

Gendering Peace in Europe, c.1918-1946: Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield, 20-21 January, 2017 Conference Report¹

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During and after the First World War, men and women across Europe responded to the cataclysm of war by envisioning and struggling for peace. *Gendering Peace in Europe, c.1918-1946* brought together some sixty scholars from a range of disciplines and from across the globe to consider the ways in which men and women peacemakers were afforded different roles, allowed different emotions, and ascribed different degrees of agency in their efforts achieve peace. Poignantly, for an event acknowledging women's peace activism in the aftermath of the First World War, the conference unfolded across two days which saw the inauguration of a new and controversial President of the United States and, in response, a wave of well-attended women's marches across the world. The conference proceedings were disseminated live on Twitter with the hashtag #GenderingPeaceShef; this had the effect of opening the conference up beyond those immediately present. This review will showcase the latest contributions to the field of peace studies with a chronological summary of the papers given.

This international conference took place at the University of Sheffield's Humanities Research Institute, hosted by the University's Centre for Peace History, and organised by JULIE GOTTLIEB. It was generously funded by the Max Batley Legacy to the University of Sheffield and the *Journal of Contemporary History* Conference Award. The scope and quality of the papers presented on both days of the conference highlighted the sheer size, in terms of geographical spread and the range of topics, and vibrancy of the field of peace studies.

The first day of the conference consisted of a number of plenary sessions. In her opening address to the conference, JULIE GOTTLIEB noted the importance of testing and contesting the construction of women as peacemakers. Gottlieb remarked that in gendering peace, we destabilise and complicate the picture, disentangling peace studies from the sometimes hagiographic left-liberal histories of brave conscientious objectors or war resisters. The first session opened with a paper by INGRID SHARP on how love was used as an argument for international solidarity and peace by female and, though not without controversy, male pacifists. Next, DAGMAR WERNITZNIG gave an overview of the life one of the most influential European feminist pacifist internationalists, Rosika Schwimmer, on whom Wernitznig is currently preparing a biography.

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The second session opened with a paper by ÁKOS FARKAS that examined how, during the Great War and into the 1920s, Hungarian women writers struggled against the confines of the (mostly) masculine discourse that established patriotism and pacifism as mutually exclusive. This was followed by a paper by SENIA PASETA on the struggles of Irish women who, disappointed by the aftermath of partition and independence, tried to reconnect with the international feminist peace movement.

In the third session, SONJA TIERNAN delivered a fascinating paper on women's involvement in campaigns against the violence of the state, in the form of the death penalty, in interwar Britain. Tiernan showed that it was the high profile campaigns against the capital punishment of women as *women*, with all the attendant gender stereotypes, that most roused public support. In her plenary contribution, CAITRÍONA BEAUMONT investigated the role of four previously overlooked women's organisations (the Mother's Union, the National Council of Women of Great Britain, the Women's Institute and the Young Woman's Christian Association) that were, in fact, involved in the popular peace movement of the interwar period such as the League of Nations Union and the Peace Ballot.

MARIE-MICHÈLE DOUCET opened the fourth session with a paper examining the concerns of French women about the international political situation after the Great War. Some, Doucet demonstrated, wanted security through peace, arguing for disarmament and other such initiatives while others believed peace could only be achieved through security. LAURA BEERS' talk looked at another divide in the peace movement, between socialist and so-called 'bourgeois' women in the international feminist peace movement of the interwar period. Beers questioned the significance of this divide, arguing that groups like the WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) displayed a strong, left-leaning social (if not explicitly *socialist*) conscience in their activism and goals.

LUCY NOAKES investigated the gender dimensions of remembrance in her paper on Armistice Day in 1930s Britain in session six. JULIE GOTTLIEB's paper, on the female members of the British Union of Fascists who campaigned for peace on the basis of an anti-Semitic, militarised authoritarian ideology in the late thirties, introduced a new element into the day's discussion. Her contribution underlined the point that the definition of peace is more complex and varied than the mere absence of war.

Considering peace from the legitimate Right, rather than the fascist margins, MATTHEW STIBBE presented a paper on the peace activism of Conservative women in the Anglo-German Fellowship, with specific reference to the visit to Britain of the Nazi women's leader Gertrud Scholtz-Klink in 1939. In the final paper of the day, International historian GAYNOR JOHNSON argued for a prosopographical approach to gendering peace through a study of the male-gendered British Foreign Office and diplomatic service in the first half of the twentieth century.

The first day of the conference ended appropriately with a screening chaired by director CHARLOTTE BILL and the WILPF's HELEN KAY, of *These Dangerous Women*, a film about the British delegation to the Women's Peace Conference at The Hague, Holland in 1915. The second day of the conference consisted of parallel sessions split across two rooms. In first set of papers in Session A collected under the heading 'Women's Feminist Pacifist Lives', REBECCA GILL & KATE LAW gave a

presentation on the peace ideas and activism of controversial English Liberal reformer, internationalist and pacifist Emily Hobhouse. AVI KLEIN's showed how the First World War splintered British feminism into a pacifist, socialist wing and a nationalist, militarist wing. SIÂN ROBERTS finished off the first session with a paper on the religious-motivated peace and humanitarian activism of Quaker women.

Speakers in Session One B, 'Gendering National Security and Peace Discourses outside Pacifist Movements' considered a range of issues. JASMINE CALVER introduced her important research on the understudied Women's World Committee against War and Fascism, and SABINE GRIMSHAW explored the problem of male identity among conscientious objectors during the First World War in Britain. MARY VINCENT emphasized the need to modify our periodization to accommodate Spain, and offered an illuminating gender analysis of Franco's construction of an 'ordered peace'.

IDA OGRAJŠEK GORENJAK began the next collection of papers in Session A on 'Women's Transnationalist and Pan-Europeanist Modes of Peace Making between the Wars', with a paper that demonstrated how the feminist pacifist concerns of the women of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were overshadowed by concerns about national integration. VERONIKA HELFERT's paper similarly dealt with socialist women divided between revolutionary militancy and a more pacifist-inclined social democracy. REBECCA SHRIVER discussed the men and women of the New Europe Group who employed stereotypes about traditional gender roles and behaviours to argue that women, with their caring and maternal nature, were essential to the struggle for peace. BENJAMIN THORPE closed the session with his presentation on Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European movement and how, despite being led by men, it used women as the symbols and foot soldiers of peace.

Session Two B, 'Gendering Men's Pacifism and Anti-Militarism', offered a range of examples of men dealing with the wounds of war and the potential emasculation of taking a pacifist position. UGO PAVAN DALLA TORRE discussed the case of disabled ex-servicemen in post-War Italy, while ASHLEY GARBER considered how the British Legion responded to the end of the peace and the nature of veterans support or opposition to the Second World War. LINSEY ROBB drew from her important research on the Non-Combatant Corps in Britain, 1940-1945, drawing on personal testimonies. WENDY UGOLINI considered the collision of national minority identity—Welsh living in England—and anti-war positions in the Second World War, also drawing on powerful personal testimonies.

The next of the Session A papers were collected under the heading 'Virile' Anti-War Campaigns in Fascist Movements in Britain and France'. These papers examined uses of gender in war and peace that differed from the 'conventional' use of masculinity as warlike and femininity as peaceful. ANDREW MCINTOSH began the session with a paper on how women were used by the British press both during and after Great War, not as symbols of peace or peacemakers, but as heroines of militant nationalism. CAMILLE CLERET followed with a paper on the recasting of French far-right intellectual of Action Française, Charles Maurras, as a virile martyr of peace using newspapers and Maurras' personal correspondence. ANTOINE GODET gave related paper on the 'virile pacifism' of Jacques Doriot's

martial movement, Parti Populaire Français. In a similar vein, LIAM J LIBURD's paper explored how the British Union of Fascists constructed and fought for a masculine fascist peace.

Session Three B came to the study of gender and peace from interdisciplinary perspectives. In this panel on 'Women's Life Writing and Fiction in Peace and War', DINA GUSEJNOVA told the story of her grandmother's experience of working for the Allied Control Council in Post-war Vienna, grappling with the issues of approaching this as both historian and granddaughter. SILVIA PELLICIER-ORTÍN offered a close textual analysis of Libby Cone's *War on the Margins* (2008), a novel set in the occupied Channel Islands, using liminality as a key category for looking at the in-between states in the novel, in terms of setting, war and peace, and gender roles. Fellow scholar of Holocaust literature SUE VICE examined representations of war and peace in Kindertransport narratives. CHARLOTTE RILEY analysed the novels of British Labour politician Mary Agnes Hamilton, especially how the author conveyed her feminist pacifism through her writing.

The final collection of Session A papers examined the contribution of woman peace activists outside of what is usually regarded as the remit of the internationalist feminist peace movement. DANIEL HUCKER began with his paper which considered the presence and activity of women in the mainstream (or 'malestream') peace organisations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the International Peace Bureau, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. MARC-WILLIAM PALEN looked at the women's peace movement in terms of economic policy in his paper, noting that free trade was regarded by feminist pacifists as the cornerstone of any peace. JAN CHARLES STÖCKMANN ended with a paper on the long history of female (and feminist) involvement in the academic study of international relations, tracing its origins and using it to put into context the activism of other feminist internationalists and pacifists. The role and representation of mothers and mothering united the papers in the last session B on 'Pacifism, Maternalism and Feminist Internationalism'. BURCIN CAKIR offered a close study of the 12th Congress of the IAW and the institutionalisation of transnational feminism and peace initiatives. SARAH HELLAWELL focused on the maternalist peace activism of the British Women's Co-operative Guild, while ERIKA HUCKSTEIN explored the place of maternalism and motherhood in feminist anti-fascist mobilization in the 1930s.

The many contributions made over the two days demonstrated that by looking at peace movements through the lens of gender history, we can more readily perceive what peace actually *meant* for the women and men fighting for it. Hoping to develop this illuminating approach to peace studies and mirroring so many of the women's meetings, marches and conferences that were being studied and scrutinized, delegates agreed to reconvene and join in a number of collaborative projects in the near future.

Conference Overview:

Day 1 – Friday 20 January

Dr Ingrid Sharp (University of Leeds), ‘Love as Moral Imperative and Gendered Anti-war Strategy in the International Women’s Movement 1914-1924’

Dagmar Wernitznig (Independent researcher), ‘Feminism, Fascism, and Visions of Peace for the Short Twentieth Century: Rosika Schwimmer (1877–1948), her Campaign for World Government, and Gendered Politics’

Akos Farkas (ELTE University, Budapest), ‘Caught in a Double Bind: Hungary’s Women Writers Before and after 1920’

Professor Senia Paseta (Oxford University), ‘Peace and Protest in Ireland, 1918-1937’

Dr Sonja Tiernan (Liverpool Hope University), ‘“There can be nothing right in a country where such a thing is possible”: Women’s campaigns to abolish capital punishment in interwar Britain’

Dr Caitríona Beaumont (London South Bank University), ‘“Why we women must campaign for peace”: voluntary women’s organisations, citizenship rights and the gendering of the peace movement in England, 1918-1939’

Dr Laura Beers (University of Birmingham), ‘Socialist and feminist collaboration in the women’s peace movement’

Dr Marie-Michèle Doucet (Royal Military College of Canada), ‘Gendering Security: Women’s Position on National Security in France after the Great War’

Dr Lucy Noakes (University of Brighton), ‘“Couldn’t Have Been A Nicer Morning For It”: Gendering Armistice Day in late 1930s Britain’

Dr Julie Gottlieb (University of Sheffield), ‘Gendering Fascist ‘Pacifism’/ Anti-War Policy: The British Union’s Women’s Peace Campaign, 1938-1940’

Professor Matthew Stibbe (Sheffield Hallam University), ‘Peace at any Price? Conservative Women in Britain in the late 1930s and the Anglo-German Fellowship’

Professor Gaynor Johnson (University of Kent), ‘Gendering Diplomacy, 1900-1945’

Film Screening – Charlotte Bill (filmmaker) with Helen Kay, ‘These Dangerous Women: Film Screening and Discussion’

Day 2 - Saturday 21 January

Session 1A: Women's Feminist Pacifist Lives

Dr Rebecca Gill (*University of Huddersfield*) & Kate Law (*University of Chichester*), 'South Africa as 'test case': Emily Hobhouse, Pacifism and International Peace Networks c.1902-1923'

Avi Klein (*University of Haifa*), 'The State of Feminist Pacifism in 1918'

Dr Siân Roberts (*University of Birmingham*), 'An 'intimate sharing of life': Quaker women, humanitarian relief and the witness for peace in Europe'

Session 1B: Gendering National Security and Peace Discourses outside Pacifist Movements

Jasmine Calver (*Northumbria University*), 'The Campaigns of the *Comité mondial des femmes contre la guerre et le fascisme* and the International Struggle against Fascism in the 1930s'

Professor Mary Vincent (*University of Sheffield*), 'The Peace of Franco: Gender and hierarchy in an 'ordered' peace'

Sabine Grimshaw (*University of Leeds*), 'You are now entering the sanctuary of conscience': British conscientious objectors and masculinity, 1916-18'

Session 2A: Women's Transnationalist and Pan-Europeanist Modes of Peace Making between the Wars

Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak (*University of Zagreb*), 'What will bring happiness to the world?' How did women of The Kingdom of Yugoslavia conceptualize the brave new world?'

Veronika Helfert (*University of Vienna*), 'No more weapons!'. Women socialists between Militancy and Pacifism in the First Austrian Republic (1918–1933/34)'

Rebecca Shriver (*Florida State University*), 'Unifying and 'Turning Earth into a Paradise Worth Living In': The Role of Women in the New Europe Group's Plans for a European Federation, 1931-1939'

Benjamin Thorpe (*University of Nottingham*), 'Visions of Johanna: Gender and Pan-Europeanism'

Session 2B: Gendering Men's Pacifism and Anti-Militarism

Ashley Garber (*Oxford University*), 'Veterans of War, for Peace: Age, Masculinity and the Meanings of Citizenship in the British Legion, 1938 to 1945'

Ugo Pavan Dalla Torre (Non-structured researcher), 'Wanting to Win the Peace: Disabled Ex-Servicemen in the Post-war Society in Italy (1918-1923)'

Dr Linsey Robb (Teesside University), ‘The only doubt I ever had was whether I hadn’t compromised too much’: Experiences in the Non-Combatant Corps, 1940-1945’

Dr Wendy Ugolini (University of Edinburgh), ‘How Peace-Loving Was My Valley? Reconstructing the Narratives of English Welsh Conscientious Objectors in Second World War Britain’

Session 3A: ‘Virile’ Anti-War Campaigns in Fascist Movements in Britain and France

Andrew McIntosh (University of Essex), ‘British Women as Militant Symbols in the British Popular Press, 1919-1920’

Camille Cleret (Angers University), ‘In the Name of Peace, Charles Maurras Imprisoned.’ Gender and Peace in the Action Française’s Political Rhetoric (1919-1945)’

Antoine Godet (Angers University), ‘The “virile pacifism” of Jacques Doriot’s Parti Populaire Français’

Liam J Liburd (University of Sheffield), ‘British fascist pacifism?’ The British Union of Fascists and war’

Session 3B: Women’s Life Writing and Fiction in Peace and War

Dr Dina Gusejnova (University of Sheffield), ‘The Third Woman: My grandmother’s work for the Allied Control Council in Vienna’

Dr Silvia Pellicer-Ortín (University of Zaragoza, Spain), ‘Liminal Female Voices at War: Resistant and Healing Female Bonds in Libby Cone’s *War on the Margins* (2008)’

Professor Sue Vice (University of Sheffield) ‘War and Peace in Kindertransport Narratives’

Dr Charlotte Riley (University of Southampton), ‘Writing Peace: The Pacifist Novels of Mary Agnes Hamilton’

Session 4A: Intersecting the Gender and International Turns

Professor Daniel Hucker (University of Nottingham), ‘Women, Gender, and Transnational Peace Activism, 1914-1920: Challenging the ‘Malestream’.’

Dr Marc-William Palen (University of Exeter), ‘The Political Economy of Feminist Peace Internationalism’

Jan Charles Stöckmann (New College, Oxford), ‘The Origins of Feminist International Relations, 1915–1939’

Session 4B: Pacifism, Maternalism and Feminist Internationalism

Dr. Burcin Cakir (Glasgow Caledonian University), '12th IAW Congress in Istanbul, 1935: The Road to Transnational Feminism and Peace'

Sarah Hellowell (Northumbria University), 'The 'Mothers' International': the Women's Co-operative Guild and Peace, 1921–1933'

Erika Huckestein (University of North Carolina), 'Our Children Will Be Pacifists: Motherhood, Feminism, and Fascism between the World Wars'