certainly reinforced this simplistic and questionable narrative necessitated by the chaotic circumstances of ideology and expediency. Getting as many children out as quickly as possible in an emergency situation, rather than considering the political and emotional parameters of their immigration to Britain, guided policy.

Certainly, notwithstanding a valid critique of 1930s voluntary agencies, our societal views about photographic representation of refugee children have not changed that much. The selection of certain types of images of children has been unconsciously repeated in subsequent commemoration and memorialisation of the *Kindertransport*. We often see photographs illustrating books and articles about the *Kindertransport*, and the images selected tend to replicate this narrative of reassurance. We see children smiling in groups or eating a meal together. In recent historiography, the pictures selected are often those that emphasise the journey. So we see a group of children in a railway carriage or waiting at Liverpool Street Station. Indeed, the *Kindertransport* memorial is based at Liverpool Street. Perhaps in unconsciously replicating the visual narrative of reassurance around the children, we are emphasising their successful integration into British life.

### **The *Kindertransport* in a domestic context: 'Successful' integration?**

The previous section showed that the *Kindertransport* children were selected and subsequently imagined as suitable for integration into British culture. In practice, for those who looked after the children, there was a constant awkward balancing act between a desire to encourage integration, recognition of the children's previous experience, and the constant

---

<sup>146</sup> SxMOA/TC25/1/c Political Attitudes and Behaviour, 1938-56. MOA.

negotiation around practical considerations such as finance. Once they arrived in Britain, *Kindertransport* children were cared for on a private and domestic level in small hostels, private homes, or schools. Leighton Park, a private Quaker boarding school near Reading, provided a home for up to 40 refugee boys between 1935 and 1945. Leighton Park is known as the 'Quaker Eton' - a leading independent boys' boarding school with an emphasis on academic excellence. Between 1928 and 1948, the headmaster was Edgar Castle, who was known among the boys as 'The Duke'. Only one academic paper - Jennifer Taylor's 2008 case study on Great Ayrton School - has explored the significance of Quaker schools in assuming guardianship for child refugees. Taylor detailed the nature of the work done to support the children and argued that this reflected a particularly Quaker ethos.<sup>147</sup> I build here on Taylor's pioneering study to argue that the work done at Great Ayrton was not isolated, but part of a wider network of support for refugee children in schools in general and perhaps Quaker schools in particular which explicitly sought to help them acclimatise into British society as rapidly as possible.

The way in which Leighton Park dealt with refugees was relatively typical of Quaker involvement. Cases were handled on an extremely individual basis, which depended on a combination of professional, personal and Quaker networks. The work was motivated by the concern of one influential and hardworking person, in this case the headmaster Edgar Castle. The detailed archives at Leighton Park school include a 'Headmaster's File' on each pupil (refugee pupils numbered around forty in total), containing full correspondence relating to their time at the school.<sup>148</sup> This allows the reconstruction of the complex networks used to create a unique support structure for each child.

Leighton Park was an expensive and oversubscribed boarding school that prided itself on taking only the brightest boys. Refugee pupils often did not speak English on arrival, financial security for prompt payment of fees was generally unreliable, and there were several cases of refugee boys having behavioural problems caused by emotional difficulty. The only reason for Castle to take so many refugee pupils was a deep personal conviction that it was the right thing to do, as it certainly made his job more difficult. Despite an official maximum limit of 12 refugee pupils at a time within the school, Castle managed to find places for nearly all the boys who enquired, most of whom required some type of additional financial support.<sup>149</sup> Crucially,

---

<sup>147</sup> Taylor, "Work of modest proportion".

<sup>148</sup> With thanks to Timothy Newell Price, the archivist at Leighton Park who kindly arranged for me to access these files.

<sup>149</sup> The entry of German Boys to be restricted to a normal of 12 with an absolute maximum of 15, 'Minute of the Board of Governors, 5 November, 1938. LPSA.

however, he did not consider the school as a refuge regardless of ability, and would only consider boys who had met the usual standards of attainment required in their previous school. In 1940, Castle wrote to Bertha Bracey regarding the admission of the brother of a refugee pupil, 'I gather that Peter Glucksmann, who has been maintained at Ommen by Reading Friends, is backward in his studies, and I should not like to admit a boy of that kind.'<sup>150</sup> It is clear in the files that the boys were expected to conform rapidly to the intellectual and cultural life of a British public school.

Pavel Reisz came to Leighton Park in 1936, the son of middle class liberal Jewish Czech parents who could afford to pay his fees, which were 60 guineas a term. He was happy at the school, and recalls feeling instantly at home.<sup>151</sup> In the spring of 1939, his mother wrote to him, asking whether he could find any way to get his younger brother Karel into England. Pavel (who later anglicised his name to Paul Rice) recalls:

I immediately approached the headmaster, Edgar Castle, and he told me to leave the matter in his hands. In June 1939 he asked me to his office (generally implying an imminent punishment for some misdeed!) and gave me I think one pound and told me to take a train from Reading to London and be at Liverpool Street station at 11am where my brother would arrive.<sup>152</sup>

Paul's younger brother was named Karel Reisz, and he had arrived on a train from Prague organised by Nicholas Winton and Trevor Chadwick in association with the BCRC.<sup>153</sup> Castle had been engaged in lengthy correspondence to organise Karel's immigration, but had still found the time to buy him a bicycle prior to his arrival to help him fit in with the other boys.<sup>154</sup> By this point, the Reisz boys' parents could no longer afford the expensive fees, and a local Quaker woman, Mrs. Hilda Bennett, paid £60 per year for Karel and another boy from Prague (Jan Weiss) in addition to paying the £50 needed for Karel's guarantee.<sup>155</sup> Reisz was never told the identity of his anonymous benefactor.<sup>156</sup> In addition to this, Reading Friends' Meeting paid £30 per year towards his upkeep, and Castle himself provided pocket money and 'extras'. From 1943 the Czechoslovak Republic covered the £16 a term for Reisz's fees. During the holidays, Paul made arrangements for the brothers to stay at a poultry farm in Cornwall owned by an elderly couple. After Paul left school, he worked on farms in Sussex throughout the war, and

---

<sup>150</sup> Letter from Edgar Castle to Bertha Bracey, 19 January 1940, Headmasters' File 1213 Ernst Glucksmann. LPSA.

<sup>151</sup> Correspondence with Paul Rice, 30 July 2011.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> LPSA, Letter in Headmaster's File 1169 Karel Reisz.

<sup>154</sup> Colin Gardner, *Karel Reisz* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

<sup>155</sup> Note in Headmaster's File 1169 Karel Reisz. Headmaster's File 1303 Jan Viktor Weiss. LPSA.

<sup>156</sup> Georgina Brown, 'They took the Children Away', *The Independent*, 31 March 1993.

he would arrange for Karel to stay with him, earning their keep through labour.<sup>157</sup> Dr. Otto Eisler, who was a friend of the Reisz boys' parents and himself a refugee, met the expenses for school clothes despite being unemployed. When he got a job in 1942, Otto Eisler even began to make a contribution of £50 a year towards fees.<sup>158</sup>

Dr. Eisler later sent his own son Bedrich (Fred) Eisler to Leighton Park in 1943. Fred received a bursary of £69. He was a bright boy but initially disruptive and Castle wrote to Otto Eisler about his son's behaviour, 'Bedrich's dormitory is much disturbed by his presence.'<sup>159</sup> Bedrich was not the only boy who found adjustment to his new life difficult. Castle frequently refers to what he termed 'refugee troubles' in his letters about the boys, which seem to be characterised as a certain wildness, moodiness and difficulty adjusting. When writing an Oxbridge reference for one former pupil he reflected on this saying, 'At one time he was a somewhat wild character, but this wildness has settled down into a healthy and well directed vigour.'<sup>160</sup> Other boys remained unreformed characters. One pupil, who had escaped with his parents after the war had started, appeared before the local magistrate's court, charged with an unspecified offence.<sup>161</sup> Still others are shadowy presences in the headmaster's files, which tend to be far thicker for the pupils who went on to universities and accolades than for those who left for uncertain futures.

Karel Reisz had an extremely successful school career, becoming Head Boy in his final term.<sup>162</sup> On leaving at the age of 18, he went into the Czechoslovakian branch of the RAF before eventually becoming a teacher. Castle and Reisz maintained contact after he left school and Castle evidently felt a duty of care towards him, awarding him a leavers' scholarship of £25 a year in 1945. Reisz wrote to Castle in 1944:

Dear Sir, when I look back on the whole of my stay in England, there seems to be little I can say now to repay the debt which I owe you personally for its comparative happiness and its complete serenity; for your part in my getting over to England at all; for the care you took to buy a bicycle for me before I even got here (the impact this little deed made on my mind coming straight from the Continent was deep; you have probably forgotten the incident) for the considered help and consideration you have brought to the aid of some of my personal problems: and finally for the indulgence you have shown towards certain of my views with which you obviously strongly disagreed.<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Correspondence with Paul Rice, 30 July 2011.

<sup>158</sup> Letter in Headmaster's File 1169 Karel Reisz. LPSA.

<sup>159</sup> Headmaster's File 1326 Bedrich (Fred) Eisler. LPSA.

<sup>160</sup> Headmaster's File 1398 Hans Reiman. LPSA.

<sup>161</sup> Headmaster's File XXX (anonymity requested). LPSA.

<sup>162</sup> Correspondence with Paul Rice, 30 July 2011.

<sup>163</sup> Letter in Headmaster's File 1169 Karel Reisz.

The Reisz boys' parents were murdered in concentration camps and they had no family in England. Edgar Castle took on significant personal responsibility in supporting them. Karel, of course, later became the well-known director of films including most famously 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning' and Paul was a successful businessman.<sup>164</sup>

The story of the Reisz/Rice brothers is the one I have been able to trace most comprehensively, partly due to Karel's subsequent fame meaning details of his life are in the public record, and partly due to lengthy and informative correspondence with Paul. However, the complexity of the arrangements surrounding the Reisz boys' care, and especially their financial support, is indicative of a constant negotiation around expectations of integration on one hand, and the need for support to be able to sustain an education on the other. The financial arrangements underlying refugee boys' attendance at Leighton Park were complex and variable, and Castle often employed strict standards that he then failed to enforce. In a 1937 letter to Dr. Gillett, a prominent Oxford Friend, Castle wrote, 'Our bursary fund is very restricted now and we like to keep it almost entirely for Friends.'<sup>165</sup> Castle took on a considerable amount of personal liability in these financial arrangements, and they must have been a continual source of stress to him. A letter he wrote to Bertha Bracey in 1940 gives some sense of the stress he was under:

Do you know if there are any funds, Friends or otherwise, available for the education of refugee children? We shall have a case on our hands next term, as the father of one of our boys, Hans Eberstadt, has been interned, his brother has been interned, and his mother expects to be. This will mean the father's source of income will stop immediately and the boy of 12 and a half will be left on our hands. I am already providing the keep and paying part of the fees of one refugee boy I have living with me, and I feel I cannot do it for this other one who is living with me but whose parents are paying for his keep.<sup>166</sup>

The stories of selected boys from Leighton Park have been used here to indicate the disparate and highly individualised nature of the refugee experience. There was no official policy on refugee pupils at Leighton Park, and the fact the school took so many pupils was largely due to the personal interventions of Edgar Castle. In practice, the unofficial policy of support dependant on boys meeting the high academic and cultural standards of the school is clear. The expectation of integration and pressure on the behaviour of the boys is implicit in all the files, correspondence and exchanges. The experiences I have outlined indicate the variety of ways by which funds were provided to pay school fees and living expenses for these boys.

---

<sup>164</sup> Correspondence with Paul Rice, 30 July 2011.

<sup>165</sup> LPSA, Letter from Edgar Castle to Dr. Gillett, 29 January 1937.

<sup>166</sup> LPSA, Letter from Edgar Castle to Bertha Bracey, 29 June 1940, Headmasters' File 1202 Hans Walter Eberstadt.

Broadly, money was siphoned from existing bursary funds, donated by Reading Friends, or waived through personal hospitality arrangements. I have only been able to document this through access to the Leighton Park archives, which contain personal correspondence relating to each pupil as well as formal examination results and documents. Most of the boys concerned were never aware of the precise nature of the arrangements concerning their care and education.

Fred Eisler evidently overcame his initial problems of adjustment. After leaving school, the bright boy was able to overcome the perceived Oxbridge prejudice against applicants of foreign nationality and get a place at Exeter College, Oxford.<sup>167</sup> I was not able to find out anything about his later life or work. Famous former *Kinder* like Karel Reisz are often foregrounded in literature about the *Kindertransport*. In the same way that children were often selected in the first place because of value judgements of relief workers and prospective foster carers, we as researchers often reveal a considerable amount about our own values and the values of the society we live in by the way we write about former *Kinder*. Part of this is down to pragmatism. As I mentioned above, information about people in the public eye is far more accessible. It goes deeper than this, though. By highlighting the achievements of famous *Kinder*, we are retrospectively justifying the immigration of these children in a Britain which we are aware is still far from a paragon in relation to our treatment of refugees. As I was researching and writing this section, I couldn't help wondering what happened to Peter Glucksmann, who was not deemed intelligent enough for a place at Leighton Park, or to the many other boys whose names in the files of their former headmaster conceal later lives lived in a diversity of ways. 'Success' for *Kinder* in the sense of fame or fortune still seems to retrospectively justify a successful integration.

## Conclusion

As Asa Briggs has pointed out, in the twentieth century, 'warfare has necessitated welfare'.<sup>168</sup> Angus Calder interpreted this to mean that national efficiencies necessitated by war prompted a consideration of the labour potential of, for example, disabled men.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, public opinion and a need to maintain the health of the existing labour force prompts a move towards universal public health legislations such as those providing milk to malnourished

---

<sup>167</sup> Headmaster's File 1326 Bedrich (Fred) Eisler. Letters in the files of Eisler and several other of the Leighton Park boys show that there was a widespread feeling at the time among educators and refugee workers that refugee boys found it harder to gain admittance to Oxford and Cambridge colleges than British-born boys with similar qualifications. LPSA.

<sup>168</sup> Asa Briggs 'The Welfare State in Historical perspective', *European Journal of Sociology*, 2, 1961, p. 226

<sup>169</sup> Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain, 1939-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1992 [1969]).

children (the soldiers of tomorrow). This cynical interpretation contains a kernel of optimism. Long-term agitation by philanthropic campaigners for such measures as nutritional supplements for slum-dwelling children finds more receptive ears in government during times of national emergency. This positive outcome, however, leads towards a yet-more-cynical interpretation of the surprising government U-turn over the *Kindertransport*. Could the *Kindertransport* children, at a time when war was increasingly inevitable, have been considered as not just *Picture Post*'s pseudo-heroic 'defenders of Empire' but also her expendable foot soldiers? They were, after all, seen as assimilable healthy children with few relatives to mourn them. From a ruthlessly cynical perspective, this makes perfect sense. And, in fact, with the Pioneer Corps eventually employing a significant proportion of the *Kindertransport* boys, it is exactly what ended up happening.<sup>170</sup>

Kushner and London, who have been justifiably critical of the British government response, have comprehensively discussed this broader understanding of the *Kindertransport* from the structural perspective of government policy. It is not entirely fair, however, to group the efforts of the thousands of volunteers who campaigned and cared for the *Kinder* with that of their government. While of course, the British government could and should have done more, British civilians displayed a hitherto unacknowledged resistance and resilience, which has not been recognised in a historiography which has focused on the decisions of governments and experiences of refugees.

The voluntary and complex nature of the organisation of the *Kindertransport*, in which the Quaker role was fundamental (along with that of other voluntary agencies and individuals), should be recognised. As I have shown, Quaker Centres in Berlin, Vienna and Prague were crucial in organising the *Kindertransport* on the ground and in providing the information that allowed the joint Quaker and Jewish delegation to get permission for the project. The Jewish communities in Berlin and Vienna organised places for Jewish children who had connections to the Jewish community on *Kindertransport*, while the Vienna Quaker Centre organised places on each train for those 'non-Aryan' children who were discriminated against under the Nuremberg laws but did not have connections to the Jewish community so were not eligible for their help, or for those whose families were experiencing political persecution. The Quakers along with others working in Prague under the BCRC umbrella contributed towards the supported emigration of 15,000 people, including 669 children under a parallel scheme to the RCM-organised *Kindertransport*.

---

<sup>170</sup> Helen Fry, *Jews in North Devon During the Second World War* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2005).

There was no distinct path for *Kindertransport* children once they arrived in Britain. A number of the older boys were interned in 1940/1, and some were deported to Canada or Australia. Boys who wished to join the army would often anglicise their names and join the Pioneer Corps. Some went on to university, most got jobs. Self-reliance had been emphasised by the RCM from the start, 'As soon as refugees leave school they should seek employment. It is detrimental for any child to be without definite work and this is especially true of refugee children, who must fit themselves for a future life of independence and self-reliance.'<sup>171</sup> It is important to emphasise that those involved in organising the *Kindertransport* thought the majority of the children involved would end up training for either domestic service or agricultural work, according to gender, and that the successful careers of many *Kinder* are a testament to their perseverance, and to some extent to the pre-existing middle-class values for which they were initially selected.<sup>172</sup> As anticipated by volunteers, most of the children *did* integrate comprehensively into British life. What perhaps would not have been anticipated is the strong sense of their own history and origins maintained into adulthood, as evidenced by the active *Kindertransport* Association and many memoirs and publications.

Research on migration to Britain has emphasised the mixed messages around a narrative of British tolerance, asylum and humanity on the one hand, and the prevalence of ingrained, imperialistic and often unpleasant stereotypes of national identity on the other.<sup>173</sup> The *Kindertransport* fits clearly into this trope, as a complex process of organisation and experience, which should be seen both in its broader context, and as a series of very individual experiences. It was in many ways the zenith of the interwar internationalist humanitarian tradition. It also, as Tara Zahra has pointed out, represents the limitations of humanitarian intervention.<sup>174</sup> Children were selected and sorted along clear class, nationalistic and racial assumptions, based on their perceived ability to integrate smoothly into British life. They were not expected to achieve high rank, but rather to work in domestic service and agriculture, or perhaps shore up the crumbling British Empire in low-grade posts. However, this did not reflect the prejudice of relief workers, but rather a pragmatic response to governmental distrust and perceived widespread xenophobia and racism among the general public. Despite the evident flaws in the

---

<sup>171</sup> RCM 2793/03/04/01 Instructions for the Guidance of Regional and Local Committees. LMA.

<sup>172</sup> See Gillespie, 'Working with the 'Kindertransports' in Oldfield (ed) *This Working-Day World*.

<sup>173</sup> Wendy Webster, for example, draws attention to the media emphasis on 'blood' and 'stock' in discourse around migration Wendy Webster, "Britain and the Refugees of Europe, 1939-1950." In *Gendering Migration: Masculinity, Femininity, and Ethnicity in Post-War Britain*, edited by Louise Ryan and Wendy Webster (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>174</sup> Zahra, *The Lost Children*. p. 77.



massive voluntary effort that brought the *Kinder* to Britain, over ten thousand children were saved by a public humanitarian response that has yet to be matched in scope.

## Conclusion

In 1945, A. Tegla Davies was working with the Friends Ambulance Unit in Germany. A seasoned relief worker, he was involved in setting up and running Displaced Persons (DP) camps. What is striking about his account is that, despite the ostensible responsibility of UNRRA for rehabilitation in Germany, much of the work was still being carried out by a patchwork of international voluntary agencies, charities and the military.<sup>1</sup> UNRRA was often striking in its absence as Tegla Davies noted, 'the care of all Displaced Persons in Germany was to be U.N.R.R.A's responsibility, but for a variety of reasons U.N.R.R.A was not ready to take the field. And the job was urgent.'<sup>2</sup> Recent research on the creation and work of UNRRA has emphasised the significance of its brief existence between the end of the Second World War and the start of the Cold War.<sup>3</sup> It has been established that the formation of UNRRA represents an acceptance of international governmental responsibility for providing humanitarian aid.<sup>4</sup> UNRRA was labelled 'a Great Experiment' on its creation and was considered by founders as being simultaneously, 'the most extensive welfare programme in history and as an experiment in international planning.'<sup>5</sup> The creation of UNRRA has been considered by contemporaneous scholars and later researchers as a 'birth', a distinct moment. This notion of UNRRA's 'birth' as a distinct moment has recently begun to be questioned, with scholars examining the nuanced development of humanitarianism in the period.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis should be seen as part of this revisionist analysis of mid twentieth century humanitarianism. My research clearly shows the continuities and developments between the 1930s and 1940s, and places interwar international humanitarianism as the 'midwife' of post-war humanitarianism.

The language of 'birth' and 'midwifery' has a clear gendered dynamic. This is conscious. Much interwar humanitarian work was guided by women in leadership roles and implemented by

---

<sup>1</sup> Including the FAU, the FRS, the British Army, the British Red Cross Civilian Relief.

<sup>2</sup> A. Tegla Davies, *Friends Ambulance Unit: The Story of the F.A.U in the Second World War 1939-1946* (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1947).

<sup>3</sup> Jessica Reinisch, 'Auntie UNRRA at the Crossroads', *Past and Present* Supplement 8, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Phillip Weintraub, 'UNRRA: An experiment in international welfare planning' *The Journal of Politics*, Volume 7, Issue 1, February 1945.

<sup>6</sup> Silvia Salvatici, 'Help the People to Help Themselves': UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons' *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 25, No. 3, June 2012; Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

women in either professional or voluntary roles.<sup>7</sup> The British state looms large in the minutes of the refugee committees they organised and in the letters and diaries they wrote. This thesis has been about those people (often women) who negotiated the middle ground in between the British state and the British public. Professional international humanitarianism did not just spring into existence in the post-war period and, this thesis has established, can be seen in part as being a direct result of the brokerage of voluntary organisations in the interwar period.

Quakers have of course been the focus of my research. There has been some, limited, public acknowledgement of the significance of the Quaker role in supporting refugees from fascism, perhaps most notably in the awarding to Quakers of the Nobel Peace Prize for their relief work in 1947. In the awards ceremony, attention was drawn to the ways in which, 'through silent assistance from the nameless to the nameless that they have worked to promote the fraternity between nations cited in the will of Alfred Nobel'.<sup>8</sup> Since then, there has been relatively little discussion of the Quaker role. As Eric Hobsbawm pointed out in the quote with which I started this thesis, any discussion has been vague and lacking in detail. In the literature there are many brief statements that are at best vague and at worst entirely inaccurate. For example, Phyllis Lassner in her 2008 book stated that, 'the British government, with help from Jewish and Quaker organisations, rescued 10,000 Jewish and non-Aryan children from Germany, Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia'.<sup>9</sup> As I demonstrated in Chapter Four, this is an entirely misleading analysis. While this project has as its remit the examination of Quaker work for refugees from fascism between 1933 and 1939, it is about much more than that simple case study. The time period covered starts with the famine relief projects in Europe in 1918 and ends with a brief look at post-world war two reconstructions in Europe. During this period, as has begun to be acknowledged in the historiography, modern large-scale humanitarianism was born.

The Spanish Civil War provoked a level of humanitarian political agitation on behalf of another country not seen again in Britain until mass protests against the Iraq war in 2003. The development of what has been termed the 'Aid Spain Movement' among the British public has been well documented and extensively debated.<sup>10</sup> What has not been fully recognised, however, is the extent to which 'Aid Spain' agitation galvanised and transformed British

---

<sup>7</sup> This, inevitably, continued into the post-war. Shephard points out that 44% of UNRRA workers were women. Shephard, *The Long Road Home* p. 306.

<sup>8</sup> "The Nobel Peace Prize 1947 - Presentation Speech". Nobelprize.org. Nobel Media AB 2013. Web. 19 November 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Lassner, *Anglo-Jewish Women Writing the Holocaust*.

<sup>10</sup> Fryth, *The Signal was Spain*. Debate most notably between Fryth and Tom Buchanan about the cohesiveness of these efforts. Buchanan, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement*.

humanitarian work. For the first time, a coalition of voluntary agencies explicitly ignored their government's stance of non-intervention to bring humanitarian relief to the Republic, seeing this work as part of a wider anti-fascist stance. It is worth reiterating most particularly here the pioneering work of the International Commission that was set up by experienced midwife and Quaker relief worker Edith Pye in October 1937 as a response to refugees from Santander inundating Barcelona. The purpose of the IC was to create a space where European governments could donate money to aid Spanish civilians without the risk of breaching their self-imposed non-intervention treaty. Using the personal connections she had built over 30 years of international relief work, Pye established a central committee under the chairmanship of Judge Michael Hansson of Norway. Edith Pye personally wrote to prominent figures including Eamonn de Valera and Jawaharlal Nehru to solicit donations, as well as working with other committee members (who were all seasoned aid workers and internationalists) to request funds from governments. The money flooded in. The UK government eventually donated a total of £25000 plus goods in kind. Part of the success of the IC fundraising was the pledge that money donated by a government would be spent on goods produced within that country. Norway's contribution, for example, was largely spent on the fish-oil supplements for which Norway was the largest and cheapest producer. In total, the IC raised and spent over £500,000 between December 1937 and April 1940.<sup>11</sup> The success of the International Commission proved that a co-ordinated international response to a humanitarian crisis was not only possible, but could avoid unnecessary duplication of work and resources. It must be borne in mind that, conceptually, donating government money overseas was still far removed from accepting administrative or domestic responsibility.

In certain circumstances, however, the British government *did* tolerate the voluntary agencies orchestrating mass relief projects domestically. The most notable instance of this is the immigration of around 20,000 young women on domestic service permits between 1933 and 1939. While government policy was not explicitly welcoming to refugees, voluntary agencies consciously exploited the perceived need for servant labour to support young women fleeing fascist persecution. The British government offered no financial or administrative support but issued the relevant visas provided employment had been found for each woman. At the peak of the project in January 1939, the Government was issuing approximately 600 permits a week.<sup>12</sup> Around 15 different voluntary agencies were involved in organising this immigration,

---

<sup>11</sup>The UK representatives were T. Edmund Harvey (a Quaker M.P and cousin of John Harvey) Edith Pye herself, Hilda Clark, Audrey Russell and Horace Alexander. *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge* (1940) No. 22, p. 474.

<sup>12</sup> London, *Whitehall and the Jews*. p. 76.

mostly on explicitly humanitarian rather than pragmatic grounds.<sup>13</sup> Quakers should be seen very much as part of a coalition of these voluntary agencies. The voluntary agencies occupied a tense middle ground between the desperation of refugees and the lack of attention by government, and were constantly negotiating humanitarian ideals with limited means. This meant that at times, despite good intentions, significant emotional and practical considerations were overlooked. Particular illustrations of this are the neglect of Jewish children's religious identity, infrequent supervision of foster placements, and the lack of safeguarding support for young women on domestic service visas.

In a similar manner, the *Kindertransport* itself represented both the fulfilment and the limitation of humanitarian ideals, where a coalition of voluntary agencies assumed a pseudo-governmental role in order to finance and organise the immigration of 10,000 unaccompanied children into Britain. It should be seen as the culmination of the interwar voluntary tradition. Those who organised it were not satisfied with the government's self-absolvement from responsibility, considering that, 'the need was far greater than could be dealt with by voluntary organisations and that financial assistance from governments was necessary.'<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia went so far as to write an open letter criticising the British government for failing to take responsibility:

The voluntary organisations find themselves totally unable to accept the implication that the extent to which the rescue of thousands can be organised, temporary refuge provided, and large-scale migration of hundreds of thousands carried out must remain entirely dependent on private efforts.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the frustration expressed by the voluntary agencies at the time, the British government gradually and quietly allowed the integration of the *Kindertransport* children, eventually allowing them to apply for full citizenship.<sup>16</sup> Of course, this integration of children is in itself problematic. As Tara Zahra has recently identified, children can be seen as a form of plunder, to be 'captured and remodelled by nations looking to expand their ranks.'<sup>17</sup> The crucial role of voluntary agencies in efforts like this, as well as their frustration with lack of governmental involvement should still, however, be acknowledged.

---

<sup>13</sup> 'Helping Refugees-Do you know what to do?', 1938, FCRA Pamphlets 1933-1944. FHA.

<sup>14</sup> GEC Minute Book, 1939-40, Minute 2, December 1938. FHA.

<sup>15</sup> 'Action of Governments and of Private Organisations in Regard to Refugees-Draft Memorandum' 25 November 1938, HO 294/39. NA.

<sup>16</sup> In 1948.

<sup>17</sup> Zahra, *The Lost Children* p. 36.

Children have been the main focus of two of the chapters of this thesis. This is because they became the main focus of relief work, both in terms of the actual relief work, and how it was sold to the public (the word 'sold' being significant). As the publicity photographs I have used throughout this thesis demonstrate, images of children being cared for by voluntary agencies were used to raise public funds even when not all these funds were then used to support children. Children, though, *were* very often the main recipients of relief work, being seen as politically neutral and innocent. Bertha Bracey, secretary of the GEC and leader of much of the Quaker work, emphasised the significance of supporting children in a Refugee Children's Movement meeting in 1945:

I believe that this gesture of bringing children out means that if we can only help one iota of the distress in Europe we do it willingly and in our own borders. It is very good to be able to give people an opportunity to make that gesture of human sympathy for German children...One real force on which we can build will be the protection of children. It does not matter what nationality they are. Those children need protection and here is one opportunity.<sup>18</sup>

Post-war, as recent research by Zahra has established, caring for children became part of reconstructing shattered Europe one family at a time.<sup>19</sup> Humanitarian agencies wanted both to care for children, and to demonstrate they were caring for children, with photographs of well-fed and happy children being used to prove their suitability for rescue and integration into the British home.

Contemporary forms of humanitarianism began in the nineteenth century as the bringing together of a disparate jumble of dissenters, evangelicals, politicians and traditionalists in response to the perceived social decay caused by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. Many of these efforts were internal, such as education, health, temperance and child labour. The most celebrated humanitarian 'triumph' was the abolition of slavery. Humanitarianism has sustained repeated criticism from the Left. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx said, 'economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hold-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind' were operating to merely smooth over the cracks on bourgeois capitalist society, placating social grievances and essentially acting in collusion with bourgeois society. Subsequent theorists have taken up this idea. Foucault, classically, said that the ultimate effect, if not the intention, of prison reformers

---

<sup>18</sup> RCM Executive Committee Minutes and Notes, Report 7 June 1945, ACC/2793/5/RCM/2. LMA.

<sup>19</sup> Zahra, *The Lost Children*.

such as Elizabeth Fry was to rationalise punishment - to punish more effectively and better.<sup>20</sup> Recent theorists of humanitarianism have recognised this inherent contradiction in humanitarianism, but sought to problematize the seductive simplicity of positioning it as a mere by-product of capitalist Imperialism. As Barnett has recently written, 'Humanitarianism is precariously situated between the politics of solidarity and the politics of governance.'<sup>21</sup>

The other problem of writing about humanitarianism is to avoid a simplistic hagiography of goodness, especially when the humanitarian intervention is linked to the Holocaust. I did not want to write a simplified Christian redemption narrative, or write another Schindler erroneously into existence. In order to reject the problematic model of the saintly rescuer, it is crucial to pay attention to the details of the processes by which 'rescue' was engineered. The Quaker work with refugees from fascism should be characterised as a grassroots model of organised voluntary intervention which, in the scale of rescue, fits somewhere in between random personal rescues and wholesale co-ordinated intervention. Examining the roots and organisation of this work is crucial.<sup>22</sup> Quaker work should be characterised as always well-intentioned, but sometimes overly reliant on these good intentions.

The original Quaker insistence on the separation of church and state can be followed through humanitarian tradition into the relationship between private philanthropy and state intervention.<sup>23</sup> The question relief workers were constantly asking in the 1930s was, 'Should basic social services ever be provided on a voluntary basis rather than being insisted upon as the right of citizens within a state'? So, during this period, how did Quakers conceive of their own work? A young Quaker interviewed by Mass Observation in 1942 was clear:

Religion should guide the social life and conscience of the Nation, by being a spiritual kind of CAB [Citizen's Advice Bureau] for the community-the end should be practical instead of giving other-world sermons, which is just so much waste of time. Religion will not do so, because it is an established religion, financed by the state, paid to keep the minds of people in a mythical heaven and not on earth, because it contains many

---

<sup>20</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Tom Buchanan's work on the creation of Amnesty International emphasises the significance of the religious and political origins of the organisation, and the subtlety of its self-image and, in a similar way, looking at the roots of Quaker humanitarianism allows us to evaluate the nature and impact of the work. Tom Buchanan, 'The Truth will set you free': The Making of Amnesty International, *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 37 (4) 2002, pp. 575-597.

<sup>23</sup> The original insistence as formed in the context of the English Civil War.

reactionary elements.<sup>24</sup>

This idea of a religion of *doing*, of being part of one's essential purpose on earth, was central to the way Quakers saw themselves in the 1930s. Mary Hughes from York, one of the leaders of the York Refugee Committee, saw her work as being very much in the tradition of the Underground Railroad, helping persecuted individuals escape to freedom. Her colleagues in the Scottish Domestic Bureau also felt their work was political in nature - a statement against fascism and a gesture of solidarity with other women. Leaders in Friends House tended to be more matter-of-fact. Bertha Bracey felt she simply did what needed to be done to counter what she considered the 'poison' of fascism.<sup>25</sup> According to Yad Vashem's definition the Quakers do not meet the criteria of 'Righteous Gentiles'.<sup>26</sup> And unquestionably, the work carried out by most British Quakers was not comparable in terms of personal risk to that of mainland European 'rescuers'. They (usually) operated within the confines of the law and did not place their lives in direct risk. However, it is worth bearing in mind that in the face of what was believed to be an imminent fascist invasion, and in full knowledge of the violent hatred that had forced refugees to leave mainland Europe in the first place, ordinary people (it should again be emphasised these people were by no means all Quaker) all over Britain provided domestic hospitality to refugees.

It is now accepted by historians that the creation of UNRRA in 1943 marked the end of the 'charitable' phase of modern humanitarianism.<sup>27</sup> It has also been established that the working practices of UNRRA drew on a long history of humanitarianism.<sup>28</sup> More than this, though, UNRRA's very existence was due in part to the repeated interventions of voluntary humanitarian organisations. There are clear continuities between interwar humanitarian structures and post-war internationalist liberalism, which cannot be divorced from debate over the core tenets as well as the working practices of humanitarianism. This did not go unnoticed at the time and both Arendt and Weber worried that institutionalization of ethics could distort private ethics, presenting a moral conundrum for humanitarian workers pushed into a corporate framework.<sup>29</sup> Of course, we cannot attribute the increased involvement of the state to the interventions of humanitarianism or, indeed, to any form of morality. The state has a

<sup>24</sup> File Report 1525, 'Reconstruction V', December 1942. MOA.

<sup>25</sup> Bertha Bracey, 4646. IWMSA.

<sup>26</sup> 'The Righteous Among the Nations'. Yad Vashem. [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org) accessed 23 November, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics'.

<sup>28</sup> Salvatici, 'Help the People to Help Themselves'.

<sup>29</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1965); Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009 [1947]).



distinct agenda in intervening in international humanitarian crises and, as suggested by recent research, the newly global relationship between states and big business presents an even more disturbing vision of humanitarian intervention.<sup>30</sup>

Many humanitarian workers in the 1930s, questioning the line between private and state intervention, felt profoundly dissatisfied with their efforts and Quaker workers were no exception. Norma and Alfred Jacob, leaders of the work in Spain, felt they should have stayed there to 'go down with the people we couldn't save'.<sup>31</sup> Bracey, Clark and Pye were all frustrated with the lack of government and inter-governmental support for refugees from fascism feeling, as Clark said, that the problem was too big for private organisations and that governments needed to intervene.<sup>32</sup> Relief workers were human and culpable. Bracey could be a terrible snob, Clark got incredibly frustrated with refugees who sunk into despair and couldn't help themselves. Even Mary Hughes from York expressed her relief when all the work was over and she could relax. They were not unambiguously good and should not, and would not want to be shoehorned into a Schindler-esque narrative. They don't represent either a concerted political resistance to fascism or a saintly selfless rescue. What they do represent is the culmination of long traditions of Quaker humanitarianism with a grassroots, largely domestic and sometimes chaotic attempt to get as many desperate and endangered refugees out of fascist mainland Europe as possible.

On a sunny March afternoon in a Home Counties English town, I interviewed a woman in the garden of the Quaker Meeting House.<sup>33</sup> She was called Carolyn, and seemed a quintessential English woman of a certain middle-class, liberal persuasion. She spoke of her experiences as an Italian baby of Communist parents, smuggled with her family in 1938 across Italy, through France and into England where Quaker strangers supported her. As we spoke, an older woman and a young black man were working together digging in a vegetable patch. I gestured towards them and asked Carolyn if she was involved in creating the beautiful garden. 'Oh no', she answered, 'that's Amos. He lives here.' She told me that Amos was an African refugee who had turned up on the doorstep one day, penniless, hungry and with nowhere to go. A joint decision was taken by members of the Meeting to allow him to stay for a while. To show his gratitude, he had offered to help with the upkeep of the Meeting House and the garden. He'd been staying for several months by this point, his English had improved and Carolyn thought he

---

<sup>30</sup> Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2008).

<sup>31</sup> Norma Jacob, 'Death in the After-War', 1940, FSC/R/SP/4/4. FHA.

<sup>32</sup> GEC Minute Book 1939. FHA.

<sup>33</sup> I have changed identifying details of the interview for purposes of confidentiality as requested by 'Carolyn' to protect both her identity and that of 'Amos'.

would probably move on soon, as one of the members had heard of a job he might be suited to. Amos will not show up on any official records or correspondence, or even in the Meeting House's own records. One day he will leave as silently and anonymously as he arrived.

## **Bibliography**

### **A.     Archive Collections**

#### **BCA. Birmingham City Archives**

Cash Book

Donations Book

Minute Book

Society of Friends Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting Minute Book Vol. 33

Spanish Refugee Children (Lord Mayor's Fund)

Warwickshire Monthly Meeting Refugee and Aliens Emergency Committee Minutes December 1938-June 1944

Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting Spanish Relief Committee 1936-9

#### **Bootham School Archives, York**

School Committee Minutes, 1933-1945

School finance book, 1939

#### **Borthwick Institute, York**

Joseph Rowntree Trust Files

Mount Admissions Register 1904-1942

Mount School archives

Unpublished biography of Ellen Catherine Waller by E.L. Ramsay, undated (c.1950)

#### **IWMSA. Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, London**

Bertha Bracey interviewed 1980, IWMSA 4646

Elisabeth 'Tessa' Cadbury, IWMSA 14205

Geoffrey Fawcett, IWMSA 4663

Jean Corder Greaves IWMSA 16835

Henny Handler, IMWSA 24190

Vera Levick, IWMSA 16637

Ira Rischowski, IWMSA 4296

Annie Savile IWMSA 29696

**FHA. Friends House Archive, Euston**

Allotments Committee Publication Vol 1 1930-1947 066

Avoncroft College, Reports 1926-1936 Accn 47553

Bertha L. Bracey, 'A Ten years' Survey: 1933-1943' Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Documents

Coalfields Distress Committee Minutes

Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Pamphlets 1933-1944, Acc. 066.34

Friends' Committee for Refugees and Aliens Minutes

Friends' Service Committee Files on Spain, FSC/R/SP/1-5

Industrial Crisis Committee Minutes

Minutes of G.E.C. 1936-38

Minutes of G.E.C. 1939-40

'Mistress and Maid: General Information for the use of Domestic Refugees and their Employers', Issued by the Domestic Bureau, Bloomsbury House, April 1940

**LPSA. Leighton Park Archives, Leighton Park School, Reading**

Headmaster's Files, 1213 Ernst Glucksmann, 1169 Karel Reisz, 1303 Jan Viktor Weiss, 1326 Bedrich (Fred) Eisler, 1202 Hans Walter Eberstadt

Minutes of the Board of Governors

**LMA. London Metropolitan Archives**

Instructions for the Guidance of Regional and Local Committees

John Presland (Gladys Bendit) A Great Adventure; The Story of the Refugee Children's Movement' July 1944

Norman Bentwich, Report on a Visit to Vienna, 17 August 1939

Movement for the Care of Refugee Children from Germany, Ltd, First Annual Report November 1938-December 1939

Refugee Children's Movement Second Annual Report 1939-40

Refugee Children's Movement, Ltd. Third Annual Report, 1941-42

**MOA. Mass Observation Archive, Special Collections, University of Sussex**

TC25 Political Attitudes and Behaviour, 1938-56

File Report 1525, 'Reconstruction V', December 1942

**NA. National Archives, Kew**

British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC) Executive and General Committee Minutes HO 294/50

BCRC Papers HO 294/39

BCRC Trust History HO 294/6

BCRC Correspondence HO 294/53-54

Cabinet Papers CAB 32/96, 19 Oct-21 Dec 1938

MI5 File KV2/2829 Thomas Corder Pettifor Catchpool

MI5 File KV6/83 Doreen Warriner

T161/932 Treasury Contribution by H.M. Government to the International Commission for the assistance of Child Refugees. 1937 Dec 10-1939 Feb 11

**NCA. National Cartoon Archive, Canterbury.**

DL1411. David Low, 'Optimistic Balancer' *The Evening Standard*, 13 January 1939

**RVA. Refugee Voices Archive, Southampton.**

Fanni Bogdanov (24)

Hana Eardley (48)

Ruth Price (68)

**USHMM. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive**

Vera Gissing interview, 22 April 2006

**WL. Wiener Library**

Domestic Council for German Jewry files, 27/6/38 and 27/7/39

**WILPF. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Archives, London School of Economics**

Executive Committee Minutes, 1918-1942, WILPF/1/1-1/18

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies WILPF/4/1

WILPF Executive Committee Minutes, Volumes 10-21

**YCA. York City Archives**

York Refugee Committee Minutes. Accession 404

**B. Interviews, Oral Histories, Family Papers and Correspondence**

**Oral History Interviews/Author's Correspondence**

J.E. Brenda Bailey, March 2012

Trudi Byrne, 15 February 2011

Roger Clark, 10 April 2012

Lenore Davies, 28 March 2011

Andrew Farrar, 22 January 2013

Gisela Faust, September 2012

Charles Hannam, November 2011-January 2012

Irene Kurer. 15 October 2012

Peter Kurer, 20 April 2011

Paul Rice, 30 July 2011

### **Documents in Private Collections**

Notes entitled 'Memories of Refugees in York', David Hughes, 30 July 2006

Letter from David Hughes to Jennifer Taylor, 16 March 2011

Correspondence relating to Dr. Martin Eggert. Private Collection belonging to Philip B. Hunt.

Scottish Domestic Bureau Minute Book, private possession of Andrew Farrar

Marion Wolff, correspondence with Peter Kurer, March 25, 2007

### **C. Newspapers and Magazines**

Birmingham Post

British Medical Journal

Daily Herald

Friends' Quarterly Examiner

The Lancet

Picture Post

Quäker: Zeitschrift der deutschen Freund

Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge et Bulletin International des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge

The Daily Mail

The Daily Mirror

The Evening Standard

The Friend

The Independent

The Manchester Guardian

The New Yorker

The New York Review of Books

The Star

The Telegraph

The Times

The World Tomorrow

The York Evening Post

Yorkshire Evening Press

#### **D. Film and Radio**

BBC Radio 4 four-part documentary series, 'The Child Migrants' aired in 2003.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/child\\_migrants.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/child_migrants.shtml)

Bowles, Steve (dir.) *The Guernica Children* (Eyewitness Productions Ltd., 2007)

#### **E. Articles, Chapters and Theses**

Brinson, Charmian, 'A Woman's Place?...German Speaking Women in Exile in Britain, 1933-1945' *German Life and Letters* 51:2, April 1998. pp. 204-224.

Bryan, Alex, 'Bertha L. Bracey: friend of the oppressed', *Friends' Quarterly*, January 1991. pp. 27-28.

Buchanan, Tom, 'Britain's Popular Front?: Aid Spain and the British Labour Movement' *History Workshop Journal* 31(1), 1991, pp. 60-72.

-----, Tom, 'A Far Away Country of Which we Know Nothing'? Perceptions of Spain and its Civil War in Britain, 1931-1939'. *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1993, pp. 1-24.

-----, Tom, 'The Truth will set you free': The Making of Amnesty International, *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 37 (4), 2002 pp. 575-597.



Caestecker, Frank and Bob Moore, 'Female Domestic Servants as Desirable Refugees: Gender, Labour Needs and Immigration Policy in Belgium. The Netherlands and Great Britain'. *European History Quarterly* 41(2), 2011, pp. 213-30.

Carson, Jenny, 'The Quaker Internationalist Tradition in Displaced Persons Camps, 1945-48' in Gatrell and Baron (eds) *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) pp. 67-85.

Castendyck, Elsa , 'Refugee Children in Europe', *The Social Service Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, December 1939, pp. 587-601.

Curio, Claudia, 'Invisible' Children: The Selection and Integration Strategies of Relief Organizations, *Shofar*, Volume 23, Number 1, Fall 2004. pp. 41-56.

Delap, Lucy, 'Kitchen Sink Laughter: Domestic Service Humour in Twentieth Century Britain' *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 49, No., 3, July 2010, pp. 623-654.

Duroux, Rose, 'La ayuda de Noruega e Suecia' in Alfonso Guerra (ed) *El Exilio de los Niños* (Madrid: Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 2003).pp. 126-145.

Ellis, Richard W.B. and Russell, Audrey E., 'Four Thousand Basque Children', *The Lancet*, May 29, 1937, pp. 1303-1304.

-----, Richard W.B. and Russell, Audrey E., 'The Refugees in Catalonia' *The Lancet*, Oct 16, 1937, pp. 929-938.

-----, Richard W.B., 'Effects of War on Child Health' *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4544, Feb. 7, 1948, pp. 239-245.

Feldman, Ilana, 'The Quaker Way: Ethical Labour and Humanitarian Relief' *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 2007, pp. 689-705

Fell, Margaret, *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed of by the Scriptures, All such as speak by the Spirit and Power of the Lord Jesus, 1666* (Quaker Heritage Press Online Texts, Accessed Jun 10, 2012).

Freeman, Mark, 'Muscular Quakerism? The Society of Friends and Youth Movements in Britain c. 1900-1950', *English Historical Review*, vol. 125, 2010, pp. 642-49.

Fyrth, Jim, 'The Aid Spain Movement in Britain, 1936-39' *History Workshop*, No. 35. Spring, 1993, pp. 153-164.

Gillespie, Veronica, 'Working with the 'Kindertransports' in Sybil Oldfield (ed) *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain 1914-1945* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994).

Godby, Michael, 'Confronting Horror: Emily Hobhouse and the Concentration Camp Photographs of the South African War', *Kronos*, No. 32, November 2006. pp. 34-48.

Grenville, Anthony, 'Underpaid, underfed and overworked: Refugees in domestic service' *AJR Journal* Volume 8 No. 12, December 2008. pp. 1-2.

-----, Anthony, 'Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and the Winton Children', *AJR Journal*, Volume 11, Number 4, April 2011. pp. 1-2.

Hammel, Andrea, 'Representations of Family in Autobiographical Texts of Child Refugees' *Shofar*, Volume 23, Number 1, Fall 2004. pp. 121-132.

Holton, Sandra Stanley, 'To Educate Women into Rebellion': Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Creation of a Transatlantic Network of Radical Suffragists' *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No., 4, Oct, 1994. pp. 1112-1136.

Jolly, Margaretta, and Liz Stanley, 'Letters as/Not a Genre' *LifeWriting*, 2006. pp. 75-101.

Keren, Célia, 'Autobiographies of Spanish Refugee Children at the Quaker Home in La Rouvière (France, 1940): Humanitarian Communication and Children's Writings', *Les Cahiers de Framespa*, Numéro 5, 2010. Published online URL : <http://framespa.revues.org/268>.

Kieval, Hillel J. , 'Legality and Resistance in Vichy France: The Rescue of Jewish Children', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 124, No. 5, Oct. 10, 1980. pp. 339-366.

Kotzin, Chana Revell, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees from Europe, 1933-1939'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2000.

Kushner, Tony, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-40' in Kushner and Lunn (eds) *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1990) pp. 49-61.

-----, Tony, 'An Alien Occupation-Jewish Refugees and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-1948' in Mosse, Werner E. (Ed) *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1991) pp. 553-578.

-----, Tony, 'An Alien Occupation: Domestic Service and the Jewish Crisis, 1933 to 1939' in *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) pp. 90-119.

-----, Tony, 'Local Heroes: Belgian Refugees in Britain during the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 18:1, 1999. pp. 1-28.

Lester, Alan, 'British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire' *History Workshop Journal*, No. 54, Autumn, 2002. pp. 24-48.

Loebl, Herbert, 'Government-financed Factories and the Establishment of Industries by refugees in the Special Areas of the North of England 1937-1961' University of Durham: MPhil dissertation, 1978.

McNeill, Jim, 'The peculiar history of the sect known at The Quakers' *Bristol Radical History Pamphleteer* #17.

Mendlesohn, Farah, 'Denominational Differences in Quaker Relief Work during the Spanish Civil War: The Operation of Corporate Concern and Liberal Theologies', *The Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2000. pp. 180-195.

Mezei, Kathy, 'Spinsters, Surveillance, and Speech: The Case of Miss Marple, Miss Mole, and Miss Jekyll' *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 30, No., 2, Winter, 2007. pp. 103-120.

Myers, Kevin, 'The Ambiguities of Aid and Agency: Representing Refugee Children in England, 1937-38' *Cultural and Social History*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2009. pp. 29-46.

Nora, Pierre, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire' *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, Spring, 1989. pp. 7-24.

Oldfield, Sybil, 'It is Usually She: The Role of British Women in the Rescue and Care of Kindertransport Kinder' *Shofar*, Volume 23, Number 1, Fall, 2004. pp. 57-70.

Rathbone, Eleanor, 'The Remuneration of Women's Services' *Economic Journal* 27:105, March 1917. pp. 56-58.

Reinisch, Jessica, 'Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA', *Past and Present*, Supplement 6, 2011. pp. 258-289.

-----, Jessica, 'Auntie UNRRA at the Crossroads', *Past and Present* Supplement 8, 2013. pp. 70-97.

Rich, Adrienne Cecile, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (1980) *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003. pp. 11-48.

Roberts, Sian Lliwen, *Place, Life Histories and the Politics of Relief: Episodes in the Life of Francesca Wilson, Humanitarian Educator Activist* (University of Birmingham PhD, 2010).

Rosler, Martha, 'In, around and afterthoughts on documentary photography' in *Decoys and Disruptions* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2004). pp. 151-206.

Rupp, Leilia J., 'Sexuality and Politics in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of the International Women's Movement', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 23, No., 3, Autumn, 1997. pp. 577-605.

----, Leila J., 'Challenging Imperialism in International Women's Organizations, 1888-1945' *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 8, No., 1, Spring, 1996. pp. 8-27.

Salvatici, Silvia, 'Help the People to Help Themselves': UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons' *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 25, No. 3, June 2012. pp. 1-24.

Schofield, Mary Anne, 'Women's Speaking Justified: The Feminine Quaker Voice, 1662-1797' *Tulsa Studies in Literature*, Vol. 6, No., 1, Spring 1987. pp. 61-77.

Soo, Gregory Scott, *Exile, Identity and Memory: Representations of Spanish Republicans in the Southwest of France* (Dphil, University of Sussex, 2005).

Stewart, John, 'Angels or Aliens? Refugee Nurses in Britain, 1938 to 1942' *Medical History*, no. 47, 2003. pp. 149-172.

Summerfield, Penny, 'Mass-Observation: Social Research or Social Movement?' *the Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 20, 1985. pp. 439-452.

-----, Penny, 'The Women's Movement in Britain from the 1860s to the 1980s.' Chapter 19, Tara Cosslett, Alison Easton and Penny Summerfield (Eds) *Women, Power and Resistance: An Introduction to Women's Studies* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996). pp. 227-237.

Taylor, Pam, 'Daughters and Mothers-maids and mistresses: domestic service between the wars' Chp. 5 in Clarke, Critcher and Johnson (Eds) *Working Class Culture: Studies in history and theory* [CCCS Publication] (London: Hutchinson, 1979). pp. 121-139.

Taylor, Jennifer, "Work of modest proportion": Ayton School: One example of the Contribution of the Society of Friends to Saving the Refugees from Hitler in 'I didn't want to

float: I wanted to belong to something' Refugee Organisations in Britain 1933-45 (ed.) Andrea Reiter Vol. 10 *Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, Institute of Germanic and Romance Languages, University of London (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008) pp. 153-168.

-----, Jennifer, 'The Missing Chapter: How the British Quakers helped to save the Jews of Germany and Austria from Nazi Persecution' (Privately published, October 2009).

Taylor, Richard, 'Typhoid Fever in the Basque Refugee Camp' *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 2, No. 4006, Oct 16, 1937. pp. 760-761.

Thane, Pat, 'Women and Political Participation in England, 1918-1970'. Thane and Breitenbach (eds) *Women and Citizenship in Britain and Ireland in the Twentieth Century: What Difference did the Vote Make?* (London: Continuum, 2010). pp. 11-28.

Thompson, E.P., 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century' *Past & Present*, No. 50. Feb., 1971. pp. 76-136.

Todd, Selina, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain 1900-1950' *Past and Present*, No. 203, May 2009. pp. 181-204.

Warriner, Doreen, 'A Winter in Prague' *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4, April, 1984. pp. 209-240.

Webster, Wendy, 'Transnational Journeys and Domestic Histories' *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 39, No. 3, Spring 2006. pp. 651-666.

-----, Wendy, "Britain and the Refugees of Europe, 1939-1950." In *Gendering Migration: Masculinity, Femininity, and Ethnicity in Post-War Britain*, edited by Louise Ryan and Wendy Webster (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008). pp. 35-52.

Weintraub, Phillip, 'UNRRA: An experiment in international welfare planning' *The Journal of Politics*, Volume 7, Issue 1, February 1945. pp. 1-24.

Wilkinson, Helen, 'The New Heraldry': Stock Photography, Visual Literacy, and Advertising in 1930s Britain, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1997. pp. 23-38.

Williams, H.C. Maurice, 'The Arrival Of the Basque Children At the Port of Southampton' *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 1, No. 3988, Jun 12, 1937. pp. 1209-1210.

Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina, 'Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41(4), 2006. pp. 595-610.

-----, Ina, 'Raising a Nation of 'Good Animals': The New Health Society and Health Education Campaigns in Interwar Britain'. *Social History of Medicine*, 20 (1), 2007. pp. 73-89.

## F. Printed Books

Adam, Ruth, *A Woman's Place, 1910-1975* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977 [1975]).

Alberti, Johanna, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914-28* (London: MacMillan, 1989).

Aguilar, Paloma, *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy* (trans. Mark Oakley) (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

Andrews, Maggie, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997).

Arendt, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1965).

Astor, Viscount, and Seeböhm Rowntree, *British Agriculture: The Principles of Future Policy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939 [1938]).

Bachtin, Nicholas, *Lectures and Essays* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1963).

Bacon, Margaret Hope, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986).

Bailey, J.E. Brenda, *A Quaker Couple in Nazi Germany: Leonhard Friedrich Survives Buchenwald* (York: William Sessions Limited, 1994).

Bailey, Rosemary, *Love and War in the Pyrenees: A Story of Courage, Fear and Hope 1939-1944* (London: Phoenix, 2009).

Barnett, Michael and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

Barthés, Roland, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980).

Bate, David, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

Baxell, Richard, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Beddoe, Deirdre, *Back to Home and Duty: Women between the Wars, 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989).

Bell, Adrian, *Only for Three Months: The Basque Children in Exile* (Norwich: Mousehold Press, 1996).

Berghahn, Marion, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 1988 [1984]).

Bingham, Adrian, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

Blend, Martha, *A Child Alone* (London, Valentine Mitchell, 1995).

Bollauf, Traude, *Dienstmädchen-Emigration: Die Flucht jüdischer Frauen aus Österreich und Deutschland nach England 1938-39* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010).

Bradley, Katharine, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the state: Charities and the working classes in London, 1918-79* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

Brothers, Caroline, *War and Photography: A Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Buchanan, Tom, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

-----, Tom, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

-----, Tom, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss and Memory* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007).

Burnett, John, *The Annals of Labour: Autobiographies of British Working-Class People, 1820-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974).

Burton, Antoinette, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

Cadbury, Deborah, *Chocolate Wars, From Cadbury to Kraft: 200 Years of Sweet Success and Bitter Rivalry* (London: Harper Press, 2010).

Cadbury, Edward and M. Cecile Matheson, *Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in An Industrial City* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906).

Calder, Angus, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1992 [1969]).

Cahalan, Peter, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England during the Great War* (Garland Publishing, 1982)

Carnall, Geoffrey, *Gandhi's Interpreter: A Life of Horace Alexander* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

Carr, Raymond, *The Spanish Tragedy: The Civil War in Perspective* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000 [1977]).

Chadwick, W.R. *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees, 1938-39* (Leicester: Matador, 2010).

Cohen, Susan, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

Cooper, Kanty, *The Uprooted: Agony and Triumph among the Debris of War* (London: Quartet Books, 1979).

Cooper, R.M. (ed) *Refugee Scholars: Conversations with Tess Simpson* (Leeds: Moorland Books, 1992).

Curtis, Norah and Cyril Gilbey, *Malnutrition: Quaker Relief in Austria 1919-1924 and Spain 1936-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944).

Darton, Lawrence, *An Account of the Work of the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens First Known as the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends 1933-1950* (Issued by the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, 1954)

Davidoff, Leonore and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).



Davies, A. Tegla, *Friends Ambulance Unit: The Story of the F.A.U in the Second World War 1939-1946* (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1947).

Day, Peter, *Franco's Friends: How British Intelligence Helped Bring Franco to Power in Spain* (London : Biteback, 2011).

De la Cruz y Gomez, Cesareo, *Mis Campos de Concentracion* (Somosierra: Gráficas Ceyde, 1978).

Delafield, E.M., *Diary of a Provincial Lady* (London: Virago Press, 1984 [1930]).

Delamont, Sarah, and Lorna Duffin (eds), *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

Delap, Lucy, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Drevet, Camile, and Edith M. Pye, 'Report of the WILPF Delegation to China', (privately printed, 1928).

Dyhouse, Carol, *Girls Growing Up in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981).

-----, Carol, *No Distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities, 1870-1939* (London: UCL Press, 1995).

-----, Carol, *Feminism and the Family in England 1880-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989).

Ellis, Havelock, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Volumes 1-6 (The Project Gutenberg eBook, released 2004).

Faber, Sebastiaan, *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico, 1939-1975* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002).

Faderman, Lilian, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: The Women's Press, 1985 [1981]).

Fast, Vera K., *Children's Exodus: A History of the Kindertransport* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

Flanders A. and H.A. Clegg (eds.) *The System of Industrial Relations in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954).

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1995 [1975]).

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* (London: Virago, 1990 [1976]).

Fox, Hubert C., *Spicelands Friends Meeting House: Its Historical Background* (Southampton: Pearson and Lloyd Publishers, 1995 [1959]).

Freeman, Mark, *The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust: A Study in Quaker Philanthropy and Adult Education 1904-1954* (York: William Sessions Ltd., 2004).

Fremlin, Celia, *The Seven Chars of Chelsea* (London: Meuthen and Co. Ltd., 1940).

Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique* (London: Penguin, 2010 [1963]).

Fry, A. Ruth, *A Quaker Adventure: The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction* (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd. 1926).

Fry, Helen, *Jews in North Devon During the Second World War* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 2005).

Fry, Joan Mary, *In Downcast Germany 1919-1935* (London: James Clare and Co., 1944).

Fry, Varian, *Surrender on Demand* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1997 (1945)).

Fyrth, Jim, *The Signal was Spain: The Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986).

-----, Jim with Sally Alexander (eds.) *Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991).

Gara, Larry, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961).

Gardner, Colin, *Karel Reisz* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

Gaskell, Elizabeth, *Mary Barton* (London: Penguin, 2003 [1848]).

-----, Elizabeth, *North and South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973 [1854]).

Gershon, Karen, *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography* (London: Victor Gollancz Limited, 1966).

Gillett, Nicholas, *Abolishing War: One Man's Attempt* (Published online at <http://insearchofpeace.net/node/23>, 2004) Retrieved April, 2011.

Gissing, Vera, *Pearls of Childhood* (London: Robson, 2007 [1989]).

Green, Nan, *A Chronicle of Small Beer* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 2005).

Greenspan, Nancy Thorndike, *The End of the Certain World: The Life and Science of Max Born* (Chichester: Wiley, 2005).

Gregg, Richard, *Gandhism Versus Socialism* (New York: John Day, 1932)

-----, Richard, *The Power of Non-violence* (Philadelphia, Penn.: J. B. Lippincott, 1934)

Grenville, Anthony, *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-70: Their Image in AJR Information* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

Guske, Iris, *Trauma and Attachment in the Kindertransport Context: German-Jewish Child Refugee's Accounts of Displacement and Acculturation in Britain* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

Hall, Radclyffe, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Virago, 1982 [1928]).

Halle, Anna Sabine, *Quäkerhaltung und-handeln im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland* (Bad Pyrmont, 1993).

-----, Anna Sabine, *'Die Gedanken sind frei' Eine Jugendgruppe der Berliner Quäker 1935-1941* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1995).

Hammel, Andrea and Bea Lewkowicz (eds) *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives* (London: Editions Rodolpi, 2012).

Hannam, Charles, *A Boy in Your Situation* (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1977).

-----, Charles, *Almost an Englishman* (London: André Deutsch Limited, 1979).

-----, Charles, *Outsider Inside* (London: Alpha Press, 2008).

Harris, Mark Jonathan, and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000).

Harrison, Rosina, *Rose: My Life in Service* (London: Cassell, 1975).

Healy, Denis, *The Time of My Life* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989).

Hill, Christopher, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1975]).

Hirschmann, Albert O., *A Propensity to Self-Subversion* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Hobsbawm, Eric, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life* (London: Abacus, 2003 [2002]).

Holton, Sandra Stanley, *Quaker Women: Personal Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1780-1930* (London: Routledge, 2007).

-----, Sandra Stanley, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Hoyland, J.S., *Digging with the Unemployed* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1934).

-----, John S., *Digging for a New England: The Co-operative Farm for Unemployed Men* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936).

Hughes, William R., *Indomitable Friend: Corder Catchpool 1883-1952* (London: Housmans, 1964 [1956]).

Hutchinson, Alex, *The Cocoa Works, York* (London: Nestle Publishing, 2013)

Ibarrurui, Dolores, *They Shall Not Pass: The Autobiography of La Pasionaria* (New York: International Publishers, 2005 [1966]).

Jackson, Angela, *British Women and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Jeffreys, Sheila, *The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985).

Jeremy, D. (ed) *Religion, Business and Wealth in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Jones, Enid Huws, *Margery Fry: The Essential Amateur* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

Jolly, Margaretta, *Dear Laughing Motorbyke: Letters from Women Welders of the Second World War* (London: Scarlet Press, 1997).

-----, Margaretta, *In Love and Struggle: Letters in Contemporary Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

- Jones, Enid Huws, *Margery Fry: The Essential Amateur* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).
- Jones, Helen, *Women in British Public Life, 1914-1950* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000).
- Jones, Jack, *Union Man* (London: Collins, 1986).
- Kahn, Albert E., *Joys and Sorrows: Reflections by Pablo Casals* (Macdonald: London, 1970).
- Kershner, Howard E., *Quaker Service in Modern War* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950).
- Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2008).
- Koestler, Arthur, *Dialogue with Death* (London: Hutchinson, 1966 (1937)).
- , Arthur, *Scum of the Earth* (London: Eland, 1991 [1941]).
- Koven, Seth and Sonya Michel (Eds) *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Krechel, Ursula, *Landgericht* (Salzburg: Jung und Jung, 2012).
- Kushner, Tony, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).
- , Tony, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in Britain during the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989).
- , Tony, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
- Kushner, Tony and Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2001 [1999]).
- Laharie, Claude, *Le Camp de Gurs 1939-1945: Un aspect Meconnu de l'histoire du Bearn* (Biarritz: Atlantic Publishing Company, 1993).
- Langhamer, Claire, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
- Lassner, Phyllis, *Anglo-Jewish Women Writing the Holocaust* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Legarreta, Dorothy, *The Guernica Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1984).

Lethbridge, Lucy, *Servants: A Downstairs View of Twentieth-century Britain* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013).

Leverton, Bertha and Shmuel Lowerton (eds.) *I Came Alone: The Stories of the Kindertransports* (London: Book Guild Ltd., 1990)

Lewis, Jeremy, *Shades of Greene: One Generation of an English Family* (London: Vintage, 2011).

Light, Alison, *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants* (London: Penguin, 2007).

London, Louise, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Macadam, Elizabeth, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934).

Macdonald, Nancy, *Homage to the Spanish Exiles: Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Insight Books, 1987).

Mackinnon, Alison, *Love and Freedom: Professional Women and the Reshaping of Personal Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Madge, C. & Harrison, T.H., *Mass Observation* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1937).

Mahood, Linda, *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876-1928* (Basingstoke: PalgraveMacmillan, 2009).

Marwick, Arthur. *British Society since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain* (London: Penguin, 1990 [1982]).

Mates, Lewis H., *The Spanish Civil War and the British Left: Political Activism and the Popular Front* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

Mazower, Mark, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

-----, Mark, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin, 2012).

McDiarmid Muriel, *Franco in Barcelona* (London: United Editorial Ltd., 1939).

Mendlesohn, Farah, *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War*, Quaker Studies Vol. 1 (Lewiston: The Edgar Mellen Press, 2002).

Mitford, Jessica, *Hons and Rebels* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1977).

Murdoch, Lydia, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

Nash, Mary, *Defying Male Civilisation: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, Inc., 1995).

Newby, Howard, *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England* (London: Hutchinson, 1979).

Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932; reprint 1948).

Oldfield, Sybil, *Women Against the Iron Fist: Alternatives to Militarism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989).

-----, Sybil (Ed) *This Working-Day World: Women's Lives and Culture(s) in Britain 1914-1945* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994).

-----, Sybil, *Doers of the Word: British Women Humanitarians 1900-1950* (privately published, 2006)

-----, Sybil (Ed) *Kindertransport, Before and After: Elegy and Celebration. Sixty Poems 1980-2007* by Lotte Kramer (Centre for German Jewish Studies, University of Sussex, 2007)

Orwell, George, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 [1937]).

-----, George, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Penguin, 1989 [1938]).

-----, George, *Orwell's England* (London: Penguin, 2001).

Ozick, Cynthia, *The Messiah of Stockholm* (New York: Random House, 1990 [1987]).

Palfreeman, Linda, *Salud! British Volunteers in the Republican Medical Service, 1936-1939* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012).

Paxton, Robert O., *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972 [2001]).

Preston, Paul, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986).

-----, Paul, *Doves of War: Four Women of Spain* (London: HarperCollins, 2002).

-----, Paul, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: Harper Press, 2012).

Pedersen, Susan, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Powell, Margaret, *Climbing the Stairs* (London: Pan Books, 1969).

Priestley, J.B., *English Journey* (London: Heinemann, 1968 [1934]).

Prochaska, F.K., *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

Pye, Edith M.(ed.) *'War and its Aftermath': Letters from Hilda Clark, M.B., B.S. From France, Austria and the Near East 1914-1924* (privately printed, n.d., circa 1956).

---, E.M. *Notes on the Women's Movement in China* (Privately Printed: Women's International League, 1928).

Rees, Richard, *A Theory of my Time: An Essay in Didactic Reminiscence* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1963).

Roberts, Elizabeth, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

Roberts, John, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

Roseman, Mark, *The Past in Hiding* (London: Penguin, 2001).

Rowntree, B. Seebohm, *Poverty: A Study in Town Life* (New York: H. Fertig, 1971 [1901]) .

-----, B. Seebohm, *Poverty and Progress: a Second Social Study of York* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941).

-----, B. S. *The Human Factor in Business* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1921)

Rupp, Leila J., *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).



---, Leila J., *Sapphistries* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

Russell, Lynn and Neil Hanson, *The Sweethearts* (London: HarperCollins, 2013).

Samuels, Diane, *Kindertransport* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995).

Schmitt, Hans A. *Lucky Victim: An Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times, 1933-1946* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

-----, Hans A., *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997).

Schott, Linda, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before 1941* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997).

Schrover, Marlou, Joanne Van Der Leun, Leo Lucasson and Chris Quispel (eds) *Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

Sebald, W. G., *Austerlitz* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2001).

Segal, Lore, *Other People's Houses* (London: The New Press, 2004 [1964]).

Shephard, Ben, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (London: The Bodley Head, 2010).

Shepherd, Naomi, *Wilfrid Israel: German Jewry's Secret Ambassador* (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Limited, 1984).

Smith, Lindsay, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth-Century Photography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

Smith, Lyn, *Heroes of the Holocaust: Ordinary Britons who risked their lives to make a difference* (London: Ebury Press, 2012).

Smith, Stanley, *Spiceland Quaker Training Centre 1940-1946* (York: William Sessions Ltd., 1990).

Sontag, Susan, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008 [1977]).

Spielhofer, Sheila, *Stemming the Dark Tide: Quakers in Vienna 1919-1942* (York: William Sessions Limited, 2001).

Steedman, Carolyn, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Stewart-Murray, Katherine (Duchess of Atholl) *Searchlight on Spain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938).

Strachey, Ray, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (London: Virago, 1978 [1928]).

Strange, Julie-Marie, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Summerfield, Penny, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

Swanwick, Helena, *I Have Been Young* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1935).

Synnestvedt, Alice Resch, *Over the Highest Mountains: A Memoir of Unexpected Heroism in France during World War Two* (Pasadena, California: Intentional Productions, 2005).

Thompson, Paul, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Todd, Selina, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Tosh, John and Michael Roper (eds) *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991).

Tressell, Robert, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2005 [1914]).

Turner, Barry, *...And the Policeman Smiled: 10,000 Children escape from Nazi Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

Urwick, Lyndall Fownes, *The Golden Book of Management: A Historical Record of the Life and Work of Seventy Pioneers* (London: Arno Press, 1979 [1956])

Veerman, Philip E., *The Rights of the Child and the Changing Image of Childhood* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992)

Vicinus, Martha, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985) .

-----, Martha, *Intimate Friends: Women who loved Women, 1778-1928* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Vickery, Amanda, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Vincent, John, *The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857-1868* (London: Constable, 1966).

Weber, Max, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009 [1947]).

Williams, Bill, *'Jews and other foreigners': Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

Wilson, Francesca M., *In the Margins of Chaos* (London: John Murray, 1944).

-----, Francesca M., *Rebel Daughter of a Country House: The Life of Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children Fund* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967).

Witz, Anne, *Professions and Patriarchy* (London: Routledge, 1992).

Woolf, Virginia, *Three Guineas* (London: Hogarth Press, 1938).

Wriggins, Howard, *Picking up the Pieces from Portugal to Palestine: Quaker Refugee Relief in World War II, A Memoir* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004).

Zahra, Tara, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families After World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

