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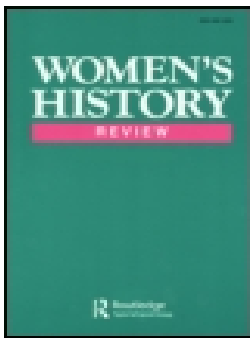
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The 'awkward' squad: British women foreign correspondents during the interwar years

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ABSTRACT

During the interwar years, gendered inequalities in newspaper newsrooms and social prejudice against 'mobile' women combined to force women who wanted to work as foreign correspondents to seek alternative routes to raising their voices on international affairs. Women's reportage can be found in a range of platforms from the mainstream press to early journals of humanitarian communication and literary magazines. When women reported for major newspapers they were often precariously freelance and the gendered nature of their treatment by newspaper hierarchies emphasised their, and all women's, outsider status when it came to international politics. Women's international journalism, often rooted in the humanitarian tradition, concentrated on telling the lives of minor characters and ordinary people, and offers insights into individual human suffering at a time of great international anxiety. Their writing, often anonymous or in overlooked niche publications, represents a missing actor on public opinion at this critical time.

KEYWORDS

Foreign correspondents; appeasement; interwar; humanitarian communications; women; gender

Introduction

During the interwar years, coverage in the British mainstream press of the major events in Europe—the rise of fascism, the League of Nations and the disarmament conferences in Geneva—was dominated by a powerful all-male group of newspaper proprietors, editors, diplomatic and 'special' foreign correspondents often with close ties to government. The complex set of diplomatic and political manoeuvres that led, ultimately, to the Second World War are thus seen as predominantly 'male-authored' in anglophone journalism, narrated by men such as Victor Gordon Lennox of the *Daily Telegraph*, Geoffrey Dawson, Norman Ebbutt and George Steer of *The Times*, and the Americans, Ed Murrow and Ernest Hemingway.¹ Although mainstream national newspapers paid lip service to the new British female citizenry following the enactment of the legislative reforms of the Representation of the People Act (1918) and the Equal Franchise Act (1928), they published little political material, particularly on foreign affairs, aimed

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specifically at women; as Adrian Bingham has shown, material aimed at women readers actually declined during the 1930s.²

Recently, scholars including Julie Gottlieb, Matthew Stibbe and Helen McCarthy have challenged the view that women were not interested in international events at this time.³ Women were, particularly in the late 1930s, deeply anxious about another possible war; they were also engaged in a broad range of international movements, ranging from peace activism, to raising money for the Aid Spain appeals, to supporting appeasement and closer ties with Germany.⁴ Jan Stockmann has also recently shown how women academics were closely involved in the newly emerging field of International Relations.⁵ Notwithstanding these arenas of women's active contribution, few women worked on mainstream newspapers during the interwar years and female-authored narratives from the field are hard to find. One sociological study of newspapers conducted during the 1930s gives an average of one woman staff member per newspaper in the editorial department, and this was usually the women's page editor.⁶ On newspaper women's pages, the rare discussions of foreign policy were often reduced to discussions of personality, or the opinions of leaders' wives.⁷ The *Daily Mail*, for example, carried a 'scoop' interview with leading Nazi woman Magda Goebbels by their 'star' female correspondent Margaret Lane in July 1933. The headline, 'Nazi Creed for Women: Marriage first but beauty is a duty' gives the tenor of the article, which discussed Frau Goebbels' view on cosmetics and complexions, although, *en passant*, Frau Goebbels did darkly warn the journalist that 'the age of strong men' was coming.⁸

For the purposes of this article, I contend, as other scholars have, that because of their legal, social and political subjugation, women during the interwar years must be seen as a minority or marginalised group, even though in numerical terms they outnumbered men.⁹ Studies of marginalised populations have established that even within minorities facing apparently insuperable obstacles, there is always a 'culture of resistance', which fosters endless renewal in strategies to oppose and overcome, just as the elite or dominant culture practices continuous strategies of defence and exclusion.¹⁰ Julie Gottlieb and Matthew Stibbe have shown that several, particularly elite, women were actively engaged and communicating about foreign affairs during the interwar years, but our understanding and knowledge of narratives authored by women reporting from the field is still limited.¹¹ As this article will show, women in fact were reporting from the field for a wide range of published media but their methods of engagement were, of necessity, very different from those employed by male members of the foreign press corps. This method, it will be seen, although bringing with it difficulties and personal dangers, also brought advantages. This article examines women's practices and methods of professional engagement, and their published reportage, in three distinct areas of international correspondence from the field: humanitarian journalism, reporting from the Spanish Civil War, and reporting on the rising threat from Germany. For all three areas, I argue that it was precisely women's 'outsider' status that enabled them to create radically different narratives that emphasised the consequences of war on civilian populations rather than describing military and diplomatic strategies. The case of Shiela Grant Duff will show, additionally, that an outsider status in relation to the British foreign press corps enabled some women to construct alternative narratives that challenged the appeasement-oriented reportage of much of the British press between 1935 and 1938.

Interwar diplomatic and foreign correspondence

During the 1930s the all-male elite corps of British diplomatic correspondents took direction from the Foreign Office News Department run by Rex Leeper. Leeper, who had briefly worked under the newspaper magnate, Lord Beaverbrook (Minister of Information during the First World War), answered to Permanent Under-Secretary Robert Vansittart.¹² The core correspondents were Frederick Voigt of the *Manchester Guardian*, Victor Gordon Lennox of the *Daily Telegraph*, Norman Ewer of the *Daily Herald*, Vernon Bartlett of the *News Chronicle*, Harold Cardozo of the *Daily Mail* and Victor Poliakoff of the *Evening Standard* and the *Times*.¹³ Geoffrey Dawson and J. L. Garvin, editors of *The Times*, and *Observer* respectively, and Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook, proprietors of the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*, took close interest in diplomatic coverage and enjoyed personal relationships with statesmen. While Minister of Information at the end of the First World War, Beaverbrook had created many of the Whitehall diplomatic and political intelligence functions.¹⁴ Eton and Oxford-educated Geoffrey Dawson had worked with Lord Milner and as assistant private secretary to Joseph Chamberlain in South Africa; he enjoyed a close relationship with Lord Halifax (Foreign Secretary 1938–1940).¹⁵ Women were on the whole excluded from these networks of power, many forged at public school, Oxbridge and later through membership of London clubs. This is not to say that women's voices were not heard at all during the years of appeasement. Many women politicians, including the Duchess of Atholl, and the Labour MPs Ellen Wilkinson and Dr Edith Summerskill were highly vocal in their rejection of Chamberlain's policy.¹⁶ However these women were not journalists and despite their access to newspapers' comment and letters columns, apart from Wilkinson, did little reporting work.¹⁷

The uncritical acceptance, by the British press, especially *The Times*, *Daily Mail*, *Telegraph* and *Daily Express*, of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement has been widely discussed.¹⁸ Individual correspondents, including Norman Ebbutt of *The Times* and Pembroke Stephens of the *Daily Express* disagreed with their editors, but national newspapers have always been very hierarchical structures, with newsroom reporters and correspondents far removed from the editor's chair. Critical dispatches, particularly about Nazi atrocities were suppressed by pro-appeasement editors and correspondents also relied heavily on official sources such as Foreign Office diplomats and Vansittart and Leeper for information.¹⁹ When these two individuals were sidelined by Chamberlain during the run-up to the Munich crisis in the summer of 1938, their sources of information virtually dried up and newspaper correspondents were left reliant on Chamberlain's direction.²⁰ Studies of professional journalists on major newspapers conclude that 'ethical' journalists are often restrained from their role as truth-tellers because this role clashes with the interests of the organisation for which they write.²¹ Unlike other professions such as the law and medicine, journalists have no official certification and thus lack 'monopoly over their worth'.²² Women, often working for smaller, less hierarchical and more independent publications, or freelance, encountered fewer problems associated with working on mainstream newspapers and were thus freer in what they were able to report, and less reliant on official sources for information.

Nineteenth and early-twentieth century women's reporting on war and foreign affairs

From the development of the Victorian ideal of women's influence over the 'domestic sphere', foreign affairs were widely assumed to be only of interest to men and there was a distrust of women's political judgement in this sphere.²³ The longevity of this prejudice is illustrated in the way in which women were barred from entering the Diplomatic, Consular and other overseas services even after the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 allowed women to join the administrative grades of the Home Civil Service.²⁴ While newspapers, particularly the popular press, published stories on women pilots, adventurers and motorists engaged in international derring-do across the Empire, sober reflections on peace treaties and the consequences of war were the preserve of men.²⁵ Small numbers of elite women had, since the Second South African War (1899–1902), been active in imperial propaganda organisations such as the Victoria League, however their influence was almost always due to their personal relationships with powerful men and their influence declined during the interwar period.²⁶ Violet Milner, Lord Alfred Milner's widow, commented on imperial politics when she became editor of the monthly *National Review* in 1929, taking over from her brother. Although its circulation was under 10,000 a month, the *National Review* was regarded as one of the most prominent conservative publications of the interwar years.²⁷ Lady Houston, similarly, was a 'diehard' Conservative commentator in her weekly *Saturday Review*, which although by the time she bought the paper in 1933 was in severe decline, still sold around 20,000 copies a week, just a few thousand fewer than the contemporary publication, the *Spectator*.²⁸ On the other side of the political spectrum the prominent feminist internationalist Helena Swanwick edited the pacifist journal *Foreign Affairs* (1919–1931), the in-house journal of the Union of Democratic Control. Similar to other women engaged in issues of international relations, her role, Jan Stockmann has argued, 'was confined to observing and commenting', on 'feminine' areas of international policy such as child protection, refugees and human trafficking.²⁹

The restriction of any commentary and reporting on foreign affairs to elite women matched the British Foreign Office and diplomatic service which was in the interwar years a 'significant bastion of male upper-class power and privilege' with women apart from diplomatic wives and aristocratic society hostesses 'almost wholly excluded'.³⁰ Even *Time and Tide*, the feminist weekly review founded in 1920 and largely directed and edited by women, kept women's names off its weekly notes and leaders, which editor Lady Rhondda saw as 'the soul of the paper', for fear, Catherine Clay has argued, of undermining its authority amongst advertisers and the more conservative sections of its readership.³¹ The novelist Winifred Holtby, who wrote widely on international affairs for the paper, and was one of its directors, struggled for both by-lines and acceptance from male contributors on these pages.³² While the occasional woman had previously reported for mainstream newspapers from foreign parts, they were, for the most part, from wealthy and well-connected families, enjoying a degree of agency and access to elite networks few women did. The acclaimed nineteenth-century journalist Harriet Martineau's *Letters from Ireland*, published in 1852 in weekly articles in the *Daily News* are considered to be the first example of female foreign correspondence, although these articles were anonymous and written as from a masculine viewpoint.³³ Lady

Florence Dixie, who reported on the Zulu Wars (1879) for the *Morning Post*, Flora Shaw (later Lady Lugard), *The Times*' colonial editor in the 1890s and Lady Sarah Wilson who reported from the siege of Mafeking for the *Daily Mail*, enjoyed diplomatic and military connections at the highest levels.³⁴ Lina Duff Cooper reported on Italy and the rise of Mussolini for the *Observer* newspaper 1921–1935, from her castle in the Apennines, facilitated through her friendship with *Observer* editor J. L. Garvin.³⁵ Other high profile British women writers did comment on international affairs, but their articles were usually to be found either in newspaper women's pages, or in niche or specialist publications. Vera Brittain, for example, was in demand from a wide variety of publications to write about her experiences in France as a V. A. D. (volunteer nurse), after the publication of her First World War memoir *Testament of Youth* in 1933. Her articles were published in titles ranging from *Peace News* (1936—present) to *Modern Woman* (1925–1966); when she wrote about war and its prevention for the *Manchester Guardian*, it was for the women's page.³⁶ The then former Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson travelled to Germany as a journalist in 1933 and wrote of the 'orgy of cruelty' she observed for *Time and Tide*.³⁷ Other prominent women working in the fields of humanitarian aid also wrote articles, particularly for the *Manchester Guardian*, although these usually appeared on the women's page and were thus seen in a different light, and level of interest and importance, to reports on the foreign news pages.³⁸ From this it can be argued that newspaper editors considered women and foreign affairs to occupy two very different spheres, and that only a few elite women were trusted to write on the subject for the main parts of a paper. Even in the *Manchester Guardian*, women-authored international reporting was sequestered away in the women's pages, and the subject matter was still humanitarian or education-focused.

Recent studies of the emergence of the idea of 'New Woman' in the late-nineteenth century have shown that much of the disapproval associated with the image by contemporary critics centred on the notion of female visibility and mobility.³⁹ Elizabeth F. Evans argues that women were perceived to be inviting self-damage and danger by leaving the home and going into public places like city streets, railway carriages and hotels.⁴⁰ The woman foreign correspondent, who perforce, had to travel, and stay in hotels or even tents and other unsavoury lodgings, thus deliberately placed herself in a category of woman which, even after the First World War, was looked on with disapproval. As well as being mobile, many of the women in this study were also solitary, compounding their suspiciousness: the solitary woman's vulnerability and thus suspected sexual availability and untrustworthiness would suggest she was either destitute, a prostitute, or a spy. The middle-class woman who chose to leave the protection of her father's home and expose herself to prying eyes, was seen as perverse but also a symbol of social change and modernity and thus something to fear by the forces of reaction.⁴¹ Often, she was suspected of espionage: the underlying assumption being that a solitary mobile female must be at best duplicitous, at worst, a traitor to her country.⁴² The German journalist and traveller Dr Rosie Grafenberg for example, who travelled to French West Africa in the late 1920s was suspected by French intelligence of being a Russian agent, a communist agitator and a German spy; French agents followed her, taking copious notes.⁴³ By contrast, women journalists from the United States had, by the outbreak of the Russian revolution, gained staff positions on leading newspapers and correspondents including Louise Bryant, Bessie Beattie and Eleanor Franklin Egan

reported at length on the conditions of ordinary people during the years of revolution and also the Russian famine of 1921/22 for mainstream newspapers with large circulations.⁴⁴ These were still, nonetheless, elite, wealthy and well-connected women. A recent study of US women war correspondents, who by the late interwar period were considerably more advanced in their access to newspaper foreign pages than their British counterparts, shows that up until 1918, virtually all women who wrote about the First World War for US newspapers did so while accompanying husbands, fathers or brothers who were either members of the military or war correspondents themselves.⁴⁵ In this case, these women may have been mobile, but they still travelled under the protection of a male member of a household and thus possibly deflected potential disapproval.

Early humanitarian communications

Campaigning journalism about humanitarian causes both at home and abroad, written first by philanthropic activists, and taken up by celebrated ‘special’ correspondents such as Henry Nevinson and Vaughn Nash, had been part of newspaper content since the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁶ In 1901 readers of the *Manchester Guardian* were shocked by the activist Emily Hobhouse’s report on the concentration camps in South Africa, where Boer women and children were interned by the British army. Her account of the squalor of the camps, written up in a series of letters to the South African Women and Children’s Distress Fund, was designed to provoke sympathy, to prompt well-meaning middle classes to dip into their pockets, and to find the attention of politicians and opinion formers.⁴⁷ During earlier campaigns in the United States she had seen how exposing hardship in the newspapers elicited swifter reaction than working for change through official channels.⁴⁸ Hobhouse’s report, although written initially for supporters sympathetic to the Boer cause, had a major impact when published in the *Manchester Guardian*. Her technique, of inserting herself into the narrative to underscore the veracity of her account, and of enduring the same hardships as her subjects, helps create a powerful image: the thick, black swarms of flies, the blazing sun:

Imagine the heat outside the tents and the suffocation inside! We sat in their khaki blankets, rolled up inside Mrs B’s tent; and the sun blazed through the single canvas, and the flies lay thick and black on everything; no chair, no table, nor any room for such, only a deal box, standing on its end, served as a wee pantry. In this tiny tent live Mrs B’s five children ... on wet nights the water streams down through the canvas and comes flowing in.⁴⁹

Hobhouse, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, embodied ‘the evolution of the spiritual authority of missionary work into the new expert realm of transnational humanitarian advocacy and relief.’⁵⁰ Her work reinforced assumptions about the role of women in international crises: that they would concern themselves with the plight of women and children, prisoners and the wounded, victims caught up in powerful men’s war-making and politicking. Scholars have noted that Hobhouse ‘valued her relationship with the *Manchester Guardian*’, which was, like her, pro-Boer, and she understood how vivid stories in newspapers would lead to demands for action far quicker than appealing to officialdom which at any rate often ignored her because of her status.⁵¹ It will be seen how women journalists reporting on international events

in the interwar period adopted similar techniques in their writing: the inserting of the self in the narrative, the appeal to emotion, the concentration on, as the American Louise Bryant called it, 'the odds and ends' of conflict, the victims of war.⁵²

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, female-authored narratives on international topics, similar to those by Emily Hobhouse, blurred the lines between humanitarian communications and journalism.⁵³ This was because often the only way women could gain access to theatres of conflict was through volunteering for humanitarian work.⁵⁴ One significant group of women engaged in this area were volunteers for the Quaker Friends, one of the largest and most widespread humanitarian activist organisations operating during and after the First World War. The Friends encouraged women both to work as volunteers and to write for their three publications, *Reconstruction* (1918–1920), the *Friends Quarterly Examiner* (1867–1846) and, the longest-running Quaker publication, the weekly *Friend*, first published in 1843 and still published today.⁵⁵ Hubert Peet, editor of *The Friend* 1932–1949 had spent most of the First World War in Wormwood Scrubs prison as a conscientious objector. He was the first professional journalist to take charge of the publication having previously worked for the *Daily Sketch* and *Daily News*. Under his editorship circulation of *The Friend* almost doubled from just over 4,000 in the early 1930s to more than 7,000 in the late 1940s.⁵⁶ Peet interviewed returning relief workers from abroad and encouraged many women to write for *The Friend*, and their vivid stories were partly why the journal became, for the first time, self-supporting as its circulation grew.⁵⁷ Prominent Quaker women, including Ruth and Margery Fry contributed, during these years, both to *The Friend*, and mainstream newspapers, notably the *Manchester Guardian* and *News Chronicle*. Similarly, *The Record*, (renamed *The World's Children* in 1923), the journal of the Save the Children Fund, with a circulation of just over 5,000 offered women activists working for that organisation (which also had a predominantly Quaker administration) a platform to describe aid work in Austria, Germany and Poland.⁵⁸ These organs helped normalise the idea of women's participation in international affairs and their growing expertise, particularly in areas of humanitarianism.⁵⁹

The monthly magazine *Reconstruction* is a very early example of a relief organisation creating its own journal solely from field workers' contributions, and was edited by a committee of relief co-ordinators from the Friends' Mission headquarters in Paris. In an editorial in its first issue (April 1918), a joint statement from the editorial committee declared the journal's aim was both to publicise the work of relief volunteers, but also to bind workers together in their common cause: 'We need comradeship; we need to know what the rest are doing and where'.⁶⁰ The editorial went on to call for contributions:

The editors welcome suggestions, advice, criticism, letters, notes, stories, articles from every man in every équipe. Their chief joy will be a fat mailbag. They count confidently on the support of Englishmen and Americans alike.⁶¹

It is interesting to note the gendered language of this request for contributions, even though one third of Friends relief workers were female; as we will see later, a large proportion of the articles published in *Reconstruction* were in fact authored by women relief workers. *Reconstruction* contained early reportage by Madeline Linford who would later become a ground-breaking women's page editor of the *Manchester Guardian*.⁶² The *Manchester Guardian* began sponsoring Friends' relief work in post-war Europe and

had sent Linford to report on projects in Poland and Austria, an example of journalistic access granted through humanitarian organisations. Her articles ‘Fighting the Typhus Plague in Poland’ (December 1919 and February 1920) and ‘Life-Saving in Vienna—a grateful city’ (March 1920) described civilian suffering in post-war Europe, valuable eye-witness reporting of the daily struggle for survival.⁶³ The articles were also published in the *Manchester Guardian*, by-lined ‘From our Special Correspondent’, the initials ‘M. A. L.’ at the bottom; in *Reconstruction*, Linford’s full name was put on the bottom of the articles, which, also unlike the *Guardian* versions, were illustrated with picturesque photographs of snow-covered Polish villages.⁶⁴ Like Hobhouse, Linford underscored her presence alongside the suffering families. By comparing the hovels to an English scullery she helped her middle-class readers visualise their plight and also extended to British readers a means of empathising with these far off victims of war:

In the last two days I have visited a score of families and in no case had any more than one small room to live in; two or three families are quite commonly found living, eating, and sleeping in a hovel not much bigger than an ordinary English scullery.⁶⁵

Despite the call for ‘articles from every *man* in every *équipe*’ (my italics), a large proportion of the articles in *Reconstruction* were female-authored, for example ‘Châlons Dreams’ and ‘The Cave Dwellers’ by Edith Pye, ‘The Expedition to France’ by Dr Hilda Clark, ‘The Quilts that Really Warm’ by Frances Candy Ferris. ‘The Return’ by Margaret Gold and ‘With the Serbs in Corsica’ by Frances Newberry.⁶⁶ Apart from the very prominent Quaker women such as Hilda Clark, Edith Pye, and Francesca Wilson, most of these women seem to have been content to limit their journalism to the pages of this in-house magazine. The main organisation for women journalists during this time, The Society of Women Journalists, while active in connecting women writing for mainstream international newspapers did not cover this kind of specialist journal in its own in-house magazine *The Woman Journalist*.⁶⁷ *Reconstruction* is thus not only a record of women’s participation in war zone relief work (it regularly published lists of names of workers in the field), it was a public platform for women to write on international affairs, an arena usually dominated by men’s voices. Nevertheless, their subject matter was very much of a feminine nature, reflecting their role and experience as aid workers. Frances Candy Ferris’ article, ‘The Quilts that Really Warm’, described the plight of an elderly woman whose cottage was unfortunately situated on the Marne battlefield and was burned to the ground. Ferris reported the woman’s words verbatim, that the Germans ‘killed her *beau coq* with the bright tail feathers ... “they wrung his neck, before my very eyes, and then they sat and ate him at my own table”’.⁶⁸ Giving this pitiful, destitute victim of war a voice to express the utter outrage that they ate her cockerel ‘at my own table’ delivered powerful emphasis to the sacrilege committed.

The humanitarian activist Francesca Wilson, who worked for the Quakers from 1915 onwards, wrote for all three of the organisation’s publications.⁶⁹ Wilson, who had been active in the suffragist movement from her years at Cambridge University (1906–1909), had first applied to be a Quaker volunteer in November 1914. Women’s committee administrator Ruth Fry questioned her motivation: was it genuine desire to relieve the suffering of civilians caught up in the war, or a selfish desire for excitement and adventure, she asked?⁷⁰ It is unclear why Wilson was initially rejected. Letters between Hilda

Clark, who ran the Châlons maternity hospital, and the Friends administrators in London, suggest there was no really good reason for the rejection apart from perhaps a suspicion of the assertive young woman, which was surprising considering Clark's long history with the women's movement and her involvement with the International Women's Suffrage Alliance.⁷¹ Wilson was qualified: although she had no medical experience, she was a Friend, a French-speaker, teacher and had volunteered in England.⁷² Hilda Clark thought Wilson not '*très sérieuse*'. Margery Fry had concerns about her 'age and temperament'.⁷³

Wilson instead gained her first overseas relief experience by unofficial means: first accompanying a Belgian refugee she had befriended to visit an interned relative on the island of Urk in the Zuyder Zee and from there slipping 'illicitly', as she put it in her memoirs, into Holland to join a Friends' mission in Gouda.⁷⁴ She soon impressed with her hard work, and was sent first to Sardinia and then from 1917 to 1919 was based in Bizerta, North Africa, helping to look after exiled and wounded Serbian soldiers.⁷⁵ Wilson's first article, 'The return of the exiles with a Serb transport to Belgrade' was published in both the *Quarterly Examiner* and *Reconstruction* (titled in that publication 'An Exile's Return', emphasising Wilson's active role) in July 1919 and described the journey across the Mediterranean with 100 Serb soldiers. She evoked the men's fear and excitement at returning home, many of them now suffering disfiguring injuries, wondering how wives and sweethearts would greet them, indeed, if there was anything to come home to at all. While they were all at sea, their small ship was a world of its own and even though a storm was blowing about them, it was a temporary sanctuary between the hospital in Bizerta and uncertain future:

It was such a homely ship. The gale might be blowing forty knots an hour, the sea might be flashing with magenta lightning and the boat trembling with the shock of thunder, but still one could always hear the Colonel's dog barking, the ship-mate's pigs grunting ... And the ship was so small, that the gales could never quite bear away the friendly odour of soup and the evening's roast. There was nothing lonely in the storm.⁷⁶

Like much of Wilson's reportage, the writing concentrates on the domestic, and both the author's, and her subjects' emotional response to the extraordinary situation in which they found themselves, often heightened by the powerful forces of nature around the tiny, desperate humans. She and the exiles inhabit the same liminal space, between land and sea, exile and home, rocked by external and internal storms. In this, her writing is similar both to that of Hobhouse's humanitarian communications from the Boer War and Louise Bryant's journalism from the Russian Revolution.⁷⁷ This tradition of reporting on the victims, and not the aggressors, in major conflicts, by women often unable to reach the loci of power, or speak to those in charge, can also be traced forwards, to the work of Martha Gellhorn in the Spanish Civil War, and that of Nell McCafferty during the Irish 'Troubles'. Of her Spanish reportage, Gellhorn wrote, apparently belittling her presence as a woman in a war zone with the words 'tagged along': 'I tagged along behind the war correspondents, experienced men who had serious work to do'.⁷⁸ Gellhorn began writing about the impact of the siege of Madrid, initially out of sheer frustration at not being able to get near the front line, yet her pieces, about the civilians who 'had war brought to them' made such an impact on readers that her loose association with *Colliers* magazine became a regular and stable contract.⁷⁹ Of her

reportage of the Bloody Sunday outrage (30 January 1972), McCafferty, who had been with the marchers as the shooting began, wrote:

I discovered, early on, that I would never be able to write a front page story ... my version appeared on the inside pages, I wrote how the rest of us felt, lying on the ground. [the article] contains no stories about the powerful, and no quotes from the people in charge. It's about how the rest of us, particularly women, feel.⁸⁰

It is interesting to note that both Gellhorn, and McCafferty's testimonies suggest that while they wanted to report from a theatre of conflict, and bear witness to events, equally, their interest in storytelling lay with a desire to convey a different perspective, and report different voices, than those in traditional masculine dispatches. The idea that only men could be properly accredited foreign correspondents persisted right through the twentieth century. In her memoir *Small Wars Permitting*, acclaimed foreign correspondent Christina Lamb recalled her early days as an intern on the *Financial Times*, in the summer of 1987, watching the 'camel corps ... waft in with the smell of the desert or the tang of the sea' on their crumpled linen suits. 'They were all men'.⁸¹

Wilson would grow in stature both as a journalist and aid worker through the interwar years. The Friends sent her to Russia to distribute food during the famine of 1921/22 and while there she reported on innovative Soviet childcare facilities for the *Manchester Guardian*. She also reported on the impact of the rise of Hitler on German Jewish refugees for the *Friend* and *Birmingham Post* and when the Spanish Civil War broke out, reported for the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Friend*. Her article, 'A Farm Colony in Spain', (September 1938) described how a group of refugee boys from Murcia constructed a farm from the barren land of southern Spain, and marked a notable change in focus of her journalism in that she emphasises not the boys' helplessness or victim-status, but their resilience and ingenuity:

That morning the whole Colony got up before dawn ... boys were working with feverish activity stopping up gaps and preparing new ones in the earth ridges of the terraces, so that when the water came it would inundate first the lettuces and then the potatoes and onions ... Then at last ... there it was – a yellow, foaming stream rushing through cemented channels and dashing in cataracts over rocks ... On the dark background of the Spanish Civil War the Farm Colony at Crevillente shines out like a lantern on a stormy night.⁸²

By placing the power over land and access to water into the hands of the boys, Wilson's article spoke to Republican arguments that the people should have the right to the productivity of the land, denied them through years of Spanish absentee landlordism. The carefully prepared runnels and seedlings, the order and hard work of the boys were evidence that they would be capable of farming the land if it belonged to them. Wilson can be seen here changing the narrative of that created by the 'Specials'—and indeed Hobhouse—from presenting the victims of war and famine simply as helpless victims requiring feeding, to humans with latent agency and power and who, if only given the correct tools and understanding, could be much more than passive recipients of rich people's bounty. What James Vernon has called the 'drama of starvation' and the voyeuristic accounts of pathetic suffering described by the nineteenth century 'Specials' had now transformed, through Wilson's pen, into a focus on the refugees' achievements and hard work.⁸³ We can see here, that women correspondents, while struggling against

severe obstacles to their participation, also wrote despatches that drove a different narrative to that of masculine war zone reports. Sometimes these women's reportage was virtually indistinguishable from humanitarian communications, and the duplication of Madeline Linford's work both in the *Manchester Guardian* and in the humanitarian publication *Reconstruction*, reinforces this. While women were indeed 'tagging along' behind the fighting, what also emerges is a strong desire to produce radically different discourses to those of troop movements and statements from generals, and, to represent women and children who were also, in their own way, battling through conflict.

Spain

During the Spanish Civil War women's voices on international affairs, via the widespread network of Aid Spain committees, public fundraising, anti-fascist and pacifist groups began to be raised beyond the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship (IAWSEC).⁸⁴ Grassroots campaigners, unions and left-wing groups both fundraised and sent people and materials out to aid the cause of Republican Spain. Prominent political women including Ellen Wilkinson, Leah Manning and the Duchess of Atholl were active in the Republican cause and in calling for the British government to take child refugees.⁸⁵ Women from Europe and the United States reported from Spain for newspapers and magazines, although most were marginal and precariously employed. Perhaps the most romantic character was Florence Roberts, who with her father, captain William Roberts of the Welsh-registered merchant ship *Seven Seas Spray* broke through Franco's naval blockade of the Basque coast several times between April and July 1937, with a cargo of olive oil, honey, beans, peas, salt, almonds, and barrels of cognac to deliver to the starving Basques besieged by land and sea.⁸⁶ The British government's official line, in support of its non-interventionist policy, was that merchant ships should not attempt to run the blockade.⁸⁷

English newspapers celebrated the 'pretty, 20-years-old' captain's daughter who arrived in Bilbao to cheering crowds on the morning of 20 April 1937.⁸⁸ The *News Chronicle*, no doubt appreciating the appeal to readers of having a real-life British heroine reporting for them, hired her to write about Bilbao's starving women and children. A week after her arrival, she reported: 'I have seen children and even women run after lorries leaving one ship with loads of salt and snatch a handful of it. Hordes of children gather round the food shops from early morning till dusk pleading for food'.⁸⁹ In a deliberate call to action, Roberts added that if British readers could see what she saw, the Government would lift its opposition to merchant ships running the blockade, and even send food to Bilbao. For a twenty-year-old daughter of a merchant seaman to give her opinion on British government policy to a readership of 1.6 million represented an extraordinary and no doubt exhilarating opportunity. When Guernica was bombed, she visited the town the following day. Her observation that the bombs were German-made was another political intervention alongside the more feminine focus on the children's plight: 'Amid the ruins mothers are still seeking children and children their parents. No cattle remain. They were machine-gunned in the fields as were their fleeing owners. Two unexploded bombs bearing German marks of identification help to place the responsibility for this inhuman massacre'.⁹⁰ Her report differed in tone from the

News Chronicle's resident correspondent's Philip Jordan, who narrated as if removed from the tragedy, weighing information from unknown sources rather than being an eye-witness himself: 'Further details of yesterday's appalling massacre continue to trickle in. It is revealed that the rebel planes bombed and set fire to isolated farmhouses for a distance of five miles Guernica. Even a flock of sheep were machine-gunned'.⁹¹

Despite the political interventions of her reportage, the newspaper gave her the gendered by-line 'Foodship Girl' or the diminutive 'Fifi' Roberts. This was the fate of other female newspaper correspondents as well. Virginia Cowles, who reported on the Spanish Civil War first for Hearst newspapers and then the *Sunday Times*, was by-lined 'American Girl' and 'NY Society Girl'.⁹² The newspapers would often introduce her as: 'Virginia Cowles, daughter of Dr Edward Spencer Cowles and New York Social Registerite, who made her debut in Boston Society in 1928–9' and as a 'young, dark, glamorous American', defining her by her gender, class, looks, youth and parentage. When Cowles began reporting for the *Sunday Times*, that newspaper employed a presentational strategy worth remarking on. When she wrote about political, military or diplomatic news, she was anonymous and described as 'an experienced observer'.⁹³ When she wrote more feminine pieces about the impact of the war on civilians, she was given her full name, Virginia Cowles.⁹⁴ The Spanish Civil War was the first major European conflict since the First World War, and broke out a full decade and a half after women humanitarians wrote their articles for *Reconstruction*. Identifiably female voices were by now found in mainstream newspapers, read by millions. However editorial decisions still circumscribed women's presence as war zone correspondents. The dual treatment of Cowles by the *Sunday Times* particularly, illustrates how far newspaper hierarchies considered readers would accept women writing seriously and authoritatively about battles and military strategy.

Despite restrictions of gender and platform, to play and record one's—even small—part in global events was an empowering experience for some. The journalist Alison Settle, who was editor of British *Vogue* 1926–1935, and editor of the *Observer* women's page for more than two decades, considered the brief three weeks of war reporting she did for the paper in 1944 as 'the highpoint of her career'.⁹⁵ Similarly Nurse Aileen Moore, who helped escort 4,000 Basque children from Bilbao to Southampton in May 1937 wrote thrillingly of the first time she had ever flown in an aeroplane, watching Franco's destroyers on the sea below her, and of the dashing escape, under air fire, out of the Spanish port for fellow professional readers of the *Nursing Mirror and Midwives Journal*.⁹⁶

Shiela Grant Duff: freelancing for the mainstream press

In the summer of 1934, Shiela Grant Duff finished three years studying Modern Greats (PPE) at Oxford. While at University she had enjoyed the company of a group of well-connected and politically active young men including the political philosopher Isaiah Berlin, the aristocratic German Adam von Trott, the novelist and academic Goronwy Rees, and the economist Douglas Jay.⁹⁷ Both Rees and Jay walked effortlessly into jobs as leader writer at the *Manchester Guardian* and economics correspondent at the *Times* respectively. Grant Duff, who had lost her father during the First World War and, desiring to be a journalist to work towards 'preventing the outbreak of a major

war', recalled in her memoirs that she expected to be able to do the same.⁹⁸ However, following an interview at *The Times*, she received a sharp rebuff from editor Geoffrey Dawson: 'The conditions of work in this office are such as to make it *awkward* to accept women as foreign sub-editors, which we regard as an essential part of the training of young foreign correspondents', he wrote.⁹⁹ Dauntless, she took off, alone, ironically exposing herself to far greater risk than any 'awkwardness' in the *Times*' sub-editors' room.

The case study of Grant Duff who, more than any other British woman correspondent asserted her claim to report alongside men of the official diplomatic press corps, reveals how protective the masculine hegemony was of its privilege. Grant Duff repeatedly found herself actively excluded, was the target of salacious rumours, and consequently appeared to suffer both physically and mentally. Her case also shows how, as an outsider, Grant Duff was able to report much more freely on the threat Hitler represented, particularly through her coverage of the Saar plebiscite in early 1935. After the *Times*'s rejection, in October 1934 Grant Duff went to Paris. Her one professional connection there was to Edgar Ansel Mowrer, the highly regarded Paris correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*.¹⁰⁰ The recent depositing of her archive at the Bodleian Library, by her daughter Penelope Newsome, reveals the difficulties Grant Duff encountered in her efforts to be accepted by the international press corps as she worked, freelance and alone through Central Europe. It was on Mowrer's recommendation that Grant Duff gained a position reporting on the Saar Plebiscite for the *Observer* newspaper. The plebiscite, held on 13 January 1935 is now seen as a turning point in Hitler's growing aggression. At the time, amongst the Allied powers, there was relief that the handover of the territory, confiscated under the Treaty of Versailles, had passed off without major incident. Most British newspapers focused on the safe return of the 470 British troops sent out on peacekeeping duties. Only later, it would be seen that hopes that the plebiscite would lead to no more 'territorial issues' between Germany and her neighbours, 'were pure delusion'.¹⁰¹ Staying on in Saarbrücken after the other correspondents had left for the next big story, Grant Duff observed the brutality of the victorious Germans that other newspapers missed:

Every town and village is decked in flags and streamers, and at night mighty swastikas stand out against the sky. Bare walls and empty buildings alone testify that for more than 46,000 people the popular slogan 'Die Saar ist frei' has no meaning ... The Nazis can tell their enemies by their eyes. Panic can be seen in all the gestures and bearing of working class women who tell how they have been threatened, how they have been mocked at and spat upon ... Others ... tell how their doors have been broken open in the middle of the night, their drawers turned out, and everything turned upside down while members of the Ordnungsdienst searched for arms.¹⁰²

The general line taken by the British press was that the plebiscite had passed off peacefully and that the vote, by satisfying Hitler, 'has brought new hope of a European Settlement', as the *Sunday Times*' unnamed 'our political correspondent' reported the week after—the very day Shiela Grant Duff was describing the brutal treatment of anti-Nazis.¹⁰³ The *Daily Telegraph* was equally complacent. Its leader, 'Happy Ending to the Saar Question' describes the return of the region to Germany, as 'a prospect which can be contemplated without the least misgiving ... it has brought a final settlement in an atmosphere of good will'.¹⁰⁴ Grant Duff was virtually a lone voice in warning that

the brutality of the Nazi guards towards the anti-reunification activists indicated that the German people would tolerate and not abhor the Storm Troopers' terrorist tactics, and the international community's turning a blind eye to the persecution of Jews and Communists was in fact only going to embolden Hitler. Like Hobhouse and Wilson before her, Grant Duff identified closely with her subjects, the persecuted anti-German activists, both in her journalism and in her activities in Saarbrücken. Using her press credentials, she smuggled typewriters belonging to activists across the border to France and hid a Communist sympathiser's gun in her underwear drawer in her hotel room.¹⁰⁵

In 1936 Grant Duff took another freelance commission with the *Observer* to report from Prague. The commission was, however short-lived after Grant Duff profoundly disagreed with editor J. L. Garvin's support of appeasement. She wrote a strongly worded, point by point rebuttal of his position, adding: 'Since ... it is hardly the place of a correspondent to reply to the Editor, I have also tendered my resignation'.¹⁰⁶ She remained in Prague, operating freelance right up until the German invasion in March 1939. After the collapse of faith in appeasement in late 1938, Grant Duff, having carefully constructed a network of independent information sources wrote articles, pamphlets, and then books, on Czechoslovakia which were marked by her knowledge and authority. Grant Duff's book *Europe and the Czechs*, a 'Penguin Special' published on 30 September 1938, the day after the Munich Agreement, sold 190,000 copies in six months. Her author name as printed on the book, as well as articles she wrote for the *Spectator*, *Political Quarterly* and *Contemporary Review* was given as 'S. Grant Duff', thus avoiding readers identifying her gender.¹⁰⁷ In the contents page of *The Political Quarterly* for April-June 1938 for example, while the contributors Kingsley Martin, Hugh Gaitskell, Ivor Thomas and Hamilton Fyfe are named in full, the article on 'Rumania' is by-lined 'S. Grant Duff'.¹⁰⁸ When, after the warm reception of *Europe and the Czechs* Grant Duff did, finally 'come out' with her female by line, Shiela, she was sometimes criticised by newspaper readers for transgressing the conventional 'woman as peacemaker' role that had become almost a tenet of faith amongst politicians during the later 1930s.¹⁰⁹ One reader of the *Cheshire Observer*, objecting to an article she wrote for the *News Chronicle* accused her of hawkishness and of wanting young men to be killed in another war. The letter, filled with disapproval of a woman having such views, urges 'Miss Grant Duff' to study her history books and stop meddling in foreign affairs.¹¹⁰ It is worth noting that Grant Duff was subjected to rumours about her personal life and moral probity as a result of her trespassing on territory more usually occupied by men. A letter from Edgar Mowrer reports rumours within diplomatic correspondent circles that Grant Duff had been sleeping with 'a Nazi boy from Germany'.¹¹¹ In Prague, Grant Duff was refused help by the British Legation, and aroused suspicion in the Czech Police, who thought she was a German spy; the foreign press corps also denied her membership of their club, declaring her not a 'Journaliste de Profession'.¹¹² Prescriptions in her archive show she visited the doctor frequently during this time, taking Belladonna, Ephedrine, Trypaflavine, sulphur and Kalzana tablets, used for treating nausea, insomnia, inflammation and breathlessness, suggesting she suffered severe emotional distress.¹¹³ Acceptance finally came when Grant Duff was appointed first by Chatham House and then as Czech editor of the BBC's new European Service after war broke out.¹¹⁴ As far as can be ascertained, Grant Duff and Elizabeth Wiskemann were the only two women foreign correspondents reporting on the rise of Hitler from Europe for

mainstream British newspapers in the mid-1930s, Grant Duff for the *Observer*, and Wiskemann for the *Scotsman* and the *New Statesman*. Both found British diplomats unhelpful, Wiskemann writing in her memoir '[the Legation] staff, naturally enough, did not care for young women who might get themselves into scrapes'.¹¹⁵ Although both benefited from friendly press contacts and, in Grant Duff's case, letters of accreditation from the *Observer*, both still remained outsiders, working at the fringes, to some extent 'tagging along'. Wiskemann also covered the Saar plebiscite, having serendipitously been given a lift by David Scott, the Paris correspondent of *The Times*, in return for acting as his interpreter: she could speak German and he could not.¹¹⁶

Conclusion

During the interwar years women's voices in three distinct areas of foreign reportage—humanitarian communications, the Spanish Civil War and the rise of Hitler—eloquently asserted the need for politicians to consider the impact of foreign policy on women and children. While women were not allowed to operate within the all-male group of Fleet Street diplomatic correspondents, they nevertheless reported widely on international politics and the impact of war for a broad spectrum of publications. Women correspondents' writings about the victims' experience of conflict, much reproduced here for the first time since publication, represent evidence of vivid, eye-witness reportage and a compassionate concern for the 'odds and ends' of strong men's warmongering. Their stories of human suffering would have appealed to women readers, and newspapers appeared to recognise this by differentiating between masculine and feminine international news coverage. Through close study of the example of Francesca Wilson's journalism, we can also see a development, from her earliest piece of writing in 1919, to her Spanish Civil War journalism, of a different view of the victims of war, from helpless spectacles only to be pitied, to human beings with latent potential.

The lack of value contemporaries typically placed in women's press work is seen in their writing mainly in the margins of national press journalism, and even on Fleet Street papers they were precariously freelance and given gendered by-line descriptors. Yet women's necessarily independent voices differed from the largely homogenous group of diplomatic correspondents who were responsible for a great proportion of British opinion towards the growing strength of Hitler and the impact of war. Shiela Grant Duff's case shows that the closer a woman got to the exclusive male preserve of a role on a mainstream newspaper and diplomatic correspondence, the more vulnerable she was to 'pushback' from the hegemonic group. Unpleasant responses of a sexual nature were also experienced by 1930s 'star' reporter Margaret Lane who had to quash untrue rumours about her private life in the offices of the *Daily Mail*.¹¹⁷ Florence Roberts, on the other hand, who posed no threat, being an 'accidental' reporter on *The News Chronicle*, was fêted as a plucky heroine.

Notes

1. Choi Chatterjee, "Odds and Ends of the Russian Revolution," 1917–1920: Gender and American Travel Narratives', *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 4 (2008): 10.

2. Adrian Bingham, 'Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman: Debates in the British Popular Press, 1918–1939', in *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender and Politics in Britain, 1918–1945*, eds Julie Gottlieb and Richard Toye (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), 87–104.
3. Julie Gottlieb and Matthew Stibbe, "'Peace at any Price': The Visit of Nazi Women's Leader Gertrud Scholtz-Klink to London in March 1939 and the Response of British Women Activists', *Women's History Review* 26, no. 2 (2017): 173–94. Helen McCarthy, *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Julie Gottlieb, *'Guilty Women': Foreign Policy and Appeasement in Interwar Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015). Gottlieb argues that unlike the US and France, 'Britain stood apart ... for not producing many women for their foreign press corps between the wars' (255).
4. Gottlieb and Stibbe, 'Peace at any Price'; Gottlieb, *Guilty Women*; Stuart Ball, 'The Politics of Appeasement: The Fall of the Duchess of Atholl and the Kinross and West Perth By-Election, December 1938', *The Scottish Historical Review* 69, no. 187 (1990): 49–83.
5. Jan Stockmann, 'Women, Wars and World Affairs: Recovering Feminist International Relations, 1915–39', *Review of International Studies* 44, no. 2 (2017): 215–35.
6. Valerie Hall, 'Women in Journalism: A Sociological Account of the Entry of Women into the Profession of Journalism in Great Britain until 1930' (PhD diss., University of Essex, 1976).
7. The *Manchester Guardian* was an exception and is discussed later.
8. *Daily Mail*, 3 July, 1933, 11–12.
9. Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Women's Magazine 1880–1914* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1–14.
10. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Preface to *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, ed. Kimberly Springer (New York: New York University Press, 1999), xix–xxiii. In this context the author is discussing resistance strategies of African-American women.
11. Gottlieb and Stibbe, 'Peace at any Price'; Gottlieb, *'Guilty Women'*.
12. Erik Goldstein, 'The Foreign Office and Political Intelligence 1918–1920', *Review of International Studies* 14 (1988): 275–88; (278).
13. Guy Hodgson, 'Sir Nevile Henderson, Appeasement and the Press', *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2007): 320–24; Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement and the Manipulation of the British Press* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).
14. Goldstein, 'The Foreign Office'.
15. 'Dawson [formerly Robinson], (George) Geoffrey 1874–1944' Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <https://0-www-oxforddnb-com.wam.city.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32752> (accessed August 13, 2020).
16. Julie Gottlieb, 'We Were Done the Moment we Gave Women the Vote': The Female Franchise Factor and the Munich By-elections, 1938–1939', in *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, 159–80; 160.
17. For example, 'Thinking in Blood', *Time and Tide*, April 1, 1933, 381–84; 'The Nazi Terror', *Time and Tide*, April 15, 1933, 440 (this latter in the form of a letter). In other publications, particularly the *Manchester Guardian*, Wilkinson's reports from Germany and Spain, that she gave widely at lectures and public meetings, were taken down, second-hand by journalists attending those events, for example 'Terrorism in Spain: Miss Wilkinson's Charges', *Manchester Guardian*, November 24, 1934, 20; 'In Germany Today: Miss Ellen Wilkinson's Impressions', *Manchester Guardian*, November 6, 1933, 11.
18. See particularly Cockett, *Twilight of Truth* and Franklin Reid Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Daniel Hucker, 'Public Opinion, the Press and the Failed Anglo-Franco-Soviet Negotiations of 1939', *The International History Review* 40, no. 1 (2018): 65–85; Hodgson, 'Sir Nevile Henderson'; Tim Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War* (London: Bodley Head, 2019). Bouverie emphasises *Daily Mail* owner Lord Rothermere's close links with leading Nazis.

19. In an article published in the Daily Express, 25 May, 1934 Stephens had written a caustic attack on the Nazis' treatment of German Jews. There is much evidence of Geoffrey Dawson suppressing reports showing Hitler in a bad light in the *Times*, See for example Lee Kersten, 'The *Times* and the Concentration Camp at Dachau, December 1933–February 1934: An Unpublished Report', *Schofar* 18, no. 2 (2000): 101–9.
20. See Cockett, *Twilight of Truth*, 64–69.
21. Jesper Stromback, Michael Karlsson and David Nicholas Hopmann, 'Determinants of News Content: Comparing Journalists' Perceptions of the Normative and Actual Impact of Different Event Properties when Deciding What's News', *Journalism Studies* 13, no. 5–6 (2012): 718–28; 722; Tony Harcup, 'Journalists and Ethics: The Quest for a Collective Voice', *Journalism Studies* 3, no. 1 (2002): 111–12.
22. Nadia Elsaka, 'New Zealand Journalists and the Appeal of 'Professionalism' as a Model of Organisation: An Historical Analysis', *Journalism Studies* 6, no. 1 (2005): 73.
23. Gottlieb, 'We were Done', 159; Riedi, 'Women, Gender, and the Promotion of Empire: the Victoria League, 1901–1914', *The Historical Journal* 45, no.3 (2002): 569–99; 572.
24. Helen McCarthy, 'Shut Against the Woman and Workman Alike', in *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, 142–58; 149.
25. Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), discusses the way newspapers used stories about extraordinary women to attract readers; for the role of women journalists on interwar newspapers and magazines, see Sarah Lonsdale, 'The Sheep and the Goats': Interwar Women Journalists, the Society of Women Journalists, and the Woman Journalist' in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain 1918–1939*, eds Catherine Clay, Maria DiCenzo, Barbara Green and Fiona Hackney (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 463–476.
26. Riedi, 'Women, Gender'; Eliza Riedi, 'Imperialist Women and Conservative Activism in Early Twentieth Century Britain: The Political World of Violent Milner', *Women's History Review* 22, no. 6 (2013): 930–53.
27. Gary Love, 'The Periodical Press and the Intellectual Culture of Conservatism in Interwar Britain', *The Historical Journal* 57, no. 4 (2014): 1027–56; 1033.
28. Love, 'The Periodical Press', 1032.
29. Stockmann, 'Women, Wars and World Affairs', 222; Riedi, 'Imperialist Women', 944–45; Gottlieb, *Guilty Women*, 55.
30. Gottlieb and Stibbe, 'Peace at any Price', 176.
31. Catherine Clay, *Time and Tide: The Feminist and Cultural Politics of a Modern Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 142 & 243.
32. Clay, *Time and Tide*, 143.
33. Teja Varma Duspatti, 'Going Places: Harriet Martineau's *Letters from Ireland* and the Rise of the Female Foreign Correspondent', *Women's Writing* 24, no. 2 (2017): 207–26.
34. For a lively overview of these extraordinary and unusual women journalists, see Anne Sebba, *Battling for News: Women Reporters from the Risorgimento to Tiananmen Square* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
35. Lina Waterfield, *A Castle in Italy* (London: John Murray, 1961).
36. 'Can Women of the World Stop the War?', *Modern Woman*, February 1934, 7 & 12; 'Lift up your Hearts!', *Peace News*, September 8, 1939; See for example 'While we Remember', *Manchester Guardian*, November 11, 1932, 6.
37. Ellen Wilkinson, 'Thinking with Blood', *Time and Tide*, April 1, 1933, 381–84.
38. A few examples: the Quaker activist Margery Fry wrote a series of articles on the conditions in Balkan jails ('Prisoners in the Balkans' 17, 18, 19 February, 1938); Francesca Wilson's article 'The Women of the New Russia', 17 May 1923 describes the crèche system in Soviet factories; there is a good selection of others in *Women Talking: An Anthology from the Guardian's Women's Page 1922–35; 1957–71*, ed. Mary Stott (London: Pandora Press, 1987).
39. Elizabeth F. Evans, *Threshold Modernism; New Public Women and the Literary Spaces of Imperial London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2019); *The New Woman in*

- Fiction and in Fact: Fin de Siecle Feminisms*, eds Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).
40. Evans, *Threshold Modernism*, 23.
 41. *Ibid.*, 22–27.
 42. Women aviators were often thought to be spies; other lone women travellers were often not issued with papers or permits and were followed by secret service agents: Jennifer Anne Boittin, ‘Adventurers and Agents Provocateurs: A German Woman Travelling through French West Africa in the Shadow of War’, *Historical Reflections* 40, no. 1 (2014): 111–31.
 43. Boittin, ‘Adventurers and Agents Provocateurs’.
 44. Bessie Beatty wrote for the *San Francisco Bulletin*, Louise Bryant for Associated Press (Chatterjee ‘Odds and Ends’); Eleanor Franklin Egan wrote about the Russian famine of 1921/22 for the *Saturday Evening Post* (David Hudson, ‘“A Woman So Curiously Fear-Free and Venturesome”’: Eleanor Franklin Egan Reporting the Great Russian Famine, 1922’, *Women’s History Review* 26, no. 2 (2017): 195–212). US women’s presence in mainstream newspapers had been established much earlier than that of British women; women were hired initially as ‘stunt’ girls and were often treated as newspaper celebrities. See Jean-Marie Lutes, *Front Page Girls: Women Journalists in American Culture and Fiction 1880–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).
 45. Carolyn M. Edy, *The Woman War Correspondent, The US Military and the Press 1846–1947* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 21.
 46. For an overview of how ‘hunger’ reporting turned journalists into celebrities see James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
 47. Rebecca Gill and Cornelius Muller, ‘The Limits of Agency: Emily Hobhouse’s International Activism and the Politics of Suffering’, *Safundi* 19, no. 1 (2018): 1–35.
 48. Gill and Muller, ‘The Limits of Agency’.
 49. ‘The Concentration Camps: Miss Hobhouse’s Report’, *Manchester Guardian*, June 19, 1901, 10.
 50. Gill and Muller ‘The Limits of Agency’, 32.
 51. *Ibid.*
 52. Chatterjee, ‘Odds and Ends’, 16.
 53. Eve Colpus describes how ‘celebrity’ humanitarian activists in the interwar years, such as Muriel Paget ‘experimented with the blending of celebrity status and the cultural authority derived from her humanitarian work’ through her association with the British Subjects in Russia Relief Association (BSRRA). Paget’s trip to Leningrad in 1926 provided material for a series of articles in the *Daily Telegraph* in which she made use of the interwar appetite for the human-interest story. Eve Colpus, *Female Philanthropy in the Interwar World: Between Self and Other* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 181–82.
 54. During the Russian Famine, for example, 1921/22, few journalists were granted access to the most devastated areas. The US journalist Eleanor Franklin Egan gained access through the American Relief Administration; Hudson, ‘A Woman so Curiously’, 195–97.
 55. Women doctors, like Doctor Hilda Clark, were permitted to work with the Friends. This distinguishes the Friends from the Red Cross, which rejected women doctors on the grounds of gender.
 56. ‘Dedicated Work, Difficult Times’ by Winifred White in *The Friend* May 21, 1993, 659; Dictionary of Quaker Biography, Hubert Peet; archives of *The Friend*, Temp MSS 727, Friends’ Library.
 57. *Hubert Peet* by Winifred White, Quaker Biographies, 1952, 35–36; Friends’ Library.
 58. For example: ‘Tragedy and Hope: A Visit to a Children’s Colony in Poland’ by Beatrice Harraden’, in *The Record*, December 1922, 83–85 and ‘Footprints of Fate: The Present Distress in Germany’ by Henrietta Leslie in *The World’s Children*, January 1924, 64–67; circulation figures from Emily Baughan, ‘Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!’: Empire, Internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in Inter-war Britain’, *Historical Research* 86, no. 231 (2012): 123.

59. Stockmann in 'Women, Wars and World Affairs' describes how organisations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom gradually increased women's influence through the interwar years through girls' summer schools, academic exchanges and commenting on international affairs (222); Esther Breitenback and Valerie Wright, 'Women as Active Citizens: Glasgow and Edinburgh c. 1918–1939', *Women's History Review* 23, no. 3 (2014): 401–20.
60. 'Editorial' *Reconstruction* 1 no. 1, April 1918, 12.
61. Ibid.
62. Linford was 'ground-breaking' in that she introduced readers of the *Manchester Guardian* women's page to a wide range of subjects well beyond the traditional 'domestic' ones of cooking, fashion, childcare and education including technology, architecture and international affairs. See also note 38.
63. 'Manchester Guardian Fund' *Reconstruction* 2, no. 8 (November 1919; no page number); Madeline Linford, 'Fighting the Typhus Plague in Poland', *Reconstruction* 2, no. 9 (December 1919): 168; and *Reconstruction* 2 no. 11 (February 1920): 185; 'Life-Saving in Vienna', *Reconstruction* 2, no. 12 (March 1920): 196.
64. 'Fighting the Typhus Plague in Poland', *Manchester Guardian*, December 30, 1919, 6 and 'The Tragedy of Poland', *Manchester Guardian*, January 1, 1920, 6.
65. Madeline Linford, 'Fighting the Typhus Plague in Poland', *Reconstruction* 2, no. 9 (December 1919): 168.
66. Edith Pye, 'Châlons Dreams', *Reconstruction* 1, no. 2 (May 1918): 22; 'The Cave Dwellers', *Reconstruction* 1, no. 6 (September 1918): 85–86; Hilda Clark, 'The Expedition to France', *Reconstruction* 1, no. 4 (July 1918): 50–52; Frances Candy Ferbis, 'The Quilts that Really Warm', *Reconstruction* 1, no. 6 (September 1918): 89; Frances Newberry, 'With the Serbs in Corsica', *Reconstruction* 1, no. 11 (February 1919): 172–74; Margaret Gold, 'The Return', *Reconstruction* 1, no. 12 (March 1919): 185. This is by no means a complete list of all women contributors to *Reconstruction*, merely a snapshot.
67. For a discussion of the *Woman Journalist's* coverage of international correspondence see Sarah Lonsdale 'The Sheep and the Goats'.
68. *Reconstruction*, 1, no. 6 (September 1918): 99.
69. For more on Wilson's activism and journalism see Sarah Lonsdale, *Rebel Women Between the Wars: Fearless Writers and Adventurers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 62–96.
70. Letter to Hilda Clark from Edith Pye, 4 May, 1915 Missions/1/3/2/1, Friends' Library.
71. Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 199.
72. Letter to Hilda Clark from Edith Pye, 4 May, 1915 Missions/1/3/2/1, Friends' Library.
73. Letter from Hilda Clark to Alice Clark, 17 June, 15 Missions 1/3/2/1; letter from Margery Fry to Ruth Fry, 3 July, 1915 Missions 1/3/2/2, Friends' Library.
74. Francesca Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos* (London: John Murray, 1944), 5.
75. A letter from the co-ordinator in Holland makes it clear Wilson had become indispensable and needed to be replaced when she returned to England at the start of the school year in September 1915; Letter to Ruth Fry from Grace Vulliamy, 6 September 1915, YM/MfS/Missions/9/3/3/2, Friends' Library.
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81. Christina Lamb, *Small Wars Permitting* (London: HarperPress, 2008), 12.
82. Francesca Wilson, 'A Farm Colony in Spain', *The Friend*, September 2, 1938, 755–56.
83. Vernon, *Hunger*, 24.

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87. Douglas Little, 'Red Scare 1936: Anti-Bolshevism and the Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 23 (1988): 291–311.
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89. *News Chronicle*, 27 April, 1937, 1.
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91. 'Rebels' air war on open towns' *News Chronicle*, 28 April, 1937, 2.
92. Articles published in Hearst Sunday Syndicate newspapers, collected by Cowles in her scrapbook, Imperial War Museum Docs.20478/20.
93. 'Realities of War in Spain', *Sunday Times* 17 October, 1937, 21; Cowles' authorship verified by its inclusion in her scrap book of cuttings in her private papers in the Imperial War Museum.
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