

BRITISH QUAKER WOMEN AND PEACE, 1880s TO 1920s

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the lives of four British Quaker women—Isabella Ford, Isabel Fry, Margery Fry, and Ruth Fry—focusing on the way they engaged in peace issues in the early twentieth century. In order to examine the complexity and diversity of their experiences, this thesis investigates the characteristics of their Quakerism, pacifism and wider political and personal life, as well as the connections between them.

In contrast to O'Donnell's view that most radical Victorian Quaker women left Quakerism to follow their political pursuits with like-minded friends outside of Quakerism, Isabella Ford, one of the most radical socialists, and feminists among Quakers remained as a Quaker. British Quakers were divided on peace issues but those who disagreed with the general Quaker approach resigned and were not disowned; the case of Isabel Fry is a good example of this.

This thesis argues that the experiences of four Quaker women highlight the permissive approach Quakerism afforded its participants in the early twentieth century, challenging previous interpretations of Quakerism as a mono-culture. Highlighting the swift change within Quakerism from being the closed group of the nineteenth to a more open group in the twentieth century, this thesis describes the varied and varying levels of commitment these women had to the group as 'elastic Quakerism'.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CO Conscientious Objector

FAU Friends' Ambulance Unit

FOR Fellowship of Reconciliation

FPC Friends' Peace Committee

FSC Friends' Service Committee

FWVRC Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee

IAPA International Arbitration and Peace Association

ICW International Council of Women

ILP Independent Labour Party

IPB International Peace Bureau

NCF Non-Conscription Fellowship

NCW National Council of Women

NUWSS National Union of Women's Suffrage Society

SDF Socialist Democratic Federation

SQS Socialist Quaker Society

WCG Women's Co-Operative Guild

WFL Women's Freedom League

WILPF Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WIPA Women's International Peace Association

WLF Women's Liberal Federation

WPAA Women's Peace and Arbitration Association

WPC Women's Peace Crusade

WSPU Women's Social and Political Union

Abbreviations for references are in the Bibliography.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim of Research

This thesis explores the lives of four Quaker women—Isabella Ford (1855-1924), Isabel Fry (1869-1958), Margery Fry (1874-1958), and Ruth Fry (1878-1962)—who engaged in peace issues in Britain in the early twentieth century. It examines the depth and variety of their ideas and practice. In order to achieve this, this thesis investigates the characteristics of their Quakerism, pacifism and wider political life, as well as the connections between them. The four women discussed in this thesis combined their radical concerns and religious minds, put them together into practice and remained as Quakers until their deaths even though not officially.

Elizabeth O'Donnell has argued that most radical Victorian Quaker women in the north-east of England left Quakerism to follow their political pursuits with like-minded friends outside of Quakerism—Quakers seemingly being considered not radical enough. (O'Donnell 1999, 308) In contrast to O'Donnell's view, Isabella Ford, one of the most radical feminists, and socialists among Quakers in her time apparently remained as a Quaker, judging by what the obituary says in *The Friend*. (1924, 670)

Why, then, did she remain as an insider? Is it that she found radical friends with whom to work, or is it that she was not, in fact, so radical herself? Had Quakerism changed in the early twentieth century?

This thesis argues that the experiences of four Quaker women highlight the permissive approach Quakerism afforded its participants in the early twentieth century, challenging previous interpretations of Quakerism as a mono-culture. (Dandelion 2007) A methodological approach of feminist biography highlights the varied emotional relations these women engaged in, also highlighting the swift change within Quakerism from being the closed group of the nineteenth to a more open group in the twentieth century. I describe the varied and varying levels of commitment these women had to the group as 'elastic Quakerism'.

These four Quaker women were all very different in political energies in direction and content. Early twentieth century Quakerism allowed this difference. As Pam Lunn has argued in the case of women's suffrage, Quakerism was permissive: those who disagreed resigned and were not disowned as in the nineteenth century. (Lunn 1997) This thesis highlights and amplifies the theory that Quakerism was permissive, at a popular and organisational level. Lunn also argues that British Quakers were 'divided on all the great social reforms of the nineteenth century', though they are 'widely perceived as having being organisationally in the forefront of change.' (Lunn 1997, 52) This thesis reinforces Lunn how Quaker women differed through tracing these four women's experiences, especially over peace issues, thus challenging the generalized view of Quakerism as a unified body, as Kennedy for example tends to imply (2001).

Thomas Kennedy has argued that Quaker pacifism in the First World War was key to the revival of the movement. (Kennedy 1989) However, Quaker pacifism was not prevalent among Friends. As Lunn argues: ‘although individual Quakers, men as well as women, contributed to the suffrage campaign – in both its constitutional and militant forms’, (1997, 52) the average Quaker was conservative on suffrage issues in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She claims that ‘Quakers were in fact divided on all the great social reforms of the nineteenth century’: Quakers remained ‘religious’ rather than political. (Lunn 1997) Accordingly, we can therefore ask: Were these women discussed here divided as well? Were they pacifist rather than patriot or religious rather than political? If they divided, how did they differ and why did they not move strongly in unison on peace issue?

This thesis argues that the Quaker women discussed found their own voice within and outwith Quakerism even though they did not represent the most radical liberal politics or liberal tendencies of Quakerism of their time. (Dandelion 2007) They all were atypical and enthusiastically involved in public lives in varied levels and diverse ways. Previous scholarship is here re-evaluated within the web of the personal and political, and this thesis argues that this lens, and not only their Quaker identity, provides the most useful way of analysing these lives.

This thesis also argues that historians need to be careful of generalising about Quaker women and Kennedy may have overstated his thesis about ‘Peace Testimony’ of British Quakerism in the early twentieth century, when he claims that the ‘Quaker Renaissance’ of liberal thought opened the way to the social and political activism.

(Kennedy 2001, 9) Again, unlike O'Donnell (1999), elastic Quakerism includes being in and out of Quakerism as part of the group even after resignation.

None of these four women married, and did not leave any descendants, though they benefited from faithful and supportive friendships with kindred spirits. They were all distinguished women leaders and lived lives that were beyond the normal reach of the women of their time.

Isabella Ford (1855-1924) was one of the founding members of the ethical socialist group 'Fellowship of the New Life' (1883-1889), while also an active socialist in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) from 1893 with her sisters, Bessie and Emily, and a peace activist for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). She also was one of the first supporters and a committee member of the Leeds Arts Club with her sister Emily. (Steele 1990, 33) She contributed a column to *Leeds Forward* titled 'Up and Down the World' and the ILP weekly the *Labour Leader* regularly. Isabella had a wide range of friendships with progressive radicals in her period. Among them were such (notorious) feminists and women revolutionaries as Olive Schreiner, Eleanor Marx, Charlotte Despard, Dora Montefiore, Constance Lytton, Catharine Marshall, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Sylvia Pankhurst, and Edward Carpenter. Their friendship mainly depended on their commitment to justice and peace, and their friendship network was based on giving emotional and practical support to each other. (Hannam 1989) The Ford sisters' house Adel Grange was a home for the radicals during the 1890s. (*The Friend* 1924, 670)

Isabel, Margery and Ruth Fry came from a prominent Quaker upper middle class family. Educationist Isabel devoted her entire life to her experimental schools. Margery was awarded an Oxford degree and became deeply involved in local education and penal reform. Ruth devoted her life to writing on peace issues and organizing relief work during and after the First World War as a Quaker representative for all over Europe. The three Fry sisters benefited from the material resources and advanced education that their family and kinship background made available to them and lived the same independent life.

This study explores how these particular women responded to their historical and social context, especially to the peace and justice issue. It argues that there were varying degrees of political lives, and that they responded in different ways to the prevailing circumstances. These four women remained personally committed to Quakerism, even though not always formally as in the case of Isabel and Margery who left. However, Quakers recognised those two as Quakers (*TF* 1958, 539-40) and they themselves engaged in Quaker activities, even after they had left Quakerism officially. When they resigned, their Quaker Meetings did not disown them, as may have been the case in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. (Marietta 1984, 6) Therefore I argue Quakerism had become more permissive and multi-behavioural culture in the twentieth century.

The remainder of this chapter explains the methodology and sources used in the present study. This chapter then looks first at previous approaches that have been used in the discussion of the women's historical background and their activism, before moving on to outline the structure of the present thesis.

1.2. Methodology

Researching Quaker Women's from a Feminist Perspective

The history of the British women's movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been presented through the use of biography. (Spender 1982, Liddington 1984, Hannam 1989, Vellacott 1993, Purvis 2002, Caine 2005) Many British historians of women's movements use such forms of prosopography as family connections, religious belief, education, and links to male elites to examine what was shared among leading members of the movement. Stanley and Morley argue that it was possible to write the biography of a woman who had left relatively little documentary evidence behind her, since the meaning of her actions could be reconstructed in terms of the values, goals and strategies adopted by her closest associates, and linked back to those documentary sources that had survived. (1988)

June Purvis argues feminist historians should attempt to capture the 'complexity and diversity' of women's lives in using different types of primary sources (1992, 293): the feminist historian has 'not only to re-read the primary sources, but also develop a sensitivity' to an analysis of women's situation and of 'the power relationships between the sexes, which have been "hidden" and "obscured" in most secondary sources.' (1992, 277) Also, when using the writings of subjects, such as novels,

historians should be careful to interpret the purposes and intentions of the texts and the relations to the contexts, as Purvis emphasizes:

To what extent do the purposes behind any one text help to shape its form and content? To what extent can it be assumed that what was written corresponded exactly (or even roughly) to what was intended? To what extent do the accounts match reality? To what extent can the views expressed be regarded as indicative of more generally diffused, widely held views, for example, those of socialist or radical feminists? To what extent do our interpretations of such texts match the intentions of the writer? (Purvis 1992, 282)

In her article, 'Knowing Because Experiencing Subject: Narratives, Lives, and Autobiography', Stanley attempts to develop 'a theory about a feminist epistemology (a theory of knowledge) and its relationship to a feminist ontology (a theory of being).' (1993, 205-15) She focuses on how we should understand and theorise the notion of 'self', and suggests the narrative approach to analyse lives. The reason why she concentrates on the narrations of selves and others is that "'self" does not exist in isolation from interrelationship with other selves and other lives and is grounded in the material reality of everyday life'. (Stanley 1993, 206)

Stanley's main concern is the narration of lives, which is 'auto/bio/graphy' (self-life-writing). Her conviction for this approach is based on the awareness that 'all knowledge of the world is rooted in the knowledge-production process engaged in by inquiring and experiencing and therefore knowing subjects', working towards historiographies, not the past of a life itself. (Stanley 1993, 214) She points out the

importance of acknowledging that ‘the real reality is that there is no single real reality’, and also that ‘a real world and real lives do exist, however we interpret, construct, and recycle accounts of these by a variety of symbolic means’. (Stanley 1993, 214)

Stanley’s main point is that:

There is and can be no neat and simple divide between different forms of writings, specially between the factual and the fictional and between biography and autobiography, for each of them is dependent on the transforming creating medium of the writer and her states of consciousness. (Stanley 1986, 30)

I agree with the notion of Stanley, when she described her methodology of her ‘feminist biography’ as a kind of relationship of ‘falling in love’- by this she means that ‘transient but enthralling state’. (Stanley 1986, 30) According to Stanley, ‘doing biography’ is ‘intimately connected with the biographer’s own autobiography and to omit this is to distort.’ (Stanley 1986, 30) She stress that ‘there is no “complete view” which adds up to “the real X or Y” because there is no such person’. (Stanley 1986, 30)

Stanley emphasises that the methodology of feminist biography inspires and demands emotional attachment to the objects of the research and an emotional engagement with their personal feelings and thoughts, (1985) because without emotional engagement we cannot fully appreciate what was happening to their minds and emotions and why they responded to their context as they did. (Stanley 1985, 1-9) Through this method

of close emotional reading we can reach to the behind and beyond the published materials of the subjects. Only through this method, she argues, can we approach their emotional lives. (Stanley 1985)

I agree with this idea and that historians need to develop a sensitivity to capture the complexity and diversity of their lives, furthermore, that my version of Isabella Ford might be a reflection of my consciousness. However, it does not necessarily mean that a researcher need no longer pursue a social scientific or socio-cultural and historical biography. I emphasize how women as a group responded to their socio-historical and cultural context and chose their life, challenging the conventional representation of women. Searching for the hidden voices and experiences of women from a feminist perspective, we can communicate with their own words and connect with their real lives through a kind of dialogue between texts and contexts - I coin this dynamic process as 'feminist socio-biography'.

Towards Feminist Socio-biography

As I use the methodology of feminist biography (Hannam 1986, Stanley 1986) in my research on Quaker women, I trace those women's political and personal lives and attempt to shape that of collective biography focusing on how they responded to their context. Adapting the notion of Michael Roper's emphasis on subjectivity and emotion in gender history I focus on my subjects' choice of their process of politicisation and single life and the 'sense of practices of everyday life and of human experience formed through emotional relationships with others', rather than concentrating exclusively on textual and linguistic analyses. (Roper 2005, 62)

Finding hidden voices and experiences of women as a group, I focus on women's choices in their context and their interrelatedness or dialectics to understand the complexity and diversity of women's lives towards 'feminist socio-biography', or a formation of women's history as a group portrait from a feminist perspective, rather than as a collection of selective portraits.

Sources

In order to trace the lives of the four Quaker women, I have elected to engage with their personal written records as well as other primary sources published and unpublished, adopting a 'feminist biography' (Hannam 1986, Stanley 1986) approach following up their personal and public networks and lives. The primary materials used in this thesis are many different types, such as diaries, letters, journals, interviews, published pamphlets and novels, as well as official texts discussed in detail below. Through the private and personal records, we can approach to the emotional lives of the subjects.

I also focus on women's networks that relied on such means of correspondence as letters, diaries and memoirs, and observe that such methods of communication became important for middle class families and that their preservation became the particular responsibility of women. (Purvis 1992, 286, Holton 2007) Many other contemporary feminist sociologists and historians have adopted biography and collective biography to address the lives of particular women. (Stanley 1985, Hannam 1989, Levine 1990, Caine 1992, Stanley 1992) Collective biography also makes possible the exploration of variation and particularity. It may serve to reveal women activists as persons quite distinct from 'the average woman' or bring about a deeper

acknowledgment of them via better narrative. (Hannam 1989, Holton 1992, 1996, 2000, 2001)

Exploring the connections between the personal and the political, or examining kinship, sociability or the life course of women proved valuable. This kind of research serves to re-examine some of the stereotypes and to demonstrate the enormous variety encompassed by written forms of correspondence, (Hannam 1989, Holton 1994, 1998, 2005, 2007) especially literary writings including fictions and allegories. (Stanley 2002)

Considering Isabella's Quaker upbringing and attitude towards life, it seems that her Quakerism affected her emotional well-being as well as the expectations and satisfactions she experienced in her life. June Hannam made it clear when she revisited her biography of Isabella Ford that she thought she should have looked at this more with exploring the importance of emotions in Isabella's political life. (2009) To understand emotions, this methodology should be backed up with 'a close reading of a range of personal material, including letters, interviews and fiction.' (Hannam 2009, 6) Only through this approach can we 'understand feelings and unconscious elements and their relationship to lived experience', Hannam emphasises. (2009, 6) I strongly agree with this idea and positively draw the emphasis onto my research.

Researching Isabella Ford

In researching Isabella Ford, the present thesis includes analysis of primary sources such as official texts, published texts including Isabella's novels and personal texts, which include letters, as well as secondary sources. The analysis will be focused on

her Quakerism as well as its relationship with her socialism, feminism and peace activism through her friendship networks to understand her emotional and political life as well.

Isabella Ford's personal letters and publications are kept in the London School of Economics (LSE) Archive and British Library Special Collection. Isabella wrote many articles in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) Journal *Labour Leader* and was interviewed by numerous local journals. A Collection of the *Labour Leader* is kept in the LSE. Scraps of local journals are found in the Friends House Library in London. Her correspondences with Millicent Garrett Fawcett are kept in the Women's Library Special Collection in the Metropolitan University in east London. Her correspondences with Edward Carpenter are kept in the LSE Archive. Edward Carpenter's two-storied cottage with a farm, Millthorpe, in the outskirts of Sheffield which once was a core centre for domestic and international radicals, where they shared their zeal for 'New Life' and the practice of simple communal living and mutual spiritual support, is still maintained.¹

My own visit to Millthorpe proved enlightening and inspirational for the present purposes. Walking around and sitting in a corner of the garden where the Carpenter community sunbathed and meditated every afternoon helped me visualise the past and imagine the ethical socialist's dream community. Visiting the site allowed me to place the events there in context, and accordingly I am able to picture the scene of December 1884, when William Morris visited Edward Carpenter to discuss a split that

¹ Now known as 'Carpenter House', the residence is run by Jo McGhee, whose mother bought the property more than 40 years ago and bequeathed it to her.

had occurred among socialist groups. Morris described Carpenter's practice of the simple life at Millthorpe as an embodiment of dreams:

I listened with longing heart to his account of his seven acres patch of ground: He says that he and his fellow can almost live on it: they grow their own wheat and send flowers and fruit to Chesterfield and Sheffield markets: all that sounds very agreeable to me. It seems to me that the real way to enjoy life is to accept all its necessary ordinary details and turn them into pleasures by taking interest in them: whereas modern civilization huddles them out of the way, has them done in a venal and slovenly manner till they become real drudgery which people can't help trying to avoid. While I think, as in a vision, of a decent community as a refuge from our mean squabbles and corrupt society: but I am too old now, even if it were not dastardly to desert. ('I listened', a letter from William Morris to Georgiana Burne-Jones, 24 December 1884, MacCarthy 1994, 501)

Seeing and experiencing the location that featured so prominently in the correspondence I was examining, helped to amplify and focus more sharply the words on the page.

Returning to Isabella, a records of Hannah Ford, Isabella's mother, is kept in Leeds University Quaker Library Special Collection. (Ref: Carlton Hill Archive R7)

When writing her feminist biography of Isabella Ford, Hannam did not include Isabella's novels. Later Hannam corrected this omission, emphasising that to do feminist biography one should analyse all accessible personal material, 'including novels.' (Hannam 2009, 6) I have therefore included the novels here.

Isabella Ford wrote three novels, *Miss Blake of Monkshalton* (1890), *On the Threshold* (1895), and *Mr Elliott* (1901). Alfred Orage, the leader of the Leeds Arts Club, reviewed her novel *On the Threshold* (1895) as ‘a book of women for men and women’, and ‘there are scenes of real life among real people, touches of homely unaffected pathos, which make *On the Threshold* not only readable but re-readable’. (*Labour Leader*, 16 November 1895) It is interesting that only in the *Labour Leader* could be found any mention of Isabella’s novel, not in any of the Quaker journals such as *The Friend* or *The British Friend* or *Friends’ Quarterly Examiner*. I examine what she sought to convey in her novels and how her readership responded through the reviews. I also explore whether her socialism, feminism, Quakerism and her writings had something to do with her aesthetics and politics, as the Leeds Art Club had a Nietzschean tendency to aestheticize politics. They believed ‘democracy subordinate to the most “beautiful” ideas’, and ‘art must serve society; art as evolutionary or spiritually nourishing.’ (Steele 1990, 224)

Ann Heilmann claims that the first works of feminist theory were *Women and Socialism* by Isabella Ford in 1907 and *Woman and Labour* by Olive Schreiner in 1911. (1996, 200) Again, she argues they created a feminist genre and wrote social document, the political pamphlet, auto/biography, and fiction, and ‘proved a means of promoting and popularizing the main ideas of the women’s movement’ (Heilmann 1996, 197): ‘particularly the case with socialist feminists like Isabella Ford, whose novel *On the Threshold* (1895) uses the friendship of the two middle-class protagonists to provide the reader with a deeper insight into working-class women’s lives.’ (Heilmann 1996, 207)

Another motivation to include the textual analysis of the subject's novels as primary sources is, particularly, to find out what her intention was in writing them and what the novels tell us about the author and the personal and the political in context. Waters argues 'the conventions of New Woman fiction' (Waters 1993, 40) can be interpreted as a political practice. In using her novels, I attempt to explore the characteristics and messages of the novels and what and how the author expressed and tried to deliver in response to the context in detail, remembering the notion of interpretation as Purvis emphasises above.

Researching the Fry sisters

The Fry family can rightly be viewed as a 'weighty' or as a renowned Quaker family. (Woolf 1940, Brown 1960, Jones 1966, Sutton 1972) Biographies of Isabel and Margery were written in the 1960s with their family's permission and with help from their artist brother Roger Fry's daughter, Mrs Pamela Diamond (Brown 1960, Jones 1966). I was unable to access the family-owned collection of papers as I had no contact information for the Diamond family. After the Fry sisters' generation, the family looks to have vanished in terms of Quaker history. Roger Fry's (1866–1934) biography written by his friend Virginia Woolf, and two edited and published volumes of letters with his family members and friends are useful for looking at their family life and the close relationships between siblings and friends and lovers. (Woolf 1940, Sutton 1972) Unfortunately, unpublished family correspondences, housed at Friends House, is still uncatalogued and in spite of requests, is still unavailable for research. The National Portrait Gallery in London keeps Roger Fry's paintings and portraits of himself, Margery Fry, Ruth Fry, and Vanessa Bell, his artist lover, Virginia Woolf's sister and Edward Carpenter. Petronella Clark, whose great aunt was

Dr Hilda Clark (1881-1955), famous Quaker relief organiser in Europe during the First World War (Spielhofer 2001), keeps Roger Fry's wardrobe with samples of his handwriting in it at her farm house in Somerset (Petronella Clark personal collection). Her grandfather and Roger Fry were friends from their Cambridge years. The significance of the preservation of these important and personal artefacts, for me, is that they offer physical, tangible points of contact with the past lives.

Isabel Fry's personal letters, diaries and journals are kept in four boxes in a special collection of the Institute of Education in London (GB 0366 FY). The collection mainly consists of her diaries in notebooks, not catalogued and piled up in boxes chronologically. The collection is unsorted and unlisted, yet still accessible for research. Her diary is, basically, a kind of miscellaneous report of every day life. She wrote of personal and political concerns, such as her failure to adopt a girl from the working class, her friendships with liberal intellectuals, political reform in Turkey, her relationship with her family, the running of her schools and classes, her educational ideas, and her ideas of anti-militarism and disarmament. The collection includes some letters and photos of her family and her farmhouse school. The correspondences are between 1930 and 1958 (so outside the scope of this study) to her friend and French teacher Eugenie Dubois and are about running the farmhouse school. There are also publications in the collection by Isabel Fry, two miscellanies, *Uninitiated* (1895), *The Day of Small Things* (1901), and *A Key to Language: A Method of Grammatical Analysis by Means of Graphic Symbols* (1925), and Margery Fry's publication *The Single Woman* (1953). The collection of handwritten personal records was kept by her friend, Mme Eugenie Dubois from 1958, and donated to the Institute by Mme Dubois's son in 1983. Isabel Fry kept detailed journals from 1911 until her death in

1958 on an almost daily basis. There are two major gaps in the sequence: 1921-1934 and 1936-1940. There are partial journal entries from 1882-3 and 1907-8. This thesis focuses on her writings around the years of the First World War to follow her ideas on peace. A pamphlet written and subscribed by her, titled 'To them that say: "Peace, peace, when there is no peace"' is housed in the archive of the LSE (D(4)/D205) and the Friends House Library (Isabel Fry, Box 223) in London. This is key material to help analyse her attitude towards pacifism. Even given this collection of her writings, it was impossible to find out the exact written evidence for the reason and her feelings about her resignation from Quakerism.

Ruth's and Margery Fry's published writings are kept in Friend House Library in London and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham. There are eight boxes of the Ruth Fry collection at the Friends House Library in London (Temp MSS 481). The Temp MSS 481 consists of rather miscellaneous bundles of papers, notes, correspondence, press cuttings, etc., not printed volumes. Some of them are arranged chronologically (includes 3 boxes marked 1917-27, 1935-41, 1943-48). However, the material is not yet listed, so there is no more detailed description. These unlisted manuscripts are not generally available for research in the Friends House Library, although on request I was given some of the materials in Temp MSS 481 as chosen by the Librarians. Some summary biographies made by the Library about the family are available, and two volumes of published materials of Ruth Fry are accessible to the public in the Friends House Library.

This thesis is limited to materials available in the UK. The Ruth Fry collection of correspondence is in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection in Philadelphia (DG

046), mostly received from others during later part of her life. Therefore, other than published material by Ruth Fry, I had to rely on secondary sources. Other Fry papers are kept in the Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, and the other related collections could be found in the Archives of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This overseas archive is suggested as promising for future research.

The Margery Fry Papers are kept at the University of Birmingham Special Collection. These are five files of letters, manuscripts, statements of Margery Fry as warden of the University House about the building plans, furnishing, funding, bills, accounts, and regarding the competing architects and their plans. (University House Archives 1-5) One of these files includes a letter from John Masefield to Margery Fry describing his experiences tending wounded soldiers, and asking her to contribute towards a travelling field hospital. (University House Archives ref. no. 5/9, letter dated 22 July 1915) Margery Fry's five letters to Sir Oliver Lodge dated between 1923 and 1925 about the activity for the Howard League for Penal Reform are kept in another file in the University of Birmingham Special Collection (OJL149). Another file of miscellaneous letters related to invitations to attend events and this also includes a photograph of the visit of Margery Fry to the Union Building (USS21). These primary resources are not useful, however, to understand her ideas on peace and her resignation from Quakerism.

No clear evidence was found to explain the Fry sisters' different approaches to peace issues and their resignation from Quakerism. It was essential to use a level of historical and social scientific imagination to fill the gap between the published and

personal materials and the 'silence' in the dialogue between texts and contexts.

Research into Friendship Networks

Stanley formulated a feminist biography methodology to shape a collective biography of women as a group that potentially makes it possible to find that 'complexities of women's friendships can be done through a combination of historical and biographical means, looking closely at particular lives and how these are intertwined with others in patterns of friendship'. (Stanley 1985, 1992, 210) Stanley warns of the dangers of generalisation in the case of women's relationships and romantic friendship. As her case study on the close friendship between Emily Wilding Davison and Mary Leigh shows, no historical evidence proves decisively whether their relationship was a political, romantic or sexual one. We only can tell it was 'close, loving, mutually supportive and going through great changes', she concludes. (Stanley 1992, 211) No more certainty is possible.

However, Stanley emphasises the importance of a great deal of 'primary research that looks in detail at particular women's friendships and the networks'. (Stanley 1992, 211) Following Stanley (1985, 38) and Hannam's (1989, 26) notion of the friendship networks, this thesis traces these four women's personal records to figure out the nature of each of their friendships and political ideas they shared. (Chapter 3, 4) Also, it explores and analyses the complexity and diversity of the personal lives and political activism of the four Quaker women. (Chapter 5)

Through Stanley's research into 'Feminism and Friendship in England from 1825 to 1938: The case of Olive Schreiner' (Stanley 1985, 10-46), the networks of prominent

women of that period can be followed up. Not only their ideas and activism but also their emotional life can be read and experienced through the web of overlapping networks. In particular, an emotional map can be drawn alongside their web of friendship. This approach is very useful for understanding how the subjects of enquiry feel, and for appreciating their emotional attachment and mutual support of kindred minds. Attempting to engage with and appreciate the deep emotions that are expressed directly or merely hinted at in the correspondence and personal records is a difficult but exciting challenge. Only a passion for the subjects, coupled with an enthusiasm and intense obsession for engaging with their lives, has made the interpretation of their written records possible. And it is entirely right that historians empathise emotionally with their subjects, seeking to visualise their lives and their epochs.

Rewriting women's lives definitely needs a highly developed emotional quality and ability. It requires cultivating the ability to hold onto the emotions that have been generated. This has been, to some extent, an artistic exercise.

1.3. Previous Scholarship

This section summarizes previous scholarships on British Quaker women activists and their networks and friendships in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

The Category of Women

Stanley points out the importance of Denise Riley's argument about the category of women in history. (Stanley 1990, 151-57) The point is that the category *Woman* is 'historically, discursively constructed, and always relatively to other categories which themselves change'. (Riley 1988, 1-2) Stanley stresses that the argument is a debate about 'the existence of any reality beneath or within in constructions'. (Stanley 1990, 151) Stanley engages with Riley's discussion as it contributes to prepare the ground for a discussion of epistemological issues within feminist history. (Stanley 1990, 153)

Stanley suggests 'looking closely at appropriate historical materials rather than the work of theorists of grand feminist theory, poets of feminist common language, or feminist deconstructors to strengthen feminist ground.' (Stanley 1990, 154) Doing her research on the relationship between Hannah Cullwick and Arthur Munby through a close reading of Hannah's diaries, Stanley finds that Hannah was a theoriser of her own experiences and those of others as she struggled with both living and understanding her relationship, in terms of class, race (and not solely colour terms), complex dominances and subserviences. (Stanley 1987, 19-31) For Hannah Cullwick, 'women' was 'a structural category to which she had necessarily to relate and respond, but in complex ways related to her class position, her rural background, and also her particular and unique biographical gathering together of experiences and understandings'. (Stanley 1990, 157) I agree with Stanley's idea that: 'we have much to learn from women whose lives admit ruffled complexities, rather than these being removed under the heavy iron of Theory'. Therefore, she suggests, 'detailed examinations of women's history should be undertaken with a spirit of humility and a genuine desire to understand'. (Stanley 1990, 157)

In this thesis, Stanley's theories about feminist research are adopted in order to understand particular Quaker women's political as well as emotional lives. Hannam attempts to explore the life of Isabella Ford through the 'web of friendship', an approach which was common among many feminist historians in the late 1980s. (1989) To do so, Hannam examines the way in which Isabella Ford was influenced by, and tried to influence in turn. Doing so, she found that a detailed study of one person's political work and ideas revealed connections between movements and ideas that often seemed separate in mainstream histories. She argues that the 'development and nature of their politics could best be understood in the context of the varied friendship networks in which they were enmeshed'. (Hannam 2009, 1)

Hannam stresses that she attempted to look at the considerable differences between socialist women in the extent to which, and how, they looked at their politics through the prism of gender. In her biography of Isabella Ford, Hannam attempts to expose the complexities of political choices Isabella Ford made, as well as how she tried to theorise the relationship between feminism, socialism, and peace. (1989)

Hannam focused on 'how women told and re-told their own stories, and why they told them in that way, and [on] the extent to which this can provide new insights into the process of politicisation' in the writing of Isabella Ford's biography. (Hannam 2009, 3) Hannam discusses the various influences on Isabella Ford's decision to become a feminist and a socialist including her early family life, her parents' involvement in radical liberal causes and her experience of helping to organise women on strike. (1989) But Isabella did not present it as a gendered process of her politicisation. Hannam tries to describe the way that Isabella represented her concern about and

engagement with socialist and feminist politics in an ‘untheorised’ way. (Hannam 2009, 3)

Hannam also follows up the matter of gender and class in Isabella’s engagement with socialist politics, and tries to figure out Isabella’s emotional difficulties, which included disapproval from her own class and suspicion from the working class with whom she tried to identify herself.

To sum up, Hannam’s narrative provides a very advanced and challenging socialist feminist presentation of Isabella. In her biography of Isabella Ford, Hannam tries to draw the emotional dimension of Isabella’s politics and everyday life, noting that the links between the personal and political were a very crucial issue among New Life socialists of the 1890s. (1989)

As for the assumption of the close connection with the women’s movement and Quakers, Pam Lunn argues that kind of reputation and ‘this perception is inaccurate, largely mythic, and based on generalisation from the actions of a small number of individual Friends.’ (Lunn 1997, 30) She suggests that ‘Friends’ reputation for having been corporately progressive on the question of women’s equality is undeserved, based on superficial consideration of the use of the term “equality”, showing that ‘the position of the London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends was far more cautious and divided than is generally supposed.’ (Lunn 1997, 30) She explores individual and corporate public statements in *The Friend*, *The British Friend* and *The Friends’ Quarterly Examiner*. (Lunn 1997, 30-55)

Sandra Holton and Margaret Allen also argue that ‘the link between the religious faith of Quaker women and their political radicalism has remained largely unexamined,’ even though British Quaker women have received much attention from historians. (such as Banks 1981)(Holton and Allen 1997, 1) She argues that ‘the relationship between religious views and political action was more complex’ in Quaker women’s involvement in a liberal politics. (Ibid) She concludes that the constitutional arrangements of Quakers became a ground of gender contest as a consequence of women’s enlarged role in the outside world, (Ibid) through re-evaluation of Quaker women’s position within the Society of Friends. (Holton and Allen 1997, 1-29)

Researching Quaker Women and Microhistorical approach

Sandra Holton and Robert Holton adopt a Microhistorical approach to their research on Quaker women, for it is a research method that ‘examines the experience, mentalities and subcultures of subordinate and/or atypical groups or individuals’. (Holton 2007, 235, Holton and Holton 2007, 9-25) Through adopting Microhistorical methodology they attempt ‘to construct a kind of micro-level collective biography, featuring a network composed of a small group of friends and acquaintances.’ (Holton and Holton 2007, 10) The Microhistory approach explores the lives of particular persons, their relationship to each other, and their understanding of larger process and structures. (Ginzburg 1989, 1993, 1999)

Microhistorians argue that ‘in order to see history as a multifaceted flow with many individual centres, rather than as a grand narrative and a unified process, we need a new conceptual and methodological approach.’ (Iggers 1997, 103) One of the most prominent microhistorians, Carlo Ginzburg argues that large-scale quantitative studies

distorted the actual reality on the individual level and focuses on observing the complicated function of individual relationships within each and every social context. (Ginzburg 1980, 1989) He proposes that any social structure is the result of interaction and of numerous individual strategies, a fabric that can only be reconstituted from close observation. (Ginsburg 1993, 33) Ultimately, he attempts to show ‘knowledge is possible, even historical knowledge.’ (Ginzburg 1999, 25) Microhistorians warn ‘the large-scale generalizations distorted the actual reality at the base and committed to open history to peoples who would be left out by other methods and to elucidate historical causation on the level of small groups where most of life takes place’. (Muir 1991, xxi)

Leading microhistorian Giovanni Levi describes ‘Microhistory as a practice that is essentially based on the reduction of the scale of observation, on a microscopic analysis and an intensive study of the documentary material.’ (2001, 99) He stresses the importance of not losing close sight of each individual’s social practice, people themselves and their situation in life. He also focuses on ‘individual lives and events and their attitudes, that is, mental habits, to succeed in expressing the complexity of reality.’ (Levi 2001, 93-113) This is the strength of microhistorical method, which appears to be useful to do ‘micro-level collective biography’, following up gender and class complexity. (Holton and Holton 2007, 10)

When Holton and R. Holton draw microhistorical method into their research on Quaker women activist networks, they themselves note ‘the subjects have been examined in terms of their particularity and not for their typicality’ (Holton and Holton 2007, 6) :

The power of individual voices, some of which emerge more strongly than others from the archive due to the forcefulness of a particular personality, individual powers of expression, a reflective turn of mind, contingencies in the survival of documents or a mixture of such elements. The eloquence of such voices make possible a particular ability to communicate between the living and the dead, to represent the self with some force in what was written and still may be read. (Holton and Holton 2007, 6)

The main concern of this approach is the history of everyday life, which was once dismissed as trivial, but which is now seen by microhistorians as the only real history to which everything else must be related. They claim through microhistorical methodology it may be ‘possible to construct a kind of micro-level collective biography, featuring a network composed of a small group of friends and acquaintances.’ (Holton and Holton 2007, 10) Microhistorians argue ‘premature and inexorable analytical shifts from the social world of individuals within their networks to social worlds of abstract collectivities, such as classes or communities lead to an undervaluation of individual encounters, exchanges and idiosyncrasies.’ (Ibid) A Microhistorical approach seems to serve the study of specific persons in particular settings. Despite differing emphases, the notion of the microhistorian is partly compatible with the feminist task to make women visible where they have been hidden in the past and challenge the stereotypical representation of women from a feminist perspective.

This thesis strives to grasp close examination of the complexity of Quaker women’s involvement in liberal politics and the link between their political radicalism and

religious faith. The next section covers the historical background of this thesis to examine the connection between British socialism, feminism, pacifism and Quakerism in the period between the 1880s and the 1920s.

1.4. Historical Context

This thesis traces the political and personal lives of Quaker women and places their lives in a broader context in the early twentieth century. To do so, I begin in the 1880s in order to examine the social movement at the turn of the century and in the years around the First World War. My focus will be on the emergence of a new consciousness and a new theory rather than on the details of activity.

British Socialism and Feminism in 1880s to 1920s

This part examines the emergence of British socialism and its relationship with feminism.

Hannam and Hunt argue that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the politics of socialist organisations were gendered in theory and in practice. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 57) Nonetheless, many of those women who became socialists in this period were determined to ensure the socialist claims of universality. From the late 1880s onwards, therefore, the ‘Woman Question’ was debated extensively within socialist groups, both in Britain and in the rest of Europe. In any conflict between socialism and feminism the attitudes of socialist feminists in European countries were

different as to whether they put socialism first. (Boxer and Quataert, 1978) Socialist groups were to develop a theoretical framework for understanding women's social, economic and political position within the capitalist system based on class. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 57)

Marxists were influenced by Bebel's *Woman under Socialism* (1879) and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). Bebel's book was translated into English and widely reviewed in the socialist press, including the *Clarion, Justice* and the *Labour Leader*. (Clayton 1926) Engels, the factory owner in Manchester, was interested in the material base of the family, rather than in women's subordination. However, he claimed that class society and women's oppression had the same origin in the growth of private property. He developed his economic analysis by adopting sex/class analogy. He explored the economic cause of women's oppression and observed that the family changed over time, taking a different form in various societies. His argument provided the theoretical framework of the Second International towards the 'Woman Question'. (Hunt 1996, chapter2)

Bebel stressed that women were oppressed from sex as well as class. He asserted women's right to work and socialisation of domestic labour. Bebel made a distinct contribution to feminist debates about 'woman's nature' by arguing against the idea that women had a 'natural calling' to raise families. Instead, he explored the social construction of gender and claimed that 'the domination of women by men was rooted not in biology but in history and was thus capable of resolution in history'. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 58)

During the 1880s and 1890s, British socialist groups all expressed a complex range of arguments around the Woman Question. The view of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) was an orthodox Marxist one and the men such as Harry Quelch and Belfort Bax, who influenced opinion through the party newspaper *Justice*, were antagonistic to the Woman Question, and misogynistic. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 59) Ernest Belfort Bax (1854-1926), the author of *The Fraud of Feminism* (1913) claimed that 'women were inherently inferior and liable to hysteria', and therefore 'not as fit as men for political, administrative or judicial functions'. (*Justice*, 19 October 1895) However, Hannam and Hunt argue that the SDF saw the Woman Question as one of conscience and a range of different views on the Woman Question was expressed in *Justice*. (2002, 59)

Hannam and Hunt claim that the ILP drew inspiration for its socialism from diverse political sources which ranged from Marxism to radical liberalism, and its views on the Woman Question were likely to be influenced by Ruskin, William Morris and Edward Carpenter, Engels and Bebel. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 59) The ILP criticised capitalism as immoral and inefficient, and it was assumed that the transition to socialism would be achieved through gradual political change rather than through class struggle. (James et al. 1992) The ILP defined socialism in broad terms as 'bringing a transformation of personal relationships and new social, moral and artistic possibilities as well as material benefits'. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 59)

In this context it was far more acceptable for the ILP at an official level to be supportive of women's rights, and one of its leaders, Keir Hardie, was a supportive campaigner for women's suffrage. However, in practice, the commitment of the ILP

to ‘women’s emancipation’ was also ambivalent. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 59) Even though *The Labour Leader* did not represent misogynistic attitudes, the main audience to be addressed were working-class men. In common with the SDF, the ILP saw ‘non-economic issues as marginal questions which could be addressed once socialism had been achieved’. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 60)

In the 1880s and 1890s, in a context in which the women’s movement was weak and the socialist movement was in its infancy, socialist women tried to persuade socialist groups to take gender issues seriously. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 40) In the decade before the First World War, socialist women had to negotiate between their party, their class and their sex. In the 1910s to 1920s, socialist women needed to make political choices and strategies of their socialist groups. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 41)

Alberti argues that the relationship between socialism and feminism has always been in tension. (1989, 94) The dilemma that faced feminists in the Labour Movement became apparent. Helena Swanwick, Mary Stocks and Helen Ward inclined to guild socialism. Guild socialism aimed at the transformation of trade unions into producers’ guilds, which would control each branch of industry. Evelyn Sharp joined the Labour Party in 1918 and moved away from other feminists. (Johns 2009) In October 1920, she criticized the Women’s International League (WIL) for being a purely women’s league. (Alberti 1989, 94-95) At that moment, there was a need for a progressive feminist group to lead the women’s movement, yet the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC) had not sufficient leadership to promote a progressive movement. (Alberti 1989, 98) Although Sharp had cut herself off from feminist

organizations in the 1920s, she compared the strike with the suffrage struggle that she understood as a non-violent revolution. (Alberti 1989, 184)

After the vote in 1918, the 1920s was the turning point of feminist politics. (Hannam and Hunt 2002, 126) The General Strike of May 1926 marked an epoch of political polarization among feminists. It was difficult for non-party or cross-party alliances to survive. Alberti argues that ‘the reactions of middle-class feminists to the strike were moderate, pacific and distressed’. (Alberti 1989, 184)

Hunt argues that ‘Engels’s analysis of the nature of the original sex antagonism is not made clear, it merely slides into one of class antagonism.’ (Hunt 1996, 24) This is the nature of the sex/ class analogy. Bebel, like Engels, stated that ‘the Woman Question is only one of the aspects of the Social Question’. (Bebel 1885, 1) Bebel was convinced of the inevitability of a sexual division of labour, and ‘women’s calling as mother and rearer of children’. (Bebel 1885, 122) For Bebel, the Woman Question was not that urgent an issue: ‘The complete emancipation of woman, and her equality with man is the final goal of our social development’. (Bebel 1885, 10)

Hunt claims that ‘the socialist construction of the Woman Question was only the pragmatic response of one movement concerned to recruit at the expense of a competing ideology’. (1996, 30) Yet part of the complexity of the evolving relationship between socialism and feminism is the nature of the original socialist construction of the Woman Question. (Hunt 1996, 30) Hunt claims that the sex and class analogy itself was never fully explored or argued by Bebel: ‘although the utopian socialists suggested the need for communal childcare and housework, and

questioned the institution of marriage, it was a moral appeal without a materialist analysis of class society and woman's subordination within it.' (1996, 45)

Dora Montefiore, Charlotte Despard, Margaret Hicks, Rose Jarvis (Scott), Mary Gray, Sarah Lay, Edith Lanchester, Clara Hedin, Kathleen Kough, Zelda Kahan, Enid Stacy all worked for the ILP, while Lena Wilson, and Edith Watson were SDF members. (Hunt 1996, 386) There is, Hunt argues, however, no evidence that women were positively encouraged to participate, and, even in debates that were specifically on women's issues or organization; 'women never constituted more than ten percent of the delegates of the SDF Annual Conference, while, the ILP Conference was much larger than those of the SDF, which means that women were likely present in larger numbers, albeit still below ten percent.' (Ibid)

Hannam and Hunt claim that the diverse divisions within socialist politics between the ILP and SDF strongly influenced the involvement of socialist women at this time. (2002, 174-75)²: 'these developments affected the pioneering generation as well as those who entered socialist politics after the mid-1890s, with many women feeling that they had to choose between their own cause and socialist politics.' (Ibid) For example, Dora Montefiore (1851–1933) joined the SDF after 1898. Montefiore was born into a large prosperous family in Surrey and was privately educated. She married in Australia and after her husband's death in 1889 became a campaigner for women's

² To compare the women on the Executives of the SDF and the ILP: for the SDF in 1884 we have Eleanor Marx, Amie Hicks, Matilda Hyndman; in 1885, Helen Taylor, Amie Hicks, Edith Bland; in 1895, Edith Lanchester; in 1896, Edith Lanchester, Mary Gray; in 1897, Mary Gray; in 1902, Clara Hedin; in 1903, Dora Montefiore, Clara Hedin; in 1904, Dora Montefiore; in 1905–1906, Rose Jarvis; in 1908–1909, Dora Montefiore. For the ILP in 1893 we have Katherine Conway; in 1895–1896, Enid Stacy; in 1896, Enid Stacy, Caroline Martyn; in 1897, Mrs Mell; in 1898, Emmeline Pankhurst; in 1903, Isabella Ford; in 1904, Emmeline Pankhurst, Isabella Ford; in 1905, Isabella Ford; in 1906, Isabella Ford, Emmeline Pankhurst; in 1907–1908, Margaret McMillan. (Hunt 1988, 482)

suffrage, an activity she continued when she returned to England. It was not until 1898 that she distributed socialist propaganda with the Clarion Van, and then joined the SDF, becoming a member of the executive in 1903. At the same time, she was an active member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). In 1907 she left and became involved in the Adult Suffrage Society. (Hunt 1988)

Among the younger group of women, born in the 1880s and 1890s, who joined the socialist movement, the schoolteachers Mary Gawthorpe (1881–1973), Ethel Annakin (Snowden) (1880–1951) and Teresa Billinton (Greig) (1877–1964) were all to leave their socialist politics fight for women's suffrage. Only Ethel Snowden was later to re-join the ILP. Others followed the older generation, comprised of Isabella Ford, Selina Cooper and Ada Neild Chew, who pursued both socialist and suffrage propaganda. Jill Liddington explores that Agnes Dollan (b. 1887), one of eleven children of a blacksmith, and Helen Crawford (1877–1954), the daughter of a prosperous Tory baker in Glasgow, and Jessie Stephen and Emma Boyce in London worked for their anti-war and suffrage agitation. (Liddington 1989, 122) After the First World War Dollan and Stephen were active in the ILP, Boyce became a JP and spoke regularly at ILP meetings, while Crawford became a communist and attended the second Congress of the Third International in Moscow in 1920 and joined the Communist Party. (Liddington 1989, 130)

Sue Bruley argues that in the early 1920s socialist women did waver between the ILP and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), and the situation was fluid enough to enable them to be members of both for a short time. (1986) Selina Cooper, for example, one of the pioneering socialists, was one among several ILP members who

were sympathetic to the Communist Party. Liddington argues that it was not impossible to retain dual membership of political parties, and some chose to remain members of the ILP and the Labour Party, which had adopted Cooper as a parliamentary candidate in the 1923 election. (1984)

Karen Hunt argues that socialist women's own background, and the context in which they entered socialist politics, could affect the choices that they were faced with and therefore the ways in which they worked out their individual and collective political identity as women. (1988) Equally important for understanding the specific ways in which socialist women approached their gender politics is a consideration of why they were attracted to socialism. (Hunt 1988, 197-203) Many of these women left direct testimonies about why they had been drawn to socialism. Mary Gawthorpe, Hannah Mitchell, Dora Montefiore, Molly Murphy were interviewed in the socialist and labour press at various stages in their lives, and also wrote their own reminiscences and autobiographies. It appears that women constructed narratives of why they became socialists which were affected by their awareness that they were challenging conventional views of what it meant to be a woman. (Clayton 1896)

It is not easy to generalize about how women became involved in the socialist movement. Usually middle-class women engaging with socialism had been involved in radical liberal causes, including women's rights campaigns, or had been concerned about the social, industrial or educational conditions of working women and girls. Many women's more active engagement with socialist politics began with their involvement in the widespread strikes, in particular among female workers, which took place between 1888 and 1890. For example, Isabella Ford, Margaret McMillan,

Katharine Bruce Glasier and Enid Stacy all claimed that the strikes were a turning point for them personally. (Clayton 1896; *Labour Leader* July 1912)

Suffragists came from all parties, though, with the exception of the north, where there was a strong movement among Labour women, the majority were Liberals. (Liddington 2006) The radical tradition of northern England led to the formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP). (Steele 1990, 29) Isabella Bream Pearce believed that the ILP was the only party which offered such a political role to women. When she left the Women's Liberal Federation (WLF) because of Gladstone's stand on women's suffrage, she wrote in *Labour Leader* that 'I find it difficult to understand how any woman can work for and with a party which declines to give official proof of its acceptance of her assistance on a basis of equality'. (*Labour Leader*, 19 May 1894) Holton argues that 'it was impossible to be active in socialist and Labour movement politics in these years and remain unaware of the revival of interest in women's suffrage'. (1986, 47) She also argues that the testimonies of suffrage activists such as Mary Gawthorpe and Hannah Mitchell show 'how discontentment in their personal lives predisposed them towards feminist politics.' (Holton 1986, 21)

It was more usual to find that women attracted to the suffrage movement had already gained experience in political reform campaigns of the early nineteenth century. Many came from professional or business families where both sexes were encouraged to take an interest in political and social reform questions. (Purvis 2000, 234) During the first decade of the twentieth century, women's groups associated with the labour movement had been critical of the preoccupation with the suffrage. Women who remained active as feminists and pursued separate women's organizations in the

1920s soon became divided about their aims and strategies. Yet Purvis argues that ‘the differences between new and equality feminists should not be exaggerated, since they frequently supported the same set of reforms’ in the 1920s. (Purvis 2000, 235)

Rowbotham argues that there was both a special place for women and an ideal of equality between men and women socialists that could sometimes challenge relations and identity. (Rowbotham 1977, 132) She also argues that the WSPU presented labour women with a dilemma: Some working-class socialist women believed in constitutional tactics. (Ibid) Others, such as Hannah Mitchell, supported militancy but became disappointed with Emmeline and Christabel’s instrumental view of the organization as well as with the attitudes of some socialist men. (Rowbotham 1977, 167)

In summary, most women who joined the socialist movement in its early years did have a vision, one which they expressed in their writings or in interviews, that socialism would bring greater equality for women, and would provide them with personal fulfilment, as well as bring an end to the poverty, injustice and suffering which was faced by all working people. Nonetheless, the balance between these reasons could vary, as did the extent to which women thought that socialists should prioritise the Woman Question. The duty of socialist women was apparently to distinguish socialism from its potential rival, feminism, so as not to divert energy from the class struggle by the ‘bourgeois’ women’s movement. Both movements had to compete to recruit new blood.

The next part introduces the women's peace movement and its organizations, and examines the link between pacifism, socialism and feminism in 1880s to 1920s.

British Feminism and Pacifism in 1880s to 1920s

The International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA), founded in 1880, became the main secular peace organisation in Britain and conflicted with the Peace Society, Brown argues. (Brown 2003, 114) The IAPA accommodated a variety of feminist perspectives, as well as attracting prominent women such as Priscilla Peckover, who was active within the peace movement as the founder of the Wisbech Local Peace Association (WLPA) in Cambridgeshire, (Brock 1990, 290) but maintained a distance from the women's movement. The IAPA drew together discourses of liberalism, socialism, evangelicalism, feminism and internationalism, and made itself central to both the British and European peace movements. The relatively new generation of feminists that emerged in the 1880s and 1890s seemed to turn more to the IAPA for their peace work than to the Peace Society. (Brown 2003, 114-18)

Heloise Brown notes that *Concord's* subscription lists for the period 1884 to 1899 record that approximately one quarter of the IAPA's five hundred members were female. (Brown 2003, 120) Some of these women members founded a separate female auxiliary to the IAPA, the Women's Committee. There were also the members of the more separate Women's Peace and Arbitration Association (WPAA), which had formerly been affiliated to the Peace Society.

Yet the IAPA also had many individual women members who were influential in political and social reform. (Brown 2003, 120) These included Mrs Ellen Sickert, the daughter of Richard Cobden and sister-in-law of Helena Swanwick, and Mary Costelloe, the mother of another active feminist, Ray Strachey, and daughter of the Quaker Hannah Whitall Smith, as well as Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Margaret Bright Lucas, Laura McLaren and Florence Fenwick Miller. (Ibid) Emmeline Pankhurst, the wife of the socialist Dr Richard Pankhurst, was an IAPA member, as well as the Irish Unionist Isabella Tod (1836-1896) and the American Julia Ward Howe. Constance Lloyd, known as 'Mrs Oscar Wilde', presented speeches at IAPA women's meetings between 1884 and 1893. (Brown 2003, 120-21)

Fenwick Miller (1854–1935), the editor of the *Woman's Signal*, 1895–1899, the voice of *fin de siecle* feminism, approached reform in a different way. Isabella Tod's and Laura Ormiston Chant's middle-class philanthropic backgrounds contrasted with the working-class women's concerns which Fenwick Miller and Florence Balgarine represented. (Brown 2003, 128) Isabella Tod's critiques of expansionist imperialism and her opposition to the use of violence and physical force contrasted with Fenwick Miller's 'combative and controversial approach' to the question of how to achieve peace and arbitration. (Ibid) Brown argues 'all four women introduced feminist arguments of sexual difference through Chant's analyses of maternalism and education.' (Ibid)

However, the abstract question of peace, and women's relationship to it, was addressed in many different ways. Evangelical Chant stressed 'women's innate moral nature', while Tod represented 'moral behaviour as a universal human aspiration'.

The agnosticism of Miller and secularist Balgarine, who criticized ‘middle-class womanhood and domesticity’, conflicted with Chant. Tod’s unionism isolated her from the Home Rulers who dominated the IAPA. (Brown 2003, 129) Yet all four women were grounded within the IAPA.

In April 1882, the Auxiliary from the IAPA split, with one organization—the Women’s Peace and Arbitration Auxiliary (WPAA)— focusing on social party politics and Evangelicalism, attaching itself to the IAPA, the other reconstituting itself and remaining with the Peace Society. Another female auxiliary was founded in 1887, titled the Women’s Committee. (Brown 2003, 132)

The WPAA was particularly concerned with social purity questions and its members often raised these within discussions on peace and pacifism. But within the IAPA, women had the opportunity for involvement in its Executive Committee. Many members of its other women’s auxiliary, the Women’s Committee, were involved in both the separatist and the mixed-sex aspects of the IAPA. (Brown 2003, 133) E.M. Southey and the other women who constituted the WPAA after the split with the Peace Society were based in London and were mostly Quakers. (Brown 2003, 134) In 1885, Southey initiated her own journal, *The Olive Leaf*, which sought to ‘co-operate heartily with every kindred society working for peace’. (Ibid) The membership of the WPAA considerably overlapped with the Moral Reform Union (MRU). The Women’s Committee attempted to ally itself with prominent feminists, but distanced itself from campaigns that it deemed controversial. It worked with the Women’s Liberal Associations (WLA), the Women’s Co-operative Guild (WCG) and the education branches of WCG. (Ibid)

Brown argues that the differences between the two auxiliaries can also be seen in the fact that Evangelicals such as E.M. Southey and the Quakers, who belonged to the WPAA, preferred moral and religious arguments. (Brown 2003, 139) The IAPA included many different feminist perspectives, from social purity campaigners who aimed to redefine motherhood, to secularists and neo-Malthusians who saw arbitration and internationalism as evidence of the progress of civilization. (Brown 2003, 142)

During the 1890s, the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW) was dominated by moderate reformers and contained few leading feminists. As Florence Fenwick Miller remarked during the NUWW's transformation into the National Council of Women (NCW) in 1898, its Committee had only one nonconformist member, Mrs Alfred Booth, and the Council was from the outset acknowledged to be 'essentially a Christian organization'. (Caine 1992, 231-33) Brown argues that 'non-socialist feminist organizations such as the ICW assumed a connection between women and peace that drew on materialist ideas as well as constructions of innate sexual difference and women's relationships to others'. (Brown 2003, 154)

Ellen Robinson (1840–1912), Quaker, who attended as a delegate of the International Peace Bureau (IPB), had been contacted by the ICW and invited to send a woman speaker: Leila Rupp has discussed how the ICW emphasized its internationalism at Council Meetings by focusing upon the national characteristics of each nation present. (1997) The focus was on nationalism and internationalism. Where there was conflict, it was more likely to be over the role of national identities in the Council than the meanings or uses of internationalist ideas. (Rupp 1997, 122, 129)

The women's movement developed their policies during the early twentieth century, with pacifist arguments changing during the war of 1914–18. Brown argues that the late nineteenth-century pacifist feminist ideas developed to become the new internationalist movements in the early twentieth century. (2003, 181) She argues that 'although there is no clear connection between pacifism with feminism before 1914, many feminists who were active in political campaigns were also involved in the peace movement.' (Brown 2003, 181) Isabella Tod stressed anti-expansionism and claimed to promote international relations; Priscilla Peckover argued that the promotion of peace was an essence of Christianity; Henrietta Muller and Florence Fenwick Miller promoted the concept of a sisterhood of women across the world; Evangelical Josephine Butler claimed that the empire should be based on the peaceful conversion of subject peoples to Christianity. (Brown 2003, 182) Brown argues that this moderate internationalism drew on patriotism, noting that Mrs W.P. Byles spoke in 1904 that 'it is the duty of all peace reformers to try to generate, by word and act and vote, a new patriotism; and the duty especially lies heavily upon us women to nourish a nobler patriotism'. (Brown 2003, 183)

Supporters of women's values and equal rights alike used their particular brands of feminism to justify both nationalism and internationalism. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Eugenicism became increasingly racist, and when America joined the First World War she sided with anti-German patriotism. (Rowbotham 1977, 173) On the equal rights front, Millicent Fawcett saw the war as a chance for women to prove they were worthy of citizenship. Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were among the patriots; Isabella Ford, Sylvia Pankhurst, and Helena Swanwick

opposed the war. The disarray was international. When war broke out the question was whether feminists had a national or international loyalty. Anti-war groups found themselves isolated; the others were swept along with the war effort. (Rowbotham 1977, 172) The argument that it was a man's war was rather difficult to sustain when women—including feminists—were supporting their respective governments. Rowbotham called them 'patriotic feminists'. (1977, 173) Emmeline Pankhurst led a 'Women's Right to Serve' march, urging women into munitions factories and claiming that work and high wages were to emancipate women, ignoring the long hours and danger of war work. (Rowbotham 1977, 173)

Rowbotham analysed the wide spectrum of the opponents of war among feminist groups: the difference feminists argued that women suffered most from wars or that mothers were inherently pacifist as guardians of the race. Equal rights feminists maintained women's progress was based on reason not force. Ethical socialists denounced militarism and left-wing socialists such as Clara Zetkin and Sylvia Pankhurst opposed the war as being in the interests of capital. (Rowbotham 1977, 174) The final division came in 1913, when Charlotte Despard joined Sylvia Pankhurst and the Irish socialist Connolly in the platform of the Albert Hall in London at a meeting called in protest against the lock-out of Dublin transport workers and the imprisonment of Irish trade union leader James Larkin. (Rowbotham 1977, 14) Martin Pugh argues in *The Tories and the People* that Conservative suffragists offered their party a way of embarrassing the Liberal and Labour parties by taking over the issue of votes for women. The WSPU increasingly provoked the Tories to support women's suffrage in order to prevent disorder, with Christabel Pankhurst urging Tory support to prevent the women's movement going to the left. (Pugh 1985)

In contrast, Charlotte Despard and the Women's Freedom League (WFL) sought to persuade both Liberal and Labour men to support poor women's particular claims on society. (Linklater 1980, 176-77)

The conviction that the vote was necessary to secure social reforms like better pay, housing and education, along with school meals, nurseries and medical services, was shared by a group of Labour women which included Isabella Ford, a middle-class socialist organizer of trade unions for women, and Margaret and Rachel McMillan, campaigners for children. In 1912 these women formed an alliance with the constitutional suffragists in the NUWSS with the help of its younger radical members, such as Catherine Marshall. (Rowbotham 1977, 15) Nonetheless, in the context of the British class structure the very existence of such cross-class collaboration was extraordinary.

There was also an Anti-Suffrage Campaign, which argued that women would lose their special influence if they claimed the right to the franchise. Ironically, its members did not escape accusations of an unwomanly preoccupation with public affairs, and when Britain's dependence on food and raw materials became an issue from 1903, the womanly question of the Big Loaf of free trade versus the Little Loaf of tariff protection landed Conservative women in the Primrose League in the midst of national politics. (Bush 2000) These women combined with the liberal unionists in demanding that trade with the Empire be expanded.

Julia Bush argues that 'the anti-suffragists' wholehearted support for the war effort was predictable, given their predilection for the gendered cause of the British

Empire'. (2007, 260) An example is that of the British Women's Emigration Society, which, by the early twentieth century, promoted emigration as an imperialist cause. The Victoria League was organized to develop women's work on behalf of the British Empire. They organized the care of South African war graves, support for patriotic colonial education and the provision of upper-class British hospitality for colonial visitors, 'imperialist propaganda at home and in the Dominions'. (Bush 2007, 134)

Not alone among anti-suffragists, the prominent leader of suffragists, Millicent Garrett Fawcett wrote her book, *Women's Suffrage: A Short History of A Great Movement*, asserting that women ought to be interested in the political well-being of their country. (Fawcett 1911, 8) Fawcett quoted the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone's words, 'All who live in a country should take an interest in that country, love that country, and the vote gives that sense of interest, fosters that love'. (Fawcett 1911, 15) This attitude was proved through deeds when the war broke out in 1914.

Fawcett was active in the women's movement from the late 1860s until her death in 1929. (Rubinstein 1991, 131-38) She was strongly influenced by liberal economic and political ideas, taking many of her early views from the work of John Stuart Mill. She was one of the few late Victorian feminists to be uninfluenced by Evangelicalism. (Brown 2003, 172) Active in the suffrage movement, Millicent was also involved in campaigns for equal education and employment opportunities for women, and in certain strands of the social purity movement. Fawcett was a supporter of imperialist expansion and, if necessary, the use of force. (Ibid)

Fawcett was one of the first feminists to be drawn into the masculine sphere of foreign politics, in a feminised, domestic role as an inspector of the conditions affecting women and children. Brown argues that 'Fawcett's jingoistic, imperialist brand of feminism was legitimized by her appointment to and role in the Commission of Inquiry into conditions in the concentration camps in South Africa in 1901, while Butler's Evangelical imperialism and Hobhouse's humanitarian focus were marginalized'. (2003, 177) Fawcett remarked that 'I'm not a protectionist and therefore cannot be a conservative. I'm not a Home Ruler and cannot be a liberal. And I cannot join the Labour Party, because I'm not a socialist.' (Rubinstein 1991, 182-83) Fawcett's jingoistic imperialism and strong nationalism led her to resign from the vice-presidency of the Women's Committee of the IAPA in 1889. In 1890, she refused to accept the presidency of the ICW. (Brown 2003, 173)

Bush argues that Edwardian Britain was crowded with Leagues and other associations advocating patriotic imperialism. (2000) Despite some differences of emphasis among the suffragists, the imperialists stressed the extension of the vote to British women. Not all suffragists were imperialists, but criticism of imperialism was not important to their campaign: 'British suffragists based their ideas on the needs of the Empire—the Empire requiring, in their view, the civilizing, superior, colonizing British race.' (Bush 2007, 109) She emphasises how British suffragists played an important role, seeking to 'civilize' and 'reproduce' their superior, colonizing population: Thus, women's emancipation was associated with abolitionism. The British Empire needed women crusaders to convert their colony to Christianity, so the British could integrate and rule. (Bush 2007, 110)

Not all suffragists were imperialists, yet pre-war ‘imperial feminists’ like Millicent Fawcett, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst eventually became imperial patriots during wartime. Still, anti-imperialists were a minority and did not put much effort into criticizing imperialism. Also, the emphasis on maternalism contributed to imperial strength for the extended Empire. There were countless Edwardian Ladies clubs and associations, such as the Langham Place circle, the Primrose League, and the Victoria League, all acting for patriotic imperialism. The members of these clubs were committed to the needs of the British Empire after the turn of the century. Bush calls this ‘womanly imperialism’. (Bush 2007, 134) By the early twentieth century the Empire needed emigrants and patriotic colonial educators and social workers. The female imperialist associations seized the opportunities available for women. Among them were feminists, suffragists and pacifists and their activities could be found all over the Dominions, including South Africa. Notably, this kind of women’s activism often had nothing to do with feminism. (Bush 2000)

The responses to the second Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1908 proved the complex relationship to liberalism and imperialism of Victorian feminism. In the First World War a ‘gendered patriotism’, Bush implies, which saw ‘men mount guard or give battle to the foe, [while] women tend the home and make provision for the sick and the wounded’ came into being. At this time, auxiliary duties of patriotic women became more than voluntary. (Bush 2007, 258) In a national emergency, everybody was expected to display their patriotic commitment. The Pankhursts campaigned for military recruitment, and the suffragists organized voluntary war work. By the summer of 1915 Mrs Pankhurst and Lloyd George, the Minister for Munitions, reviewed a WSPU-led procession of women demanding the ‘right to serve’. (Bush

2007, 258) Bush argues that ‘suffragist war work demonstrated the highest form of womanly patriotism.’ (2007, 265) The NUWSS organized massive war relief work and the national press reported their war effort in an account of ‘The Woman Suffrage Movement and the War’. (Ibid)

Alberti also argues that Patriotism existed among British feminists before and during the inter-war period. (1989, 46) Alberti focuses on Helena Swanwick’s awareness of the force of patriotism. On 15 April, Swanwick, Alice Clark, Isabella Ford, Emily Leaf and Maude Royden resigned from the executive of the NUWSS to promote international peace efforts. (Alberti 1989, 52) Alberti argues that the Hague Congress provided a focus for the efforts of women which linked the pre-war international suffrage movement with the post-war women’s peace movement. (1989, 52-53)

Bush argues that many of the leading women were disappointed at the opportunistic attitudes of suffragists during wartime. (2007, 259) : ‘Anti-suffragists and suffragists shared the auxiliary duties of patriotic women during the war by organizing war work, speaking on recruiting platforms, and donating money for patriotic purposes.’ (Bush 2007, 258)

As an Evangelical imperialist, Josephine Butler strongly preached that Britons had a mission to win converts to Christianity across the globe. Butler envisioned a Christian utopia in which ‘race prejudice’ and other social evils, such as war, would be history:

as an Evangelist we all wish for peace; every reasonable person desires it...but what peace? It is the peace of God. We do not and cannot desire the peace which some of those are calling for who dare not face the open book of present day

judgment, or who do not wish to read its lessons! Such a peace would be a mere plastering over of an unhealed wound, which would break out again before many years were over. (Butler 1900)

Holton argues that moderate suffragists such as Lydia Becker (1827–1890), editor of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, were sceptical of the proposal and even envious of Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's leadership. She argues that the radical suffragists, and Ursula Bright in particular, may have gone along with Stanton's views as a means of achieving prominence over the moderates. (Holton 1994, 213-33)

Leila Rupp has focused on the growth of international women's organizations, beginning with the ICW in 1888 and continuing into the twentieth century with the WILPF. (Rupp 1994, 111-29) Rupp does not focus in detail on Victorian feminism or the interrelations between women's individual efforts and the formal association. However, she demonstrates the link of the twentieth-century international women's movement had with the late nineteenth century. Rupp has examined the challenges of maintaining a national identity during international work, exploring how some women attempted to transcend national allegiances, while others held that nationalism and internationalism could be complementary. (Rupp 1994, 1571-1600) At the outbreak of the war, women organized against the war internationally. Hungarian socialist suffragist Rosika Schwimmer, from a free-thinking middle-class Jewish family, took the initiative in calling a peace conference in the Hague in 1915. However, the forces of nationalism were overwhelming and the advocates of internationalism remained an embattled minority. (Bussey and Tims 1965, 156-7)

To summarise this section, there were many women's organizations which opposed the war, such as the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG), which had a long-term commitment to working for peace and education for peace. (Black 1984, 467-76) It was assumed that women were unified in their interests as a result of their common biological and social experiences. However, like feminism, pacifism in this period was varied in its politics or methods. While some of the women who were involved in the work of the Peace Society attempted to keep the peace movement distinct from the feminist movement, there were nonetheless important areas of overlap. As Brown argues 'the ICW relied upon rhetorical devices which linked cultural constructions of women to abstract ideals of peace, including concepts of spiritual or moral inner peace'. (Brown 2003, 159)

Despite the differences within the peace and feminist movements of the late Victorian period, they seemed to co-operate. Many diverse interest groups united to express common aims. Brown argues that 'by the turn of the century, the IAPA was working with absolute pacifists, Continental nationalists, socialists and feminists, all of whom had different conceptions of what peace meant and how it might be achieved'. (Brown 2003, 129) Brown suggests that the question is how the groups could overcome the diversity of their interests and recruit women to work for peace, a pursuit that might be understood as 'the truest form of patriotism'. (2003, 142, 182)

Precisely, it appears that women's peace organisations at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries relied on the abstract and moral ideals of peace. However, a minority of socialist feminists among progressive groups battled to grasp a clear stand against imperial war and the women's question. However, it was not

until the First World War that they could realise they should decide and choose which way they should take. Under the leadership of socialist feminists the first women's international peace effort was organised to promote peace by negotiation.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 introduces the historical context of British Quakerism and peace and its changes in the early twentieth century.

Chapter 3 follows up Isabella Ford's Quaker background and her political and personal relationships and her activism to analyse her ideas and practice and how they connected with her personal and emotional life.

Chapter 4 traces the Fry sisters' upbringing and the diversity of their political lives and the complexity of their responses to their historical context and rules of their activism and its connection with the changing feature of British Quakerism in the early twentieth century.

Chapter 5 analyses these Quaker women and their activism as their responses to their context to capture the complexity and diversity, especially focusing on the peace issues and Quaker responses to their practice.

Chapter 6 concludes and highlights the original contribution of this thesis and suggests future research.

1.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter explains the aim of this thesis in terms of exploring the complexity and diversity of Quaker women's ideas and practice on peace issues from the end of nineteenth to early twentieth century through the web of the personal and the political. This thesis focuses on particular Quaker women's lives and their responses to their context, and it attempts to discuss and understand the political and personal lives of a group of women as their dialogue with their context, and characterises British Quakerism in the early twentieth century through the analysis of these women's attitudes towards the peace issues.

The method used in this study is mainly influenced by feminist biography from a feminist perspective. First of all, following feminist research methodology, this study has defined itself as a focus on women, and has attempted to capture a complexity and diversity of Quaker women's lives. The women to be discussed in the following chapters have been chosen because of the accessibility of the resources and not because of the women's absolute importance. They were all prominent single Quaker activists in that period. They left relatively abundant materials owing to their family legacy, which, however, proved not always useful to draw meaningful interpretation for their political and personal lives. Feminist research methodology focuses on an emotional identification with a qualitative approach to the knowledge. To make feminist biography as a collective biography, this research traces the web of friendship. The emotional quality of women's friendship is one way of understanding the material, supplying the context in which the correspondence can be analysed. The

particularity and the peculiarity of these four British Quaker women and their relationships and friendships are traced here. The objective is to find out who these women were and to analyse their ideas, especially their attitudes on the peace issue.

Sources used in this thesis are mainly three categories of primary sources: official texts, published and unpublished personal texts, and secondary sources including biographies. The main forms of analysis are textual analysis based on close emotional reading, which is adopted from feminist biography. Also inspired by the insight of microhistorians, which focuses on each individual's social practice, people themselves and their situation in life, I trace the diversity and complexity of the peculiar women's lived experiences as they were, avoiding generalizing and theorising. I coined the approach attempted in this thesis 'feminist socio-biography', which focuses on women's subjectivity and how women as a group responded to their socio-historical context from a feminist perspective, challenging the conventional representation of women, and finding the hidden voices and experiences of women so that we can communicate with their own words and connect and understand their context.

Previous scholarship on the history of the women's movement in Britain in the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was reviewed to contextualise the British Quakerism and its approach to peace at the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth. Historians of the British women's movement whose works are focused on Quaker feminists and socialist feminism and pacifist feminism were examined to outline the historical context of this thesis. The rest of the thesis has been outlined. The next chapter introduces British Quakerism and Quaker women's

activism, especially towards the First World War. It also traces the connection of Quaker women activists and pacifism and their political affiliations.

Chapter 2

QUAKERISM AND PEACE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the context of British Quakerism in the early twentieth century and how it differs from nineteenth century Quakerism and its attitude towards peace. It begins with a brief examination of Quaker tradition and explores the main shift in Quakerism in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, especially Quakers' role in promoting peace issues in and out of the Religious Society. It also looks at Quaker women activists networks and their activism in radical politics, and pacifism. (2.2) Finally, it examines British Quakers and war and peace, especially, their responses at the outbreak of the First World War. (2.3)

2.2. Quakerism and Peace

Brian Phillips identifies Quaker tradition from its early stage originated from seventeenth century as follows:

They attacked the social arrogance and conspicuous consumption of the rich and modelled a simplified lifestyle; they confronted unfair commercial practices and practised one-price trading; and they pamphleteered for legal reform, full employment and land reform. But they concentrated their greatest energies in the attempt to abolish tithes, to discredit the clergy and to demolish the national Church system. (2004, 42)

Phillips observes the deep antipathy of the Quaker movement towards established religion as a 'trait of anarchist politics'. (Phillips 2004, 41) As Phillips speculates, the Quaker movement was active and influential on other fronts of English culture. It may be justified to say that it was engaged in cultural revolution from the ground up. (2004, 41-42) Dandelion claims the legacy of the Quaker movement was a 'silent revolution'. (1996)

Dandelion describes the culture of Quakers at the end of the nineteenth century: 'the aspects of the religious life that had once been the consequences of spiritual experience, such as plain dress and plain speech, became part of a code of behaviour and consumption which was used to try to defend the spiritual.' (2007, 66) It is shown in the *Christian Disciple* at that time:

It is our tender and Christian advice that Friends take care to keep to truth and plainness, in language, habit, deportment, and behaviour; that the simplicity of Truth in these things may not wear out or be lost in our days, nor in those of our posterity; and to avoid pride and immodesty in apparel, and all vain and

superfluous fashions of the world. (*Christian Discipline of the Society of Friends: Doctrine and Practice (CD)*, 1883, 104)

Furthermore in the early twentieth century, London Yearly Meeting claimed: 'In all times Christians have been constrained to free themselves from luxurious and self-indulgent ways of living.' (*Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends of London Yearly Meeting*, 1911, 91) (hereafter *CD*)

Wives, mothers and daughters, by encouraging simple tastes, and refusing to be bound by conventional requirements, may not only set an example of self-denial, but also do something to relieve the pressure of earthly care upon the man who is striving to earn a sufficient income. (*CD* 1911, 93)

Dandelion explains the Quaker theological culture of 1647–1827 as follows:

Quaker identity became constructed around performance ethics. Disownment was about the maintenance of spiritual purity within the group to avoid contamination from worldly ways and the presentation of this purity to the outside world to obviate criticism and as a model of the gathered community. (2007, 69)

In her analysis of Quaker organisation and power in the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Isichei pointed out its duality in democratic formal organisation and concentration of power. (Isichei 1967, 182-212) Isichei argued that George Fox's theology of Quakerism, the 'Light Within', made all forms of ecclesiastical constraint seem intolerable. (Isichei 1967, 183) At the beginning, the Quaker movement could survive by the personal charisma of Fox, but some organisation was necessary. (Isichei 1967,

184) In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the liberal theology emphasising 'Inner Light' was revived and the tension between authority and the individual conscience became clear, Isichei argued. (1970, 34-36)

The system and process of decision making was a particular kind of democratic method—a 'Quaker democracy'. (Isichei 1967, 184) Quakers developed this democratic method by considering minority opinions. In the process of a Quaker business meeting, if there was serious disagreement, the case was postponed. Obviously there were difficulties in discerning between the divine and the individuals' own imaginations. (Isichei 1967, 185)

In the 1860s there were major conflicts in the group. As Isichei put it, the conflict was between:

'conservatives', who thought of the sect as a 'gathered remnant' which should live in the greatest possible isolation from its environment, and 'reformists' who sought to break down the barriers protecting the sect, which were seen as 'crippling restrictions' affecting its life and work in the wider society. (Isichei 1967, 185)

The most important arguments occupying the group were whether or not to abolish the group's endogamy and the distinctive modes of plain dress and plain speaking at that time. (Isichei 1967, 186)

Quakers have always rejected having paid clergy. Every lay person was encouraged in voluntary ministry. In England by 1880, the theory of spontaneous inspiration had been evolved by the practice of 'recording' ministers. (Isichei 1967, 188) In theory,

the unrecorded were allowed to speak, but it seemed impossible because they often felt psychological difficulty in speaking in a meeting for worship.

Isichei argued that there was no correlation between those who spoke in Meetings for Worship and those who dominated business meetings. (Isichei 1967, 189) For Quakers, Isichei argued, the theory of authority varied according to conceptions of the geography of power; As an example, Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) found it difficult to accept that, though she preached to others about the principles she held dear, she could not instil her values onto her own family—one after another, Elizabeth's own children left the Society of Friends. (Ibid)

Isichei analyzed the class divisions of Victorian Quakers. (Isichei 1970, 289-90) Isichei's table shows that they included spiritual friends who had the same spiritual zeal but who were not from the same class background. It seems that even though the number from lower class backgrounds was small, the Religious Society of the Friends was open to every human according to their strong belief that God is in every human.

And yet, as a sect with a strict inner network, Quakers in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries were based overall on the same class background, and came largely from the upper middle and middle class. Isichei's data show almost the same constitution as the other periods analysed. The difference between 1870–1871 and 1900–1901 might be partly affected by the rise in their membership. Between 1871 and 1901, Quaker membership totals rose by 24.5 percent. (Isichei 1970, 113) In 1913, the British membership of London Yearly Meeting was 19000. (*Minutes and*

Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Friends 1913, 38, quoted from Lunn 1997, 52)

British Quakers and Peace in 1880s to 1920s

The discipline and practice of British Quakers regarding their peace testimony changed in the period under discussion. Quakerism shifted from the testimony against war to the testimony for peace after 1907. Dandelion observes that Liberal Quakerism motivated the twentieth-century reinvention of the testimony against war into a peace testimony. (Dandelion 2007, 162)

According to the *Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends* approved by the London Yearly Meeting of 1883, the British Friends adopted a ‘Testimony on War’. (*Christian Discipline* 1883, 153-58) Later in 1911, the Yearly Meeting changed it to ‘Peace among the Nations’ (*Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends*, 1911, 139-46), and again in 1925, to ‘the testimony for peace’. (*Christian Practice*, 1925)

A liberal Quaker leader, William Charles Braithwaite (1862–1922) reminded Quakers that the Boer War was an imperial war, and criticized British imperialism and its imperial lust for gold. (Kennedy 2001, 264-65) Braithwaite asserted that England’s greatness should be in the greatness of the character of her people and emphasized ‘true patriotism’. John Wilhelm Rowntree (1868–1905) criticized the greed of the British Empire and asserted that testimony against war must not be mere testimony against the use of armed force, it must cut the roots of war.

Martin Ceadel, a historian of the British peace movement, argues that ‘in sectarian orientation pacifism was characterized by pessimism, and by such ideas as, war will never be abolished—unless by the complete moral regeneration of human society’. (Ceadel 1996, 22)

Ceadel uses the term ‘pacifism’ to refer to ‘the belief that all war is always wrong and should never be resorted to’ and ‘*pacifism*’ to refer to ‘the assumption that war, though *sometimes necessary*, is an irrational and inhumane way to solve disputes’. (Ceadel 1980, 3) He claims that ‘the Society of Friends worked closely with Nonconformist *pacifists*; and, indeed, a minority of the former became overtly *pacifist*, and a minority of the latter absolutely pacifist’. (Ceadel 1980, 26) He argues that ‘because of its sectarian origins the Society of Friends remained, despite its *pacifist* minority, a resolutely pacifist body; whereas the Nonconformist Churches - as a denomination, despite their pacifist minority, endorsed the national cause in both world wars.’ (Ibid) He also argues that in Russia during the 1870s Leo Tolstoy and anarchists were working for political change through an essentially apolitical way, the uncompromising rejection of all force, and that a minority of British socialists before 1914 were interested in Tolstoy’s pacifism. (Ceadel 1980, 27)

Peter Brock, a historian of pacifism, claimed that for over a century and a half after the Quaker peace testimony had crystallized, pacifism within the British Isles had been confined almost exclusively to the Religious Society of Friends and its close sympathizers. (Brock 1972, 367) Brock argued again there were a few isolated forerunners of the non-Quaker pacifism which were to find organizational expression in the peace movement after 1815. Evangelical clergymen of the established Church,

non-conformist ministers, Quaker merchants and businessmen, philanthropically minded industrialists and professional men, middle-class ladies with an interest in charity, earnest artisans and a sprinkling of self-taught workers: these were the kinds of people the Peace Society attracted into its ranks. (Brock 1972, 379)

Within most of these social groups the adherents of peace were a tiny minority, a select few ignored by the vast majority of the population. Indeed, lack of notice, rather than any unfavourable or downright hostile reactions, was the biggest obstacle in the way of the Society's spreading its view or of increasing its extremely modest numbers. (Brock 1972) Brock claimed that:

until the 1860s the most vigorous of the Peace Society's local branches was the Birmingham auxiliary, set up by the Quaker Joseph Sturge (1793-1859) in December 1827 when membership in the city reached a figure of forty-one. [In] Birmingham, Quaker participation was a major factor in making this group'. (Brock 1972, 380)

The Welsh pacifist Samuel Roberts explained the situation in the London Peace Society: 'The Peace Society had been dubbed a Quakers' Society, but its promoters had never wished this'. (Brock 1972, 383) They welcomed all who opposed war on Christian grounds, and maintained that if the Church of England were to take the lead in contributing members, this would only be cause to them for rejoicing. Indeed, before Roberts, others in the Peace Society had realized the disadvantage of the Quaker label being attached to their activities. Newcomers to the movement, it was found, were apprehensive that they would have to accept the full Quaker position on peace were to join the Peace Society. Brock argued that its leaders had done their best to dispel this notion. (Ibid)

Ceadel claimed that in the early 1920s war-resistance in Europe was led more by socialists than pacifists, but in Britain it was by pacifists. (1980, 73) The pacifist societies in the 1920s were based on Christian or socialist principles. The socialist attitude to war was very complex. Nevertheless, all socialists supported war as an end, and accepted military force in defence of a socialist state and for the overthrow of capitalism. In theory, they were totally opposed to imperialist war. (Ibid)

And yet, a minority of socialists were opposed to all war and believed that socialism would change individual moral values. (Ceadel 1980, 48) The socialist pacifists were mostly Christians who opposed the Russian revolution, which denied religion. For them, socialism and pacifism were their faith and they sought after a different kind of revolution. Many members of the peace organizations and the ILP and some of the Labour Party were Christian socialists. The ILP socialists were leaders of the rank-and-file pacifists of the 1920s. (Ceadel 1980, 83)

The Socialist Quaker Society (SQS) (1898–1924) was a small group that persuaded socialists to be Quakers, and Quakers to become socialists. (Adams 1990, 38) Their perspective of socialism was that that was a way for individuals and society, locally and globally, to reach the vision of a sustainable civilisation for all. (Ibid) They believed that humanity could not reach peace through freedom, for freedom includes the liberty to struggle and to make war. That struggle for freedom must therefore be given up. Freedom, for them, rested on a basis of self-determination, on the belief that the idea and realization of mutual dependence could be obtained by struggle of individuals. (Socialist Quaker Society, Minutes, 1898, FHL) Accordingly, they chose

to be socialists and not to remain as liberals. Ultimately, they are best considered as a kind of 'guild-socialists', since they did not seek workers' control of a reconstructed social and economic order.

According to the SQS, socialist thought has always seen war, violence and repression as evils rooted in the exploitation of human beings in the interests of state and capitalism; socialists have stressed that a socialist society must be a peaceful society. The SQS believed pacifism to be a moral and a political issue, and a spiritual one also, one that arises from our relationship with God and our fellow human beings. The 'right relationships' are rooted in that sense of one-humanity that is common to both socialists and Quakers, hence, Quaker socialists. (Adams 1990, 48) They published their organ *The Ploughshare*. In chapter 3, I examine other religious socialist group which Isabella Ford was deeply engaged in from the beginning, considering whether the two different strands of socialist group, Fellowship of the New Life and the SQS, had in common in their moral and spiritual pursuit.

Quaker Women Activists Networks

On the question of Quakerism and feminism, Holton follows friendship and kinship networks of prominent feminist Friends. (1994, 2005) Holton and Allen argue that women Friends were split over what kind of change was required in the organization and administration of the Society. (Holton and Allen 1997) Prominent feminists, including members of the Bright and Priestman families, argued for the merging of the two meetings, women's separate meetings and mixed gender meetings, while more traditionalist members, such as Peckover, argued that it was only through having separate meetings that women were able to develop the skills and confidence

which made their work possible. There was clearly a whole spectrum of opinions in between, including Ellen Robinson's (1840-1912) idea that both had a place within the Society, providing the role of each was clear. Robinson drew attention to the fact that the problem was not who took part in which meeting, but with the ambiguity over the status of the Women's Meeting and, in fact, over the status of women in the Society as a whole. (Holton and Allen 1997) Ellen Robinson had a voice in and outside of the Religious Society. (Kennedy 2001, 154) She addressed eighty meetings in 1898. (Kennedy 2001, 263) However, Phillips criticised her role in the Peace Society as one pertaining to an ideology of 'Friendly patriotism', because Quakers like her supported the potentialities of British imperialism. (Phillips 1989, 74)

Brown argues that Peckover's construction of the individual owed much to late Victorian understandings of democratic citizenship, the belief that individuals were 'free and equal and possessed of rights deriving from their innate capacities as human beings.' (Brown 2003, 90) There was some overlap of membership with the Women's Liberal Federation (WLF) and the suffrage movement. Brown argues that despite this highly politicised base, in the early years much of its work was focused upon promoting peace among the clergy, school children and other middle-class women. (2003, 100-101) The WLF's annual meeting in June 1900 provided a forum in which members could speak out against the war, and Ellen Robinson proposed a resolution, emphasising the desirability of arbitration. At the forum, Lady Carlisle and Emily Hobhouse, and Mrs. W. P. Byles and Isabella Ford also addressed. (Brown 2003, 106)

The Priestman-Bright family circle apparently looked forward to the internationalist project among women that arose as a result of the First World War, a project that

played an important role in the formation of non-governmental organisations, such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). (Holton and Holton 2007) Holton and Holton argue that the Priestman – Bright circle created 'a set of particular persons linked by a shared emotional life as well as through mutual assistance, friendships, material resources and family connections.' (2007, 16) They analyse this network of wealthy middle class members whose wealth was built on industrial and mercantile enterprises: 'these were, therefore, well-educated individuals with sufficient available time to be dedicated to maintaining intense relationships required of a women's circle', (Holton and Holton 2007, 13) They also 'shared a liberal faith and intensive kinship as well as extensive religious, business and social networks through endogamy.' (Holton and Holton 2007, 14) Shared values led this circle to play an important role in humanitarian and philanthropic campaigns: 'the members of the circle were still unusual among their religious peers because of their engagement in radical politics in general, and their demand for women's rights in particular.' (Ibid)

Holton and Holton explore the Priestman family in the Newcastle region and the Bright family from the Manchester region. Their work reveals that marriage connections between the two families extended geographically and as well as socially. (Holton and Holton 2007, 14) The marriage of various members of the Priestman family and the Bright family can be considered typical of the kinship network that existed between Quaker families through endogamy. The Priestman-Bright circle originated from the marriage of Elizabeth Priestman and John Bright (1811-1889), and the marriage of Margaret Bright Lucas, sister of John, led her to be a member of metropolitan leadership of women's rights movement by the late 1860s. (Ibid) They

argue that Margaret's daughter, Kate Lucas's marriage to J.P. Thomasson, a future Member of Parliament, helped to maintain her leadership of women's organisations. (Ibid) Eventually, Margaret became the President of the British Women's Temperance Association and the World Women's Christian Temperance Union. (Ibid)

The marriage of John's other sister, Priscilla Bright, to Duncan McLaren, a merchant based in Edinburgh and an MP in the late 1860s, promoted her leadership in local bodies in Scotland and in London. The marriage in 1847 of Margaret Priestman, sister-in-law of Priscilla Bright McLaren, brought about her move to Bristol, where she remained until her second marriage, whereupon she became Margaret Tanner. Margaret extended her leadership internationally, travelling to Europe for conferences with colleagues of women's organisations. (Holton and Holton 2007, 15) The marriage of Margaret's niece, Helen Priestman Bright (1840-1927), the daughter of Elizabeth Priestman and John Bright, into the Clark family in Somerset, William Stephens Clark (1839-1925), gave Helen an opportunity to become active in the women's movement at the local and regional base. She worked with her cousins, Anna Maria, and aunt, Mary Priestman, in the Bristol and Bath region in those days. (Ibid)

The Priestman-Bright family members were therefore located throughout the southwest of England as well as around Scotland's capital. The family links helped to establish their local, regional, national and eventually international leadership of the women's movement. Holton and Holton derive the importance of particular persons and their private relationships by studying the collection of family papers, including

letters and diaries, as internal evidence. (Holton and Holton 2007, 16) They argue that the very existence of the family archive was based on a particular family sensibility, ‘a shared sense of value and emotional intimacy and enthusiasm towards civil society.’ (Ibid) They especially emphasise that ‘particular persons and their relationships generated a shared emotional life in which the female identities sustained domestic and public, feminine and authoritative, religious and secular elements.’ (Ibid) They also explore evidence that the Priestman-Bright circle worked together with a particular sense and sensibility, as well as through mutual friendships and shared social position through their family connection. Priscilla Bright McLaren, whose husband, two brothers, both sons, and several brothers-in-law and nephews were MPs, eventually became represented as one of the most prominent women’s rights campaigners. (Ibid)

The Holtons’ work also reveals a legacy of black civil rights activity in the Clark family, a legacy that spanned several generations and three continents. During his first and last visits to England, the fugitive slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglas was a guest of the Bright family in the 1840s, and, among others, John Bright’s daughter, Helen Clark, in the 1890s. (Holton and Holton 2007, 19) The African-American civil rights activist Ida B. Wells built up connections with Helen Clark following Fredrick Douglas’s introduction of the two by letter. (Holton and Holton 2007, 20) An early spokesman for black rights in South Africa, John Tengo Jabavu (1859-1922), ‘a Native leader’ (*TF* 1922, 41) found friendship with the Clark family as he struggled for the retention of black voting rights in the Cape within the constitution of the new republic of South Africa. (Holton and Holton 2007, 20) They find the Clarks’ connection with the black rights networks evident again when they visited the

African-American political leader and educator, Booker T. Washington, at his Tuskegee Institute for black students in Alabama in 1900. (Ibid) Through personal history, they follow up intercontinental social and political movements, also, they note that because of their very particularity, the personalised relationships involved depended on friendship, kinship and emotional ties which provided the foundation for informal networks that were trans-local, transnational and global. (Holton and Holton 2007, 21) Through the Holtons' research into kinship networks woven by endogamy and business, a group portrait of prominent Quaker women activists at the end of the nineteenth century was drawn and expanded to a global level. (Holton and Holton 2007) A similar method is used in this thesis to draw conclusions from the networked to the universal.

Quaker Women and activism

In the nineteenth century, women Friends who veered away from their domestic duties were not approved of. There was a letter to *The Friend* in 1854, which showed the value of women's duties and places in the world:

While man in the full stature of his mental and physical capacity sounds the trumpet note of reform, preaches a stern crusade against the pomps and vanities of the world, denounces the brute force of barbarous ages, or with Herculean might brings up the long delayed arrears of justice and equality toward his brother man, woman exercises a mighty leverage on the human race. And let none underrate her influence, because her life is comprised in a narrower bound; the beauty of a circle consists not in its size, but its correctness; to her the all-wise has committed a mighty empire, – the empire of hearts plastic as wax to receive impressions, but rigid as marble to retain them. (Letter from 'A.V.D.', *The Friend*, 1854, 124)

O'Donnell argues that some female Friends internalised the ideology of gender division. (1999, 261) If this were the dominant ideology of gender politics in their own Society, as Pam Lunn argues (1997), many of the prominent women Friend activists would hide themselves behind the curtain.

For example, consider Elizabeth Pease, an abolitionism activist from the early 1830s (Halbersleben 1995, 26-36), who considered her cause to be a public and spiritual issue. Eventually rising to prominence because of her anti-slavery work, Elizabeth abandoned her activities in 1853 when she married. Then, when her husband died in 1859, she moved to Edinburgh, joining its radical community and becoming involved in the women's right movement. (O'Donnell 1999, 265) She never spoke on a public platform until 1870. (Midgley 1993, 349)

In nineteenth-century Quaker families, obligations to home and family might prevent women from participating in public activities. By the mid-nineteenth century, for many well-off Quaker families, philanthropy was a duty. (Isichei 1970, 216) But for women Friends, the full commitment to family lay before duty for the public good.

As an example, Mary Ann Hewitson, a prominent philanthropic activist, initiated her concern when her mother died in 1870. (O'Donnell 1999, 264) Elizabeth Fry wrote in 1837 that 'she felt down when her husband constantly expressed his desire for her to be a loving wife'. (Rose 1994, 164) Her brother Joseph Gurney, a leader of Evangelical Quakerism, disapproved of women speaking in public, even in the anti-slavery cause. (Rose 1994, 185) Women Friends, however, were to show the

influence of the Holy Spirit in any of their public activities. Alice Clark wrote of 'some clearer sign from Heaven to tell me to go and do likewise' when she wished to become involved in the militant activism of WSPU in 1906. (Holton 1996, 168)

Margaret Priestman, the second daughter and fifth child of Rachel and Jonathan Priestman of Newcastle became involved in radical politics in the form of the Free Trade movement. (O'Donnell 1999) Her brother-in-law, John Bright espoused the cause in the early 1840s. But when she married in 1846 the cotton spinner and manufacturer Daniel Wheeler, a man of intellectual tastes, she laid down her own interests in favour of her husband's. (O'Donnell 1999, 265) During her second marriage, after Wheeler's death, she had to immerse herself with her husband, Tanner, in nature and country life. Tanner did not care for politics and society. When Tanner died in 1869, Margaret started a new life for public causes with Josephine Butler. (Ibid)

O'Donnell argues of 'feminist Friends of the north-east, that while public involvement in philanthropy and reform movements might be encouraged by the Society of Friends, there were limits as to what was acceptable.' (O'Donnell 1999, 279) : 'The few local Quaker women who could be described as feminist in the early British women's movement seemed to be at a distance from their religious community.' (Ibid) The Priestman sisters, Anna Maria and Mary expressed their feminist commitment after their father, Jonathan Priestman, died in 1863. (O'Donnell 1999, 280) They moved into the more radical Bristol, Somerset and Dorset Women's Quarterly Meeting after 1863 than the north-east. (Ibid) Judith Walkowitz describes these areas as having a large feminist society. (1980, 136) however, the story was

different in different areas. The Priestman sisters moved from the north-east into the radical Bristol area.

The Priestman–Bright circle of kinship and friendship had close links with the American women’s movement through Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (Holton 1994, 214) The sisters campaigned against protective legislation, which restricted women’s employment opportunities. Anna Maria Priestman became a strong supporter of the militancy of the WSPU. (Holton 1996, 108)

Holton argues that Alice Clark’s Quaker background made her identify with the method of WSPU’s militant and extremist tactic. (Holton 1996, 167) She wrote that her Quaker descent made her feel that ‘it was rather an admirable thing to go to prison for one’s principles’. (Alice Clark to the Priestman sisters, 12 December 1906; Holton 1996, 167) Holton also argues that not only Alice Clark but also members of her family circle sympathised with WSPU’s militant methods. These supporters included Priscilla Bright McLaren, her elder son, Charles McLaren, her youngest son, Walter McLaren, his wife, Eva McLaren, and his sister-in-law, Laura McLaren. (Ibid)

Alice Clark (1874-1934) was the granddaughter of John Bright, and the daughter of Helen Priestman Bright Clark (1840-1927). Anna Maria and Maria Priestman were her great-aunts. Priscilla Bright McLaren was another great-aunt. Josephine Butler, Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were friends of both her mother and her great-aunts. Another great-aunt, Ursula Bright, helped in initiating the campaign for votes for women. Alice’s own three sisters, Esther Bright Clothier (1873-1935), Margaret Clark (1878-1962), who accompanied Emily Hobhouse for

war relief work in South Africa in 1905, Hilda Clark (1881-1955) and her American sister-in-law, Sarah Bancroft Clark (1877-1973), were all campaigners for suffrage. Margaret and Sarah marched in the WSPU's coronation procession. (Holton 1996, 170) Liliash Ashworth Hallet was Alice's mother's cousin, and spoke at the WSPU's first demonstration in the House of Commons in February 1907. Alice Clark herself participated in that demonstration. (Holton 1996, 167)

Holton explores the role that Alice Clark took in the WSPU although she remained a member of the NUWSS. (Holton 1996, 168) Alice Clark wrote:

In some ways I skip all the decorous intervening generation of Friends and my sympathies go direct to the contemporaries of George Fox, who protested in the steeple-houses against the false teaching of the Priests and annoyed the magistrates by wearing their hats in court and using their plain language. (A. Clark to M. Priestman, 14 November 1907 ; quoted in Holton 1996, 168)

Also Alice wrote to her Priestman aunts in mid-1908 expressing her support for the WSPU:

Without defending such things or thinking them necessary I think where there is an overwhelming moral force at work it does bend all things to good. That is the divine power to bring good out of evil. It is the willingness to sacrifice everything to the cause that is the attractive power of the suffragettes. The way they sacrifice is sometimes wrong. My heart goes out to them all the same. (A. Clark to Priestman, 10 October 1909 ; quoted in Holton 1996, 169)

Alice Clark seems likely to have identified with suffragettes. But she still struggled with such acts as throwing tiles and stones, which she absolutely was not able to accept. At the same time, she would apologise to them for being in a confused state. At this time Alice was receiving treatment from her younger sister, Hilda Clark, a doctor. Hilda Clark and her life-time companion, Edith Pye, were also suffragette sympathisers throughout 1910. (Holton 1996, 170)

According to the above research on Quaker women's friendship networks and blood ties, it is clear that there existed a network of prominent supporters for the WSPU, including Alice Clark, Hilda Clark, Edith Pye and Anna Maria Priestman. This network built up a transcontinental web of human rights movements through their bonds of friendship, kinship and blood ties, connecting home and abroad, in the States and South Africa.

Quaker women and peace

In 1816, the Peace Society was founded through an informal meeting which was not exclusively comprised of Quakers. (Isichei 1970, 220) The Society condemned war on Christian principles rather than humanitarian grounds. In the 1830s it supported the anti-slavery movement, and in the 1870s, the anti-opium movement. Around 1854, and the outbreak of the Crimean War, the peace movement in England revived, with Cobden and the Quakers Bright and Sturge as its leaders. (Isichei 1970, 221) Joseph Sturge (1793-1859) was a prominent leader in the English peace movement in the years before the Crimean War and supported peace works financially and spiritually. (Isichei 1970, 222) Isichei claimed Sturge was an uncompromising Quaker pacifist from a Christian perspective, unlike Bright's rather humanitarian attitude. (Isichei

1970, 223) Many women Friends agitated against the Contagious Diseases Acts with Josephine Butler, Margaret Tanner and Anna and Mary Priestman being among the delegates sent by the Peace Society to the International Peace Bureau (IPB)'s first Peace Congress in 1892. (Brown 2003, 118) The Congress proclaimed 'women should unite themselves with societies for the promotion of international peace' as a resolution. (Brown 2003, 118)

Isichei argued that only a few of the leading Victorian pacifists were Quakers, still the Peace Society proved itself as a pioneer of English pacifism. (Isichei 1970, 225) Isichei added that to support the Peace Society did not require a devoted commitment to pacifism, and these Quakers played a role in providing financial support. (Isichei 1970, 226) From the late 1880s to the end of the nineteenth century, however, pacifism became one of the Quakers' main issues and characteristics. (Isichei 1970, 227) In 1879, around the age of 45, Pricilla Hannah Peckover (1833-1931) established the Wisbech Local Peace Association (WLPA) for women in a small town in Cambridgeshire and edited a quarterly magazine *Peace and Goodwill* until her death. (*TF* 18, Sep. 1931, Brock 1990, 290-1) She claimed that over 15,000 members had enlisted from Britain and Europe by the early 1890s. (Kennedy 2001, 246-7) The Friends' Peace Committee (FPC) was founded in 1888 to promote the Quaker witness against all war. (Kennedy 2001, 248)

Isichei argued that a silent and invisible revolution occurred in Friends' attitude to their traditional philanthropy. (Isichei 1970, 256) They began to look at their way of making money. By the 1890s, the Friends began to maintain that philanthropy was not the ideal way to remove social evils. (Ibid) Edward Grubb criticized the attitude of

traditional philanthropists. (*TF* 1889, 51) Joshua Rowntree (1844-1915), Scarborough Liberal MP from 1866 to 1892, worked for peace, temperance, the anti-opium movement and the Adult School movement until the 1890s. He was supported by Joseph Sturge (1793-1859) (Isichei 1970, 257) who founded the first Friends' Adult School in Birmingham in 1845. (Kennedy 2001, 44) After time as an MP, Joshua Rowntree devoted himself to the Quaker Renaissance commencing with his address to the Manchester Conference in 1895. (Kennedy 2001, 175-6) Ellen Robinson was also active within the Religious Society of Friends, and she was involved in decisions made over the status of Women's Yearly Meeting and peace meetings. (Kennedy 2001, 263)

Brown argues that Peckover and Robinson expanded the women's peace movement in Britain and abroad, while the Peace Society became increasingly isolated and declined: 'Although Robinson challenged both the Peace Society and international organizations such as the International Peace Bureau (IPB), her work was needed for cooperation and collaboration, both nationally and internationally and between absolutists and non-absolutists.' (Brown 2003, 109) Ellen Robinson's leadership within the international peace movement led many of its male leaders, in Britain and abroad, to acknowledge that women could contribute to political as well as religious debates on peace. (Kennedy 2001, 154, 263) However, Robinson's combination of feminism, Quakerism and Liberalism forged a different path to that of Priscilla Peckover, by which she drew women into the public sphere within both the Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends, and the Women's Liberal Associations (WLA).

Peckover and Robinson contributed to pacifist feminist ideas on the roles of women within the peace movement, especially the Peace Society. As a result, Brown argues, 'they proved that pacifism could be a feminist issue.' (2003, 111) The International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA) was a pacifist organization that attracted many feminist members. Brown compares that 'while Priscilla Peckover argued for the continuance of separate women's meetings, seeing them as potentially useful for women Friends, Ellen Robinson's main focus was on the need for equality within the Religious Society.' (Brown 2003, 110) However, Kennedy argues, Ellen Robinson played an active role in discussing the Religious Society's position on war and peace. (Kennedy 2001, 252) She fiercely condemned British participation in creating the crisis in South Africa. In 1900 Yearly Meeting she addressed that 'the whole world seemed to be crying out for some one to deliver it from the monstrous yoke of militarism.' (*TBF* 1900, 156)

Both women influenced the developing strands of pacifist feminism, albeit in very different ways. Robinson's approach was similar to the ideas of Henrietta Muller and Florence Fenwick Muller, although Robinson worked primarily within the peace movement rather than the women's movement. Her activism might be described as one of the most active Quaker women who had popularized pacifist feminist theories within the Religious Society alongside pacifists during the First World War, such as, Edith Ellis (1878-1919), Edith Jane Wilson (1869-1953) and Dr Henrietta Thomas (1879-1919). (Kennedy 2001, 319, 362)

Since Peckover established Wisbech Local Peace Association in 1879, it increased to 30 branches with around 15,000 members in 1889. (Brock 1990, 290) Though it had

no peace radicals it contributed to spreading peace issues, such as arbitration, to a wider society. (Brock 1990, 291) Peckover argued that true patriotism involved considering what was best for one's country and that it should be served by arbitration and the avoidance of conflict. (Ibid) Brown argues that this view was distinct from 'feminist revisions of patriotism, which focused on the effects of women's enfranchisement and argued that women would be loyal to a higher ideal, or a more moral and humane nation'. (2003, 111)

Published in Britain in late 1902, *The Brunt of the War and Where it Fell* was written by Emily Hobhouse, a humanitarian Quaker reformer. During 1901 Quakers supported Hobhouse's speaking tour. The Friends South African Relief Committee (FSARC) reported the situation in British Concentration camps in South Africa. (Kennedy 2001, 260) The 'brunt' dealt with in Hobhouse's book had, according to the author, fallen on women and children in the South African War of 1899–1902. In this Anglo-Boer War, European white men fought each other to control the production of gold in the ZAR (South African Republic). (McClintock 1995, Stanley 2006, 5) After her return from Africa to Britain in May 1901, Hobhouse's report was sent to the War Minister. Specifically, Hobhouse's report publicised farm-burnings and the catastrophic death-rates of Boer women and particularly children in concentration camps during the South African War. (Stanley 2006) As a result, the government sent a 'Ladies Committee' to all the camps in Port Elizabeth, headed by Millicent Fawcett, in July 1901. (Stanley 2006, 86) For the war relief Margaret Clark (1878-1962) accompanied Hobhouse to South Africa in 1905. (Kennedy 2001, 390)

In the twentieth century women Friends have participated in a large number of peace groups, those including both men and women and those founded by women alone.

Among these organizations is the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which was established in 1914 by Christian pacifists but now attracts members of many religions. The FOR is an international group of men and women that has been involved in efforts for civil rights, economic justice, and civil liberties as well as for disarmament and nonviolent conflict resolution. (Brown and Stuard 1989, 166)

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was founded in 1915, and since its earliest years consistently had Quakers among its leaders. The Women's International League members attempted to negotiate an end to the First World War and since then have tried to affect government policy by lobbying decision makers and influencing public opinion. (Bussey and Tims 1965)

Quaker women also participated in the War Resisters League (WRL), which was established in 1923 as an alternative to women's peace groups such as the Women's International League and groups with a religious basis such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). Theodora Wilson Wilson, Quaker socialist writer, played a leading role for the FOR. (Boggende 2007, 107) The WRL pledged to 'enroll all persons who were absolutely opposed to war, irrespective of sex or religion.' (Brown and Stuard 1989, 166)

2.3. British Quakers and the First World War

This section examines British Quakers' responses to the First World War. There are obviously superficial understandings and assumptions about Quakers and their role in

the peace movement. As Berkman argues that, before the First World War, prominent British pacifists were Quakers, as one of historic peace churches. (1989) During the First World War, a new pacifism grounded in democratic and/or socialist ethics had grown. (Berkman 1967) Contrary to Berkman, Isichei argues that only a minority of Friends participated in pacifist movements, and that few of the outstanding Victorian pacifists were Friends. (Isichei 1970, 217)

In theory, Isichei maintained, Friends were to follow pacifism in personal and public life, though this was not universally accepted. In 1841, the Meeting for Sufferings reaffirmed the evils of war. (Isichei 1970, 220) However, those Friends who did commit themselves to pacifism sometimes allied themselves with like-minded individuals and groups outside the Religious Society of Friends, seemingly because they found it difficult to support the official policy of the Society.

Brian Phillips has explored a kind of 'Friendly patriotism' throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian period invoked frequently by 'weighty' Quakers. (1989) During the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, Phillips argues, 'a number of eminent Quaker peace emissaries allowed the proliferation of a superficial conception of the Society's history as an agent of reconciliation rather than Quaker prophetic witness.' (2004, 67)

An editorial of *The Friend* in 1897 shows an ambiguous attitude of Quakers towards British colonies and imperialism, and their belief in the expansion of England and the Anglo Saxons:

We are not inclined to become little Englanders. We heartily believe in the expansion of England. A vigorous, energetic, and industrious people increasing rapidly in population like the Anglo Saxons, must expand. (*TF*, 1897, 256)

In 1914, the British Quakers issued their testimony against war, not as an absolute objection but with regard to ‘patriotic service’:

As a society, we stand firmly to the belief that the method of force is no solution of any question; we hold that the present moment is not one for criticism, but for devoted service to our nation (*TF*, 1914, 599)

The Friends’ Peace Committee suggested alternative service for Quakers at the outbreak of the First World War:

Since the outbreak of war we have suggested that threefold duty of the Society of Friends at the present time is to bear witness to its Peace Testimony, to prepare for, and make its contribution towards, the Reconstruction after the war, and to undertake National Service on behalf of the maintenance of the manifold distress and sufferings which abound both here and abroad. (*TF*, 1914, 796)

When the Government began conscription during the First World War, Conscientious Objectors (COs) refused the State’s and society’s requirements related to war-making and military service. National registration was first introduced in June 1915, and in May 1916 the universal conscription law for the conscription of all able-bodied males between the ages of 18 and 41 was established. (Kennedy 1981, 29) The contemporary British Liberal Government recognised the rights of COs and made a

provision for exemption. This move was regarded as a part of the English heritage of religious and civil liberties. (Brock and Young 1999, 15) In particular, the Quaker tradition of religious objection to war was considered and some Quakers played an active role in the progress of producing the provision for COs. (*TF*, 1915, 711)

British Quakers argued that compulsory conscription was morally wrong and that it subjected individual freedom and the nation to material force.

First, we claim that no man should be called upon compulsorily to fight, if the dictates of his conscience convince him that it is morally wrong for him to do so. Secondly, we claim that to require every man to be a soldier is to hand over individual freedom to the military authority and to make the nation essentially military in power and to introduce in England the beginnings of the very vice against which we profess to be at war, namely, Prussian militarism. Militarism cannot abolish militarism. On the one hand we must strenuously resist the Atheism of Force; on the other we must withstand the Atheism of Fear. (*TF*, 1915, 455)

The Friends' Service Committee (FSC) reported 'The Absolutist's Objection to Conscription':

The longer I remain in prison the more convinced I am that all war is contrary to the Spirit of Christ's teaching... With a firm belief in these truths, I can accept nothing but absolute exemption from all the working of the Military Service Acts. I feel that all the alternative service of whatever kind, is merely a compromise with the spirit of force to which I am opposed. (author unknown, *TF*, 1917, 20)

Kennedy claims that, despite the hopes of its progressive wing, the Religious Society of Friends was seriously divided during the Anglo-Boer War that began in South Africa in October 1899, (Kennedy 1989, 91) again, similarly in spite of the ‘uncompromising absolutism’, the absolutists were a minority rather than majority of Quaker pacifists during the First World War. (Kennedy 1981, 161) The British Quakers supported both alternative service and absolutism. (*TF*, 1917, 211) Kennedy argues that ‘Quakers could not deal with the actual war situation very well and sacrificed their consciences, being confused with the culture of manliness encouraged by the culture of Victorian gender roles, rather than the Quaker belief in God in every one’. (Kennedy 1989, 394)

The conscription law exempted Quakers. At the same time, those eligible British Quaker men who enlisted in the First World War were not disowned. (Dandelion 2007, 162) Alternative service was considered a compromise with state power, so a small group of absolutists returned to prison and stayed there for three years. The decision was left up to the individual and was not a collective dogma. All this indicates a strong liberal tendency in British Quakerism in the early twentieth century. (Dandelion 2007, 129) *The Friend* actually advocated contemporary Liberal Quakerism:

Whilst we desire to judge no man who sincerely does what he believes to be his duty, we likewise desire to urge each member to be ‘a faithful witness to the great principle of the universal indwelling light of God’ and the consequential guidance, ideals and conduct which it involves. This is something infinitely larger than a sectarian aim. It is the basis of our peace testimony, and more than that it is the

living message, the central experience, to which we bear witness. (*TF*, 1914, 932-33)

Most Quaker war resisters during the First World War grew up in middle-class families and therefore their life before the war was comfortable. However, this was a time of Quaker Renaissance in which the religious and pacifist message came along with the political and social gospel of the New Liberalism. (Kennedy 2001, 376) Among the Friends, the absolutist Wilfrid Littleboy (1885–1979) wrote ‘Our Peace Testimony and Some of its Implications’: ‘No one can honestly take our Quaker stand against all war without being committed to a higher and more exacting service, one leading to love and life and not to hatred and death.’ (Littleboy *TF*, 1914, 722-24)

Of about 1,700 ‘absolutists’ who rejected any alternative form of war work and were imprisoned, 145 men were Quakers. (Hirst 1926, 538) As an absolutist, Wilfrid Littleboy’s stand is not typical among Quaker COs. It was claimed that only about two-thirds of Friends of military age adhered to the peace testimony during the Great War (approximately 1000 or about one-third actually joined the forces) and of these who would not fight, fewer than 150 or about five percent took the extreme or absolutist position. (London Yearly Meeting Minute 1919, 75; Kennedy 2001, 351) On the other hand, Kennedy argues that it should be noted that a large proportion of young Friends who joined the forces were Quakers in name only and were not actively involved with the religious activities of the Society. (Kennedy 1989, 97) I suggest below that this analysis applies only to men Quakers and that an ‘elastic Quakerism’ better describes the relationship between women and Quaker involvement. Kennedy argues again that the absolutists had an influence in the

Society of Friends. (2001, 355) In those days of Quaker Renaissance as Kennedy emphasises, young Friends were guided by the Liberal, humanitarian ethic that war was wasteful, uncivilized and irrational, and by the religious belief of the presence of 'that of God in every one' and 'Inward Light'. (Dandelion 1996, 268; 2007, 132)

Judy Penelope Lloyd claims that many mercantile Quakers who were committed pacifists and who seemingly aligned themselves to the Quakerly disapproval of war engaged in the war trade and proved their relationship to imperialism as part of a 'self-confident moral superiority'. (Lloyd 2006, 223) John William Graham (1859-1932), a leader in the Quaker Renaissance wrote *Evolution and Empire* (1912). Kennedy claims that 'Graham seemed unaware (or unconcerned)' about 'questions concerning the exploitation of native workers who produced most of the cocoa for the Quaker chocolate firms of Cadbury, Fox, and Rowntree under conditions of virtual slavery.' (2001, 305)

Again, Graham was ambivalent about women's equality, reminding us of Victorian misogyny. His letter to his son Richard at Balliol College, Oxford, about women's suffrage said that 'what women want was to get out of the natural duties of women, and women would vote for conscription and for war, one cannot trust the working women.' (Graham quoted in Kennedy 2001, 235-6)

Finally, Graham, a leader of Quaker Renaissance, changed his views on peace testimony from being the Prince of Peace to the patriotic defender of British Empire (Kennedy 2001, 247, 250-1, 306-7); He asserted that 'Quakers should be prepared to assist in defending the Nation' and British security. (Kennedy 2001, 306) He tried to

seek exemption for his two sons of military age including Richard, who was an original member of the Friends' Service Committee (Kennedy 2001, 327-32), while he was speaking and writing against conscription, and taking a leading position in the local branch of the Union of Democratic Control (UDC). (Kennedy 2001, 327) When he was most active in supporting and encouraging COs and influencing Friends, however, he himself was showing uncertainty concerning war resistance as a patriot and a father and anti-war Quaker. (Kennedy 2001, 326-8)

The Friends' Service Committee (FSC) claimed that 'every individual's actions regarding the war and conscription should be based on faithful adherence to his or her own interpretation of the peace testimony.' (Kennedy 2001, 332) Kennedy argues that the central question of the FSC leaders was that 'Were Friends trying by every possible means to stop the war?' rather than 'Do Friends refrain from fighting with carnal weapon?' (Kennedy 2001, 333)

Alan Lloyd from Birmingham, who volunteered for the army and was killed in combat, wrote to his father John Henry Lloyd accusing him, a 'weighty' Quaker merchant, of hypocrisy, asking 'why other Quakers tolerated those hypocrites who cry aloud of the principle of peace and actually turn out munitions of war just to make money'. (quoted in Lloyd 2006, 227-28) Even in a weighty Quaker family, a committed pacifist father could not stop his son from joining the army. Alan Lloyd's friend Charles Marshall wrote in a letter to his wife, commenting on Alan's manliness and bravery, and saying that 'he was loved, respected and admired, because he was in every respect a MAN, a white man and one of the very bravest'. (Ibid) Marshall's words show stereotypes of racism and patriotic imperialism. Lloyd points out that 'the

culture of male emotional friendships or manly love was common in the public school class; he would have been relieved to know he was so highly thought of'. (Lloyd 2006, 232)

When the first Military Service Act was passed in early 1916, a group of sixteen 'dissenting Friends' announced that they would 'stand by our country' with other 'loyal citizens', and George Cadbury's son, Egbert Cadbury had enlisted in the Royal Naval Air Service. Elizabeth Cadbury (1858-1951) claimed that young Friends who enlisted chose the hardships of soldiering over the comfort of the home front at the All-Friends London Conference in 1920. (Kennedy 2001, 389-90) Some Quakers who supported the war resigned their membership, while others remained in silence or encouraged active war service and enlisted against the Religious Society's refusal to engage in any war effort. (Kennedy 2001, 390-1)

In wartime the dominant ideology of the true patriot, the true 'Englishman', was the soldier hero, who 'died as he lived brave and fearless a true British hero'. (Lloyd 2006, 231) Only a mother's attachment to her son and desire not to lose him could possibly prevent him from joining the army and being killed. (Lloyd 2006, 239) For Alan Lloyd, war was the chance to prove himself a 'real' man, a notion of 'muscular Christianity deriving from public schools and their stress on the importance of patriotism.' (Lloyd 2006, 255) At the outbreak of war, members of the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU), the British Friends' civilian service unit, were all from Oxford or Cambridge. Their motivation was 'not not to enlist in the army but to respond to their patriotic zeal in wartime'. (Kennedy 1981, 85)

Out of over 1500 men, fewer than half of the FAU membership was Quaker. Twenty members lost their lives, nine being killed by shellfire or air raids, the others dying from illness contracted on the front. (Hirst 1923, 502) Lloyd claims that ‘the FAU demonstrated the manliness and bravery of Quaker men who refused military service due to their religious convictions, but whose masculinity overcame their religious beliefs.’ (Lloyd 2006, 241) Further examination is needed to follow up the culture of masculinity and Quakerism.

2.4. Chapter Summary

Quakers in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries were based overall on the same class background, deriving largely from the upper middle and middle classes. Isichei argued that only a few of the leading Victorian pacifists were Quakers. These Quakers played a role in providing financial support. From the late eighteenth to the end of nineteenth century pacifism became one of the Quakers’ main issues. Young Quaker Renaissance Friends were shown to be guided by the Liberal, humanitarian ethic that war was wasteful, uncivilized and irrational, and by the religious belief of the presence of God in every one, in other words, ‘Inner Light’. However, only a minority of Quakers opposed war in Britain in the early twentieth century.

To sum up, when the First World War broke out Quakers responded in different ways following their conscience. On the one hand, they took seriously their responsibility to their fellow-countrymen at home and abroad, on the other hand, there were a few

Conscientious Objectors and absolutists who witnessed to their testimony towards all wars. Further more, there was a large range from patriots to pacifists, despite the ‘official’ (see 5.3) Quaker peace policy. Kennedy argues the First World War was the testing time for Quakers to prove their peace testimony that the Religious Society had been preparing for two and a half centuries.

Next chapters examine the case of Isabella Ford and the Fry sisters’ political and personal lives and their responses to the First World War.

Chapter 3

ISABELLA FORD (1855–1924)

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the background of Isabella Ford and her ideas and activities are explored. This chapter asks how Isabella's legacy as a radical liberal Quaker worked through her whole life and writings. Her ideas on peace and war as a Quaker, and socialism and feminism are discussed: How did she engage in the labour movement at that period and what did she seek after as a Quaker, socialist and feminist? What was her vision of ideal society and how did she reconcile this vision with the grim realities of the Great War and its aftermath? What allowed her to bear the despair and frustration of the war? What was the core energy that allowed her to keep moving toward a meaningful life? From where did she draw the energy to remain open towards people and hopeful for the world?

Isabella's Quaker family background was very important to her throughout her life. Her lifelong activism as a socialist and feminist was strongly based upon her Quaker faith and practice. Not a conformist, she could be open to new ideas and experiments and remain courageous when faced with challenges which shook the borders and boundaries, challenging gender politics and the social system. Isabella's high educational and

intellectual background was a benefit of her upper middle class Quaker family background. Her home was, in many ways, a centre for radical intellectuals.

3.2. Family Background

Isabella Ford was born into an upper middle class elite Quaker family in Leeds in 1855. The Fords had owned large estates in Yorkshire and Lancashire for generations. Isabella's father, Robert Lawson Ford (1809–1878), had inherited land from his family before setting up in Leeds as a solicitor. (*TF* 1924, 670, Hannam 1989, 7) Isabella's mother, Hannah Pease (1814–1886), was from a successful Leeds Quaker merchant background. The Pease family had built up their wealth in the eighteenth century from wool-combing, banking, and coal-mining. (Cookson 2004, 119) Cookson examines that the Pease family was a vital force in the industrial development of Darlington and of the Tees valley between 1820 and 1870, and that Darlington was known as 'the English Philadelphia' because of its early railway. (*Ibid*) After the Stockton and Darlington railway line had been opened, Darlington's leading Quaker families, the Pease and the Backhouse families, established their iron and engineering businesses. (*Ibid*)

Cookson explores the Pease family and the Quakers' status and role in Darlington industry in the nineteenth century:

There were over 250 in the Darlington society during the 1860s and nearly 400 in 1870. Membership was stable and well-recorded, though not completely static. An analysis of Darlington Quakers registering births shows that almost all were middle-class or white-collar workers: two fifths shopkeepers, one third upper or professional,

15 per cent clerks. By 1850 several were very wealthy, collectively owning an area five times greater than the town itself, and their suburban estates surrounded Darlington's population of 11,000. Local commerce – banking, worsted manufacture, industrial finance, railway promotion and direction, coal and iron ore mining – rested largely on Quakers, and especially upon the Pease and Backhouse families. A number of professional men, including engineers, architects and surveyors, who were Friends or on the fringes of the Society, profited from railway business and from the ensuing growth of the town. (Cookson 2004, 118)

The Fords had eight children, two sons, John Rawlinson (1844–1934) and Thomas Benson Pease (1846–1918), and six daughters, although two died in infancy. Their youngest child was Isabella. The Fords and the Ford children were brought up in an atmosphere of radical liberal politics, women's rights and humanitarian causes. (*TF* 1930, 230) Hannah Ford was an important influence on all of her daughters, and she was active in the women's suffrage movement. It is claimed that Robert and Hannah established the first night school in England. It was formed in Leeds for the benefit of local mill girls. (*TF* 1924, 670)

The Pontefract Lane Friends Adult School (1869–1883) can be linked with Robert and Hannah's involvement in that school:

This was originally known as the Leeds Friends Sunday School and met at Mill Street, Bank, from 1869 until 1874. It was run by John Hall Thorpe and T. Benson Pease Ford, and began classes for adults in a relatively small way. A First Day School was created at the same time. After moving to the Miners' Institute on York Road, however, it soon became the largest Adult School. Until 1890, when the school moved

into new premises funded by the Harvey Family, in Pontefract Lane, off York Road. Its new name was Pontefract Lane Friends Adult School. It had 404 members, both men and women, in 1902. (Southall 1909)

Hannah involved herself in the campaign to increase women's higher education and to establish their right to sit public examinations. She joined with other local women from leading manufacturing and professional families to set up the Leeds Ladies' Educational Association in 1865. This association developed into the Yorkshire Ladies' Council of Education in 1871. The council provided lectures for women of all social classes. Hannah was a member of the committee formed to establish the Leeds Girls' High School. (Hannam 1989, 12-4, 17)

Robert and Hannah's first son, John Rawlinson Ford, became a solicitor in his father's firm. He served as a councillor and then alderman on Leeds City Council. His wife, Helen Ford, was a member of the Yorkshire Ladies' Council of Education. The Fords' second son, Thomas Benson Pease Ford, was an engineer, but he gave up his career in order to avoid becoming involved in the manufacture of armaments. He became the owner of a silk-spinning mill instead. (Hannam 1989, 7-8, 14)

Isabella's eldest sister, Mary, who married Richard Smith of London, died in 1894. The three youngest sisters, Bessie (1848–1919), Emily (1850–1930) and Isabella developed a very strong sisterly bond from their early childhood, relied on each other throughout their entire lives, and worked together for the women's and labour movement.

3.3. Isabella and Her Sisters

Like women born to a Buxton, a Gurney, a Fry, a Wedgewood, a Bright, Isabella and her elder sisters, Bessie and Emily were encouraged to become educated and cultivated, and were expected to do something useful with their lives. (Strachey 1978, 44; Hannam 1989, 15) The three of the Ford sisters all shared their passion for new social order and supported local labour and women's movements.

Emily was vice-chairperson of the Artists' Suffrage League. A poster designed by Emily illustrates 'the hypocrisy of denying working women the vote'. (Liddington 2006, 197) Emily eventually left Quakerism and moved to Anglicanism, painting murals in churches in Leeds and London. (*TF* 1930, 230) Emily joined her sisters in the common cause, but not in the labour movement. Bessie was treasurer of the Leeds Suffrage Society. (Liddington 2006, 197) By winter 1909–1910, Emily Ford chaired the Leeds Suffrage Society. Bessie and Emily walked as 'sandwich women', carrying a suffrage poster in the street. Liddington stressed the Ford sisters' courage and enthusiasm for the cause, and their willingness to push boundaries: 'upper-middle-class women, who had never knowingly got up in the morning without a maid to light the bedroom fire, help them dress and serve breakfast, were undertaking actions previously undreamt of'. (2006, 213) Liddington claims their efforts to win Edwardian hearts and minds on the subject of Votes for Women reached everywhere and were 'beginning to recruit a new generation of activists'. (Liddington 2006, 214)

With her sister, Bessie, and sister-in-law, Helen, Isabella formed the Leeds Women's Suffrage Society in 1890. However, it was not until the early years of the twentieth

century that Isabella concentrated more on the campaign for suffrage. Isabella, as a Quaker, abhorred violence, became a member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). Isabella's work for the suffrage movement took her to London and she was a member of the executive of the NUWSS from 1907 to 1915. She and her sister, Emily, were vice-presidents of the Leeds society, and Bessie was the treasurer. Isabella was also the chairperson of the West Riding Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies. (Hannam 1989; Liddington 2006)

When the NUWSS organised a caravan tour of the Yorkshire Dales in 1909, Isabella went along. In contrast to her upbringing and family background, Liddington especially stresses the courageousness of Isabella's caravanning, a physical challenge for an upper-middle class lady who had 'never dressed herself and who had had domestic staff to cook and clean for her whole life.' (2006, 4, 201) Isabella's earlier life was privileged from a family of well-to-do lawyers, employed a governess plus five living-in servants. Adel Grange was one of Yorkshire's 'brass castles,' the Fords employed a cook, a lady's maid, two housemaids and a kitchen maid, two gardeners and a coachman. (Ibid)

The Fords supported every Victorian reforming cause: anti-slavery, Josephine Butler's 'Contagious diseases' campaign, the campaigning for women's education and suffrage. Along with her sister Bessie and sister-in-law Helen, who married Isabella's lawyer brother, Isabella helped form the Leeds Women's Suffrage Society. Liddington remarks this Society was more than just a Ford family club, with afternoon drawing-room meetings. (Liddington 2006, 10) Even though it initially looked as though Isabella would not attract attention to herself, with her courage and the experience of the defeat of the Manningham mill workers' strike at nearby Bradford, Isabella moved away from her

family's Liberalism towards the socialists in Leeds. Here she joined the ILP with her sister Bessie. (*TF* 1924, 670)

The sisters grew up in a suburban area close to nature and were able to enjoy music, painting and plays. They learned German and French to a high level at home and could speak their languages quite fluently. The sisters did not go to school in their early days, benefiting instead from their own private library at home, which was stocked with a wide range of books covering all art and literature, social and political science, world history and philosophy. The Ford sisters read widely and discussed what they learned with their intellectual visitors to their own home Adel Grange from home and abroad. (Hannam 1989, 14) Hannah and her daughters built close links with the most well-educated women in and outside Leeds through the campaign for women's education and vote. Among them were Fanny Heaton, Mrs Frances Lupton, Theodosia Marshall, Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Josephine Butler. (Hannam 1989, 18)

Emily Ford, who had been an art student at the Slade in 1879, was one of the founder members of the original Men and Women's Club in London. She was also vice-president of the Yorkshire Union of Artists with her old friend, Vernon Lee (1856-1935), the aesthetic critic and author of the *Ballade of Nations* (pen name, Violet Paget). (Livesey 2007, 61-63, 78, 176; Hannam 1989, 21, 167) Emily also liked to write and recite plays in the Yorkshire dialect and published a series of plays in the 1880s and later became a pioneer member of the Leeds Arts Club. (Hannam 1989, 21, Steele 1990) She painted murals in several London churches and frescos of Saints Columba, Augustine and Patrick in clergy houses in Leeds. Emily engaged eagerly in the suffrage movement and created badges for the campaign. (Liddington 2006)

Returning to Isabella, Liddington laments on the difficulties of tracing her personal records: ‘self-effacing even in death, Isabella Ford, sadly, left behind scant personal trace of her suffrage days, having closed her scrapbook with the dampening down of her early novelist ambitions’. (Liddington 2006, 309) Born a generation before the Edwardian campaign took off, Isabella Ford and her sisters were rooted in the family Liberalism of the late Victorian context. The sisters played pioneering roles, developing constitutional tactics such as Isabella’s caravanning, Florence’s pamphleting, and so on. (Liddington 2006, 315) Liddington stresses their daring experiences as ‘being full of romantic longings and yearning ambitions for shared experiences which encouraged friendships.’ (2006, 316-17) It was true that some of the women activists worked closely together while some remained virtually inaccessible, never having the opportunity to ‘know each other’. (Liddington 2006, 318)

With their wealthy, progressive parents’ financial and emotional support, the three sisters were able to enjoy significantly greater freedom as single women than was possible for other contemporary women. Their strong lifelong sisterhood was sustained by Bessie’s emotional and practical support and the selfless care she gave to her younger sisters after the death of their father in 1878 and their mother in 1886. (*TF* 1924, 670)

3.4. Isabella Ford and Political Activism

Isabella Ford is best known for her work in the suffrage, trade union and labour movements. Isabella helped Emma Paterson, President of the Women’s Protective and

Provident League, and members of the Leeds Trades Council to form a Machinists' Society for tailoresses in Leeds in 1885. In addition, she set up a Work-Women's Society for Leeds' tailoresses and textile workers in 1886. (Hannam 1989, 36) Isabella believed firmly in the equality of women. She recognised that the idealised view of women in the family was not the reality for the majority of working class women. Immersed in socialist and radical ideas from an early age, Isabella first came to prominence as a trade union organiser during the period of social unrest in Leeds between 1888 and 1890. Isabella took it upon herself to find out the facts behind the weavers' strike at Wilson's in Leeds during September 1888. In 1889, Isabella helped in a dispute in Alverthorpe. In October 1889, as a result of unrest among tailoresses in Leeds, Isabella called a public meeting to establish the Leeds Tailoresses' Union. (Hannam 1989, 36) The meeting was attended by Clementina Black, who spoke about the victory of the London dockworkers for better working conditions.

Towards the end of the 1880s, the organisation of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the Leeds area saw the Leeds socialists Isabella Ford, Tom Maguire and Alf Mattison become deeply involved in organising tailors, tailoresses and gas-workers in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire. (Rowbotham 1977, 64)

Seven hundred female machinists went on strike at Wilson's, and although the company claimed victory after four weeks, many strikers stayed out until the end of December. Isabella spoke at meetings, organised and distributed relief among the strikers, and publicised the women's case in the press. Isabella was made an honorary member of the Trades Council in 1890 for this work, and then became President of Leeds Tailoresses' Union from 1890 to 1899. (Hannam 1989, 36) Isabella continued to work with textile

workers throughout her life. She was also involved in the Manningham Mills dispute in Bradford. (Hannam 1989, 48) She emphasised the need for unity between the sexes, and attacked those who spoke of the consequences of women's subordination in the workplace and not the causes.

Isabella Ford left the Women's Liberal Federation and committed herself to socialism after helping textile workers and tailoresses on strike in Leeds. She found that 'it was quite impossible to obtain any help politically from either of the two political parties'. (*Labour Leader*, 1 May 1913) However, Isabella Ford severed her links with liberalism because of the way Liberal employers treated women workers during the labour unrest. (Ibid)

Rowbotham claims that Isabella Ford struggled to maintain a labour-suffrage alliance. Not only was it difficult to get socialists to make votes for women a priority, but there were also very different political conceptions within the suffrage movement about the significance of the demand for the Franchise. The escalation of militancy polarized the conflict, making the suffrage appear as an issue that should override all differences and defer all other struggles. The WSPU came increasingly to regard men and women as irreconcilable and presented enfranchisement as a separatist, women-only movement. (Rowbotham 1977, 167-68) The Leeds' WSPU branch, with which they were involved, had many working-class girl members. Liddington found the records of Leeds's WSPU members including Elsie May Stevenson, a 21-year old typist, 16- and 18-year-old domestic servants, a 40-year-old housekeeper, and a 50-year-old draper. This stood in contrast to Isabella's ILP links, which were mainly middle-class and rooted in the drawing room gatherings. (Liddington 2006, 193)

Isabella believed that ‘women must revolt and act independently to change their own conditions’, and argued that the trade union movement was key to any change in women’s status in industry, including that trade unionism should be linked to women’s suffrage. Isabella also campaigned for effective factory legislation, including the employment of female factory inspectors. As a member of the ILP from 1893, Isabella was convinced that men and women must work together for emancipation. She also placed great emphasis on the importance of family life, and resisted idealising the role of women in the home and family. Isabella made it clear that in working class homes, ‘motherhood was not always honourable and voluntary’. (*Labour Leader*, 1 March 1902; 13 May 1904; 2 September 1904)

In 1895 and 1897 Isabella was a delegate to the International Textile Workers’ Congress, in 1896 a delegate to the Trades Union Congress, in 1897 a delegate to the Congress of the Second International, London, and in 1898 a member of the executive committee of the Humanitarian League and the Women’s Trade Union League. (Hannam 1989, 73, 79)

The way Isabella was represented by other labour movement activists suggests that they do not seem to have counted her as a comrade. For example, Ben Turner, Isabella’s close friend, a leader of the Yorkshire Textile workers’ Union in the 1890s and later an MP, wrote in the press:

No flattery is needed in speaking of the good work done by the Ford family. All that Miss Isabella has done has been done through a sincere desire is to benefit the workers. (*Yorkshire Factory Times*, 1 November 1889)

Isabella Ford strongly mentioned her identity and consciousness as a socialist feminist in *Labour Leader* in November 1906:

It is the use of that unfortunate masculine word, 'fraternity' which excludes women. Women are evidently not brothers. English socialists must, therefore, find a new word which will include us. (*Labour Leader*, 2 November 1906)

However, Hannam stresses that 'some of Isabella's contemporaries used more positive images of strength, noting, for example, that 'she marched through the streets with striking textile workers "like a new Joan of Arc"'. (2009, 4) She points out 'there was a big gap between the ways in which life stories were framed, and the ways in which contemporary discourses reflected lived experiences.' (Ibid) When she was asked why she became interested in working class girls, she answered her mother and family background, 'I don't know. Some people are born that way. My mother was quite a revolutionist, a great admirer of Cossuth...' (*Leeds Weekly Citizen*, 12 June 1914)

There exists a very important narrative on Isabella's emotional identification with mill girls which derives from her own experience at a night school for mill girls. These experiences clearly seem to have shaped her commitment to socialism. From the night school, which Isabella's parents established and where Isabella and her two sisters Bessie and Emily taught, Isabella could build up intimacy with girls of her own age as well as an understanding of their lives. Hannam claims that Isabella's motivation and her devotion to socialist politics was personal self-fulfilment as well as 'the suffering of others'. (1989) Isabella wrote:

Gradually I became aware of a stirring and lifting of the gloom. A possibility, perhaps even a probability, seemed growing that women and men should stand together as equals, in the industrial world, and even in the political world. (Ford 1896, 5)

Isabella wrote a letter to Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929), one of her closest friends and comrades, outlining her emotional difficulties in making a speech in public, saying that ‘if I don’t get so terrified (as I generally do) as to forget anything but Mrs Byles and Mrs Cannon’s faces gazing at me...’ (Letter to Millicent Fawcett, undated 1898, Letters/microform 9/01, Box 1, Women’s Library) When both women’s suffrage and socialism started to come together in 1913, Isabella was delighted. In a letter to Carpenter she wrote:

I feel comradeship, the real thing, is growing fast... I feel like bursting with joy over it at times. (Isabella’s letter to Edward Carpenter, 25 August 1913, CHUBB/4/23, LSE)

Hannam claims that Isabella’s politics were not based simply on theory but were ‘sustained and enriched by an emotional engagement that could be either full of joy at the prospect of a different world or anger against injustices that she saw all around her’. (2009, 5) As a single woman, how Isabella Ford dealt with emotional issues or physical difficulties such as ill health can be important for understanding her emotional life. Isabella had her supportive and reliable sister Bessie, who was also single and looked after the whole household while Isabella was away on speaking tours. (Hannam 1986, 1989) Sharing her sister’s commitment to socialist politics, Bessie was an emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical supporter to Isabella. When Isabella lost Bessie, she wrote to Carpenter that ‘a piece of myself is gone... I keep thinking “I will ask Bessie” or “I will show her this”’. (Letter to Edward Carpenter, 2 August 1919, CHUBB/4/23, LSE)

Isabella was grief stricken and found life very difficult. It seemed that Isabella never could recover from the grief of her loss. Isabella discussed the constraints of marriage in her novel in 1895. (Ford 1985) I discuss this in 3.8. The sisters appear to have chosen not to marry, Hannam concludes that through a wide range of close friendships with men and women Isabella could gain emotional fulfilment. (2009, 6) I discuss her singleness in Chapter 6.

Because of her language skills, Isabella even represented trade unionists at international meetings. (Hannam 1989, 36-41) Abroad, as well as at home, she was an active supporter of the Leeds tailoresses' society and women textile workers in Yorkshire. Her experience in helping working women led her to set up the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) with her friend Mrs Fawcett in 1897. This move stemmed from an awareness that the lack of constitutional voice of working women prevented them from making economic gains. (Liddington 2006, 12)

From 1901, encouraged by the success of the Lancashire women textile workers' suffrage petition of March of that year, Isabella focused on collecting signatures from the poorly paid women textile workers in Yorkshire. The campaign took off in June 1901 and meetings were held just outside Huddersfield. No fewer than 33,184 Yorkshire women textile workers had signed up by February 1902. (Liddington 2006, 46) On February 18, Isabella petitioned the House of Commons. There Isabella and her supporters were greeted by ten MPs. Eight women made short speeches. Isabella reported in *Labour Leader*:

They were answered politely, and even cordially, by some of the MP's present, but the usual vagueness of expression employed on such occasions rather opened the women's eyes...their backs began to stiffen a little. It is only in the House that a proper idea of the attitude of the nation's representatives about women can be found, for there disguise seems unnecessary. We all felt as we hurried along the passages to Committee Room No 13. It was written on the faces of the members we met. (*Labour Leader*, 1 March 1902)

In November 1903, Isabella supported the NUWSS and the new WSPU in speaking out for women's suffrage. In January 1905 Isabella gave a talk at the Leeds Arts Club on 'Woman and the State' for women's franchise. (Steele 1989, 95) Liddington comments that the Liberal government's refusal of the women's franchise helped to form a powerful bond overcoming the gap of class differences among women. (Liddington 2006, 47) One working class member of the Leeds Arts Club, Mary Gawthorpe (1881–1973), wrote in the *Labour Leader* in 1905:

When Mr Herbert Gladstone was asked his opinion on November 6th last, in Leeds, he said that the Parliamentary machinery (six million votes) was 'already' large and cumbersome, and that if women were enfranchised, they would be 'eligible for all offices' etc., just as men were. Why not?... Why should not...Miss I. O. Ford, Mrs Pankhurst, and others we could mention, be considered in the light of this (as) possible Parliamentary candidates?

Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas, and their advocates, and bear the consequences. (*Labour Leader*, 15 December 1905)

In the spring of 1906 Isabella and Mary Gawthorpe had established themselves as popular speakers, giving talks in many local meetings. Isabella was organising secretary of the Leeds Women's Suffrage Society, part of the NUWSS, and Mary joined the committee. The two women addressed many ILP local meetings together. They also participated in the University Extension Committee and trade unions mainly in the Leeds area, on occasions travelling across the West Riding, to Keighley, Wakefield and beyond. Mary Gawthorpe said that she was 'able to satisfy Miss Ford, including teachers in Miss Rowlette's itinerary'. (Gawthorpe 1962, 209) It seems that Isabella Ford was pleased to encounter and work with Mary Gawthorpe, who was from a working class family background. Mary wrote an article, 'How Women Will Succeed', to the *Yorkshire Weekly Post* in 1906:

The average woman's life is still hedged in by artificial conditions, and her natural aspirations are still bound down by artificial and arbitrary laws and customs...

Women, as a sex, are still...taught that the broader race-life, or welfare of future generations, does not concern them; that a strict confinement to home life or self-preservation should be their only goal...

Small wonder is it then that, living a life of such utter dependence, she fails to acquire that 'perfect sense of justice' which we are to believe all men possess; that having her duties narrowed down to the four walls of her home, she cannot keep a secret – for secrets do not bother the woman who is allowed a refreshing and illuminating glimpse into the outside world... [Y]ou cannot expect a sense of honour (implying through self-respect) from a person who though deemed an angel, is not fit to be trusted... who is not credited with sufficient intellect to mark a voting paper correctly, or sufficient justice to weigh rival claims...

Woman as a law-biding subject must be made a self-respecting citizen, with a direct voice in the affairs of the world... [A]s potential citizens with a raised status in life,

they will not practise the vices of the slave – dissimulation, petty tyranny, ‘influencing’ and the like – but as free and responsible women will develop just in proportion as more justice and more freedom are meted out to them. (*Yorkshire Post Weekly*, 10 January 1906)

Isabella maintained long and faithful friendships with her valued kindred spirits. Yet we also can see her suffering through her personal records when she experienced the breakdown of a friendship. Such breakdowns were not brought about because of Isabella’s weakness or unfaithfulness, but because of divergent perspectives on important topics. (Isabella Ford’s letters to Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 20, 10, 1914, Letters/microform 9/01, Box1, Women’s Library, London)

In early spring 1909, Isabella Ford, now in her mid-fifties, decided to repeat the success of the previous summer and organise another rural Yorkshire caravan tour. Isabella and Mary Fielden were joined by Ray Costelloe, later Ray Strachey, an energetic suffragist who had just graduated from Newnham. The caravan route attempted to skirt along the edge of the Hambleton Hills. Isabella reported in the *Common Cause*:

The Thirsk route was impossible, owing to steep hills. Two people in a van cannot easily manage the work. Of Miss Fielden’s energy, care, and unselfish kindness and economy I cannot speak too highly, but she needs helpers. Nice as vanning is, it is extremely tiring when you have to earn your living as you go along and make all arrangements for horses, men etc. it is too hard work for only two people, if daily travelling is necessary. All the way through beautiful old villages we distributed leaflets and did house to house visiting, so that we were constantly on the go,

constantly talking and arguing. We found Miss Costelloe invaluable, a very excellent collector (of donations) (and cook). (*Common Cause*, 17 June 1909)

By late July 1909, Isabella had left the tour and gone home to Leeds for a local suffrage society fund-raising garden party. At the party Isabella entertained the audience by playing the part of the 'Anti', a 'Miss Ford-Cromer' mocking Mr Austen Chamberlain, a leading Conservative 'Anti' who expressed the particular rhetoric of 'Men are men and women are women!' (Liddington 2006, 213)

Isabella met Mary Gawthorpe at the Leeds Arts Club. Mary was from a working class background and had retired from being a WSPU organiser in autumn 1910, before resigning from the WSPU itself by around the end of 1911. Mary contributed to a new feminist journal, the *Freewoman*, dealing with issues of free love and homosexuality, celibacy and women's economic independence around this time. (Liddington 2006, 228) She wrote in Alfred Orage's (1873–1934) *New Age* criticising the Nietzschean rhetoric in radical tone:

Who are You? You are Man, the Thinker. And who am I? I am Wo-man, the Thinker...who carries the Womb...

It is not that I rebel against Nature but that your new variation on the old theme, he for God and she for God through him, promises continued outrage upon her. It represents for me the great conspiracy, the repeated folly of the ages... Your thought for Woman is too little. It is too *cheap*...

This civilisation might have, today, the glorious confident outpouring of a free and radiant womanhood...The new Eve stands already at the door. Can it really be that you do not know her? (Mary Gawthorpe, *New Age* 12, September 1912)

Isabella also criticised Orage's interpretation of Nietzsche as a 'sentimental masculine view' and argued women needed to be free from these 'false beliefs'.

(quoted in Livesey 2007, 177)

Asquith's liberal government won the 1910 general election. In 1911, the summer Women's Coronation Procession was organised by the NUWSS and between ten and fifteen thousand women took part in it. (Liddington 2006, 202) The International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) contingent marched alongside almost 140 women doctors, the Writers' Suffrage League, the Women's Co-operative Guild, an organisation of married working class women, followed by the Women's Freedom League, which had broken away from WSPU. Bessie described her impression of the procession: 'Those women's faces are beautiful – it was quite glorious to see them, they seemed to shine... No, nothing can push it back, women are stirring and rising up everywhere, it's like a great flood.' (Bessie Ford to Kate Salt, 15 June 1908; quoted in Hannam 1989, 129)

The next day Isabella Ford set off for the IWSA Congress in Amsterdam. A week after the NUWSS procession was the WSPU's 'Woman's Sunday' demonstration, held on 21 June in Hyde Park. After Hyde Park, Emmeline Pankhurst announced: 'if you believe in JUSTICE, join the Women's Procession... Come and march with the women who are fighting in the Cause of Liberty'. (quoted in Liddington 2006, 204) The long procession was led by Emmeline, Adela and Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Annie Kenny, Jennie Baines and Mary Gawthorpe. (Ibid)

That summer, both the Women's Freedom League and the NUWSS organised special caravan tours. Among the NUWSS vanners were Margaret Robertson, holder of a

literature degree and a talented open-air speaker, and the enthusiastic Emilie Gardner, recently graduated from Cambridge with a history degree. (Liddington 2006, 205) The vanning demanded practical clothes and offered a new experience and new identities. One of Emilie Gardner's postcards to a girl who was hoping to follow Emilie's academic success shows her as a vanguard of her time (Liddington 2006, 208):

Good child – it's jolly fine [news] & I'm awfully glad [about your exam results]. It showed that all your dismals was in vain & now you will be allowed up to go on to Newnham [College, Cambridge] eulogium [praise]. Hurrah. Give my love and congratulations to Polly. (Mary Gawthorpe 1962, 231; Liddington 2006, 208)

Isabella believed that women should have a vote to get their freedom to lead them to a more just society. Also she emphasized ILP worked with 'true Socialist spirit' to help women in *Labour Leader*. (*LL*, 26 June 1908)

From January 1911, Asquith's liberal government implemented the 'People's Budget' and established national insurance. Home rule for Ireland, the order to fire on strikers in south Wales from Home Secretary Winston Churchill, as well as unrest with syndicalist workers were the main issues of the day. Meanwhile, the WSPU organised a 'Women's Coronation Procession' to mark George V's coronation in July. The Women's Freedom League led by Charlotte Despard and the NUWSS agreed to join in. Emily Ford designed eighty shield-shaped banners inscribed with the name of local town councils supporting a new Conciliation Bill. (Liddington 2006, 231-32) Alongside the Men's Leagues, around 40,000 women walked in seven miles of 'gold and glitter and sparkling pageantry'. The press reported this spectacular as 'greatness, dignity and beauty'. (Liddington 2006, 232)

The NUWSS Liberal Reform Bill in November 1911 did not extend the right to vote to women—it was, however, extended to all men. This brought about a turning point in the NUWSS strategy of seeking an electoral pact with Labour. In addition to ‘democratic suffragists’, the Liberal government gave Labour the chance to recruit more daring suffragettes. (Holton 1996, 175) In early 1912, the NUWSS set up a special Election Fighting Fund (EFF) to support Labour candidates at by-elections. By 1913, over 50,000 members joined the NUWSS in demanding women’s full citizenship as a democratic right. (Liddington 2006, 261-63) At this time, Isabella Ford seemed to have gained new energy from her EFF work and to have disassociated from the militants. (Hannam 1989, 148-49)

The NUWSS was backed by working-class communities and the Labour–Suffrage pact was established. In July 1913 the NUWSS Suffrage Pilgrimage march took place. (Liddington 2006, 283) The march set off on 18 June to coincide with its international events in Budapest, and converged on Hyde Park on 26 July. On the north-east leg of the route, the march started off at Newcastle-on-Tyne and marched to Leeds, where it was greeted by Isabella and Bessie Ford. (Ibid) In October 1913, Isabella Ford chaired a suffrage meeting at the Miners’ Conference in Scarborough. (Hannam 1989, 156) The Labour–Suffrage alliance was put under pressure as ILP suffragists became angry because the NUWSS still maintained traditional Liberal loyalties in regions such as Yorkshire. (Hannam 1989, 158) Through the Election Fighting Fund, about 45,000 Friends of Women’s Suffrage had enrolled by August 1914. (Liddington 2006, 294) Desperately, Florence Lockwood wrote on the first day of the First World War after she tried to hold a peace demonstration but found only a few Quaker suffragists shared her views about warfare:

Put the finishing touches to the (new) Women's Suffrage banner which I had been embroidering with such high hopes. Little remained to be done, only a few stitches to the lettering: 'A New Age demands new Responsibilities for Women'. The motto assumed a new significance. All reform and progress must wait now. War will not help human liberty, I thought, as I folded up the banner and put it away. (Lockwood 1932, 185-90)

Liddington estimates that although Mary Gawthorpe was involved in Leeds University extension classes, Yorkshire universities had no one like Esther Roper, the working class Manchester graduate and prominent activist. As for Isabella's support for women trade unionists and ILP networks, this did not seem to result in the recruitment of working-class women or young blood to the NUWSS. Thus, Liddington argues, it can be said to have remained only as a Liberal elite club. (2006, 319) Despite Isabella's vanning, the 1913 pilgrimage, Florence's 'Friends' propaganda, and the well-organized working women, the NUWSS in Yorkshire could not attract working-class women members. (Liddington 2006, 319) Even though Isabella's political affiliation to the constitutional NUWSS, she made clear that the women's movement needed both middle-class and working class women in her *Women and Socialism* in 1906:

The middle-class woman, as I have pointed out, bases her demand for justice, primarily on the needs of the working woman, now that her knowledge of those needs has grown clearer. It is impossible, therefore, any longer to brand the woman's movement as only a middle-class affair. (Ford 1906, 21)

Also, she made clear her strategic support for female suffrage:

The socialist cry for Adult Suffrage (the word Adult now does not include woman),

which when put into shape as a Bill for Parliament shrinks into Manhood Suffrage only, makes them think, and naturally I hold, that Socialism means nothing more for them than Liberalism has ever meant, with its empty cry of ‘no taxation without representation,’ or Toryism, with its ‘property vote,’ which has always ignored women’s property claims. (Ford 1906, 22)

Isabella Ford strongly suggested that the women’s movement and the labour movement should work together:

We must I think, surely gather from a clear understanding of the common origin and aims of these two movements, that the more they work alongside or together, the more each will strengthen the other. The Labour party will always keep the economic side well to the front, and this is a side women are apt to overlook since all women do not yet grasp the intimate connection between morals and economics. Women will help to keep more clearly before our eyes, than is perhaps always possible now, those great ideals for the accomplishment of which Labour representation is only a means. (Ford 1906, 23)

She also suggested the vision of equal and free society and clearly described a new relationship in a new freed and equal society as friendship.

We think now that we understand and worship love, justice and compassion, but our present understanding of them is a mere blurred vision compared with what, in the future, it will be when men and women stand together, helping and teaching one another as equals and friends, instead of as now often living alongside one another as strangers, sometimes even as enemies. (Ford 1906, 23-4)

She concluded with what women should do now to reach a better life:

Our lives at present are mostly quite different from our ideals...; we reverence woman and motherhood in our poetry, whilst we underpay and enslave women, and motherhood leads to untold misery and degradation in the lives of innumerable women;...but it is not until woman, strong and free, stands beside man, helping him to reach this better life, and not as now often holding him back from it, that we shall begin in real earnest to walk towards the full light of day. (Ford 1906, 24)

The next section examines the origins of her socialist ideas and the process of her politicisation as a socialist feminist.

3.5. Isabella Ford and the Fellowship of the New Life

An obituary published after Isabella Ford's death in a socialist newspaper wrote of her socialism:

Isabella Ford's conception of socialism was broad and human. She identified herself with every movement for freedom. She was international through and through, she loved animals scarcely less than human beings, she loved beauty and music, and sought a society in which all men and women would have an opportunity to develop into full human beings. She was, indeed, a citizen of tomorrow. (*New Leader*, 25 July 1924)

Although rooted in a radical liberal Quaker background, it was in the 1870s and early 1880s that the Ford sisters began to incline towards more socialist ideas and the labour movement. (Hannam 1989, 22) Isabella Ford's first meaningful encounter with the ideas of socialism was through her friendship with Edward Carpenter. (Hannam 1989, Rowbotham 1977) At the age of twenty, Isabella met Edward Carpenter (1844–1928) in Leeds when he was touring, giving lectures for the University Extension programme. From then on, Isabella shared the vision of her socialism with Edward Carpenter and the Fellowship of the New Life, and the two maintained a life-long friendship. (Ibid)

Friendship with Edward Carpenter and the Fellowship of the New Life

Her life-long friendship with the New Life socialist, Edward Carpenter was of a different character from the friendships Carpenter had had with his other friends. (Rowbotham 1977, Berkman 1989, Stanley 1992) Stanley claims that Ford and Carpenter met when Edward Carpenter (1844–1928) left the clerical order for University extension teaching, following which he joined the middle class radical and socialist circles in London. (Stanley 1992, 214) It was in the 'Fellowship of the New Life' that Isabella Ford, Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, Edith Lees and Olive Schreiner came to know each other. Carpenter and Schreiner corresponded over many years after she left England. (Rive 1988) Carpenter stayed in contact with Edith Lees until her death in 1916, the two being of the same 'intermediate sex', to use Carpenter's term. (Stanley 1992, 214) But there is no clear evidence for the characteristics of Isabella Ford and Carpenter's particular life-long friendship. Rowbotham describes them as 'close' friends, but that does not necessarily mean anything more than a platonic relationship. (Rowbotham 1977, 27-138)

From an upper-middle class background, Edward Carpenter became a lecturer at Trinity Hall, Cambridge in 1868. He was ordained as a deacon in 1869, though spiritual and intellectual doubts saw him leave the curacy in 1871. From then on Carpenter challenged institutionalized sexual concepts and conventions. He had a deep concern about sexual pleasure and the realization of love in ‘a loveless world’, and focused on exploring ‘new ways of life’. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 34) Carpenter tried to relate subjective experience to politics toward a more equal and democratic society not bound by sending a representative to parliament or the endeavour of class struggle.

Edward Carpenter believed that self-realisation could be accomplished from ‘new forms of relationship’ and ‘democratic comradeship’. He idealized the concept of love in order to learn how people could accept one another and honour each other’s own personality without ‘false shames’ and ‘affectations’ between the classes and between the sexes. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 35)

In the early 1880s, two socialist groups, the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and the Fabian Society, were formed. Before the formation of the Fabian Society, the Fellowship of the New Life served as a ‘proto-socialist’ group. Edward Carpenter, Isabella and Bessie were the earliest members of the Fellowship. The English sexologist, Havelock Ellis (1859–1939), was a core member of that group. ‘Sexologists’, Weeks writes, were ‘the scientists of sex, the arbiters of desire, [who] promoted the belief that sex was of crucial importance to individual health, identity and happiness’. (Weeks 1985, 7) Weeks claimed that Ellis believed that the outstanding problem facing the new century was that of sexual relations and that a solution was attainable. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 58)

Weeks diagnosed Ellis's socialism as typical of the 1880s: it 'combined a vague progressivism and a belief in the benevolent role of the state with a desire for personal uplift and freedom'. (Ibid)

After his father's death in 1882, Carpenter inherited £6000 and bought a farm cottage. In 1883 he set up a communal farm with friends called Millthorpe, where they made sandals, kept bees, farmed strawberries and lived on a vegetarian diet. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977) At Millthorpe, Carpenter became acquainted with the socialist movement and became involved in various workers' organizations in Sheffield. His farm became a shelter for socialists and radicals from home and abroad. Of 1883, Carpenter wrote in his autobiography of his 'migration to Millthorpe, and the publication of *Towards Democracy*, my first acquaintance with the socialist movement, and my reading of Thoreau's *Walden*'. (Carpenter 1918, 114) Millthorpe was a relatively spacious two-storey house with several rooms and a garden for sharing with his guests, friends and visitors. Millthorpe provided the perfect location for discussing world matters and shared visions on human life.

Carpenter tried to relate the subjective experience of politics toward a more democratic society. Rather than sending a representative to parliament or seeking to engage in 'class struggle', Carpenter's core concern throughout his whole life was democracy, love and life—in other words, sexuality and spirituality. His writings clearly show his ideas on democracy and relationship. In his autobiography, *My Days and Dreams*, Carpenter describes his *Towards Democracy* (1883–1902) as 'the start-point and kernel of all my later work'. The theme of *Towards Democracy* can be described as the immortality of life; the immortality of love; the insignificance of death.

In *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter wrote, 'The body is a root of the soul. As the body in air, so the soul sustains itself in love.' (Carpenter 1985, 39) In his poem 'A New Life', Carpenter describes it as a relationship with others:

Henceforth I profound a new life for you-that you should bring
 The peace and grace of Nature into your daily life – being freed from vain striving:
 The freed soul, passing disengaged into the upper air, forgetful of self,
 Rising again in others, ever knowing itself again in others. (Carpenter 1985, 286)

And the relationship should lie in the pursuit of love Carpenter wrote in his poem 'The end of Love':

Seek not the end of love in this act or that act – lest indeed it become the end;
 But seek this act and that act and thousands of acts whose end is love –
 So shalt thou at last create that which thou now desirest;
 And then when these are all past and gone there shall remain
 To thee a great and immortal possession, which no man can take
 Away. (Carpenter 1985, 285)

Rowbotham argued Carpenter's concept of 'new life' was based on his concern of his idealisation of the 'artisan'. He found ground for the love of men in his idealisation of the artisan class. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 35) The characteristic of artisans, to him, was a kind of 'median', one which is not extremely female or extremely male, and which can be most beautiful, emotional, sensitive and creative. (Carpenter 1918) Comradeship, for Carpenter, meant a personal relationship between the classes and between the sexes,

and new forms of relationship were seen as the practice of socialism and alternative way of living, which is sincere, trustful, caring, creative and spiritual. The socialism of Carpenter and his friend was based on personal growth and democracy in love, and was one which should be achieved now and here, and not in the future.

Hannam mentions that the American poet Walt Whitman was Carpenter's mentor. (1989, 23) Whitman emphasized democratic comradeship and the need to be close to the natural world. Carpenter attempted to live a simple life-based on 'new personal relationships'. Carpenter's ideas of knowledge through 'direct experience of life' and the 'simple life' influenced the Ford sisters, as well as Katherine Bruce Glasier, John Bruce Glasier, James Ramsay Macdonald and Edward Pease, who became the new young leaders of the British socialist movement. (Hannam 1989, 24)

Isabella Ford was also very passionate about Whitman's ideas, and she is known to have corresponded with him. When Whitman published his *Leaves of Grasses*, he sent two copies of it to Britain, one to Carpenter, the other to Isabella and Bessie Ford. (Edward Carpenter Collection, CHUBB/4/17, LSE) Rowbotham explains that the culture of early socialism involved the creation of new forms for all aspects of people's lives: 'It had to provide a kind of home for people made spiritually homeless in capitalism'. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 66) The home was seen as a highly spiritual and emotional place where the heart belonged and could rest. Involvement in socialist groups implied a new position for women and a change in relations between the sexes. Both men and women would have to change, for 'socialism' meant questioning the whole range of social relationships and the creation of the new forms of everyday life.

Early members of the Fellowship of the New Life focused on communal living, care for life, and for all creatures—not just human beings. Pursuing the ‘simple life’ was another principle of the Fellowship. The rule of simplicity of living meant simplicity in all the relations of life:

The household must be attended by the members who create them. It includes all sorts of modes of living, eating, drinking, maybe a vegetarian or fruit diet, dispensing with complicated, offensive, and harmful processes. In dress, striking at the vagaries of fashion; in house furnishing and decoration, precluding more furniture; in social intercourse, demanding thorough sincerity and frankness in speech and behaviour.

(Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, 6, CHUBB/6/6, LSE)

This proto-socialist movement in Britain resembled Quakerism in some ways in pursuit of religious and spiritual growth, especially on the level of everyday practice. The religious socialists pursued the spiritual practice through simple life. Quakers practiced spiritual and religious life through ‘plain speech’ and ‘plain dress’. (Dandelion 1996, xxiv-xxv) The Fellowship defined their principle of simplicity as follows:

This simplicity is the essential condition of worthy and joyous work for everyone; so the delightful exercise of faculty would be enforced by that of true service which raises work to its rightful dignity as a religious function, not austere as that of Henry Thoreau. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, 7, CHUBB/6/6, LSE)

In its earlier stages the Fellowship was a society for ethical culture, that is, a religious society, or church, for the edification of its members in the spiritual life and the formation of character. This church will have its basis in the moral sentiment, and will be free from admixture of superstition. It will rest on no external authority or special

revelation, but on conscience and insight. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings minutes 1883, 8, CHUBB/6/6, LSE)

The Fellowship tended to be more liberal and non-institutional than the Victorian norm of morality. The Fellowship believed in conscience and insight and relied on these to build a new beautiful world only for beautiful people. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, CHUBB/6/5, LSE) They hoped for and dreamed of the ideal of an advanced form of life in the name of ‘socialism’, which would serve as another form of church or spiritual home for the ethical quality of life. The Fellowship’s ideals of socialism and democracy were proclaimed and recorded during the Fellowship’s first meeting, held on 25 September 1883. The Fellowship’s goal was to establish a strong healthy individualism and to live a high spiritual life. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, CHUBB/6/5, LSE)

For the Fellowship, socialism meant more than community of goods: it was also required community of opinions. The thing to be attained was the living of a high spiritual life. The unprejudiced desire of all the members to live worthily and consequently to know wherein ‘noble being’ consisted, that is relations of all things, they believed, would necessarily lead to a certain unanimity. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, CHUBB/6/5, LSE) The members of the Fellowship sought to make a strong and healthy individualism possible. For them, suffering and want, indeed, all of the conflict of life, would serve as the materials for artist and poet, and provide an opportunity for the virtues of charity and creation of beneficial life to be exercised. (Ibid)

The Fellowship took the cause of 'the spiritual' seriously, and viewed their current age as retrospective. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, CHUBB/6/5, LSE) As the foregoing generations beheld God and Nature face to face, they wanted to enjoy an original relation to the universe. The Fellowship, it was argued should have a poetry and philosophy of insight, not of tradition; they should have a religion by personal revelation, not by history. They claimed that there were new lands, new men, new thoughts that demanded their own works, laws and worship. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, 2, CHUBB/6/5, LSE) The Fellowship proclaimed equality as the principle of society. Equality evidently embraced women as well as men in education, economic dependence, law, and professional activities. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1885, 6, CHUBB/6/6, LSE)

The next section examines the socialist ideas of the members of the Fellowship and their friendship and comradeship which influenced Isabella Ford's political and personal life.

Ethical Socialism and the Fellowship of the New Life

The Fellowship of the New Life, a 'proto-socialist' group, which aimed at a 'new moral society' against capitalist materialistic 'civilisation', began in 1883. The Fellowship's idea was based on the 'subordination of material things to spiritual', and 'the cultivation of a perfect character in each and all'. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 146) Edward Carpenter, Isabella, Bessie and Olive Schreiner were the earliest members of the Fellowship, while Herbert Rix, W.J. Jupp, Percival Chubb, Mrs Hinton, Caroline Haddon and Ernest Rhys were also among the early members. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1885, CHUBB/ 6/6, LSE)

Carpenter wrote about the early meetings of the Fellowship: ‘they were full of hopeful enthusiasms – life simplified, a humane diet and a rational dress, manual labour, democratic ideals, communal institutions’. (Carpenter 1918, 225) Carpenter practised this idea throughout his life at Millthorpe. He met the first British sexologist Havelock Ellis, a co-founder of the Fellowship, at their inaugural meeting.

One of the founders of the New Life socialism Havelock Ellis (1859–1939) was born as a son of a lower-middle class family in the London suburb of Croydon in 1859. The young Ellis rejected conventional religion, believing in mystical experience, which provided him with an inner strength. He was convinced that a new way of thinking about sexual freedom, one which replace the Victorian conventional and institutionalized sex, would usher in a new age of happiness. To fulfil his ambition to study a new view of sex, Ellis trained as a doctor. He completed his studies in 1889, but never went into practice. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 144)

Ellis completed his major work, the multi-volume *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, in 1910. In this work, Ellis sought to discuss sexual frankness against the Victorian sexual dualism. The ‘double standard’ presumed male sexuality to be uncontrollable and female sexuality to be non-existent. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1979, 168) Therefore, sex and sexuality were assumed to be all about male dominance and the man’s biology—it was not communicable or emotionally sharable. When Ellis worked on the radical journal, *Today*, in 1884, he met H.M. Hyndman, the founder of the Marxist Socialist Democratic Federation (SDF), John Burns, and other radicals of the day. Between them, they talked

about land nationalization, the 'new woman', and various progressive reforms. (Grosskurth 1980, 60)

Early in 1884, a split from the Fellowship of New Life resulted in the formation of the Fabian Society. Ellis stayed with the Fellowship, preferring its emphasis on the personal and spiritual rather than the practical. Around this time, Isabella Ford was engaged in work for the Leeds Art Club. A decade later, Isabella described her experience as a member of a socialist group in these days in her novel *On the Threshold* published in 1895. Isabella Ford and Edward Carpenter maintained relations with the Fabian Society, of which Isabella's cousin Edward Pease was secretary. Carpenter was a close friend with both the Pease and Ford families, and he ordered the *Fabian News* and pamphlets for Millthorpe in 1884. (Edward Carpenter Collection, CHUBB/4/17, LSE)

The most important practical work to be undertaken by the Fellowship was education. Their inauguration documents express the clear desire for them to focus on education for self-reform:

Our faith is not in an improved social mechanism, but in the vivifying power of a new moral and religious inspiration. We desire ourselves to gain through mutual aid and encouragement a clearer discernment of what is true and right, and so to detect what is false and evil in current opinions and practices; to participate in evil practices to the least possible extent... We would wish to constitute, with all who will join us, a band of reformers reforming through self reform, exerting individually and collectively a wide and determining influence for good... a society based on those higher principles which we have declared. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1885, 9-10, CHUBB/6/5, LSE)

Havelock Ellis believed that the only revolution now possible was the revolution of the human spirit. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 139-86) His interest was always in exploring personal relationships and ethical concepts and never in political activism. He stressed that through discussion, simple living, manual labour and religious communion, members could lay down the basis of a new life.

After all not to create only, or found only,
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded,
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free,
To fill the gross the torpid bulk with vital religious fire,
Not to repel or destroy so much as accept, fuse, rehabilitate,
To obey as well as command, to follow more than to lead,
These also are the lessons of our New World;
While how little the New after all, how much the Old, Old World!

* * * * *

To exalt the present and the real,
To teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade,
To manual work for each and all, to plough, hoe, dig;
For every man to see to it that he really do something,
for every woman too.

All occupations, duties broad and close,
Whatever forms the average, strong, compete, sweet-blooded man
or woman the perfect longeve personality,
And helps its present life to heath and happiness,
and shapes its soul. (Henry Havelock Ellis, 1885, CHUBB/4/9, LSE)

Havelock Ellis had close relationships with famous feminists at that time. At the beginning of the formation of the Fellowship he contacted Olive Schreiner, later a famous South African feminist writer, immediately after she had published her first novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, in Britain in 1883. Olive Schreiner became one of the founding members of the group. (Fellowship of the New Life, Meetings Minutes 1883, CHUBB/6/5, LSE)

Grosskurth argued in his biography of Havelock Ellis that he began a life-long emotional friendship with Olive Schreiner. This claim, however, has been re-examined by Liz Stanley. Before coming to England in 1881, Olive Schreiner, the daughter of a German missionary, had been a governess in South Africa. (Grosskurth 1980, 73) Grosskurth claimed that the passionate relationship between Ellis and Schreiner resulted in an inequality of emotion between them in 1886, and that Ellis wanted a more intense and dependent relationship than Schreiner. However, this claim has been proved to be invalid by the long-term research on Olive Schreiner by Stanley. Stanley argues that Olive Schreiner suffered as a result of the emotionally exploitative relationship between her and Ellis. Ellis, Stanley argues, was a demanding partner, giving nothing in return for what he received, even punishing Schreiner emotionally by pretending he did not desire or require her emotional support. (Stanley 2002) Furthermore, it becomes clear that the chief founder of the New Life, Havelock Ellis, was not a 'new man' but only the 'old Adam'. Schreiner proposed in her early allegorical writings that women's freedom involves no longer 'carrying' men emotionally. (Stanley 2002, 57)

Stanley argues that Schreiner saw women's oppression as a condition of women's sexual, emotional and economic dependence on men. (1983, 32) Her feminism was as much a matter of hearts, minds and behaviour of women themselves and of personal change as of institutional or structural change. For her, feminism could be achieved by women, by changing their lives in the present moment. Schreiner clearly believed that everyday life is political. (Stanley 1983, 235)

All of Schreiner's writings deal with personal life in a sexist society. She took this 'as eventful, complex, contradictory, surprising and, except in a superficial and general sense, absolutely unpredictable'. (Stanley 1983, 237) Schreiner used the term 'New Women' for women who were working towards a new life of equality and not living on surplus produced by others. Therefore, she stressed, the 'new life' was achievable in the here and now by women community: 'The most important thing was the attempt, and the attempt is a beginning, [and] beginnings make things easier for all women who come after... [A]ll women must stand together, for no woman can stand alone; and that unless all women are free no woman can be free.' (Stanley 1983, 238)

Ellis's first book, *The New Spirit*, was published in 1890. In it, he insisted that the growth of science, the rise of the women's movement and the demanding of democracy was the 'spiritual awakening' of the age. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 145) By the end of 1890, according to Grosskurth, a sense of close comradeship was growing between Ellis and Edith Lees. (1980, 140) Grosskurth claimed that Ellis learned by experience that 'a union of affectionate comradeship, in which the specific emotions of sex had the smallest part, could attain the passionate intensity of love.' (1980, 140) Ellis and Lees both

disapproved of the conventional form of marriage, but they both wanted a permanent relationship. In 1891, Ellis married Edith Lees, with their marriage lasting until her death.

Edith Lees, who had been a core member of the Fellowship, was the secretary of the group until her marriage to Ellis. After Edith Lees's death, Ellis lived with Margaret Sanger, an American feminist. (Grosskurth 1980) Edith Lees joined the Fellowship in 1887, became secretary in 1890 and resigned the secretaryship upon her marriage in December 1891. (*Seed Time*, No. 10, Oct 1891, 16) She gave feminist lectures and contributed to a journal founded by the Fellowship, *Seed Time* (Grosskurth 1980, 137), which was started in 1889 and ceased publication in 1898. She wrote about marriage in *Seed Time* in 1890:

a woman ought not to be economically dependent on man: it must be as equal comrades, shoulder to shoulder in the work and joy of life, that they must enter the lists; and unions thus formed of conscious comradeship, long knowledge of each other, and communion of soul and spirit as well as body, will rarely need the invention of free love societies or the offices of the divorce court. Prevention here is certainly better than the proposed cure. (E.M.O. Lees, "Women and the New Life", *Seed Time*, No. 3, January 1890, 5-6, Fabian Society/E/117, LSE)

Edith Lees wrote that true marriage was a 'union formed of conscious comradeship, long knowledge of each other, and communion of soul and spirit as well as body'. (E.M.O. Lees, 1890, 6, Fabian Society/E/117, LSE) Grosskurth claimed that Edith Lees was bisexual and had many female lovers to whom she was attached emotionally. Ellis also had other lovers and told Lees of the intimacies of his relationships. The emotional inequality between Ellis and Lees might have made the relationship difficult, yet this

open form of relationship was a part of the Fellowship's ideal. Ellis and Lees experimented with how not to be exclusive in their relationship. Edith Lees gave insight into their principle of their relationship, highlighting the importance of 'sincerity in marriage', while also noting that 'conventionalities at length are as bad as impurities'. (Edith Lees Ellis, *Seed Time*, No. 13, July 1892, 10, Fabian Society/E/117, LSE)

Weeks argued that Ellis's socialism was close to that "“humanist” ethical revolt against capitalism which has been a central strand in British radical thought in the absence of a developed historical materialism'. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 147) The socialism of the Fellowship was claimed in the first edition of their organ in 1889:

The New Fellowship is based on the conviction that those who accept the principles of Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood, should observe these principles as far as possible in their relations with the world. It aims to unite all such persons, in order that by co-operation and by mutual help and stimulus they may the more fully realize the true social ideal, and may commend it to others by practical examples as well as by precept. The members believe that by so doing they will be assisting in a very necessary manner that wider political and social movement which seeks to replace our present competition society, with all its injustices, by a co-operative commonwealth where each man shall have the best opportunities for developing his manhood. (Edith Lees, *The Sower*, No. 1, July 1889, 11, Fabian Society/E/117, LSE)

Weeks claimed that Ellis was familiar with many Marxist ideas, though his socialism was never close to Marx's nor even to the working class. (1977, 148) Ellis shared with Carpenter a belief in the innate possibilities for good of man's biological nature. Ellis's beliefs seem to resemble biological determinism, given that he assumed that individual

behaviour was an expression of inherent biological drives rather than of social processes. (Weeks 1977, 148) The core of their beliefs was declared in the last edition of the organ of the Fellowship in 1898:

The New Life must be the outcome of the New Spirit, to that spirit, the Spirit of Fellowship and Service... [W]e must find the highest aim of life in voluntary service, in the fellowship of comrades, and the pursuit of knowledge and beauty. From this followed the necessity of contact with nature and simplicity of life, since only by contact with nature can body and mind alike be fitted for healthy living, and only by simplicity of Life can we free ourselves from excessive and aimless labour without violating the personality of others by using them as mere tools, and making them toil that we may live and enjoy. (Adams, Editorial, *Seed Time*, No. 34, February 1898, 1, Fabian Society/E/117, LSE)

Carpenter's socialism, which was based on the belief in human evolution towards democratic relationships, closely resembled the Fellowship's belief in human progress:

Our fundamental doctrine is the sacredness of the human personality, as that which alone possesses ultimate value as an end to, and in itself. The true end of each individual is thus perfection, or the complete development of all his faculties in a natural and healthy human life. But such development is only possible for each in that organic union with his fellows, which we call society. This society, to ensure its true ends, must be a society of equals, recognising the right of each of its members to be treated as an end in himself, and never to be degraded into a mere tool for other's ends. It must be the union of all, in Co-operative effort, for a Common Good, at once the good of each and the good of all. It is believed that this ideal, is the only true one, and that loyalty to it, and its far reaching implications, would entirely transform the

chaos in which we live, and regenerate society. (Editorial, *Seed Time*, No. 3, January, 1890, 1, Fabian Society/E/117, LSE)

Carpenter stressed many signs of an evolution of a new human type, neither excessively male nor excessively female. He theorised “‘Uranians” as an “intermediate sex”, which is the physical characteristics of one sex and many of the emotional characteristics of the other’. ‘Uranians’ would be ‘the interpreters of men and women to each other’ and a ‘forward force in human evolution’. (Weeks 1981, 173) He believed bisexuality might become the norm of a new society and argued for a new awareness of sex. Carpenter’s conception of Uranians is described in his poem, ‘O Child of Uranus’:

O Child of Uranus, wanderer down all times.

Darkling, from farthest ages of the Earth the same

Strange tender figure, full of grace and pity,

Yet outcast and misunderstood of men-

Thy woman-soul within a Man’s form dwelling,

[Was Adam perchance like this, ere Eve from his side was drawn?]

So gentle, gracious, dignified, complete,

With man’s strength to perform, and pride to suffer without sign,

And feminine sensitiveness to the last fibre of beings;

Strange twice-born, having entrance to both worlds-

Loved, loved by either sex,

And free of all their lore!

.....

Lord of the love which rules this changing world,

Passing all partial loves, this one complete – the Mother love

And sex emotion blended –
 I see thee where for centuries thou hast walked,
 Lonely, redeeming, drawing all to thee,
 Yet outcast, slandered, pointed of the mob,
 Misjudged and crucified. (Carpenter 1985, 331-32)

Weeks claimed Carpenter's socialism was a kind of 'religion' and a new way of relating as a radical critique of the values of capitalist 'civilisation'. (1981, 174) Carpenter's emphasis on 'the personal' was easily reduced to an emphasis on personal relationships, but his socialism meant a fundamental transformation in all relationships, including sexual reform, towards, as he saw it, morality and democracy. (Weeks 1981, 174) Contemporary emphasis on trade unionism and parliamentary representation were the preoccupation of the British socialist movement. As for Carpenter's contribution to sexual liberation, he separated sex from procreation, which was a revolutionary idea not only for women but also for homosexuals, and one set against the Victorian sexual and moral norm. Carpenter stressed that emotional love could be developed into spiritual union on the basis of the physical union. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 139-86)

Carpenter did not deny the pleasurable nature of sex aside from its procreative function; at the same time, while acknowledging 'the physical', he promoted 'the spiritual' aspect of sexual union. Carpenter made the purely physical a secondary issue and accordingly recommended 'Karezza', that is, the 'prolonged bodily conjunction between the sexes without orgasmic emission'. (Weeks 1981, 173) Carpenter wrote of 'Karezza' being 'a more complete *soul* union, a strange and intoxicating exchange of life and transmutation of elements'. (Carpenter 1906, 173-74) He argued for the reform of marriage, putting emphasis on 'the spiritual' rather than on sexual loyalty, and seemingly was conscious of

the concept of love as a ‘non-exclusive’ relationship. It is not clear, however, whether he counted the emotional aspect of the ‘non-exclusive’ relationship: he had a life-long male partner until his death who lived with him in his house. (Weeks 1981)

Carpenter’s impact on socialists and feminists who were seeking understanding of sexual relationships can be seen from the emergence of small discussion groups like the one in Eastwood near Nottingham. (Stanley 2002) Carpenter’s writing was more accessible to members of such groups than Ellis’s. It was important for them to connect sexual liberation to their politics. Carpenter’s work in sex psychology, the laborious studies of Ellis, the journal *The Adult* in the 1890s and the publication of a feminist journal, *The Freewoman*, in 1911 attempted to create a ‘new morality’ as a rebellion over and against Victorian formality and hypocrisy. (Rowbotham 1977, 121) Carpenter founded the British Society of the Study of Sex Psychology with his friend Laurence Housman. Members of the Society sought to question things that had not been questioned before. For Carpenter, socialism meant questioning the whole range of social relationships.

Livesey explores women’s contributions to the socialist movement to figure out how women activists modified the masculinized socialist culture and aesthetics and produced their own. (2007, 12) Livesey claims that ‘Carpenter sought to reshape masculinity and civilization through sexual desire itself’. (2007, 16) For instance, Carpenter describes ‘intermediate sex’ as an ‘effeminate’ man:

A distinctly effeminate type, sentimental, lackadaisical, mincing in gait and manners, something of a chatterbox, skilful at the needle and on women’s work, sometimes taking pleasure in dressing in woman’s clothes; his figure...betraying a tendency towards the feminine, large at the hips, supple, not muscular, the face wanting in hair,

the voice inclining to be high-pitched...while his dwelling room is orderly in the extreme, even natty, and choice of decoration and perfume. His affection, too, is feminine in character, clinging, dependent and jealous, as of one desiring to be loved almost more than to love. (Carpenter, 'The Intermediate Sex', 1896, 126-27)

The Fellowship believed in conscience and insight and relied on it to build a new beautiful world only for beautiful people. They hoped and dreamed of an ideal and advanced form of life in the name of 'socialism', one which offered another form of church or spiritual home for the ethical quality of life.

As a member of the fellowship, Carpenter sought after the conviction that emotional love, sexual feeling and intellectual attraction should be combined. (Stanley 2002, 27) Carpenter tried to nurture an accord with the life of the mind and the spirit and body. He created a communal home and developed interests in gardening and strawberry farming, as well as making sandals that were to be worn in 'the new life' and sold in the market.

However, Stanley argues that women might feel the kind of exclusion from friendship with heterosexual male friends as well as with homosexual male friends, for example, Olive Schreiner. (Stanley 2002, 28) While Carpenter himself was writing and lecturing about equal relationships and spiritual matters, these things seemed to Schreiner to be very male subjective ideas, Stanley argues. (2002, 28) She also argues that 'Schreiner perceived a highly gendered intellectual, political and emotional milieu, and also felt sexual exclusion from the male world of loving friendship'. (2002, 28) She claims many of the women involved in radical liberal and socialist circles became more and more dissatisfied with the approach taken by the men and some of the women towards women's problems. (2002, 28) As a proof of this argument, Edith Lees wrote that

fellowship was hell, because she, as a secretary of the Fellowship, was in the experimental communal living and knew well what was going on there. (Grosskurth 1980)

Furthermore, Livesey claims ‘the millenarian spirit of aesthetic socialism had failed.’ (2007, 65) By 1889, she claims, the practical work of the movement was nowhere near achieving its objective of a new life of beauty. Although, she argues, ‘aesthetic socialist fiction became a crucial aesthetic supplement to their practical work in the labour movement, at the same time the activists felt as if they were no longer embittered individuals standing out from their class.’ (2007, 68) She claims that ‘the role of female socialists, such as Olive Schreiner, Clementina Black and Dollie Radford contributed to convert the male oriented socialists culture and aesthetics to their own.’ (2007, 69)

However, it is impossible to find whether Isabella Ford discussed masculinized culture of the socialist group or the matter of sex love and sexuality with Carpenter or any other members of the group. Later in this chapter I will discuss this matter through reading her novels in detail. (3.8)

For Isabella, like Schreiner, being different from Orage’s *New Age*, socialism meant ‘living the new life, not waiting for someone or something else to bring it into existence through institutional and structural change’. (Stanley 1983, 231) For them, capitalism and imperialism should be reformed through a vision of collective beauty. (Livesey 2007, 15) Socialism for them was a way of living and conducting loving relationships with people, and also for women, the only way to equality. The next section explores her socialist activism, which was mainly trade unionism and a parliamentary route.

Isabella and ILP

In 1903 Isabella Ford was elected to the National Administrative Council of the ILP. Among the ILP executive, Keir Hardie was the only supporter of women's suffrage. John Bruce Glasier announced that voteless women could be represented by the men in their family. (Liddington and Norris 1978, 127)

In 1906 at a by-election in Cockermouth, Cumberland the Labour candidate Robert Smillie, the president of the Scottish Miners' Federation, a group which supported adult suffrage failed to win. Several Manchester members of the WSPU and the ILP refused to speak for Smillie. Isabella Ford and Margaret McMillan were the mediators between the ILP and WSPU. Isabella Ford and Margaret McMillan asserted that anyone who hesitated on the question of Extension of Franchise on the ground of sex was not a true socialist, and the causes of Women, of Labour and socialism were inseparable. (Steedman 1990, 137)

Livesey contends that for Isabella Ford 'it was not so much idealism and the politics of feeling which drew her in to the Leeds ILP'. (Livesey 2007, 170) In *Why I Joined the ILP*, Isabella recalled that 'wider and truer views of life, was the party for me I felt, and so I joined it'. (Clayton 1896, 10) It seems that Isabella's previous experience as a member of the Fellowship of the New Life during the 1880s convinced her of the religious aspects of ILP's true socialism and sexual equality. The ILP criticised material and spiritual ugliness of the contemporary factory system of society. The members of the ILP believed people should be their own actors, artists and musicians. It looks natural

from Isabella Ford's upbringing and her family culture that she was inclined to rank and file ILP rather than Marxist SDF.

Isabella also founded the Leeds Women's Suffrage Society with her sister Bessie in 1890. At the end of 1890s, Isabella and Bessie established a Women's Trade Union Club in Leeds, which had its own library—half club and half tearoom—functioning as a bureau for labour information. An observer from the *Women's Trade Union Review* noted:

The whole place is painted white, and has yellow walls and a matting dado, and a wallpaper covered with yellow daffodils or sweet peas – something nice. Beauty of all sorts is excluded from so many of our girls' lives, that it shall not be excluded from their club. (*Women's Trade Union Review*, Jan. 1897; Hannam 1989, 63)

Livesey points out that 'the very feminine interior reflected political aesthetics within the ILP at the turn of the century.' (2007, 173) Furthermore, Livesey refers to 'the ILP's emphasis upon "making" individual socialists through aesthetic responsiveness, and on economic redistribution through parliamentary means, rather than reorganizing the basis of production increasingly relegated the aesthetic to an ideological means rather than an end in itself'. (Ibid) She also claims that 'the aestheticism formed the basis of a new interest in individualism among socialist thinkers at the end of the nineteenth century.' (Ibid)

Isabella did not extend her critique of notions of duty and self-sacrifice to the ethical idealism that had first interested her in the labour movement. Isabella argued in the *Labour Leader* that women should be socialists. She wrote in 1913 that 'the party that

has ideals is the party for women. No other parties than the ILP have ideals, though they have traditions.' (*Labour Leader* 1913) Isabella stressed that women's participation in the ILP was of particular importance at a time when, in continental Europe:

Socialism, on what I should call chiefly masculine lines, is being taught. Formed on narrow sex lines, it cannot have such a universal growth as here, where neither sex nor class distinction comes into our creed. Class war and sex war are poor things even if clothed in a Socialist garb, and they possess no real life. (Ford, 'Why I joined the Leeds ILP', Clayton 1896, 10)

Isabella's continued commitment to the ideal of collective comradeship without the boundaries of sex and class kept her loyal to the ILP and the Labour Party for the rest of her life. Isabella's desire for a new life of beauty with a commitment to trade unionism shaped her socialism. For Isabella, socialism was the answer of sexual equality and a desire to liberate the self from 'sexual prescriptions'. Isabella's demand for 'revolution' was less focussed on the material basis of society, and her socialism lingered in the politics of the 1880s. (Livesey 2007, 178-79)

Isabella and the Leeds Arts Club

In 1903, Alfred Orage and the Fabian, Holbrook Jackson founded the Leeds Arts Club announcing in its manifesto that their aim was 'to affirm the mutual dependence of Art and Ideas'. (Steele 1990, 67) Isabella's literary reputation ensured her place among the exclusive membership of London's professional class, as one of just three women members of the management committee of the Arts Club. (Livesey 2007, 176) However, it seems 'Orage's perception of Nietzsche as a mystical utopian prophet' (Livesey 2007, 177) did not quite fit with Isabella, considering her increasing activism within the

women's and labour movements in the early twentieth century. Criticising Orage's interpretation of Nietzsche as a 'sentimental masculine view', Isabella argued women needed to be free from these 'false beliefs' (Livesey 2007, 177) and propelled her activism within the ILP.

Sponsored by George Bernard Shaw, Alfred Orage and Holbrook Jackson bought a weekly newspaper, the *New Age*, from the former Secretary of the Leeds ILP, Joseph Clayton early in 1907. (Livesey 2007, 180) Orage promised that the modern intellectual weekly would be an 'organ of high practical intelligence' as 'An Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature and Art'. (Editorial, *New Age* 1, 24 October 1907, 408)

Unlike Isabella's commitment to the collectivist ILP and women's movement, the *New Age* increasingly focused on guild socialism, mainly with the abolition of wage-slavery. Accordingly, the *New Age* criticised the theory of women and labour produced by Isabella Ford and Olive Schreiner after about 1911:

Olive Schreiner has recently claimed all labour for women's province equally with men. But her claim and women's claim as represented by what they do are two totally different things. Women, we may say, so far from taking all labour for their province are in industry – to the extent that they *are* in – under protest and against their will. Not only is their demand for economic emancipation feeble in comparison with that of men, but it is not nearly as strong as their demand, made in a thousand feminine ways, to be emancipated from the industrial system altogether. ('Notes of the Week', *New Age* 11, 22 August 1912, 387, quoted in Livesey 2007, 189)

It is impossible to tell that Isabella Ford discussed with Olive Schreiner about her analysis of *Woman and Labour* published in 1911. Nevertheless, Isabella remained true to the comradeship and development of the women's and labour movement. Isabella never stood by the *New Age*'s vision that 'men would tend back to the pleasures of the workshop, whilst women would remain at home, and become more womanly, more pleasing and profitable to themselves'. (*New Age* 1912, 388; Livesey 2007, 189) For the aesthetics and politics of the *New Age*, Art were beyond material, 'labour was man's invention and could only be his liberation with the abolition of the wage system and the biological reproduction of women's dull material process of sustaining the mass, eternal and unchanging'. (Ibid) They warned at the turn of the century that the 'spread of sentimentality in men' in politics and aesthetics led only to 'effeminacy'. (*New Age* 11, 22 August 1912, 388; Livesey 2007, 190)

Livesey argues Alfred Orage defined the 'sentimental' socialism and its aestheticism of the *fin de siècle* as a 'pathology of effeminacy' that his early comrades, Edward Carpenter and Isabella Ford, were obsessed with, and which should be allowed to wither away. (Livesey 2007, 192) Orage wrote:

There were those, for example, who in the choice between personal and social idealism chose the former; there were those likewise who chose the latter; I am thankful to say that I was one of them. Of the first set the end was in almost every instance one of melancholy, of decadence, of suicide, or premature death. They had cut themselves off from society hoping to blossom on a stem cut off from the trunk of the tree; and they withered away. (*New Age* 11, 22 August 1912, 388, quoted in Livesey 2007, 190)

Livesey comments that the *New Age* was ‘a journal central to the dissemination of early modernist literature’, and that the ‘distinctive pluralism of 1880s socialism and its promise of the both/and of aesthetics and politics left a legacy within the socialist movement well into the twentieth century’. (Livesey 2007, 8) For such ethical socialists as Percival Chubb, James Ramsey Macdonald and Isabella Ford, the goal of socialism was nothing less than the perfection of human character. Katherine St John Conway saw this as a belief system, and in her 1894 pamphlet *The Religion of Socialism* she expressed her desire for the socialist future:

A race of men and women who work together for the need of each, and who strive in every way that the powers of every man, woman and child, may be called forth to the uttermost, that real wealth may abound and that never a beautiful picture, a glorious song, or a triumph over nature may be lost to the human race. (Conway 1894, 5)

Livesey comments on this text as ‘a discourse about the aesthetics of the work of both form and content within the late nineteenth-century socialist movement.’ (2007, 9) She claims that ‘the idealist tendency within the socialist movement meant that this alternate world of the aesthetic served not just as a utopian vision of the new life of socialism but also as a means of bringing the new life into being’. (Ibid)

Hannam’s biography of Isabella Ford shows the ILP activist contributed both to the early twentieth-century labour movement and to the women’s movement. (1989) Hunt contributes to the research of women’s participation in the Marxist Socialist Democratic Federation. (SDF) (Hunt 1996) Livesey’s research on women’s contributions to the socialist movement shows how they, such as Olive Schreiner, Clementina Black and

Dollie Radford, adjusted the masculinized socialist culture and aesthetics and produced their own. (2007)

Schreiner became a regular visitor to many socialist clubs after she first arrived in London in the early 1880s and met Eleanor Marx, Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter, Isabella Ford, Karl Pearson. She went back to South Africa in 1889, and travelled to England again and rented a cottage in Millthorpe in 1893. (Berkman 1989, 238) She developed her analysis of *The Woman Question* (1899) and *Woman and Labour* (1911).

Livesey claims that ‘Schreiner tested the limits of female desire, then Carpenter sought to reshape masculinity and civilization through sexual desire itself’. She argues again ‘For Carpenter and George Bernard Shaw these aesthetic regimes provided a means of investigating and reforming conventional ideals of masculinity...whilst Carpenter’s theory of Lamarckian biological idealism concluded that such practices would result in species change and a socialist utopia of liberated sexual bodies.’ (2007, 16) She argues that William Morris insisted upon ‘the necessity of historical materialism as the engine of revolution believing desire for the beautiful alone is never enough,’ but based on ‘manly socialism’. (Livesey 2007, 43)

This section examined the origin of Isabella Ford’s socialism and her early connection with Edward Carpenter and the influence of the Fellowship of the New Life to the formation of the socialist ideas and friendships and the sense of the comradeship. The next section examines the politicisation of Isabella Ford as a socialist feminist.

3.6. **Isabella Ford and Socialist Feminism**

The characteristics of Victorian feminism should be discussed as the background of Isabella Ford's novels. The nurturing of a feminist position more particularly in this period, when it inevitably marked a certain relinquishing of social status, could not but distinctively shape the lives of women who were passionately committed to their cause. The history of nineteenth-century English women's movement is as much the history of friendships, emotional attachment, and social and intellectual networks as it is the history of organised campaigns and lobbying. (Levine 1990, 63-78)

Alberti points out that Naomi Mitchison (1986) suggested that the discontinuity between before and after the First World War feminism meant that the older generation failed to move beyond the concept of separate spheres to try to understand the feminism of their generation. (Alberti 1989, 105) The generation spanning the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods was going through 'loving repression' and 'a most unsatisfactory world'. (Alberti 1990, 118) Philippa Levine evaluates the involvement in feminist activities which brought women to reflect on their relations with one another and with men on political understanding and decisions about the course of their own lives. The women, Levine argues, identified certain characteristics of a feminist-derived culture. (Levine 1990, 63) The issues of bourgeois moral judgment, rebellion and moral degradation were key issues.

Noel Annan traced feminist genealogy in his *The Intellectual Aristocracy* (1955), observing that the wealthier end of middle class genealogy was prominent from the mid-

nineteenth century to post-war twentieth century. Annan points out that something of a women's culture existed, and that there was a close network of feminist support and activism characterised by a high level of emotional commitment? (Annan 1955, 243-87)

Sylvia Walby discusses many faces of first wave feminism from 1850 to 1930. The major changes during that period were the field of political citizenship, entry to paid employment and higher education. She particularly mentions hostile male reactions to their being forced into conceding the vote. (Walby 1990, 97) An important change for married women was the legal right to leave an unwanted husband and the obligation for him to continue to support her. This right was extended further by the 1969 Divorce Reform Act. (Walby 1990, 99)

Alberti argues that women seldom chose to channel all their energies into one specific area of protest—financial or institutional. The connections the women drew were transparent enough, though they drew links between seemingly disparate issues. The same women appear again and again in her discussions. (Alberti 1990, 64)

Concerns about Women Labourers' Working Conditions

Isabella Ford concerned herself with the difficult, dangerous and unhealthy working conditions experienced by women workers mainly from textile and clothing industry in her region. Isabella Ford wrote several articles about the importance of factory legislation for women and women inspectors of factories and workshop in *Yorkshire Factory Times* and *Women's Herald* (1891 to 1893), and for the Women's Co-operative Guild (1898). A report of women inspectors shows the terrible working condition of female labourers:

The mother of one girl, whom I saw in her home, tells me that she never expected to see her daughter the same girl again, that she sits down in a stupor or extremely drowsy condition in front of the fire whenever she comes home, refusing food, and that she can only be got to bed by being carried there, while if aroused she gets wild and excited. All these and other symptoms are the affects attributed to poisoning by bisulphide of carbon. (Annual Report of H.M. Women Inspectors, 1895, 129; Harrison 1990, 80)

Work in silk mills was especially hard, with workers working in overcrowded and badly ventilated rooms. With the air thick with silk debris, the workers would inevitably develop serious respiratory problems, sometimes even coughing up worms. Due to chemical poisoning, inspectors noted a case of one girl working in a factory who was reported for insobriety and rowdyism. After having been exposed to toxic chemicals for more than two and a half hours, she had developed signs of hysteria and insanity. (Harrison 1990, 81) The bacteriological infections resulted in fatal outcomes. In 1897 there were 23 deaths; in 1899, 55 and in 1907, 67 were reported by the medical inspector. (Harrison 1990, 82) Lead poisoning and anthrax undermined the health of women and increased the infant mortality rate. The two major causes of ill-health and death were poisoning by lead and by white or yellow phosphorous. Lead poisoning results in colic, constipation, violent diarrhoea, anaemia, fits, delirium, paralysis, blindness, cirrhosis and insanity. (Harrison 1990, 84)

Not only was the work dangerous, but the unimproved working hours and conditions were another factor used to control women workers. A serious lack of regulation of the basic conditions at work (such as excess temperature and insufficient breaks) resulted in

ill health. A woman inspector wrote the following about laundry work, which was an important source of employment for women:

Nothing has been more striking than the difficulties of the law affecting laundries. The immensely long hours, the absence of any conditions such as meal times, other than that there shall be at least half an hour every five hours spell, and the extraordinary manner in which overtime is at present worked, combine to make the inspection of laundries more difficult and more ineffectual than in any other trade I have under my notice. (Annual Report of the H.M. Women Inspectors, 1898, xiv, 107; quoted in Harrison 1990, 87)

Isabella Ford wrote to the *Friends Quarterly Examiner* concerning how to help industrial women not in philanthropically- mined :

In the west Riding of Yorkshire the average wage (during a year) for a women textile-workers is at the most about 12s. per week. In the same county, amongst the female wholesale clothing workers, the highest average is from 14s. to 15s. per week. (Ford 1900, 173)

Isabella Ford felt particularly compassionate towards those women suffering in terrible working conditions, seeing it as a personal moral responsibility to seek to resolve the problem: ‘You cannot have “character” unless you have economic and political freedom... Our state is not funded on justice nor on freedom, as long as women are ignored, as long as the slightest distinction is made between the sexes politically’. (Ford 1913)

Since the time when British socialism arose in 1893, Isabella proclaimed that without women's awareness and participation it would never be possible to develop Trade Unionism in Britain. Isabella believed the ILP was aware of the real meaning of socialism and she embraced fully its aim for gender equality. She claimed the future of socialism was to realize the law of love. (Ford 1913) Her vision of British socialism was ethical and religious.

Isabella campaigned tirelessly to ease the immoral working conditions for young women workers. She was concerned about their quality of life and the danger they faced at work: 'Truth and honour they cannot learn in the workshop. The girl working on the machine, nearly cost her life.' (Ford 1900, 175) Isabella emphasized the importance of close monitoring of the exploitative working conditions faced by working women. She emphasized the poor conditions of these girls and focused on their education to improve their lives: 'Anyone who cares to study all this earnestly, and really grasps this point of view, can never again lose patience, or faith, in these girls. They are not by nature depraved.' (Ford 1900, 177)

Isabella was concerned about the dehumanization of the industrial life for women and the lack of proper support for their physical and moral training. She suggested good physical and moral training as an integration of human body, mind and spirit:

Indeed, the more one knows of industrial life for women – I would impress on all my readers that these facts, these conditions, fines, and c., apply to women and not to men – the more one begins to wonder at the goodness of which its members are capable: a goodness which makes that of one's own class seem to be a poor cheap sort, mainly the result of good physical and moral training. (Ford 1900, 178)

She also urged to 'have faith in the people and they will respond to your faith through their innate goodness' at the 4th annual Conference of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) in 1908. (IWSA 4th Annual Conference Report, 31; Hannam 1989, 130) She wrote:

They are taught indirectly that trade unions, which are disliked by the average teacher, mean strikes and general revolution and disorder, and what is much worse, are unwomanly and intensely vulgar. There is no intelligent teaching on the subject in these centres, or in any schools; no showing of how a trade union, by displacing the immediate advantage of the individual by the ultimate advantage of the many, and particularly of the weak and suffering, is a kind – and a high kind, in my opinion – of religion. (Ford 1900, 178)

Isabella warned of the harm of the traditional education for women. For Isabella, particularly problematic was the orthodox religious teaching that this world is of little importance and that there is the need to pay attention to the next world. Such a perspective, for Isabella, taught women and girls to be too submissive and patient in their daily and domestic lives.

Isabella wrote of the details of the exploitative employers' interest and their system at the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*.

It is a common saying that no employer of labour is so hard in his treatment of his workpeople as one who has himself been through the workshop; is not the reason for this that he is the result, the product, of the system working there? An inspector once

said to me that the hardest, most indifferent set of people as regards factory improvements, were the employers' wives of the class I have described. (Ford 1900, 175)

Isabella paid attention to and expected to build a network between women with the goal of improving and helping working women:

Few workingwoman could or would appeal against unreasonable deductions.

Fear keeps them quiet... With one hand the richer classes plunder them by means of fines, & with the other hand they apparently pay for their acquittal from these penalties. (Ford 1900, 175)

Isabella was able to visualise the future of the organized women's labour movement. For her, the revolution was to have a distinctly intellectual character (so as to):

emancipate with an intelligent discontent with the conditions enslaving them, & help them to obtain freedom by means of a discriminating & well-organized rebellion, of the sort that leads to effective results, & not, as now, to mere disorder. In order to show how to produce this rebellion – this great mental revolution – & to prove that at present the general teaching & practice of the world is opposed to it, let us examine what the conditions are which enslave the industrial woman. (Ford 1900, 172-73)

Isabella argued that although the factory inspectors imposed fines for disciplinary purposes, all this actually did was bring about labour control and the enslavement of industrial women. In her *Women and Socialism*, Isabella speaks of the injustice of capitalism and contextualises the question of women's emancipation within the great

world movement. She also stressed the idea that socialist feminism lifted the woman question into the arena of practical politics. (Ford 1906)

Isabella also pointed out that prostitution was largely an economic question. In the case of prostitution, Isabella blamed employers for underpaying their women employees. (Ford 1900, 179-80) To improve the conditions for working women and to get rid of prostitution, Isabella insisted on the full rights of women's citizenship:

Our first step must be to gain full freedom for her. She must be given the full rights of citizenship. She must have a vote... When women have got the vote, the next step will be to make them understand its connection with every part of their individual lives; to make them realize the responsibility it gives them; & to awaken in them a desire to undertake the troublesome, difficult tasks of full citizenship. (Ford 1900, 182)

Isabella blamed the conventional teaching, philanthropy and rescue-work for actually helping to maintain the status quo:

Directly, by her teaching the beauty of humility, patience, & resignation; & indirectly, by her ignoring the evils which she might, if she would but look & understand, see going on round her... When we have helped her to find a voice whereby she can express her needs, when we have given her a knowledge of what freedom really is, how it can only be gained by desiring & aiming at the best & highest – a desire of which she is as capable as any one of us in all the world. This is our task. (Ford 1900, 183-84)

Isabella Ford urged people to believe in the people and their innate goodness. (1900, 178)

She also emphasized the links between women's movement and socialism and international solidarity. (1906)

In the next section, this thesis explores Isabella's first and second novel what she delivers and what the novels tell us about her in connection with her socialist, feminist and Quaker background.

3.7. Isabella Ford and Peace

In 1914, Isabella joined the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), which aimed to secure peace by negotiation, and in 1915 she resigned from the Executive committee of the NUWSS in order to concentrate on the peace cause. Isabella became a member of the executive committee of the British section of the Women's International League, and in 1917 she engaged in forming the Leeds branch of the Women's Peace Crusade. As a Quaker and pacifist, Isabella was not able to support the war effort in the same way as many other suffragettes and suffragists. She wrote to Millicent Fawcett to explain her position towards war:

I hate Prussianism as heartily as you do – and I long for it to go. – But I do not think that war ever destroyed war – and real salvation can only come to people and nations from within. – But I do thank you so much for your letter – I will always tell you and ask you first. – I really wish I could feel as you do. (A letter from I.O. Ford to Mrs Millicent Fawcett dated in October 1914, Letters/microform 9/01, box1, Women's Library)

Isabella and Millicent were close friends, and differed only on their opinions on war. Following Isabella's resignation from the NUWSS in 1915, mainly because of the lack of agreement with Fawcett toward war, she concentrated on organizing campaigns to bring the First World War to an end through negotiation, as well as to build future international co-operation. The campaign was directed through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). In her latter years, Isabella was dogged by ill-health, but her views on women remained consistent throughout. She believed that women would only achieve emancipation if there were a change in the hearts and minds of individuals, not institutions. Furthermore, women would not have economic freedom until they had political freedom and autonomy. Isabella stressed women should represent themselves and have a voice in all issues that affects their lives. (*Labour Leader*, 9 January 1913)

Hannam argues Isabella's sisters and her close friends were involved in the UDC, and the friendship network was important to carry out their peace work despite patriotic antagonism. (1989, 167) Especially she worked with Vernon Lee and Emily Hobhouse, distributed leaflets and addressed meetings, facing antagonism from the patriotic crowds. (Hannam 1989, 167-8)

Isabella argued the relationship between feminism and peace at the executive committee of the NUWSS in 1915: 'peace propaganda would strengthen our W.S. cause immensely and would clearly explain to the public that our whole raison d'être the substitution of moral and spiritual force for physical force.' (Minutes of Executive Committee of the NUWSS, 8 Mar, 1915, Women's Library, London)

Furthermore she asserted peace was an issue of women rather than men, because of women's special quality, caring for life:

Women have more to lose in this horrible business than some men have; for they often lose more than life itself when their men are killed; since they lose all that makes life worth living for, all that makes for happiness. The destruction of the race too is felt more bitterly and more deeply by those who through suffering and anguish have brought the race into the world. (Minutes of Executive Committee of the NUWSS, 15 Apr. 1915, Women's Library, London)

She delivered the argument about the fundamental principles of women's movement claiming not to work for the vote simply as a political tool, but to connect with peace at any price. (Hannam 1989, 170) This argument seems connected to the contemporary feminist pacifism.

While she put her effort into urging women to join the UDC, she urged socialists throughout Europe to lead the movement for peace spreading the women-centred spirit of Internationalism:

When the women of all the nations have a voice in the affairs of their various governments...this understanding will grow more and more rapidly...as the mothers and educators of the human race, the bond which unites us is deeper than any bond which at present unites men. These are the conclusions arrived at by the congress, and expressed in the resolutions passed as it. (I. O. Ford, 'The Hague Conference', *Leeds Weekly Citizen* 28 May 1915)

She accused false patriotism as the creed of the commercial and ruling classes and asserted women had to be involved in the international work for socialism and the women's movement. (*Labour Leader*, 29 Apr. 1915) After she resigned from the NUWSS she and her old friends from the NUWSS and the ILP, Helena Swanwick, Maude Royden, Margaret Ashton, Kate Courtney, Charlotte Despard, Katharine Bruce Glasier, and Margaret Bondfield organised the Women's International League in September. The aim of the WIL was to achieve peace by negotiation. As a separate organization for women, they emphasized that women have the duty as guardians of the race. ('The Women's International Manifesto', *LL*, 25 Mar. 1915)

With Emily and Bessie, Isabella helped to organise a Leeds branch of the WIL. The WIL was based on well-educated middle-class women. They were also the 1917 Club members, which brought together ILP socialists, radical Liberals, and suffragists who opposed the war. (Hannam 1989, 183) Again, Isabella and her sisters worked together to help to organize the Women's Peace Crusade in Leeds throughout August and September 1917. The WPC aimed at propelling women and workers to work for a negotiated peace and the democratic control of foreign policy. (Ibid)

Her enthusiastic concern for the peace cause lasted for her whole life. In July 1922, and August 1923, she helped to prepare women's 'No More War' procession in Leeds. In December she attended the Hague International Congress to promote peace. She agreed with Radek, the Russian Bolshevik, that 'if the people want peace they must get rid of capitalist Governments.' (*Leeds Weekly Citizen* 19 Jan 1923, quoted in Hannam 1989, 200) To the last she put her effort into women's peace movement.

Concerning the connection between her pacifism and Quakerism, Isabella mentioned her Quaker background in a letter to Millicent Fawcett when they split over the peace issues in 1915:

I don't think I can ever get away from my Quaker upbringing, but it doesn't touch my deep & enduring love for you & gratitude for all I owe to you in my life & your concluding words in your letter have consoled me greatly & I thank you so much dearest Millie. (Isabella Ford to Millicent Fawcett, 23 June 1915, Letters/microform 9/01, Box1, Women's Library, London)

It is clear that Isabella comprehended her concern for peace as rooted in her Quakerism. Also she claimed the cause of the War as stemming from the greed of the capitalist and his governments as well as imperialism and empire. Therefore, she argued, in order to secure peace women should take action for peace work not for relief work. (Hannam 1989, 166)

This section focused on Isabella Ford's fundamental idea on peace and peace activism. The next section explores her novels focusing on what they deliver and whether they represent her Quakerism, socialism, and feminism, and what else we can find from her novel writing.

3.8. Isabella Ford and Her Novels

Isabella published three novels and short stories. Indeed, it can be argued that Isabella expressed her socialist beliefs via her novels. Her first book, *Miss Blake of Monshalton*,

was published in 1890, while the second, *On the Threshold*, followed in 1895, and the third, *Mr Elliott* in 1901. This section explores aspects of the socialist feminist novel in *Miss Blake of Monkshalton* and *On the Threshold* to achieve fuller understanding of Isabella Ford.

Julia Bush claims that ‘Novel-writing was one form of subjective response to visible social changes which stimulated multiple debates over the Woman Question in the late nineteenth century’. (Bush 2007, 83) Ann Heilman discusses the emergence of the ‘New Woman’ in the *fin-de siècle* British cultural discourse. (1996) She claims mainly ‘middle-class female-authored, feminist New Woman fiction attempted to popularize feminist concepts and ideas in their fictional works towards the end of nineteenth century’. (Heilman 1996, 197-216) W. T. Stead identified Schreiner as the founder of the school of novels of the ‘modern woman’, and her *The Story of an African Farm* as a ‘New Woman’ novel. (Stead, *Review of Reviews* 10, 1894, 64; Livesey 2007, 78) Stead defined ‘the Novel of the Modern Woman is not merely a novel written by a woman, or a novel written about women, but it is a novel written by a woman about women from the standpoint of Woman’. (Stead 1894, 64; Heilman 1996, 205) Again, Heilman puts Isabella Ford’s *Women and Socialism* (1906) and Olive Schreiner’s *Women and Labour* (1911) as the first New Woman writings. (1992, 62)

Isabella’s desire to write a novel was not realised until she was in her forties. Isabella’s socialist friend Edward Carpenter told Walt Whitman that her first novel in 1890, *Miss Blake of Monkshalton*, was ‘quite a success’, though reviewers commented that it was ‘over-detailed’. (Liddington 2006, 7-8) Alfred Orage (1873–1934), editor of the *New Age*, once a member of the Leeds Arts Club with Isabella and co-worker in the ILP in

Yorkshire, reviewed her second novel, *On the Threshold* (1895) in the *Labour Leader* that ‘it had the unusual merit of being a book of women, for men and women’, mentioning that ‘Democracy at last touches life in Ford’s ‘New Woman novel.’ (‘A.R.O.’, *Labour Leader*, 16 November 1895, 5) The review went on to say that ‘the book helps many young women to cross the threshold of “stucco and window squirt” and enter the world of reality and high endeavour’, and commented on its absence of plot and weakness in style, but recommended as ‘readable’. (Ibid)

The next part explores Isabella’s first novel *Miss Blake of Monkshalton* (1890) in terms of what it delivers and what she attempted to communicate with her readers, assuming possibly mainly women.

***Miss Blake of Monkshalton* (1890)**

The heroine of *Miss Blake of Monkshalton* (1890), Anne Blake, a young lady who lives with her two aunts in a manor house, Monkshalton, represents the interior frustration of Isabella’s generation at having to struggle against the monotonous life of Victorian women. Aunt Jane was an overwhelmingly dominant character who inherited her father’s values, which exemplified the suffocating and very narrow Victorian values. Aunt Emma was the desperate victim of the dominant patriarchal ideology, feeling no hope and helpless in her unfulfilled life:

Though the state of constant repression in which she lived had not embittered her and made her hard and intolerant, as had been the case with Jane, it had nevertheless worn away her courage and faith, so that when twenty years ago their father died, and with his death freedom had come, Emma found herself a middle-aged woman with a mind unable to grasp any definite purpose, even her visions seemed to have faded away,

leaving only a vague yearning after some misty glow of unattainable sunlight. To do her justice, Miss Blake had no notion how that guiding hand worried Emma, for most of the more subtle feelings of life were mere “stuff and nonsense” to Jane. (3-4)

The novel depicts in detail the limited life of the middle class Victorian women and their frustrations and distortions:

Unconsciously the strain of living with this unswerving pinnacle of excellence was wearing Emma’s life & strength away. It was as if she felt the constant pressure of Jane’s soul near her day by day, gazing even into her inmost depths: and this intangible contact, with which no words or looks were mingled, so powerfully gnawed into her being that she sometimes felt as if life itself were growing weaker & fainter. (5)

Jane represents a domineering patriarch to her sister Emma:

Sometimes, after an hour of silence, with a great effort she left the room, & the relief from cessation of bodily presence brought back the blood to her heart and brain; but, as time went on, the relief grew feebler & the horror stronger, till sometimes for days Jane seemed to be ever there, everywhere – in the street, at her elbow, all around her. (5)

Anne desperately wants to help Emma to find her life and make herself free from the conventional life of no hope:

I know that woman is slowly killing her! But what can I do? I don’t know how to help her! If only something would happen to break this horrible suffocating monotony! Just

because Aunt Jane had a tyrannical old father, who never let her do what she liked, why should she revenge herself on me & Aunt Emma, and every one she comes near? Oh, dear me! If only I could marry some one, any one, it would be better than this life of slow torture. Aunt Emma is old, I do think it is different for her; but I am young, and I shall die & never have seen anything of this wonderful thrilling world! (10)

Anne challenged the Victorian gender norm and pursued her own career in London.

Emma yearned for new life, yet hopelessly:

What could they do? Continue this murderous life together, or live stuntedly & apart? The ties we find most irksome are often our strongest motive for living if we could but know it. (6)

Emma was filled with a never-ending craving to do something for another human being – anyone; if the washerwoman had been there instead of Jane the desire would have been just as strong, indeed perhaps stronger, for a stronger sometimes awakens the feeling of abstract love for humanity in our soul more keenly than kith and kin can do. (12)

The character Anne raises doubt about the normative attitude towards marriage and expresses her longing for a new life as a new woman in a new age. She pronounces a desire for an independent life of her own: ‘I shall have everything my own way’. (15)

The heroine’s yearning for freedom and autonomy as a part of new life is expressed through wishing the death of her aunt in extreme tone:

‘If Aunt Jane died how happy we two, Aunt Emma & I, should be,’ was the thought which gradually shaped itself in her brain with startling distinctness. It was an old thought, and she was used to it, but somehow to-day the buzzing of the fly & the hot heavy air outside made it take stronger & more definite shape than usual. (16)

Anne complains of Jane, who represents the convention of patriarchy, being figures of hardness and misery, and refers to a dreary house with sighs and horrible thoughts; the house of no spirit:

“If it wasn’t for my singing lessons when we are up here, and for my rides with Bernard Forbes when we are at Monkshalton, I should have committed suicide long ago.” She concluded, with that youthful scorn of life & belief in our ability to end it at any moment, which is not rapidly destroyed with advancing years. At least age teaches us the futility of such a philosophy, which (to my mind) belongs along with other unhappiness to that much praised period we call youth – the period surely when we are most burdened with a sense of our age, and of the responsibility of living. (19)

Anne mocks at the upper-middle class’s evil habit and hypocrisy. (59) Anne shares deep compassion and love with Aunt Emma and sympathy with her unfulfilled life because of patriarchal order:

‘You’re my dear, dear Aunt Emma whom I love more than anything else in all the world. Why Aunt Emma, I should have murdered Aunt Jane long ago if it hadn’t been for you!’ (107)

The novel portrays romantic and devoted love in terms of an idealised man being able to love sincerely and faithfully. Bernard confesses his life-long earnest love and care for Anne:

‘For years, I believe since I first saw you at Monkshalton standing in the hall holding Emma’s hand, I have cared for you, worshipped you, with every fibre of my heart & being; but I know you have always looked upon me as quite an old person... Like a selfish brute, I have been thinking of myself & my own pain, & never seen your unhappiness growing greater each day! Now is it all too late, can I do nothing? Oh, my dear, my dear, don’t say I can be of no use to you, for even if you can never care for me, at least let me care for you, and let me try to help you; there is nothing in the world can give me so much happiness.’ (160)

Eventually at the end of the novel Anne and Bernard a man who is able to love like Mr Estcourt in *On the Threshold* are engaged.

Women’s limited life and feminist psychological device

Returning to the beginning of this novel, it is notable that at the outset the character Anne talks to herself, condemning her dreary life and feeling bound to a suffocating old-fashioned home. She laments Emma’s complete hopelessness and her passion for reaching out to the new world, battling with conventional life of ‘horrible suffocating monotony,’ ‘slow torture’. (10) For helpless Emma, only Bernard is a comfort to her. Before Bernard, Anne had an extremely monotonous life at Monkshalton with only the tyrannical Jane and the surprisingly submissive and gloomy Emma for company. Anne felt great resentment for not having been able to escape from the frustrating life:

The very sound of the word Monkshalton always brought to her mind. This house & the London House constituted her whole world – a narrow, warped, comfortable untroubled world. Why could she neither feel happy in it, nor yet brave enough to venture forth into another one more active & complete? (80)

What was desperately lacking in Anne's life was 'common ground of youth & unreasoning lightheartedness'. (84) To move forward into the future, like-minded friendship was essential to a new generation:

Lack of kindredship, sympathetic companionship, a quick mind converse with that ready sympathy which requires no ponderous explanations, and which can catch & return a half-expressed thought with pleasant readiness was a unbearable prison to them. (85)

The old stifling atmosphere reminded her of the stories of prisoners chained for life in dismal dungeons with which the old gamekeeper used to terrify her long ago. (85)

In this novel Isabella seems to deliver her revolutionary zeal for a new life for a new generation. In the end of the novel, when Anne left for her own life outside the house in London, Emma passed away out of despair not being able to see her again due to Jane's anger. Emotionally battered Jane, given the fatal loss of her sister, had a stroke and died without being able to say a word for a few years.

The novel portrays that Emma chose death instead of new life because she could not find any hope in this unjust loveless world. The choosing of death was not a decision based upon weakness; it was the only choice for her for her life's sake.

The novel deals with women's unfulfilled desire and despair through the life and character of Emma, who suffered a string of crippling emotional crises that resulted in depression. According to Phyllis Chesler's observation, "'Depression" rather than "aggression" is the female response to disappointment or loss.' (Chesler 1997, 41) She further says that women are to be 'in a continual state of mourning – for what they never had – or had too briefly, and for what they can't have in the present'. (Chesler 1997, 44)

In the novel the author successfully delivers female psychology in a detailed and sensitively devised way. In the end, with despair Emma had a heart-failure and Jane a fatal stroke. Apparently Emma's death was not suicide. In her *A Woman's Way of Healing*, the depth psychologist Patricia Reis challenges this, asking: 'Is it a deeper psychological truth, which realizes that some aspect of oneself does need to die in order for new life to be born, in order to bear the new life?' She adds, 'When one is in the throes of a major life transition, it is very difficult to discern what wants and needs to be released', and 'the final choice belongs only to oneself.' (Reis 1995, 203) The characters prove their genuine desire for life with their deaths, the strongest form of denial of surrendering to pseudo-life. This seems to me the aesthetic of the author to emphasize her passion for true life, to get a new life.

Four letters from readers to Isabella were found in the West Yorkshire Archive Service in Leeds. (WYL1201ACC2727) A letter written in Jan 2, 1890 appraised her artistic manner as exquisite and her heroines were painted with delicacy. Giving her feedback as to her heroines, this letter claims 'Annie is not good enough', preferring Aunt Emma as she is 'more original than Jane'. Another letter written in Jan 31, 1890 mentioned the

book as delicate and artistic as well. This reader read the book at a library and gave her positive feedback for her literary career as a novelist.

On the Threshold (1895)

Isabella Ford published her second novel in 1895. This portrays her socialist vision of new life, of a new relationship between women and women, and women and men, and a sketch of a socialist group in London in 1880s. The middle-class heroines' friendship lead readers to a different world of working class and the backstreet life in London at the end of the nineteenth century.

Socialist Feminist novel

On the Threshold describes in exact detail this very urgent moment in the shaping of the future of British socialism. The Fellowship of the New Life was founded in October 1883. From its inception, the Fellowship made it clear that its aims were 'to cultivate perfect character in each & all by founding a communistic society in which material things would be subordinated to spiritual things' and 'to promote manual labour pursued in conjunction with intellectual pursuits'. (Fellowship Meetings Minutes, 24 October 1883, CHUBB/6/5, LSE) Isabella and Bessie were at the founding meeting of the Fellowship. Over a decade later, Isabella picked up the delicate issues within the idealist socialist debating group.

In *On the Threshold*, the male leaders of the group expected their women members to do housework and not much else in their future commune. Livesey argues pointing out its masculine culture:

The form of the novel itself poses a question about the ethics of seeing socialist activism as romance: a question that the women activists examined here all had to face by the end of the 1880s. Could the ethical ideal of fellowship and the hope for a new life of beauty under socialism really make a difference to the lives of working-class women? The cluster of women writers and artists who studied in the mid-1880s offered a moment in which the socialist aesthetic ideals of fellowship and comradely labour shared by men and women alike could be lived in the city in pursuit of the cause. (Livesey 2007, 47)

Livesey includes Ford in the narrative genre of epic romance that offered these socialists the possibility of sensing and living through another historical rhythm, the spectre of a future utopian transformation. (2007, 47)

In *On the Threshold*, the ‘I’ character, Lucretia, is twenty-four, studying music whilst her friend ‘Kitty Manners’ is twenty-two. Against their parents’ wishes, Lucretia and Kitty were art students living in Bloomsbury in a cheap flat. While their means were painfully limited, they felt those three dark rooms were palaces of liberty, and their life there was a dream of beauty. The two heroines represent the new generation of women art students in London in the 1880s. Actually, Isabella’s sister, Emily was a Slade student, the art school in London. Through their friendship with Beatrice, who was the maid-of-all-work in London lodgings for them, the author pursued a possibility of a friendship across classes.

Beatrice’s role in *On the Threshold* is to lead the middle-class heroines out of their world of armchair socialism and into the material determinism of poverty in the East End of London. Lucretia, one of the novel’s main characters, reflects on her beliefs:

We were quite sure that the oppressed in this world were the good, and the oppressors, the bad.

However, after we had known Beatrice a few days, Kitty suddenly announced that our creed had changed. I always followed Kitty's lead.

And that henceforward we must understand, first, that people who are oppressed are often more wicked than their oppressors, and, second, that wicked people require more love and help than good ones. (11-12)

Livesey argues that Isabella's heroines' hope and desire for a relationship with Beatrice was 'the aestheticized ideal of fellowship – the sort of collective romance that sustained the "religion of socialism" in groups like the Fellowship of the New Life'. (2007, 48) Beatrice claimed how her dearest ladies' dreams could never meet her life's reality. There was no possibility of understanding or true communication. To Beatrice, the upper-class ladies ideal has no meaning or future:

She struggled harder to get free from us.

'I cannot go back to that house. I've no pleasure there; I've nothing but hard words and hard work. I've never had nothing else all my life! And now Jim's turned against me, I've no one left, nor nothing. You've been kind to me, kinder nor any one; but you'll be going home soon, and I shall never see you again. The likes of you, miss, can't understand what it is.' (49-50)

At the very last moment of Beatrice's life, Lucretia desperately yearned to share a part of their lives, and searched vainly for a response from Beatrice:

‘You see you’re a lady, miss, that’s what it is’

‘Then must I always be outside your life, always be something different from you?’

Can I never reach you, Beatrice?’

She looked puzzled.

‘You’re very good to me, miss, but you don’t know what it is to be all by yourself in the world.’ (155)

Livesey argues that *On the Threshold* ‘reflects on the very specific dynamic of this period of the “religion of socialism”, and that it was a moment in which many young men and women writers and artists set aside their aesthetic activities in pursuit of fellowship and a new life in which it seemed that differences of sex and class could be resolved.’ (2007, 49)

However the insistence on the aesthetic requires more detailed explanation. The role of Beatrice in *On the Threshold* is of a tragic heroine sacrificed by a violent material society. Her lover beat her to death. The world did not allow her to belong. She was denied physically and emotionally. She tried her best to care for him, to give of her life’s energy, but he never appreciated her and even took her life away. Masculine organized class society abused helpless women. Only Lucretia and Kitty concerned her and tried to approach to help and save the most vulnerable in vain. The desperate moment in the end delivers a strong and genuine bond between women.

In McMillan’s novel *Life* (1894), which, like Isabella Ford’s *On the Threshold*, was set in London, the crises and opportunities for the independent-minded young woman on the verge of a new order of life in the 1890s are represented. (Steedman 1990, 100) In *Life*, the working girls’ hostel is set:

in the midst of eager pulsing life beyond...streets nearby crowded with artists, adventures, Bohemians of many lands...people who lived an anxious, eager and perilous life...the note of anxiety prevailed. Anxiety that sometimes passed into a kind of terror and even into despair. Hundreds of girls were here who lived from hand to mouth, holding ill-paid jobs precariously, and in constant danger of losing them altogether. (McMillan 1894, 14-15)

In *On the Threshold* (1895), London was the place to learn and experience most advanced thinking. The heroines were living away from their families in Bloomsbury and learning socialism in the early 1880s. Isabella described their experiences in detail through conversations in a man and women socialist debating group, a group including her heroines and a prominent male idealist socialist Estcourt:

We were all Socialists more or less, and any disagreement among us concerned merely the particular manner in which we believed our ideal future would be realized. Kitty believed that the awakening of women was the key to the problem. Estcourt believed that the future lay with the people, the wage-earners of the country. (28-29)

A decade after the Fellowship of the New Life had debated women question and the question of free love, in the 1890s Isabella Ford dealt with the same issues in her novelistic writings.

The world is so miserable, and Kitty and I are determined to save it, to help it! I shall die if we cannot do something, for those thoughts whirl in me and tear me, and make me full of misery. (134-5)

E.P. Thompson observed the British socialism in the 1880s in his *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* as ‘utopian’. (Thompson 1976, 33) The main characters in this novel, Lucretia, Kitty, Estcourt, seem more like to utopian socialists.

Lucretia yearns for a real life, real people, real thoughts and real love not second-hand ones:

‘I want you to tell me why women’s lives are like – like those’ – I pointed vaguely out of the window towards the house of her friends; – ‘and tell me if there is not in your lowest, most secret soul, a longing, a great burning longing, for a real life, with real people in it; not second-hand kind of people with second-hand thoughts; but with real thoughts; and for real love which would care for all troubles...and which would help towards bringing in light to all the dark, miserable places in the world?’ (134)

Lucretia criticizes female education to spend one’s life in ‘self-sacrifice’, (136) defining women’s life for the necessity for ‘gentleness and submission’, (137) rather encouraging rebellion. Kitty tells her beloved friend Lucretia her idea of marriage,

I do want happiness very much...I want to do things, like going to Germany to study music, to study it really – women are such pottering creatures...I am not in love with anyone, and the idea of marriage does not attract or interest me very much, women’s lives are so cut up when they marry. (201)

The novel portrays ideal relationship; ‘which we felt was one of the leavening forces of the world, [and] possessed much more interest for us than falling in love’. (28) Lucretia

claims her dream of perfectly communicable friendship sharing visions which is one of the most important ideal of new life socialists not just material change:

We had exciting conversations on the best ways to reform the world, and on the ideal future we each longed for. We were all Socialists, more or less, and any disagreement amongst us concerned merely the particular manner in which we believed our ideal future would be realized. (28)

The narrator insisted that 'to do so the first thing is the awakening of women', (29) and the details of a new society for the reformation of the world to be formed should be a 'communistic household'. (30) Kitty says, 'Woman is a spiritual being', and ought to be treated 'on the same terms as men'. (30)

The novel depicts the sensitive feeling of loving friendship between women:

I saw Estcourt's face light up as Kitty spoke, and for an instant their eyes met. My heart sank, for I loved Kitty as I loved no one else, and it seemed to me as that look passed between her and Estcourt, something grew up between them which must separate her from me. (31)

As Isabella's socialist ideas focused on new life, new relationships between women and men, women and women, heterosexual friendship, ideal comradeship across gender, loving friendship between women were given equal importance in this socialist novel.

The characters demonstrated in vivid detail the discussion surrounding their creed and communistic household, seizing power, selling their souls for power or a more spiritual

society, something that will bind everybody together as comrades, something really worth living for. (34) The socialist ideas were expressed directly as, ‘first abolish philanthropy and the distribution of tracts, and industrialism, all class distinctions must go’, (35) ‘philanthropy generally means giving away what you don’t want, to people who would be much better without it’. (177) Chris Waters claims socialists were openly against philanthropy, even though some kind of socialists, like Beatrice Webb and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence supported philanthropy initially. (1990, 65)

Readers can easily grasp the picture of idealized comradeship between socialist women and complicated emotions of who hope for the everlasting continuance of close friendship and sharing of meaningful life:

I caught hold of her hand... Her voice sounded a little impatient, and she pulled her hand away. ‘But I saw by your face to-night that you had got some foolish, tiresome ideas into your head about – about – oh, about Mr. Estcourt, and I came to say that, Lucretia dear’ – there was a little sound as of a sob in her voice, and I put my arm round her soft curly head – ‘Of course I love you as much as ever – I love you best, I shall always love you best; and don’t, please, think such things, Don’t Lucretia dear, they are not true.’ (38)

I lay awake for a long time that night and finally cried myself to sleep, for it seemed to me that already I had lost her. (39)

The heroines deliver faithful love and comradeship between women and the cheerful identity as a woman and the pride of women’s spiritual superiority and women’s special quality of caring:

‘We must swear to one another, on our love for each other, that we will set about changing all this. We must reform these things. Let us solemnly swear it now, Lucretia dear.’

Solemnly we swore it, and solemnly we sealed our oath with a kiss. It was rarely that we kissed each other, but that night we clung together in the darkness, for we seemed to be on the threshold of a great unknown world, and we were filled with awe, though our faith and courage, like our ignorance, were great, boundlessly great.

‘I am so glad we are women, Lucretia,’ said Kitty, ‘Women seem to care more about things than men do, it is fine to be a woman!’

Miss Burton, who lives in a lodging house mentions friendship as a genuine love of ‘human intercourse and friendship’ (73), putting the importance of human relationship before material change to live a new life:

‘You see, I have no money,’ she said, ‘beyond what provides me with the necessaries of life, and so we get on excellently together, they and I, for neither of us expects anything from the other, except human intercourse and friendship. Sometimes I can help them, very often they help me. They are the best friends I have.’ Her voice shook a little. (72-3)

There is another vivid picture of the beauty of comradeship between women and a new way of being a woman:

‘now that we are on the threshold of such an awful world, we mustn’t lose our faith.’

‘We could never lose our faith or our courage,’ she answered, looking up at me, her eyes glowing – ‘never, never; and even now as we sit here it is growing within me that these things are not everlasting; they cannot be; and there will come to us knowledge of how to attack them and destroy them. I am sure there will, Lucretia – I know there will; we will keep our faces turned towards the sun, and light must come.’

‘How ashamed and miserable I should feel if I were a man!’ I said, ‘I should continually hide my face.’

‘No,’ said Kitty, ‘I feel more ashamed of all the women who have known, and never done anything, never said anything, never helped any one, for you see, Lucretia, one always expects more from a woman than from a man.’

‘Only one doesn’t always get it,’ I answered. (76)

Waters claims ‘one important aspect of the religion of socialism was its emphasis on the lived experience of the working class and on the importance of individual transformation rather than political and economical change.’(1990, 14) Isabella’s novel shows the development of the socialist ideas in 1880s to 1890s. For the religious and ethical socialists, socialism was not just a series of political programmes but a whole way of life to develop a politics of everyday life. For the New Life socialists, socialism has an ethic and religion of its own.

Isabella was obviously aware of feelings between activist women, and this was expressed through Lucretia’s complicated feeling about Kitty and the hope for the advanced relationship between men and women:

I spent the rest of the evening in my bedroom, leaning out of the open window, and feeling neglected and miserable and jealous, and out of patience with men and women, and falling in love, and all the rest of it. (123)

‘Someday, Kitty,’ I said, ‘I feel sure, quite sure, that men and women will love each other as we do, and will understand each other.’ (125)

The old generation demands self-sacrifice of women, but Miss Burton, intelligent woman who lives in a slum in London and loves and cares for a man who is very selfish and does not care other’s feelings at all and just takes advantage of her, suffers. She is a kind of a Victorian angel with a socialist vision sacrificing her self in vain. She is in complete despair but giving her life to do good for him and socialist cause even though she is unhappy because of her exploitative relationship. She feels emotionally trapped. Believing it to be impossible to change her feelings, she says, ‘when once you care, you care always’. (146)

The author describes female psychology through Miss Burton; ‘how gladly would we take all the slips ourselves and bear all the pain they bring!’ ‘But, after all, it matters to no one but myself: for I am nothing to him, and he does not know that he is anything to me; no one will ever know anything about it.’ (146)

Miss Burton could not reject the snobbish journalist Mr Innes who took advantage of her for his own purpose only to taking her articles about the lodging-house. Eventually she decided to leave him saying ‘because his ideas about men and women were so-what I thought-degrading, he thought me, of course, only a fool- a man would. Men are like that, and some women’. (148)

The author delivers a desire for more meaningful life and deeper fulfilment of life, describing the heroine's feelings of sadness due to the shallowness of ordinary life and the yearning for the possibility of sharing a more advanced level of life: 'other people's lives are always pressing on one, and one must, one must try to be true to them; and it somehow is the only way of being true to one's self. Besides, there is something more in life, something deeper, than merely loving each other'. (147)

Beatrice, maid-of-all-work in London lodgings for Lucretia and Kitty, displays the characteristics of a woman who cannot survive without something to love (giving life energy), or feeling of use, she says to Lucretia, 'I loved you that much that I couldn't live without something to love, as I couldn't live with you, for I ain't your sort, I went to live with Jim.' (153) Lucretia screams in despair for the frustration of not being able to be connected deeply and thoroughly across the two different classes. (155)

Lucretia mourns the limitation of the human condition: 'My sorrow is that Beatrice and I had never really seemed to get near each other, she also refused to understand'. (165) The awareness of the connectedness finally comes with the strong feeling of intimacy through the death and separation from the beloved one. Nevertheless, the author's positive and optimistic belief appears in Aunt Henrietta's change of attitude and mind. (175) The delivers the belief in people and they will respond to our faith through their innate goodness.

On the Threshold is full of revolutionary ideas. Mr Estcourt, a young socialist from the debating group, who is able to love a woman truly and to be a true friend to women,

criticizes philanthropy: 'Philanthropy generally means giving away what you don't want, to people who would be much better without it'. (177) Kitty is convinced of the unconventional life: 'You stupid old Lucretia, to think one's caring for people alters because of people's faults', she said. 'Of course one cannot *marry* them; you see, she didn't marry him, for there is something else in life besides caring about people in that kind of way, something else in one's self to which one must be true.' (184) The novel delivers the ideal of the deep understanding of human feelings and emotions is crucial for the true revolution of human life:

'But you are so tiresome, Lucretia dear; you don't seem to understand that one does not quite know what one wants. I believe you always know what you want; I have to try a thing first to see if I like it!' (185)

The beauty of their revolution lies in women's love: 'loving a person is such a huge, endless, boundless thing, beyond creed, laws and convention towards spirit'. (186-87) Pointing out the man-made world's emptiness, and conventional, vain shadows, compared with one's spirit, the most sacred and beautiful part of one, Kitty asserts, 'inward light'. (188)

Kitty confirms the agreement between men and women about friendship, the comradeship of marriage, (199) and the ideal of a moral, ethical way of human living:

'It is only through renunciation one can develop one's self or learn the best things, and one never, never gets happiness by snatching or trampling on other people, does one? At least it is not a happiness I should ever care to possess.' (201)

The conversation between Lucretia and Kitty challenges the idea against the institutional marriage based on the conventional Victorian gender norm:

‘I am not in love with any one, and the idea of marriage does not attract or interest me very much; women’s lives are so cut up when they marry. And, after all, is it worth it? I don’t know, you think it is, but I don’t think I do. Anyhow, I want something else first.’ (201)

‘We are leaving the sun behind us, Lucretia, but we are sailing on towards the east – towards the dawn. Don’t you think we are?’ (202-203)

Like other New Women writers, Isabella’s life in London in the 1880s was a time and place of hope, with thoughts turning towards the dawn of the twentieth century. Her hope for socialism meant a new life of beauty and fellowship. Stephen Yeo named the peculiarly idealist and aesthetic belief system of British socialism in the late nineteenth century as the ‘religion of socialism’. (Yeo 1977, 5-55)

However, in *On the Threshold* the socialist idea is extremely sketchy compared with other British socialist novels. (Klaus 1982) *On the Threshold* provided a much-needed description of socialism with regard to the working-class women’s lives and household labour. In her novel, we rarely meet admirable rich people, in spite of that Isabella Ford herself cherished her friendship rooted in that class.

On the Threshold shows the characteristics of vision and hope, and beautifully suggests ethical socialist ideas from women’s experience. *On the Threshold* perhaps represented for Isabella her nostalgic memory of their shared fellowship of the New Life of the

1880s. It seems Isabella's sensitivity made it possible for her to draw on every detail of their lost dreams, and to reflect on times when she was totally exhausted from the disappointment of reality. Her last novel *Mr Elliott* was published in 1901.

It looks like Isabella Ford eventually restored her creativity, energised herself and moved forward towards the transformation of the real world through her engagement in the labour movement and women's movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Her novel writing could be interpreted as a turning point of her career, reflecting her life and to become a confident leader transforming her abstract aesthetic ideal into the real world.

3.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the life of Isabella Ford alongside her political activism, personal networks and links with friendship and blood sisters. In particular, this chapter sought to explore the emotional dimension through her novels as the links between the personal and political.

This chapter included a discussion of the Fellowship of the New Life and Isabella's socialist feminist ideas in her novels. Notably, it seems to me that through a wide range of qualitative close friendships with men and women, Isabella could gain emotional fulfilment. Imagining Isabella's Quaker upbringing and attitude towards life makes it possible to assume how her Quakerism affected her socialism and spiritual fulfilment through her novel *On the Threshold*.

Through a close reading of a range of personal material, including letters, and especially through her novels, this chapter approached Isabella Ford's emotional life and aspects, such as frustrations, sufferings, sensitivity, warm-heartedness, sense of humour and complicated feelings about unfulfilled relationship in terms of class rooted in her upper-middle class background.

This chapter explored Isabella Ford's socialism and feminism. She maintained her idealism of collective comradeship without the boundaries of gender and class. Her loyalty to the justice and peace issues endured throughout her life. Her idealism for a new life of beauty shaped her socialism. For her, socialism was the answer to gender equality and a desire to liberate the self from gender prescriptions towards a just and peaceful society.

Isabella was one of the founding members of the Fellowship of the New Life. Early members of the Fellowship focused on communal living, care for life, and for all creatures and not only for human beings. Pursuing 'simple life' was another principle of the Fellowship. The rule of simplicity of living meant simplicity in all the aspects of life.

Carpenter's socialism, which directly affected Isabella, was based on a belief in human evolution towards democratic relationships, and was similar to the Fellowship's belief in human progress. Carpenter stressed the many signs of what he saw to be the evolution of a new human type, neither excessively male nor excessively female—an 'intermediate sex'. For him, this was a 'forward force in human evolution'. (Carpenter 1896)

Havelock Ellis shared with Carpenter a belief in the ethical socialism. However, Ellis's beliefs appear to have been based on biological determinism since he believed that individual behaviour was an expression of inherent biological drives rather than of social processes. The members of the Fellowship of the New Life in the 1880s objected to the neglect of ethical ideals on the part of the Fabian Society and the SDF. (Waters 1990, 14)

For Isabella, as an ethical socialist, capitalism and imperialism should be reformed through a vision of collective beauty. The Fellowship of the New Life believed in conscience and insight and relied on it to build a new beautiful world. (Fellowship of the New Life, Minutes 1883, 6, CHUBB/6/6, LSE) Their goal was to establish a strong healthy individualism and to live a high spiritual life. Isabella's notions of citizenship engaged with inter-personal forms of politics, including how people have relationships and behave toward each other. (Ibid)

Through her writing, Isabella Ford tried to realise her ideal, ethical duty to engage with 'the times and not to stand aloof from social duty as an individual', as fellow New Life Fellowship member Olive Schreiner did. (Stanley 2002, 148) For them, writing was a channel to change the world. As a socialist, Isabella Ford viewed capitalism as by definition concerned with profit and so, by nature, exploitative.

Isabella portrayed women's craving desire for courage and faith, purpose and visions and 'to do something for another human being' in her novel *Miss Blake of Monkshalton* (Ford 1890, 3, 4, 10) Isabella depicted a very strong sense of commitment to other large-hearted women who also sought a better world through the relationship between Miss Anne and Emma Blake. *Miss Blake of Monkshalton* depicts the lives of Victorian middle-class

women and their different responses to their context and choice of their lives. Those three heroines portray the condition of limited lives of middle-class women at the end of the nineteenth century. Focusing on Miss Anne Blake's desire for her own life, the novel contrasts Miss Emma Blake's despair with Miss Jane Blake's strictly conventional practice without compassion at the price of their own lives. This novel does not portray anything about the labour movement and/or socialism of the time, even though Isabella was deeply engaged in the Manningham Mills dispute (1890-1). It focuses mainly on the three women's psychology and different choices in their context. I assume the author was aware of her women readership to raise their women's consciousness.

On the Threshold (1895) delivers the messages of the ethical socialist feminist ideas and the sketch of the 1880s socialist group. Especially it represents the critique of the male-oriented socialist group and culture and emphasis on women's friendship. The heroine's hope and desire for a relationship with the aestheticized ideal of fellowship, pursuing inner beauty of human life, sustained the religion of socialism in the Fellowship of the New Life. Involving the care of the most vulnerable brings the future in existence.

Isabella Ford, as the only Quaker woman among the Fellowship of the New Life and the leader of ILP activists contributed both to the labour movement and the women's movement in the early twentieth century in ethical and aestheticized way emphasized on spiritual quality. (Ford 1900) Yet she was not a maternalist who insisted on biological mothering. She believed that we could make this world better with civilised means not with violence and aggression. The importance of Isabella's message of love and justice was to encourage the joining of a female community energised by the same personal and political vision. In other words, it represented the ethical socialist aspect as well as of her

Quakerism. The aestheticized quality from her socialism not just for material change or political programming, and the importance of friendship between women from her feminism characterised her personal and political attitude. In short, her commitment to the movement originated from her faith in justice, beauty and peaceful co-existence. As a Quaker, believing in innate goodness of people (Ford 1900, 178), ‘that of God in everyone’, ‘inward light’ (Ford 1895, 188), she positively chose to commit herself to the movements for the beauty of life and human progress in a way of responding to her time. It seems that her religious attitude led her to the ILP rather than the Marxist SDF.

I develop this discussion in Chapter 5, the personal and the political in context, and in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4

THE FRY SISTERS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the personal and political lives of the Fry sisters, Isabel (1869-1958), Margery (1874-1958), and Ruth (1876-1962) and their concern about peace issues. It begins by looking at the Fry family background then considers their diverse political lives and their responses to the peace issues. It argues that the diversity and complexity of their political lives and their approaches to the peace issues was affected by liberal political thought and Liberal Quakerism as well.

4.2. The Fry Family Background

The Fry family had a long-established Quaker heritage.¹ The Fry sisters' father, Sir Edward Fry (1827–1918), was born to Joseph and Mary Ann Fry of Bristol. His great-

¹ Among the Fry sisters' distant kinship we find Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845), who as a pioneering prison reformer 'was among the first to recognize the importance of rehabilitating rather than punishing criminals'. (Abbott *et al* 2003, 114) *The Historical Dictionary of the Friends* notes her as one of the earliest British women philanthropists and one who set an example for activism among women. (Ibid)

grandfather was Joseph Storrs Fry (1767–1835), the founder of a most prosperous chocolate business in the eighteenth century. (*TF* 1913, 206) His grandfather J. S. Fry, his father Joseph and uncle Francis Fry, and brother another Joseph Storrs Fry (1826–1913) succeeded in the cocoa business. He had another brother the Right Hon. Lewis Fry. (*Ibid*) On their father’s side there were eight recorded generations of Frys: Zephaniah, the first who become a Quaker, was in prison for three months for refusing to take the oath of allegiance. (Woolf 1940, 11–12)

In 1878 when the Peace Society organized with the Society of Friends a large protest against the war, Joseph Storrs Fry attended the Bristol rally. During the Edwardian period, the Fry family was one of the three most important financial supporters for the Peace Society with the Cadbury and Peckover families. (Laity 2001, 194)

The sisters’ mother, Mariabella Hodgkin (1833–1930) was a daughter of barrister John and Elizabeth (Howard) Hodgkin, a sister of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin (1831–1913), the historian, (*The British Friend* 1913, 82) and of E. S. Waterhouse, wife of the architect Alfred W. Waterhouse. (*TF* 1930) She was born in Tottenham, and engaged in local movement, ‘well-read and intelligent’. (Sutton 1972, 2) Both the Fry and the Hodgkin families’ ancestry can be traced back to Quakers of the seventeenth century. Through intermarriage and business, as well as fairly close geographical proximity, they formed a

The Fry sisters' great-great- grandfather was Joseph Storrs Fry (1767–1835), the founder of the chocolate business, the cousin of Elisabeth Fry's husband, Joseph (Storrs) Fry (1777–1861). (Dictionary of Quaker Biography, LSF) Born Elizabeth Gurney of a prosperous Norwich family of Quaker cloth manufacturers, Elizabeth married Joseph Storrs Fry (1777–1861), an established firm of grocery importers in the city of London. Elizabeth Fry’s brother, Joseph John Gurney (1788–1847), was a banker and a biblical scholar involved in work for peace, abolition of slavery, and penal reform. ‘His evangelical writings came increasingly under the influence of the Wesleyan holiness movement and his emphasis on Bible study conflicted with Quietist waiting on the spirit and Inward Light in nineteenth-century Quakerism. His followers became Gurneyites and were uneasy with Progressive liberal Friends.’ (Abbott *et al* 2003, 123)

‘weighty’ family in the Religious Society of Friends. (Jones 1966, 6-7) Mariabella Hodgkin was brought up in Quaker plainness and aware of its integrity, though her family owned comfortable houses and had servants and carriages like other well-off families. (Woolf 1940, 13) Her mother, Elizabeth Hodgkin, daughter of Luke Howard², had died before she was three, and she grew up taken cared by aunts. Mariabella Fry had a special relationship with her children corresponding with them for all of her life. (Sutton 1972, 3) She corresponded with Margery for over fifty-six years. (Jones 1966, 161)

As a liberal Friend, Edward Fry recalled in 1859 how ‘the miserable questions about dress and address, and...disputes about orthodoxy...produces a chasm...between myself and systematic Quakerism which I have never got over’. (Agnes Fry 1921, 168; Kennedy 2001, 43) Later in 1887, he supported John William Graham (1859-1932) against Evangelicals, Joseph Bevan Braithwaite (1818-1905) and Jonathan Backhouse Hodgkin. His comment that ‘the creed...would be a death blow to Quakerism in its present form’ (Kennedy 2001, 114) added weight to the forces of progressive well-educated young leaders’, such as J. W. Graham’s and Edward Grubb’s (1854-1929) struggle against evangelicalism. (Kennedy 2001, 115) Later, this group of leaders, John Wilhelm Rowntree (1868-1905), William Charles Braithwaite (1862-1922), Rendal Harris (1852-1941), Edward Grubb, John W. Graham and others set out a social and theological liberal idealism between 1890 and 1914, which Kennedy emphasises as the ‘Quaker Renaissance.’ (Kennedy 2001, 422-3)

² Fry’s maternal greatgrandfather was Luke Howard (1772 -1864), the author of an essay ‘proposing a classification and nomenclature of the clouds’, which attracted the attention of Goethe. (Woolf 1940, 13-14)

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) wrote about Edward Fry: ‘He spent over half of his life travelling and educated himself to a high level in natural science.’ (Woolf 1940, 23) His mother, Mary Ann Fry, had ‘an optimistic character full of hope and trustful views, always talking with bright humour, and never annoyed by opposite opinion. This made her a delightful companion.’ (Agnes Fry 1921, 16) Margery shared this joyous spirit. (Jones 1966, 7) Margery remembered his father as an austere man: ‘His pleasures were almost entirely intellectual, his friendships few, his mind powerful with a sensitive feeling for honour, truth, and justice. He hated inaccuracy and sloppy thinking. He held to a profound belief in the spiritual meaning of the universe.’ (Margery Fry 1948, 53)

Sir Edward Fry graduated from London University in 1851, and began to study law in the Chambers of the Quaker barrister Joseph Bevan Braithwaite. He married Mariabella, daughter of John Hodgkin under whom Braithwaite had studied law and the sister of his friend, Thomas Hodgkin, in 1859. (Fairn *TF* 1958, 539) He was called to the bar in 1854, after fifteen years as a junior, and in 1869 he became a Queen’s Counsel. From 1877 he worked as a Chancery Judge for fifteen years. He was appointed additional Judge in Chancery in 1877 and was knighted in 1877. (Woolf 1940, 28)

Although he was knighted in 1877, his income was reduced to £5,000 a year, which was half of what he had earned when he was running his own practice. (Woolf 1940, 28) A few years before the birth of Anna Ruth, his last child, he purchased Failand, a country house in Somerset, near the Bristol Channel, which was their home for over half a century from then and left to the National Trust by Agnes Fry. (*TF* 1958, 1266) Later in 1887 the family moved to a house in Bayswater, which overlooked the Broad Walk and Kensington Gardens. A walk through Hyde Park to the Law Courts had become a more

accessible pleasure to Sir Edward Fry than their acres of garden at Highgate. To Roger Fry, artist son, however, the Bayswater house was 'ugly, typical of a growing stiffness in their family life'. (Jones 1966, 13)

He was a judge at the Hague in the war arbitration between the US and Mexico on the Pious Funds Case of California dispute, 1902-03. He was also active at second Hague Conference, 1907, and an arbitrator between France and Germany over the Casablanca incident, 1908-09, and Judge on the Hague Tribunal, 1908. (Sutton 1972, 2) In 1892 Sir Edward Fry resigned from the Bar, and said 'I longed with a great longing to possess more leisure for thought and reading, and to pass the last years of my life in the midst of country sights and sounds in that daily intercourse with nature of which I was always thinking in the midst of my busy life in London'. (Agnes Fry 1921, 77) As he had planned, Failand became the 'union of simplicity of life with the benefits of cultivation'. (Jones 1966, 25) Beatrice Brown described how 'the Fry family was a complete world of its own, a secure and deeply established large family of strong personalities united by deepest loyalties and the outer network of family was a world in itself.' (1960, 9)

Sir Edward Fry and Lady Fry had nine children; Portsmouth (died in his twenties), Mariabella (1861-1922), Joan (1862-1955), Alice (died at four years of age, *TF* 1955, 1158), Roger (1866-1934), Isabel (1869-1958) and Agnes (1869-1958), Margery (1874-1958), Ruth (1876-1962). (Brown 1960, 3, Jones 1966, 10)

Notably, Sir Edward Fry taught his daughters that there were other things in life besides marriage. Many of the Fry sisters' cousins married, but many of their friends seemed to accept from girlhood a general expectation of celibacy. (Jones 1966, 29) The Fry girls

had never been encouraged to place value on looks and physical appearance. For instance, Jones wrote that Margery was never gentle to ‘pretentious fools’ and that she disliked such people *en masse*. (Jones 1966, 21) Instead, she liked and respected ‘thoughtful, conscientious and honourable’ friends. (Jones 1966, 21) The Fry children had not been sent to Quaker schools. During their London childhood in the 1870s, Quakerism was influenced by Evangelicalism. (Dandelion 2007, 112-14) Roger Fry (1866-1934) received an education at Clifton and King’s College, Cambridge, where he gained a double First degree in science, later becoming Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge. (*TF* 1934, 844) As Sir Edward Fry was a scholar and a great lawyer, when Roger Fry turned away from the scientific profession to become an artist, he had had difficulties in breaking away from his father’s expectations. (Sutton 1972, 3, Woolf 1940, 5) Neither Joan nor Ruth left home until they were middle-aged.

Mariabella, the eldest, had never left home until she died in the 1920s. She was Clerk to Portishead Monthly Meeting, secretary of the local tubercular cases, a member of the County Health Committee, secretary of Infant Welfare Centres in Pill and Wraxall, and actively engaged in promoting the establishment of a country home for unmarried mothers and their babies. (*TF* 1920) Agnes never left home, Failand House for over half a century until both her parents were dead in 1930. (*TF* 1958, 1266) She spent the last twenty-one years at Brent Knoll, Somerset. (*Ibid*) She wrote the life of her father and little book of verse. (*TF* 1930, 230)

Joan Fry worked as a Quaker Prison Chaplain after she finished her eleven years of mothering. (Jones 1966, 103) She became a leading Quaker and was one of the first Quakers in Germany organizing relief after the First World War. (Sutton 1972, 3-4) She

was one of the few ‘Recorded Ministers’ of the Religious Society and ‘Meeting for Worship was central to her life’. (*TF* 1955, 1158) She was active in Summer School Movement in 1897 and in the founding of Woodbrooke in 1903, and adult education (*TF* 1955, 1158) when Rendel Harris became the first Director of Studies at Woodbrooke, Birmingham. In 1910 she was the Swarthmore Lecturer and travelled in the ministry at home and abroad, in Europe and the States. (*TF* 1955, 1159) Later she emphasized the value of the Quaker peace testimony and the importance of social reform. (Kennedy 2001, 410) During the First World War she visited COs as the only woman to whom such permission was granted. (*TF* 1955, 1159) Later in August 1919 she and three other Friends went to Berlin to take part in relief work for women and children feeding twelve thousand children and students. For her services to Germany Tübingen University awarded her an honorary doctorate in 1924. (*TF* 1955, 1159) In this thesis Joan is not included as a subject for detailed study to focus on prominent single women activists and analyse their personal and political lives.

The Fry sisters specialised in something: Margery in mathematics, Agnes in botany, Ruth in music. Their parents supported their daughters’ spontaneous desire for knowledge. (Brown 1960, 10) Virginia Woolf recalled that ‘The Frys begin talking at dawn: and talk all day without stopping about all subjects, such as politics, philosophy, religion and friends.’ (Woolf 1940, 281)

The next section explores the political life of Isabel, Margery and Ruth Fry to analyse their personal and political ideas and practice as atypical prominent women among Quakers in their time.

4.3. The Fry Sisters' Political life

Isabel Fry (1869–1958)

Isabel Fry and her twin sister Agnes were born on 25 March 1869, at No. 6, The Grove, Highgate. (Sutton 1972, 3) In her late teens Isabel travelled abroad extensively with her family, gave classes to factory girls and educated herself. Isabel read works on economics, science and history in the family's private library. Beatrice Curtis Brown described how she was eager to learn 'to meet life full face'. (Brown 1960, 6) In the 1880s, intelligent women, especially from the upper class, could enter higher education and participate in social work.

Around 1885, Isabel attended school at Highfield. (Brown 1960, 7) The 1880s was an active decade for social change in Britain, in industrial, intellectual, political term, especially for women's emancipation and higher education. (Brown 1960, 6) But Brown assumed Isabel had difficulty in breaking through her upbringing in pursuing an independent life of her own from her upper class gender norm. (Ibid)

It was in 1891, when she was twenty-two years old, that Constance Crommelin (later Mrs John Masterfield) offered Isabel a job at Miss Lawrence's School in Brighton, later named Roedean School, which Margery attended. Isabel was courageous enough to decide to guide her own life. Taking a job allowed her to leave home and come back home just for visits. (Brown 1960, 7) In 1895 Isabel moved to London with Constance and taught small groups of children in their own homes, and also at private schools in

London. She was a staff teacher for three and a half years in Marylebone Road in London and assisted Constance Crommelin in English Literature and Composition. (Brown 1960, 15) She also undertook to coach pupils in Advanced Geography for the New Group in the Higher Local Examination. (Brown 1960, 11) Isabel invented her own method of encouraging pupils to learn. She was far from a discouraging teacher. Her method was more fun-based and led to exciting lessons: She was good at playing games, telling stories, acting and telling jokes. (Brown 1960, 16) Isabel was involved in a Society for Volunteer Teachers for Board Schools.

She was very much concerned about political reform and emancipation in the Far East and in Turkey and Persia, especially through her Turkish friend Halide Edib, educational and social reformist, and visited Turkey in 1908 and 1914. (Isabel Fry's Diary, GB 0366FY, Box 1, Institute of Education Special Collection) In 1916 she worked as a welfare supervisor in a factory in the Midlands. (Ibid) She was not only interested in politics, but also religion and mysticism. It is interesting that Isabel was preoccupied with mysticism for the whole of her life. She discussed the pacifist movement, slum clearance, socialism, women's emancipation with her wide range of friends, 'mostly the liberal intellectuals, Nevison Hobhouse, the Buxtons, Bertrand Russell, Edith Durham, Lowes Dickinson and many others'. (Brown 1960, 19)

1912 was a tough year for her. Because of the Balkan war, she was constantly concerned about her friendships in Turkey. She applied for several jobs in England, but due to lack of recognised qualifications she was rejected. For a while she was motivated to take a job at a school in India. (Brown 1960, 19) During the summer of 1912 she went to France to study. (Brown 1960, 20) During this year she suffered the failure of a relationship which,

at one time, had shown the prospect of marriage. (Isabel Fry's Diary, GB 0366 FY, Box 1, Institute of Education Special Collection) Despite her lack of fulfilment in teaching as well as physical overstrain to the point of exhaustion; she carried on teaching regularly at two other schools besides her own. She travelled across London every day on her bicycle to attend meetings for political and social causes. (Brown 1960, 23)

During these tough years, her friendship with Harriet, who helped her with cooking, nursing, and housekeeping for many years, sustained her. (Brown 1960, 24)

The only really live parts of the day are when I sit with Harriet in the evenings in my beflounced little parlour and play Chopin or write letters. I understand why people in business don't identify themselves with their work, as I have always hitherto done with mine. (unknown resources, quoted in Brown 1960, 29)

Also, emotional support from her brother Roger helped her survive a sense of failure in human relations and isolation. (Ibid) In spite of her personal sadness and anxiety she was still full of life and gentle to others, so that, Brown described, no one could imagine she suffered so deeply. (Ibid) She resigned from the Religious Society of Friends in 1913 because of 'deep spiritual uncertainty', considering 'the Society's pacifist policy to be untenable.' (Ibid) However, it is impossible to tell how she felt, because she did not leave a record for this matter in her diary. I could find no letter that she discussed this matter with her family or friends.

Between 1913 and 1915 Isabel held morning classes for children in Gayton Road, Hampstead and at other schools in London. She emphasised education for 'real' work and not just for intellectual things. (Brown 1960, 21) At this time Isabel developed her

idea for the establishment of her own experimental school for training farm and household labourers.

She wrote in December 1912:

Personally I believe we are most of us overdosed with intellectual things. We take them apart from the practical and what ought to be a medicine we try to use as a food. We learn the theory of nutrition and never try to cook; geography, and do not travel; dynamics, and never use a saw or make a machine. We are mostly divorced from real life and our manners grow artificial, our interest, even our kindnesses. I want to try not to lose sight of this. (Isabel Fry Dec.1912, GB0366FY, Box1, Institute of Education)

Isabel arranged carpentry lessons for the Gayton Road School children with a working carpenter. (Brown 1960, 22) In the summer of 1915, under the threat of air raids, she took most of the Gayton Road children for the summer term to her Great Hampden cottage. Brown recalled that Isabel used to talk about how Isabel realised that it was unhelpful for the young of the urban middle class to have been removed from 'real things' in her those school days: 'We were not only ignorant but without curiosity about the work on a farm, or in a house, and about animals, food, plants, trees. We could not even mend our clothes'. (Brown 1960, 23) This Great Hampden experiment confirmed Isabel's feeling that in her teaching she was not dealing with the fundamentals to absorb the world in its totality and failing to prepare children for living. (Ibid) Later, Isabel attempted to realise her educational ideal by establishing a boarding school. (Brown 1960, 24)

Alternative Educationist

As an experimental educationist, Isabel Fry tried to devise an alternative method of teaching. She adopted a new system of school education and worked out a creative method for teaching language structure. (Sutton 1972, 3) Her enthusiasm to find an appropriate teaching scheme was found here and there in her diary, for example:

What I say is, the work you are doing now is it good enough for you; said Harriet to me this evening. It is true it is too easy; I'm not using full power- and there is something wasting. (Isabel Fry 9 Oct. 1913, GB0366FY, Box 1, Institute of Education)

The lecture was not a lecture, just a talk and reading aloud of 2 poems. I had both nights the sense that my audience had no desire in themselves for my information, but that someone else wanted them to be made interested. I confess I don't much believe in this, until there is appetite I said it is useless giving food. (Isabel Fry 19 Nov, 1913, GB0366FY, Box 1, Institute of Education)

In early 1916, at the age of forty-seven, Isabel went to an estate in the south of England as a trainee farm labourer for a feasibility study for her own Farmhouse school. Having been left a legacy by an uncle, she became financially independent and able to start her own school. (Brown 1960, 28) However, her health was not good and she found it most difficult to endure the bullying from the supervisors and fellow workers because of her age and class: Isabel confessed that the farm was like a prison to her. (Ibid)

Isabel frequently met Norah Laycock, a science tutor at London University, to discuss plans for her Farmhouse school. Quite soon in 1917 the school was set up at Mayortorne Manor, an eighteenth-century house with several acres of land and garden, halfway

between Great Missenden and Wendover in Buckinghamshire, emphasising sense of responsibility and training in farm and household duties at the same time. (Brown 1960, 30)

Here she made a life-long friendship with Eugenie Dubois, French teacher at the Farmhouse school. In 1930 Isabel left Mayortorne Manor feeling unable to carry the school alone for her age of sixty. She moved on to work at the Friends' settlement for unemployed miners Wales and Durham which was initiated by her sister Joan. (Brown 1960, 35) After leaving Mayortorne she helped in the Caldicot community in Maidstone, Kent. For a time she and Margery tried to settle in a Cotswold village. In 1933, she was dreaming to start a small boarding farm-house school for poor children. Early in 1934, then sixty-three, she established a new experimental school for refugees and deprived children at Church Farm, Buckland near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire again. (Ibid)

In the summer of 1939 she fell ill. As always, Margery rescued and took her to a nursing home at Malvern. On her return to Church Farm she was under care of a nurse for six years. In 1943 she lost her beloved Lewis Masfield when working in the Friends' Ambulance Unit in North Africa. She was devastated by the loss and anxiety from the terrible horror of war. (Brown 1960, 39-40) During the hard times the only solace was Margery's visits. She kept on her journal until she died in 1958.

Isabel Fry published two miscellanies, *Uninitiated* (1895), an essay about 'A Discovery in Morals', 'Blood Guiltiness' mentioning her childhood memories, and *The Day of Small Things* (1901). *A Key to Language: A Method of Grammatical Analysis by Means of Graphic Symbols* (1925) was a work which represented her educational approach to

language. This book is about the teaching of grammar, the relationships between language, feeling and intention. This subject became a theme of communication and linguistics. (Jones 1966, 76-7) The book discussed a method of grammatical analysis by means of graphic symbols, a full exposition, arranged in a graduated series of lessons, of a system of teaching English Grammar which has been evolved and practiced by the author during twenty years of teaching. (Isabel Fry 1925) It contains; Superficiality of results of ordinary grammar teaching; Value of Graphic Symbols to represent grammatical functions and relations. Failure of verbal definition to convey; Examples of constructions which grammarians fail to deal with satisfactorily. Classification of words apart from their functioning; Symbolization elucidates grammatical constructions; exhibits literary style. Symbols applicable to teaching of foreign languages. (Ibid)

It seems that she identified herself as an alternative educationist rather than anything else for whole her life. She wrote: 'They think that some intellectual interest will justify their existence in the world, whereas you should *serve* the world in some perfectly definite way. And you must not flatter yourself that merely to produce children is sufficient. If you produce children *and* bring them up as valuable citizens, that may serve.' (Isabel Fry 23, April, 1920) Through her life-long career of experimental schools she seemed to realize her ideal of a life of service.

Margery Fry (1874-1958)

Margery went to Miss Lawrence's school at Brighton, which later became Roedean School. Miss Lawrence prepared pupils for the Junior and Senior Cambridge Locals, and sent some of them on to Newnham College. (Jones 1966, 17) Margery Fry went to

Somerville College, Oxford to read mathematics in 1894 and became librarian of the College in 1899, as there were very limited choices for women. To Roger, who was accustomed to living among artists in London, Paris and Florence, Somerville lacked creative power. Roger thought his sister was not 'made or nurtured for blind devotion to institutions'. (Jones 1966, 39) Roger recommended Margery to be an artist rather than anything else. (Sutton 1972)

Of the twenty-four women who entered Somerville with Margery Fry, seven went on to marry. Her contemporaries at Somerville, coming mainly from large and dynamic families, would bear between them fourteen children. The majority of Margery's university intake remained single, and devoted their lives to transforming nursing and education, to changing the whole status of women, and to improving the position of children. As highly motivated intellectuals, they attempted to supply their enthusiasm for all their work. (Margery Fry 1953, 32)

Margery wanted more than kindness in her relations with other people. She chose her friends from among her own demographic, from among those who fundamentally shared her outlook and way of living. For Margery Fry, friends were those with whom she had university connections. Everywhere she was received by Quakers either as 'Sir Edward Fry's daughter' or else as the child of one of the Bristol Frys who had married a Tottenham Hodgkin. (Jones 1966, 43)

Upon leaving Oxford in 1897, Margery and Eleanor Rathbone, a Unitarian friend, a year Margery's senior from Oxford, discussed whether there was anything worth being ambitious about. (Jones, 1966, 45) At that time Parliament was closed to them, as was

practically every other position of influence. Women pioneers had nowhere to go, they could only go back home. Margery was reunited with her parents and her siblings Mab, Joan, Agnes, and Ruth in Failand House, near Bristol. (Jones 1966, 47)

Later Margery went to back to Somerville as a librarian, 1899 to 1904. (Jones 1966, 51) On 29 June 1904 she was appointed warden of the new hall of residence for women students at the University of Birmingham, a prototype of English civic universities, a position which she held until 1914. (Margery Fry Papers, University House Archive 1-5, University of Birmingham Special Collection) A committee of women, under the chairmanship of Mrs Beale, the Vice-Chancellor's wife, decided to go ahead with a project for a women's residence. Within a year funds had been raised by subscription and a house in Hagley Road had been bought. Mrs Muirhead, wife of the Professor of Philosophy, was a member of the Hostel Committee. (Ibid) The Muirheads were close friends of Dorothy Scott, one of Margery's fellow Somervillians. (Jones 1966, 33)

Margery's parents approved of the appointment. They might have considered Birmingham as a centre of Quaker enlightenment, as Woodbrooke College had been set up for Quaker study and research in 13 October 1903 at the former home of the Cadburys at Selly Oak. (Kennedy 2001, 185) With Mrs Beale, the wife of the Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University, Margery Fry became one of the first two women governors of the King Edward's Schools' Foundation in 1909. (Jones 1966, 86) In less than three years she was Bailiff (chairperson) of the Foundation, after which she became a member of the University Council. A few months later she joined the Staffordshire County Education Committee with Rose Sidgwick in charge of the industrial southern area. (Ibid) Enid Huws Jones assumed that for these years Margery's longing for a spiritual certainty

remained unsatisfied, and she discovered a tenderness towards what she called Franciscan Quakerism. (Jones 1966, 78-79) It is not clear what she based this assumption on and I could find no evidence to support this claim.

From the autumn of 1913 Margery became financially independent, independence she enjoyed for the rest of her life, owing to the enormous legacy bequeathed to her by her bachelor uncle Joseph Storrs Fry (1826-1913), the head of the Cocoa Works of Bristol since 1885. (Joan Fry, *The British Friend* 1913, 206) The income was larger than that of a university professor. (Jones 1966, 90) Early in the summer of 1914 she resigned from University House, and by September of that year, University House was used as a military hospital. Margery Fry, Rose Sidgwick and Marjorie Rackstraw moved to an Edgbaston villa. (Jones 1966, 91)

Early in 1915 Margery discussed a scheme for housing refugees. Her sisters Isabel, Joan and Ruth were busy helping relief work. In October 1917 Margery was almost persuaded by the Bristol Union of Women's Suffrage Societies to stand as an Independent parliamentary candidate for West Bristol. The Labour Party, however, refused to support her so she withdrew. (Jones 1966, 108) To her, the labour-suffrage alliance was over then. After that she became more concerned about penal reform, and was secretary of the Howard League for Penal Reform from 1919 to 1926. (Margery Fry Papers, University of Birmingham Special Collection OJC149)

Margery and Penal Reform

In 1921, Margery Fry became one of the first women magistrates in Britain. Though she was part of an upper-middle class family, she immediately sensed the problems faced by

prisoners when she started to engage in penal reform. Margery Fry encouraged Roy Calvert, at the age of twenty-eight to devote his life to abolish the Death Penalty. (Jones 1966, 123-24) He saw the Death Penalty as ‘the stranglehold which enabled the forces of reaction to keep their ground’ and campaigned for ‘a general advance to an enlightened and rational humanity in the treatment of all lawbreakers.’ (Calvert, *Capital Punishment in the Twentieth Century*, 1936; Jones 1966, 124) In 1933 Roy Calvert died at thirty-five, without seeing any results. (Jones 1966, 158)

At the end of 1921 she wrote to her friend Marjorie Rackstraw, relief worker in Russia;

I’ve seen prison and homes, Borstal institutes galore—I tell myself that after all the worst treated person in them is in paradise compared with *your* people, but still I hate to think what man has made of man...I don’t think I can keep out of direct political work much longer—our ‘middle-class idealism’ begins to disgust me. (quoted from Jones 1966, 123)

So the November 1922 general election was ‘a horrid job’ for her. She wrote, ‘Why oh why has one a Quaker conscience? Six blessed electioneering meetings...Of course our candidate didn’t get in’. (Jones 1966, 123) The candidate was Miss Picton Turbervill from the Labour Party. (Ibid)

As a result of Stephen Hobhouse’s frequent imprisonment, the Labour Party established a prison enquiry committee. He wrote a book titled *English Prisons Today* in 1922. Margery wrote *Some Facts regarding Capital Punishment* which was published by the Howard League in 1923. (Jones 1966, 125) Around 1924 she worked to support the

International Prison Congress with Mr Boucher, who apparently became a firm friend. (Jones 1966, 118, 125)

To sum up, as a highly motivated liberal intellectual, Margery Fry's main political life was concentrated in public education and penal reform as a practical approach to human rights.

Ruth Fry (1878–1962)

Anna Ruth Fry was the youngest of the Fry children. Ruth Fry worked as a secretary for her father, assisting his work for the consolidation of international law and for the development of the Hague conference held in 1899. (Canter 1962, 524) Ruth had the opportunity to improve her knowledge of foreign languages and cultures and develop a sense of mutual understanding. During this time she was exposed to and learned from her father's well-trained and impartial mind. Ruth began her public activity in 1906, holding international office without her father. Ruth established a friendship with Emily Hobhouse, an Anglican pacifist who helped her to face 'the shock felt at the outbreak of the war' during the Anglo-Boer War. (Ruth Fry 1944, 3)

Ruth Fry joined Hilda Clark and Edith Pye in doing relief work. (Spielhofer 2001) Ruth's delicate health prevented her from entering public life but allowed her a life of administration. (Jones 1966, 93) Ruth Fry was appointed Honorary Secretary of the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) and was responsible for a vast programme of supplies, administration, personnel management, public relations, fund-

raising and leadership. (Ruth Fry 1926) Ruth ran the London office under increasing pressure for twelve years. (Canter 1962, 525)

Ruth thought the First World War was unlawful and unjustifiable and so joined Hilda Clark and Edith Pye at their office in a basement at Islington, London in the autumn of 1914. (Jones 1966, 93) Ruth Fry could not work in the field due to her ill health, and so worked instead in administration. (Ibid) She was appointed honorary secretary, a role in which she displayed great leadership and inspiration. Ruth was made responsible for a vast programme of supplies, administration, personnel management, public relations and fund-raising on behalf of the Friend's Relief Committee in 1914. (Ruth Fry 1926) The committee sought to help civilians who had suffered because of the war, and extended over nine countries in Europe: France, Holland, Belgium, Serbia, Russia, Austria, Hungary, Poland and Germany. (Ibid)

The Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) was founded during the London Yearly Meeting of 1879, at a time when the Franco-German War was raging. At this meeting the black and red double star icon was established as a badge for British Quaker relief workers and their camps and vehicles. (Ruth Fry 1926, xv) During and after the First World War, Quakers' relief work and service activity included the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU), which supplied medical care for wounded soldiers and civilians. (Kennedy 2001, 361) The FAU was one of a number of alternative services available for Conscientious Objectors (COs). The service demanded devotion, courage as well as financial sacrifice. Though it was criticised for assisting the military's activities, it had universal humanitarian causes at its core, being dedicated to saving all human lives—

friend and enemy, military and civilian. The FWVRC worked to support civilians and refugees in wartime. (Ibid)

While the FAU was an independent body led by a committee of Friends organized by individuals concerned about providing an alternative service for COs, the FWVRC was an official committee supported by the Religious Society of Friends which did not provide alternative service for COs. (Ruth Fry 1926) Ruth Fry, as General Secretary of the British section of the FWVRC from 1914 to 1923 announced that the movement 'sought to carry a message of help and friendship to the numberless sufferers from the war in foreign countries, entirely irrespective of race, politics or religion'. (Ruth Fry 1926, xx) The Emergency Committee for Helping Aliens was to protect 'enemy aliens', such as Germans, Austrians and Hungarians who were victims of war hysteria. Ruth Fry reflected that:

The Committee was united to both extremes by thinkers of all shades of opinion, who maintained that the exceptional circumstances called for a new expression of their belief, a constructive effort to remedy the state of things which they found around them, caused as they felt by wrong beliefs, wrong principles and wrong actions. The war was a fact, no efforts of theirs had availed to prevent it, but the very principles on which their objection to war was founded could be lived out even amidst the clash of arms. (Ruth Fry 1926, xix-xx)

Ruth Fry's public life was devoted to relief work during and after the First World War, and writing and giving lectures on peace for the rest of her life. Owing to her ill health she could never do more than administration for relief work but her devoted effort for

caring for life led her to be seen a leader of Quaker thereafter, even though she herself did not claim this role. (Jones 1966, 94)

The Fry sisters, Isabel, Margery and Ruth devoted their lives in diverse ways, yet still they lived atypical and peculiar lives as women of their time. As an independent experimental educationist, highly motivated liberal intellectual and penal reformer, and a leading Quaker and relief organizer, they lived beyond the gender norm of their time. They shared material, mental, emotional and spiritual support from their family and kinship network. They also were supported from meaningful friendships during certain periods of their life. Their devotion to humanitarian causes came from the Quaker belief in the divine in everyone, ‘the Inner Light.’ (Ruth Fry 1926, xvii) Ruth Fry described her Quaker peace testimony as follows:

The testimony against all war, which is well known as a Quaker tenet, is not a mere isolated, negative one. It springs from our belief in the potentiality of the divine in all men-the Inner Light, as we call it, which is in every man, however hidden and darkened it may be. (Ruth Fry 1926, xvii)

The next section examines the Fry sisters’ ideas on peace and their choices in context.

4.4. The Fry Sisters and Peace Issues

Isabel Fry and peace

Isabel Fry lamented the mad destruction of war and wrote that she was anti-militarist rather than pacifist and that she regarded the military ideal as a power for world dominance. She expressed strong feeling of hatred towards the manufacture and use of war weapons. (Isabel Fry 23 Nov, 1913, GB0366FY, Box 1, Institute of Education)

Like many of her friends, Isabel opposed Sir Edward Grey's policy and the *entente* with France and Russia, yet she also vehemently opposed the Prussian militarist ideal. (Brown 1960, 27) Though she felt sympathy with the Conscientious Objectors, she did not agree with them. She wrote a leaflet "To them that say: "Peace, peace, when there is no peace"" in July 1915:

But this phenomenon of anti-war English people is not, I comfort myself, quite what these persons would take it to be. It is not, indeed, by any means wholly ugly or discouraging. It has actually good points about it. It means, for one thing, that we have citizens who venture to assume almost the most painful possible position—that of the antagonists of their country in its moment of passionate appeal. And when this is done from principle – as I think in this case it largely is – it means at least that they are English men and women who cannot be intimidated by a bully into any sort of imitation of his ways, and, disbelieving in the righteousness of force under any circumstances as these peoples do – not even German frightfulness can alter their resistance to the use of arms. (Isabel Fry 1915, 2-3)

Isabel Fry analysed the cause of war as capitalist greed:

What is the aim of this war? They say: the welfare, the defence of your country? Ought it not to be the welfare of its millions of inhabitants, of those millions whom the war has killed or dismembered? Who threatens the welfare of the country? Those

men who wear another uniform at the other side of the frontier, who, like men, neither wanted war, nor knew why they have to kill their brethren? No! Threatened is the country by all who enrich themselves at the cost of the masses'—and so on and on. (Isabel Fry 1915, 3-4)

However, Isabel Fry did not agree with pacifists' attitudes because she thought they simply stated their position without achievement in reality. (Ibid) Isabel Fry asserted it was just to fight for the principle of liberty:

Nearly three hundred years ago a noble Englishman fought to the death against a tyrant, and we honour the name of Hampden and shall always do so. He fought without anger or malice for the principle of liberty. So should we fight to-day. Other men—his friends—in that terrible day of decision feared to fight the enemy. They had scruples which made them unwilling to soil their hands in the blood of despotism. So they fought against freedom—there was no other alternative then any more than there is for us now—and their names wake no echoes for us who are once more at death-grips with the oppressor. (Isabel Fry 1915, 12)

Isabel Fry obviously opposed the approach of Quakers, which Phillips criticised as 'Friendly Patriotism'. (2004, 67) Isabel Fry did not agree with official Quaker Peace policy and left the Religious Society of Friends in 1913. Isabel Fry's attitude toward pacifism shows a vivid contrast with both the majority of Quakers and a few pacifist Quakers. Isabel felt pacifism strongly linked with her Quakerism, but she asserted that Quakers should be honest with themselves as the matter of principle. (Isabel Fry 1915) The reason she resigned from Quakerism seems her opposition to the Quaker application of their position on peace, which she viewed as hypocritical. (Isabel Fry 1915)

Isabel obviously lost her dear Quaker friends and had to endure emotional isolation from them as the price for this position. (Brown 1960, 27) Brown claimed that Isabel could not condone hypocrisy. (Ibid) She had to suffer from her own inner conflict and agony. She also had to face the loss of her intimate circle of friends in London because of her beliefs about war and peace. (Ibid) During these hard times she received huge emotional support from her brother, Roger. (Brown 1960, 27) With the shock of the war in 1914, she sought to engage in essential national activities and she was told to stand by for War Office work. (Brown 1960, 28)

Isabel Fry was concerned about anti-militarism as a Quaker, yet she chose to support the war effort at the outbreak of the First World War rather than a path of pacifism. However, the Quakers did not disown her for her obvious disagreement to the Quaker peace testimony. Indeed, many men Quakers joined up in the First World War without being disowned. (Kennedy 2001) Isabel had to suffer from the loss of her circle of friends as the price of her position. Brown analysed Isabel Fry as a perfectionist, who was very strict to her self. She wrote that Isabel left the Quakers due to her own spiritual and political reasons. (Brown 1960) Unfortunately, unpublished correspondences of her family are still unavailable to establish the exact cause of her resignation from the Quakers and her feelings about the matter, and whether her family discussed her resignation and peace issues. The edited version of Roger Fry's letters does not include any of these concerns.

Margery Fry and Peace

In 1899, on the outbreak of the South African War, Lady Fry and Joan Fry were among a committee of women Quakers working for the relief of war victims. Margery declared the causes of war to be materialistic greed, though she confessed 'feeling ashamed to be working for anything else but peace'. (Jones 1966, 123) Margery had found the pacifists impossible to work with. It is known that she had marched with them from the Embankment to Hyde Park, but that she felt 'they seemed such a feeble folk that it couldn't matter what they thought'. (Ibid)

The NUWSS sent Margery Fry and Margery Corbett Ashly as delegates to the 1919 Paris Conference in an attempt to ensure that women would be represented on the various international bodies which were being established. (Alberti 1996, 88) The efforts were not successful and Alberti argues that Margery Fry was very disappointed with so-called international cooperation and the Paris Conference. (Ibid) From Paris, Margery Fry wrote letters to Eva Hubback, who became secretary to the NUWSS in 1919:

I will say that of all muddles, undemocratic, unpractical bodies, this conference simply takes the bisc(uit?). We practically never met, we have noted the resolutions and we couldn't get them altered. The preambles are a simple disgrace to the human intelligence, I consider. (Margery Fry to Eva Hubback, 10 April 1919; quoted from Alberti 1996, 88)

Margery Fry was concerned about peace issues yet she never felt comfortable to do only peace work. (Jones 1966, 123) Also she did not agree with peace by negotiation, because she thought so-called international co-operation looked very superficial. (Alberti 1966, 88) She chose to do something practical amidst the scenes of human sufferings during the First World War. She went to the Marne to help Quaker relief work and took care of

the organization of relief work in the Marne and Meuse region, as well as other parts of France, from 1915 to 1918. (Jones 1966, 94)

Ruth Fry and Peace

Ruth Fry's public activism was mainly concerned with the co-ordination of a project of relief work and the production of peace pamphlets. She applied her high idea of morality to the political area of international relations among European nations. Ruth mourned that 'War inspired men with a passion for co-operative destruction'. (Ruth Fry 1926, xix)

Ruth Fry asserted that Quaker humanitarianism was an expression of 'the spirit of love from man to man which refused to be turned into hatred at the bidding of Governments'. (1926, 302) She reported to *The Friend* when she visited France in 1915:

As to work and arrangements for women, Gulielma Crosfield and Edith Bigland propose to go out to Holland shortly to investigate, and stimulate the work. Thus the committee hopes that a more effective work for the benefit of the Refugees will be set on foot, under the management of the Dutch Committee, with some support from the Dutch Government.

Of all the sad sights we saw, I think that of Sermaice is the saddest. Formerly a prosperous little town of about 4,000 inhabitants with many villa residences, it is now a heap of broken bricks and twisted iron. (Ruth Fry *TF* 1915, 123)

It is exceedingly unfortunate that the relief work is being hindered by the impossibility of getting the goods sent from our warehouse through the customs in Paris.

My visit to all the centres was of necessity short, but I came away feeling that a very excellent beginning has been made, and that the work, whether medical, relief, or building, should do much to inspire these sorely stricken people with fresh courage, and go far to prove that those who will not fight will do their very best to heal. (Ruth Fry, "Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee", *TF* 1915, 124)

Ruth Fry visited Russia in 1925 during the great famine and reported to *The Friend* suggesting to promote mutual understanding and build up friendship between the two countries:

With the methods of change, no pacifist can be in accord, and we cannot wonder if one of the results of such a revolution is the hatred of other nations, for this is but the reaction to the methods employed. I think we can only respect and admire the decoration which is being shown in the attempt, although we differ so radically as to the means to be used.

To help to make a bridge between Russia and the West Friends alone, the Mennonites, student workers help other people to see that friendship and love are the only forces which can break down the ideas of forceful revolution? Everywhere the nations are suffering acutely from the disease, or rather the crime of fear, which perfect love only cast out. Can we show that not to fear, is to find there is nothing to fear?

Let us as a very minimum, work in every way possible for more intercourse and knowledge of each other between our two countries and for the friendship which ought to exist between all nations whatsoever. (Ruth Fry *TF* 1925, 198)

When Ruth Fry returned from a special mission of inquiry, on behalf of the Friends'

Council for International Service, she tried to help the refugees coping with the cessation of relief, and the coming of winter, death from cold and starvation:

In any case, until it has been brought to an end, peace-lovers cannot on the matter. At any rate we can show that Christians do not only fight, if we help to save from starvation the latest group of war victims. (Ruth Fry *TF* 1925, 769)

In 1925, returning from the Fifth International Peace Congress, she asserted the responsibility and role of Quaker pacifists again:

England sent only three delegates, and one wish is that next year a contingent of the Youth Movement could make its appearance. At last year, in London, the gathering was composed of delightfully diverse elements, from student and workpeople, to university professors, animate ladies in neat white trousers. Members of Parliaments and a lady of royal birth, mixed together with a freedom and friendship which we are accustomed to associate perhaps too exclusively with our own Society.

A Congress such as this emphasized yet once more in one's mind the conviction that peace can only be sought with any success, on a religious basis. This spirit alone can make and really seek to understand and appreciate the mentality and outlook of those who differ from them.

Although we, as Friends, often find that continental pacifist are not ready to go so far along the absolutist path as we desire, such a spirit helps very greatly to bridge the difference. (Ruth Fry *TF* 1925, 843)

Ruth proclaimed ‘the positive spirit of love which is necessary to man’s highest development’. (Ruth Fry 1926, xviii) She asserted relief work was based on the Quaker belief in the divine in everyone. She warned of a serious moral collapse which would produce hatred and evil passions. She claimed: ‘violence is not effective in producing good results, peace is not the result of war’. (Ruth Fry 1926, xviii)

Ruth Fry gave a speech promoting the international co-operation for the advance in the peace movement at the British Peacemakers’ Pilgrimage and the Mare Sangnier Congress at Bierville in 1927:

Close co-operation and tolerance of different views are essential. The pioneer spirits must be followed up by more moderate opinion, and that public opinion is built up out of a very great number of divergent elements. Let us illuminate this by special reference, and the peace movement in Great Britain the importance of the League of Nations Union which Friends overlook. The consolidation of the international peace movement remains to be done.

We know what sinister effect the news of what die-hards in one country think has on foreign opinion, and we need badly that this shall be counterbalanced by equal publicity for pacifist opinion. (Ruth Fry *TF* 1927, 10)

She condemned the Soviet Union for using violences:

The Anglo-Russian Relations were complicated by the Bolsheviks, who hold their view almost as a religion, and believe in the efficacy of force, peace lovers can only deplore. The Soviet beliefs in terrorism as a means of accomplishing the good of the

many, which form of force seems to them more potent than international war. (Ruth Fry *TF* 1927, 679)

She asserted that social intercourse was essential to mutual understanding: 'The mutual fear is ruining Anglo-Russian relations. Each side is genuinely afraid of the victory of the other's ideas, with consequences they feel sure would be disastrous. Such fear is useless, and is no protection.' (Ruth Fry *TF* 1927, 679) She suggested the visits of qualified observers as 'unofficial ambassadors', such as the Society for Cultural Relations, to learn about Russian non-political life to promote mutual understandings. (ibid)

Ruth confessed her belief in Christianity, that it inspired people with a passion for building a new world, and claimed that obedience to Christ's spiritual laws was essential to the continuance of the best of civilisation. (Ruth Fry 1926, xix) Despite the awful suffering she had to cope with during her relief work (Ruth Fry 1926), Ruth appreciated that she and her colleagues gained great happiness from relieving human suffering and helping people to regain their human dignity. She also could find a deep sense of comradeship in spite of demanding hard work and moral commitment during the years of relief work. (Ruth Fry 1926) After the First World War, Ruth co-operated with the 'No More War Movement' (NMWM). She wrote: 'Finally, the Council is to recommend what effective military, naval or air force members of the League shall contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenants of the League'. (Ruth Fry 1929, 4)

Ruth Fry's ideas of peace were rooted in her Quakerism. She wrote:

It is not only wrong to kill, and therefore all war is utterly outlawed by Christ's teaching, but it is equally wrong to prepare the ghastly instruments of torture and death, which we call armaments, for even the thought in our hearts of using them on our fellow children of God is as bad as actually doing so. (Ruth Fry, 'No! Not Safety First', 1937)

She asserted the law of peace:

No human relationships can be built on hatred and fear. Trust between nations is as imperative as between individuals, and our senseless search for security by threats must be changed to friendly co-operation if the world is to be saved. No. Selfishness has been glorified as patriotism, murder as sacrifice, and brutality as strength. (Ruth Fry 1936, 7)

She strongly proclaimed that in no condition could 'just war' be acceptable:

We must be willing to sacrifice for peace, as is done for war and truly any suffering would be worth while for delivering mankind from this hell of its own making. For what is the purpose of life? To live at the mercy of devilish machines or to found a fellowship of divine souls – there is no halting place between militarism and pacifism. (Ruth Fry 1936, 8)

Ruth was firmly against the constitution of an international force 'to bring pressure to bear upon a law-breaking nation as the policeman does on a law-breaking citizen':

The Formula <Armed Force> + <Pacific Settlement of Disputes> = Security cannot be solved, because the two terms are contradictory. Doing harm to others hurts ourselves

as much as it does them, and that even though we should like to force them to follow our dictates; we have little power to make them do so. (Ruth Fry 1934, 7)

At an address to a peace demonstration in Manchester on March 15th, 1936 she suggested the practice of non-violence: seeing how far it can be used as a definite alternative to force, and to live in the active belief that Love is the greatest power in the world. (Ruth Fry 1936, 14) She rejected the idea of the system of ‘collective security’, as it is ‘a political and not an ethical weapon’ (Ruth Fry *The Leagues’s Authority*, No More War Movement, 1926, 11), and asserted the ‘only chance to save the world is to kill fear by friendship.’ (Ruth Fry 1936, 7)

She asserted that peace is a practical policy attainable by friendly co-operation:

That peace can never be attained by preparing for, or engaging in, war, or by the possession of armaments. That peace is a practical, positive policy, which must be attained by friendly co-operation between the Nations, putting the good of all, before the selfish interests of each.

That because the soul of man is the temple of God, because the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God are facts, it cannot be right to torture, to maim, or to KILL our fellow-men. That if we desire to be followers of Him, who is, “ Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you,” it cannot be right to spend our money, our labour, and our brains, in devising means to injure our fellow-men. That if we believe that “all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them’, we cannot prepare arms, whose only purpose is to destroy and harm. That Pacifism must begin in our own lives: that we must not be quarrelsome or selfish, but

always patient and long-suffering, forgiving “till seventy times seven”. (Ruth Fry 1936)

Ruth’s ideas about peace were firmly based on religious and moral quality. She believed in the law of cause and effect and that only Love can save and fulfil our life. She urged our responsibility to end human-made misery, and championed the endeavour to make spiritual growth with the goal of achieving a more advanced level of life. She claimed: ‘According to the moral law of the Universe, evil brings evil as inevitably as effect follows cause. War breeds war and the vicious circle can only be broken by goodness.’ (Ruth Fry 1937, 3-6) In brief, Ruth Fry’s ideal on peace is goodness and love, which leads to human civilisation: ‘The positive spirit of love which is necessary to man’s highest development.’ (Ruth Fry 1926, xviii)

This rhetoric precisely shows her pacifism, ‘a way of love’:

Love is a force which burns up the bad in other people. Hatred and violence only feed the flame of evil. The magic of generosity is too often left out of life to the immense detriment of both sides. Not till we realise the spiritual significance of all matter rightly used, shall we truly make our whole life religious, or understand the wonderful richness of life here and now. Earth can sometimes come very near to heaven. (Ruth Fry 1926, xvii)

Ruth Fry also emphasized the importance of personal friendships in helping forward understanding when she was touring and giving speeches in the States for Anglo-American co-operation in 1924.

I was 99 days in the country and spoke 95 times in California, the middle West, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and New England. I had been threatened that the behavior of my English voice was an unknown quality, and from Angeles it was expected to be carried as far as Greenland. Personally, I found more antagonism to the idea of help to the German in the East than anywhere in the West, where the spirit of hatred did not seem to have taken such deep root and had more speedily passed away.

One of my most interesting experiences was of speaking to a Negro college in North Carolina, where the students were a very receptive audience and responded not only by singing their wonderful song of 'we won't study war no more', but by spontaneously taking up a collection for our funds. (Ruth Fry, 'Impressions of American Thought from East to West', *TF* 1924, 249)

It might appear that Ruth's pacifism and relief work was regarded as emotionally Utopian by a British society still suffering from xenophobia and a feeling of national revenge. However, it seems that she challenged the nationalism and imperialism of her time in her own way, which in turn was oriented towards her Quaker beliefs. Basically, Ruth relied on Christianity and Western civilization. For instance, in a pamphlet opposing the Boer War, she claimed that Great Britain was indeed 'carrying out a civilizing role in the area'. (Ruth Fry 1944, 5)

Her ideas of peace based in Christianity stood along with *The Friend's* 'A New Era for Christianity':

Christianity has not said its last word. It is a living that evolves, and we are at the beginning of a new era of Christianity in its international aspect. He spoke of many social evils that still remain, and that pacifism in its deepest sense could only be complete when men's consciences were educated. Christianity is not only a doctrine,

but it is a life the effort to learn to understand one another and make a common life. If we cultivate peace within ourselves, peace within our neighbours, we would help to build up a universal peace. (*TF* 1929, 928)

The War Resisters' International (WRI) appointed Ruth Fry as treasurer from 1936 to 1947. The WRI claimed that 'War is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all the causes of war.' (source unknown, quoted in Brock 1990, 110)

There were many other British women pacifists in 1914 included Maude Royden, Crystal Macmillan, Helena Swanwick, Margaret Ashton, Kathleen Courtney, Isabella Ford, Catherine Marshall, M.P. Stanbury, S. J. Tanner, Ethel Barton, Margaret Hills, C. C. Lyon, Lucy Deane Streatfield, Dr Ethel Williams, Eva Gore-Booth, Esther Roper, and Mrs Charlotte Despard, as well as Mary Sheepshanks, Sylvia Pankhurst, Hannah Mitchell, Ada Nield Chew, Selina Cooper, Ethel Derbyshire, Margaret Llewelyn Davies, Lillian Harris, Mary Agnes Hamilton, Vernon Lee, Irene Cooper Willis and Ottoline Morrell. (Oldfield 1984, 307) However, none of the Fry sisters was seen working closely with them.

Isabel, Margery, and Ruth Fry chose practical ways to help people during the war rather than 'pure' peace work. It was rooted to their concern for individual lives, political liberalism and liberal Quakerism. Even though Isabel Fry claimed to 'fight the enemy for the principle of liberty', (Isabel Fry 1915, 12) it was not easy for her, because she lost her circle of friends at the price of her claim. Yet, there are no clues to figure out more her feelings and emotions about this particular political decision and her Quakerism, even in her diary.

Alice Clark also took on the secretaryship of one of the subcommittees of the FWVRC overseeing the refugee work in France in 1915. (Holton 2007, 220) Though Alice, Hilda Clark and Edith Pye worked for the relief work, Hilda Clark complained about the inefficiency of the London office and Ruth Fry's poor management and if Ruth Fry had not had her family connections she would have been removed from the position. (Holton 2007, 220-221)

Ruth Fry became a leader of Quakers after her devoted commitment to the relief work for nine years from 1914 to 1923. Her pacifism was firmly rooted in Quaker 'testimony against all war', 'belief in the potentiality of the divine in all men-the Inner Light in every man'. (Ruth Fry 1926, xvii)

This section explored the Fry sisters's Quakerism and peace ideas. From their Quaker legacy their activism and concerns rooted in their Quaker belief in the Inner Light, yet when the First World War broke out, they answered the call in various ways as Quakers did. They responded following the dictates of their conscience, a third way to carry out their individual responsibility, 'an effort to give a positive expression of our faith in God and belief in mankind.' (Ruth Fry 1926, xx)

4.5. Personal Lives as Women

As prominent women the Fry sisters had atypical lives. As an intellectual, educationist or leader of Quakers, they led independent, unmarried lives. It appears that they could

fully focus on their political lives and concentrate their energy on their work and they fulfilled their lives. Yet it is not that simple as they had personal lives and also a certain level of life as women. This section explores their experience and sensitivity as women.

Isabel Fry

In her essay on childhood memory, she recalled her traumatic experience of low self-confidence due to her mother. This narrative shows very different images of the activist Lady Fry and Isabel Fry:

But in spite of their isolation and solitude most children are blest with an intuitive sense of confidence in 'Mother,' a sort of blind trust, which believes that though they are powerless to ask it, mother's help will always be forthcoming. This was just what was peculiarly lacking during the first three or four years of my childhood. One circumstance, that during those years my mother was more or less of an invalid, told almost fatally against my natural trust in her; and until my mother got better, any original shy confidence that I had, lay undeveloped within me...The very names of 'invalid' bears with it still to my mind a feeling of undefined dread, which I can distinctly trace to the first misty childish imaginings, connected with my mother...My mother's manner was such as comes with the schooling of suffering and weakness in sensitive natures. It was refined and gentle to a degree which puzzled and alarmed me.

(Isabel Fry 1895, 3-5)

Isabel Fry once wrote about sex, 'the sex edifice for me might have been one solid block of nothing!' (source unknown, quoted in Brown 1960, 141) It seems she poured her whole life energy into her enthusiasm to serve, and had a fear about fields absolutely unknown to her. It appears that she was concerned with caring for children in her schools

rather than other things. Brown reflected that Isabel Fry had a very strong sense of integrity and never allowed herself to fail to do her work properly. (1960, 35) Brown claimed that Isabel was constantly tortured by self-blame for everything: she was such an alert person that she was deeply concerned and cared for the lives of all she knew and for all living creatures. (1960, 35) However, sometimes, she confessed her frustrations:

I cannot make out why people are so usually dull. There seems no real satisfactory reason for it. I think it is due to the fact that most people like to wear what other people do, whether it suits them or not, and as this habit consists very largely of proprieties, common-sense and a minus quantity of anything which could possibly really interest anyone, the result is naturally a very dull set of common-place men. I am sure that my own entire stupidity and un-interestingness comes very largely from this, that I will not take the trouble to let my own nature show itself; - it is so much easier to put on this cloak of un-eccentricity than to remember what I am really made of. I think there is some hope for me, though I know it will need a good deal of trouble. Still I think it is worth that. And I think that the fact that I am dull and uninteresting is a step in the right direction. (Isabel Fry 16 Jan, 1918, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

Brown speculated that Isabel sometimes had been a victim of 'self-blame' due to her own perfectionism. (Brown 1960, 33) She seemed to have had developed her awareness of moral duty much more than most people. In her diary of October 1913, she wrote of her personal feelings:

Whenever I have time to think and realise my personal status, an almost unbearable sense of the failure and disappointment of my life fills me. Then my inclination is to

rush into fresh affairs, fresh society, so as to drown the feeling. (Isabel Fry 5 Oct, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

She found it difficult to fulfil her responsibilities in her work as well. She wrote:

I felt that I had not managed to give myself as fully as I wanted. Things around me clutch me, they make the air breathe and it is difficult to have this without being boring. In the term I live too much in my children that it is sometimes difficult to put them aside and let other things come in. Also I have so many purely personal relationships and these are incommunicable in short words. (Isabel Fry 25 Nov, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

An old Mayortorne pupil, Anne Gratton, recalled that Isabel had shown unbreakable faith and compassion to her charges. (Brown 1960, 38) Brown praised Isabel's life as being one without wasted time or energy. (Ibid) Every moment she lived deeply and did her best and gave her genuine energy of affection for other people. Isabel was always focusing on 'concern' in the Quaker terms. Even though she had resigned from the Quakers in 1913 (Brown 1960, 49), she reflected on her life as a Quaker:

Quakerism, like any unorthodox creed, set people apart. There are two almost opposite sources of satisfaction – that of belonging to the herd and that of not belonging to it and not wishing to. In the latter case the aloofness must be supported by an assurance of superiority, felt, it may be, only unconsciously. In my own life I have had comparatively rare periods of the first type of satisfaction... I have been outside the herd and too often, in later life, without much of the compensation of sharing the warm comradeship of a complacent minority. (Isabel Fry 'Being Quakers', n.d., quoted in Brown 1960, 132)

Brown claimed that 'Isabel identified with Quakerism by nature as it was so firmly in her bones'. (1960, 132) Isabel had once seen an evangelical revivalist mission tent within sight of her house, but found that their message meant nothing to her. She thought that Evangelicalism seemed a servants' religion; 'the chapel-goers were of lower social rank and the Church provided a separate place of worship for the servants.' (Isabel Fry 'Being Quakers', n.d., quoted in Brown 1960, 133)

It appears that Isabel had sensitive feelings about personal matters as well as political issues here and there in her diary. For instance, Isabel resented failure in the matter of relationships in general. In 1913 she tried to adopt a girl from working class family, but the attempt was rejected. After that incident she suffered from depression for a while. Isabel confessed herself how difficult life was in her diary:

During these weeks, since coming back to town I have been suffering with quite an unusual sense of depression. I believe it is because coming back here makes me realise how fruitless my efforts have been in getting me any good work. Take me away from this particular environment which is so painful to me-it seems as though every thing repeats the burden of my unwantedness and prisoned- in less to the old, old pain. (Isabel Fry 12 Oct, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

However, she never expressed her painful feelings to others:

I know now that it is always there, underneath and I have taken a resolution to try to conceal the feeling as much as (possible?) from everybody. One has no business to spread pain, - and I hardly know, sometimes whether I have any right to consider that

I have any more pain than every one else has – my just and proper share of the world's sorrow-. (Isabel Fry 5 Oct, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

As a kind of perfectionist she appeared never to allow herself to be easy-going and had high expectation of humanity: 'the pessimist is overwhelmed. And I think the real pessimist do so wrong to continue to accept an existence. He contemns. By not ending it he probably writes himself down a coward as well.' (Isabel Fry 3 Oct, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

Isabel Fry was discomforted with the Post-Impressionists, while Margery shared Roger's artists friends and the Omega life-style. She wrote:

Tonight I went down to Bedford College to try- vainly to see Sabiha- (the Turkish student) or Meta Tuke- I went for a minute into Beatri Orange's room (she too was out) and suddenly realized that I hate the Post-Impressionists- She had a cushion, evidently a product of the Omega, meaningless, haunting, ugly, showing, and – worst of all from my own point of view, of poor technique. I fancy I care for technique more than I ought but this is worse than it ought! I wish I didn't feel like this towards- work. It makes me feel miserable, the more so as I know how important it is to artists to feel the appreciation of their world. Often I feel like saying 'Art and artists be hanged' – they seem to ask so much and gives me so little and yet, and yet the world without the art that really counts to me a started place. But pseudo-art- I think that may go hang – and there's a lot about. But which is it? (Isabel Fry 6 Oct, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

As for her sensitivity an episode was written in her diary:

Malinowski came and read his 3rd lecture on religion. His theory is on developing and becoming more suggestive of still hardly convincing. He criticized me today as not being quite free of what I myself dislike – a kind of whimsical artificial style of conversation. I pleaded that I often made attempts to reach other people by imitating their style of conversation, but he very charmingly urged that one's own honesty to oneself but- one nearer than anything else. (Isabel Fry 21 Nov, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY)

Isabel Fry appears as a woman of strong self-confidence who strived to achieve her own goal of integrity and perfection of morality from the every edge of institutionalised and conventional life. She never allowed herself just to follow majority without self-censorship.

Margery Fry

It seems that Margery had a very independent mind. She wrote a book titled *The Single Woman* in 1953. The book reflects her thoughts on marriage and her belief that the single life was a way of life that allowed her to focus on her own concerns. (Margery Fry 1953)

At twenty-seven Margery had a chance to get married with a liberal-minded fellow of New College, Oxford, who was fifteen years her elder and who recognized her maturity. (Jones 1966, 58) Margery eventually decided that her affection for her friend was not 'the real thing' and ended their relationship: She said to a Somervillian friend, 'How bitter it is when the very thing you long for is offered you in a form that you can't accept'. (Jones 1966, 60) When Margery reached thirty-six, she confirmed to her mother, who worried about her lonely life, that she was 'extra well suited to a single life'. (Jones 1966, 89) At thirty-eight she wrote:

I often think...that the knowledge of a sympathetic ear makes me not tell you the happiest side of life... there are so few, if any, people I would really change with if I got the chance. ... For one thing, I think my work really suits me very well, for another I do enjoy the feeling of freedom to shape my own destinies which after all is a big advantage. And I think with me life gets pleasanter as I get older, one gets more friends and more outlets, and perhaps more feeling of being wanted... (quoted from Jones 1966, 89)

Margery was aware of ‘a unconscious cruelty in the way the world thinks of spinsters in monogamous society.’ (Margery Fry 1953, 8) Also, she knew well how family structure demanded women’s physical, mental, emotional energy and life energy for it. Margery asserted gender politics and women’s education. (Margery Fry 1953, 18-19) Margery was quite conscious of the situations affecting unmarried women of her day—unmarried women from all social backgrounds. Margery focused on the education of girls in order to support the condition of unmarried, widowed and divorced single women, and was engaged in education for almost her whole life:

The education of girls must always aim at keeping in view the two answers which Fate may give to the question. If the answer proves to be that she will not get married a woman must face, as middle-age comes on, a rather different place in the world from that of those who still foresee a future family of their own. (Margery Fry 1953, 20)

Margery emphasized ‘the deep happiness of real friendship’. She strongly suggested keeping up of friendship for single life: ‘I do beg all the single women who listen to me,

old and young (and not only the single women) to cherish their friendships.’ (Margery Fry 1953, 39) She gave a gentle advice:

So many are allowed to die for want of a little care. For some reason which I have never quite understood, the letter unwritten or the visit unpaid for a long while becomes almost impossible to make or to write, and because of a little laziness, or perhaps a little hurt pride, or just the difficulty of finding the re-opening words, a real happiness is allowed to slip out of two lives. The keeping up of friendship is a real insurance for old age. (Margery Fry 1953, 39-40)

Margery was especially close to her brother Roger. Roger and Margery shared a Victorian house on the Dalmeny Avenue, Camden Town in London in order to support Roger’s children and work for the Howard League in 1919-1926. (Jones 1966, 109-10) Roger had married Helen Combe, a brilliant artist of his art group, in 1896; soon after, however, their two children were born Helen suffered from a disease caused by brain ossification. (Woolf 1940) In 1906 Roger was invited to become curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. While Roger stayed in the States, after over ten years of being cared for at home, Helen was sent to an asylum in 1910. Here she lived for thirty years after Roger’s death. (Woolf 1940) Roger exclaimed in August 1914, he felt ‘like living in a bad dream’, and ‘I hoped never to live to see this mad destruction of all that really counts in life. We were just beginning to be a little civilised and now it’s all to begin to over again. But we are all entrapped in the net of a heartless bureaucracy’. (Woolf 1940, 200) He said ‘his life had been full of bad dreams’. (Woolf 1940, 201) After a long and gloomy married life, Roger worked and lived with Vanessa Bell, Virginia Woolf’s artist sister at the Omega Workshop, the icon of Bloomsbury Art from 1913. However, Vanessa eventually decided to leave Roger and live in Charleston with

Duncan Grant, with whom she shared an artistic passion. Roger suffered deep hurt for a long time after Vanessa Bell ended their relationship. (Sutton 1972) Jones described Margery as having very sensitive emotions, as she wrote that she suffered more from it herself than most people would guess when Roger's friendship with Vanessa failed him. (1966, 130)

Roger Fry also struggled on in the Omega Workshop, in Fitzroy Square where he introduced the spirit of fun into furniture and fabrics in the Bloomsbury style. (Jones 1966, 128) In these days Margery stayed with Roger at the Omega Workshop and they shared emotional support with each other. Margery confessed that this was the happiest moment in her life, and that she felt fulfilled with a security of love in the Omega home life. Margery established contacts with artists, and travelled to Greece with Roger, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf by car. (Jones 1966, 127) There the friends painted doors and fireplaces in flowing patterns for fun. She shared much with Roger's artist and writer friends. (Jones 1966, 128)

Margery also shared an artistic sensibility with Roger, which Isabel did not. (Sutton 1972, Isabel Fry 6 Oct, 1913, Institute of Education Archive, GB0366FY) Once Roger wrote:

Both Margery and I always feel that we were born there –Provence- because of their feelings of a tribute, a kind of passion, falling in love with their culture of pagan, classlessness, every peasant was an individual, a more civilised human being than the citizens of Paris, Berlin or London, a centre of sanity and civilisation. (original source unknown, quoted in Woolf 1940, 282)

Margery seemed never to have ‘expressed her deep sorrow or grief in the presence of others’. (Jones 1966, 130) A graphologist interpretation of Margery’s writing stated that she had:

Immense personal value, great practical ability, extraordinary consciousness of her own and other people’s forces. A little too much introspection but corrected by mental quickness and physical activity. Possibility of unhappiness but corrected by balance of mind and sense of humour. Wonderful truth and frankness of expression. Fearless in every sense. Freedom from self-consciousness. Splendid values of every kind- a real personality. But she must be careful to have some real gaiety in her life. It is her protection – necessary to insure her continued strength, usefulness and happiness. She narrowly escaped at one time being a very unhappy person but was cured by ideality and common sense which form the balance so perceptible in her character. She will never change, you will find her just the same when she ought to be an old woman. (quoted in Jones 1966, 131)

The specimen seemed to give information about Margery Fry’s personality of a perfectionist. Margery came back to live in Birmingham with Rose Sidgwick, a lecturer in history at the University of Birmingham, at the end of 1917. Margery had been asked to visit America as a member of the British Universities Mission but with the death of her father, Sir Edward Fry in October 1918, Margery felt she could not accept the invitation. (Jones 1966, 108) Rose Sidgwick and Caroline Spurgeon, who worked at Bedford University, went to America: Spurgeon was, in fact, the first woman English Professor in British university history, inspired and encouraged her friends to work together for the formation of the International Federation of University Women, whose office remains in Geneva today. As a result of their enthusiastic efforts, representatives of sixteen countries

were present at the first conference which was held at Bedford College in London. (Jones 1966, 108) Rose, however, was unable to return to England. She died of influenza in the United States in November 1918, at which time Roger and Margery found a house to share in London. Rose had intended to stay with them. (Jones 1966, 93, 161) Margery and Rose seemed to be very close friends, but it is impossible to find out more about their friendship.

During the post-World War I period, séances were something of a fashion among women. (Jones 1966, 107) Yet Margery was strongly against spiritualism. When they lost Sir Edward Fry, Lady Fry visited spiritualist meetings, yet still that did not affect her religious belief. (Jones 1966, 107)

To sum up, Margery was an independently minded intellectual, having friendship with pioneering Somervillians. During the First World War she joined Quaker relief work and took care of the organization of relief work in the Marne and Meuse region, as well as other parts of France, from 1915 to 1918. (Jones 1966, 94) She left Quakerism in 1932 because ‘she could not make the affirmation which membership implied.’ (Fairn 1958, 540) Still she regarded herself as a Quaker, even though not a ‘good Quaker’ as she wrote in a letter (Margery Fry Papers, University of Birmingham Special Collection, OJL149), and Quakers and others remember her as a Quaker. (TF 1958, 539-40) Especially, Margery gave an insight for theorising women’s friendships and its formation, maintenance and its relations to single life.

Ruth Fry

It appears that Ruth Fry's Quaker upbringing affected her personal and political life. It seems that due to her valuable friendship and blood ties she maintained she could carry on her concern despite of her delicate health.

Ruth Fry valued the feminine quality based on mothering and caring for life as the natural female dispositions of patience and sensibleness. Ruth claimed that 'Between the nation and the individual that is to say, we women choose the individual'. (Ruth Fry 1939, 3) Because every human being has a spiritual essence and a special position for the Universe, Ruth maintained, the necessity of sacrificing the few to save the majority was totally against any claim based on each single life. (Ibid)

Ruth suggested that British women could find a better way than struggling to realise a vision of an army-less world. She claimed that 'Women will feel the immense importance of cultivating truth in regard to international problems'. (Ruth Fry 1940, 7) Ruth stressed women's spiritual power, their intuition, their extraordinary commitment and self-sacrifice. She expected women to lead the peace movement, because, she believed in the spiritual superiority of women. (Ibid)

She asserted her faith in spiritual growth: 'inherent desire for freedom for unhampered spiritual development, which is man's highest need.' (Ruth Fry 1936, 119) In her *The Way of Love* (Ruth Fry 1935, 5), she asserted her Quaker belief:

What we do really need to fear is being false to our Inner Light, to the vision of Christianity as it should be. For if we do believe Christ's laws, we know that Love can overcome evil and it alone can do so. (Ruth Fry, An armistice day's address at a meeting

at the Central Hall, Westminster, November 11th, 1935, under the auspices of the Christian Pacifist Group)

Her belief in Christian pacifism led her life as a leader in Quakerism and peace movement onwards.

4.6. Chapter Summary

In this chapter the lives of three Quaker women activists from a prominent Quaker family were examined. The Fry sisters appear to have been brought up differently from average women, receiving an education whose range and depth was beyond that which would have been offered even to contemporary males. The sisters shared the benefit of education, resources and training from their family legacy. Their mother, Lady Fry, was active in social concerns throughout her life. Their father, Sir Edward Fry was a supporter of the Quaker Renaissance as a weighty Quaker. (Kennedy 2001, 115) As liberals, the Frys pursued causes that were associated with the dignity of individuals.

The Fry sisters all resisted unjust and unreasonable human misery. They chose relief work during the First World War as a witness to their faith. Their work never proved easy for them, and it was hard for them to watch human suffering. Ruth worked with the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee during the First World War and its aftermath. For Margery, it was totally unacceptable for her to engage only in peace work. She devoted to organize relief work in France during the War. In the case of Isabel Fry, she circulated her pamphlet opposing Quaker peace policy at the outbreak of the War,

something that ultimately cost her her circle of contacts. Isabel left the Religious Society of Friends.

Although Isabel and Margery left the Religious Society officially, yet they were still involved in Quaker witness and activism and remained as a Quaker in spirit for their whole lives. Despite the extended archival research, it was not possible to trace whether the Fry sisters discussed with each other their different approach to peace issues and relief work. Ruth Fry's pacifism was rooted in a belief in goodness and the spirit of love, a spirit, which refused to be turned into hatred, and her purpose in life was to find a fellowship of divine souls.

Chapter 5

THE POLITICAL AND THE PERSONAL IN CONTEXT

5.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the wider context for the Quakerism, pacifism, political activism and personal lives of Isabella Ford and the Fry sisters. Section 5.2 analyses their personal lives and the nature of their friendships, which sustained their political and personal lives amidst the culture of feminist Friends and pacifism in the early twentieth century. Section 5.3 analyses their different approaches to war and peace and their depth of concern for pacifism. Section 5.4 analyses the diversity and complexity of their activism and their Quakerism.

5.2. Personal Lives and Friendship

Many historians and sociologists of the women's movement have explored women's friendship and examined its relation to feminism. (Stanley 1985, 1986, 1992, Hannam 1989, Levine 1990) Drawing upon the previous scholarship of O'Donnell and Holton about Quaker Women and their friendship, (O'Donnell 1996, Holton 2005) this section analyses how these four women sustained their emotional and spiritual life and their

everyday practice. It argues that their singleness and friendship formed a kind of alternative life-style of upper-middle class Quaker women and informal networks of women leadership in the early twentieth century. It also examines whether any other form of support developed as a kind of subculture of progressive Quaker women in the period.

As explored in Chapter 3, Isabella Ford described meaningful friendships between women in her socialist novel *On the threshold*. In reality, Isabella cherished lifelong friendships and had a close ‘web of friendship’ (Stanley 1985) with socialist feminist pacifists, such as Charlotte Despard, Katharine Bruce Glasier, Margaret Bondfield and Catharine Marshall. (Stanley 1985, 38) This group of friends worked together for a new organization, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 1915 to stop the war. (Hannam 1989, 173) Olive Schreiner was also one of her close friends in personal and political term. Isabella Ford was one of only three visitors in three weeks when Schreiner was an invalid in London in 1914. (Hannam 1989, 167) Isabella made a public tribute to her loss at the third International Congress of the WILPF in Vienna in 1921, praising her courage and their solidarity for peace and justice. (Hannam 1989, 196-7) The web of friendship was based on sharing political values and emotional support.

Isabella Ford also had life-long friendship with Edward Carpenter from before the formation of the Fellowship of the New Life. They shared a vision of the new life and cared for each other, such as at the time of Bessie’s death. Their socialism was based on the belief in human progress towards democratic relationships; democratic comradeship: Carpenter idealized the concept of love to argue that people could accept and honour each other’s own personality between the classes and between the sexes. (Rowbotham and

Weeks 1977, 35) As Beith claimed, to Carpenter the word 'democracy' meant 'a thing of the heart rather than a political creed', (Beith 1985, 11-12) it also seems that it meant the same to Isabella. However, there is no further evidence to indicate whether they also discussed 'intermediate sex', heterosexual love, homosexuality and masculine oriented socialist culture, and their different positions towards England's entry into the war. For example, Carpenter stressed that emotional love could be developed into spiritual union on the basis of the physical union, (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, 139-86) however, there is no indication that they discussed this matter.

Schreiner wrote to Carpenter of her disappointment at the masculine world of love from which women were alienated, and the male members' patriotism, and discussion of sexual love, and of emotional and intellectual levels or relationship. (Stanley 2002, Berkman 1989, Livesey 2007) As seen in Carpenter's description of the 'intermediate sex'; 'His affection, too, is feminine in character, clinging, dependent and jealous, as of one desiring to be loved almost more than to love' (Carpenter 1896, 126-27), it is not surprising that the highly motivated and intelligent women members in that group felt somewhat distanced from the male leaders in the matter of subjectivity.¹

It is widely accepted that women's friendship with women is fundamentally important to most women for their emotional and social and psychological health. (Symes 1999, 5) Women's friendship means sharing and mutual support. It is said to be based on mutual 'loyalty', 'trust' and 'affection' in women's friendship. (Ibid) However, it is worth

¹ On the male-oriented socialist culture of that group, Bush claims that Edith Lees shared her husband Havelock Ellis's eugenic beliefs and his biological determinism, and pronounced that 'the normal woman is maternal'. (Bush 2007, 45) Brandon also is interested in Edith Lees's views on maternity, how she 'wanted to be properly and totally married' and how she mourned her childless state. (Brandon 1991, 101, 107)

considering theoretically. Ruth Symes argues that women's emotional friendships are not fully understood yet. She claims that meanings of reciprocity, mutuality, trust, and understanding are not universal. (Symes 1999, 69) And she also criticizes those aspects of women's friendships which are expected to translate to other forms of relationship but which remain under-explained. (Symes 1999, 70) She warns about romanticizing the ability of individuals to establish and maintain a 'pure relationship'. (Symes 1999, 72)

Some feminist scholars explore idealised women's friendships with women in their historical contexts. (Levine 1990, Stanley 1992) Drawing out Heloise Brown's notion of women's friendship, friendship means 'shared affection and concern, shared experiences and beliefs, selflessness, self-sacrifice and a supporter.' (Brown 1999, 143-4) So the idea requires the premise of an individual's ability to choose levels of living and perception. Not only Isabella's caring personality, but also her deep concern should be emphasised when examining her friendships.

The four women in this thesis seemed to be content with their single life. Isabella Ford obviously put her concern for meaningful life before conventional marriage, and she delivered that idea in her novel *On the Threshold*. Isabel Fry once had a chance get married, but when she missed the chance she felt her life a failure for a little while. (Isabel Fry GB0366FY) Margery Fry might accept marriage if the 'real thing' happened to her life, but it did not happen to her life. She looked up her father and brother as ideal men. (Jones 1966) Not much is known about the personal life of Ruth Fry, except she was shy and delicate in her health, and her friendship with Lady Gibb was a great relief for her when she was exhausted with her constant activity. (Canter 1962, 524-5) Alison Oram challenges the popular representations of the spinster as unfulfilled and sexually

repressed that featured in early twentieth-century sexology and psychology. (1992, 413-34) She argues against these representations and maintains that feminist doctors in the inter-war period used psychological theories of sublimation in a feminist appropriation of psycho-sexual ideas to assert that spinsters could lead a complete and happy life through work and female friendships. (Oram 1992, 413)

Faderman researched women's friendship from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. (1981) She suggests that one example of how women friends felt about their friendships in the nineteenth century was that women : 'were sober and industrious, and most of all, they were capable of enduring a self-sacrificing friendship.' (Faderman 1981, 150) To be willing to involve oneself in a totally committed female friendship was an indication of the seriousness of one's moral character, it seems. Especially, Isabella Ford maintained many life-long friendships with her comrades and close relationship with her blood sisters, sharing emotional and practical support with each other. Isabel Fry maintained broad friendships and a special friendship with a Turkish educationist with whom she worked and lived together at her experimental schools. Margery Fry mainly had friends with the same educational background and they pursued a professional career together when the chance was very rare to women. Their friendships were possible because they shared the purpose of their life. The quality of their friendship seemed close to the intensity of a 'Boston marriage' time to time in their life. Besides their friendship with female friends they also had blood sisters with whom they could share their concern and live together sometimes in their life. It was possible from their family background, which enabled them to be highly educated and they learned from their travelling and shared their experiences.

After Henry James, Faderman defines the term 'Boston Marriage as a long-term monogamous relationship between two unmarried women in late nineteenth-century New England.' (Faderman 1981, 190) The women involved were normally financially independent of men, usually feminists, often pioneers in a profession. These women spent their lives primarily with other women, they gave to other women the bulk of their energy and attention, and they formed powerful emotional ties with other women, regardless of the level of any sexual interests. (Faderman 1981, 190) They provided each other with love and stability. She claims that expression of such a love was a common and appropriate behaviour in the nineteenth century, and that it was quite normal for two women to spend most of their lives together. In the twentieth century, she argues, however, attitudes seem to change, meaning that it suddenly regarded as less acceptable, even abnormal, in spite of the fact that nothing about the nature of the relationship had changed. (Faderman 1981, 197)

There is little proof if any that the friendships of the women treated in this thesis were of the intensity and duration to be considered a 'Boston marriage', but there are some cases of prominent Quaker women activists having life-long devoted friends and comrades. As they seemed to have lived together for a long time, for example in the case of Hilda Clark and Edith Pye for twenty years (Spielhofer 2001), so they devoted complete attention to their work, travelled together, and shared interests in books and people. They worked together their whole adult lives, dedicating themselves to relief work during and after the two World Wars and also for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Save the Children Fund. (Spielhofer 2001) They lived together in a house near the Clark shoe factory when they returned to Somerset and were buried together in the Quaker graveyard. From an interview and visit with Petronella Clark, whose great-

aunt was Hilda Clark, I have been unable to trace any formal request or statement of intention that the women should be buried alongside each other—it may have come about because of some express wish, or because others knew of their close friendship or by chance.

Bernard Canter wrote in his obituary to Ruth Fry that she lived together with Lady Gibb for many years at Thorpeness in Suffolk and shared her gaiety and that ‘it was a terrible blow to Ruth when she lost her’. (Canter 1962, 525) It seems that their friendship was based on practical and emotional support.

As Henry James’s term ‘Boston marriage’ meant ‘a union of souls’ (Faderman 1981, 191), it was assumed to refer to a loving relationship between asexual women. A strong bond of emotional support kept relationships of this kind alive and fulfilled. Faderman explores the passionate and intense friendship between Lenore and Yvette in Russian-German novelist Elisabeth Dauthendey’s *Of the New Woman and Her Love: A Book for Mature Minds* in 1900. (Faderman 1981, 252) In the novel, Lenore is fed up with disappointing relationships with men and desperately searches for a perfect woman to share her life. In the nineteenth century many middle-class women *seemingly* preferred to ignore or deny genital sex. (Ibid) By the early twentieth century, however, influenced largely by the sexologists, love between women was becoming identified with disease, insanity, and tragedy. (Ibid) Genital love between women became a condition for which women were advised to visit a doctor and have both a physical and mental examination. (Ibid)

Faderman argues that in nineteenth century when birth control methods were not terribly effective and birth rates were high, there was a sense that unrestrained sexual activity was dangerous:

To love a man meant pain and burdens and potential death since middle and upper-class women were separated from men not only in their daily occupations, but in their spiritual and leisure interests as well. With other females a woman inhabited the same sphere, and she could be entirely trusting and unrestrained. She could share sentiment, her heart – all emotions that manly males had to repress in favour of ‘rationality’ – with other female. And regardless of the intensity of the feeling that might develop between them, with another woman she didn’t need to fear losing her chastity and reputation and health. (Faderman 1981, 159)

In view of this, it must have taken an unusual amount of strength and maturity to manage their relationship, as shown in Alice Greene’s letters, for example. (Bartham 2007) Perhaps their lives as independent women with serious concerns towards the issues of the world helped them to develop those qualities, and to see themselves as healthy and productive and natural, despite society’s assessment of their lifestyles. During Olive Schreiner’s stay in England from 1914 to 1920, the friends closest to her were Betty Molteno and Alice Greene. Both were Quakers who had lived in South Africa and who shared their attitudes towards war and peace. (Stanley 2002, 40) When they stayed together in South Africa they engaged in the movement against the Boer war, and became good friends. They also supported Gandhi and the Indian passive resistance movement in South Africa. In those days South Africa became more and more militant towards its non-white population. Schreiner became aware of this and in her *Trooper Peter* described

the turmoils in what were then Mataberland and Mashonaland and which became later parts of the two Rhodesias and then Zimbabwe and Zambia. (Stanley 2002, 40)

Elizabeth M. (Betty) Molteno (1852–1927) came from a very prominent South African family. Her father, Sir John, was the first Prime Minister of the Cape colony, and her brother was the first Speaker of the South African Parliament. (Bartham 2007) Betty became principal of a girls' school in Port Elizabeth, but she was forced to leave her job because she supported Emily Hobhouse (1860-1926) in her opposition of the Anglo-Boer War. Emily Hobhouse had visited the concentration camps in South Africa where Boer women and children were confined, which directly led her to campaign against the Anglo-Boer War. Her uncle, Lord Arthur Hobhouse, was a Law Member of the Council of the Government of India and later of the Privy Council. She was disappointed that the Boers joined with the British South Africans to oppress the Indians after the war. (Stanley 2006)

Alice Greene's uncle was head of the Admiralty in Britain. Her brother, principal of a public school in Britain, was father of Graham Greene, the famous novelist. She was vice-principal of the school in Port Elizabeth of which Miss Molteno was principal. Both women opposed the Boer War and were campaigners for the women's suffrage. (Barham 2007)

Alice Greene's relationship with Elizabeth Molteno lasted over thirty years approximately from 1889 in South Africa right up to Alice's death in Britain. Their intimate relationship seems to have been initiated around 1889 judging by their correspondence. (Barham 2007, 603-605) Alice wrote that their relations were based on

'loyalty and trust and whole-hearted devotion'. (Barham 2007, 616) The documentary resources do not allow us to find out how they resolved difficulties in their relationship. In any event, their relationship lasted until Alice's death from breast cancer in Cornwall in January 1920: Molteno moved to Hampstead and survived until 1927. (Barham 2007, 630-32)

O'Donnell has uncovered one such intimate relationship between feminist Friends in Newcastle. (O'Donnell 1999) Anna Maria Priestman supported her beloved friend, Mary Grace Taylor to be able to gain access to higher education in Newham College, Cambridge. (O'Donnell 1999, 295) The women involved supported each other's work, offering emotional, intellectual and spiritual sustenance. They relied on and encouraged each other to challenge for fulfilment of their meaningful life, which included better education, care and service for others and spiritual growth. They were devoted to each other and were thoroughly committed to each other. (Ibid)

Despite extensive archival research, there are no resources to indicate that the Fry sisters worked closely with other Quaker women and formed friendship networks similar to those outlined by Stanley's research on feminist friendship networks including that of Isabella Ford (Stanley 1985), nor like Holton's research on Quaker women's friendship networks. (Holton 2005) Canter wrote that Margery lived two floors down the same house as Ruth in the last part of her life. (Canter 1962, 524) The Fry sisters appear to have relied mainly on each other and kinship more generally, sharing concerns and living and working together occasionally rather than friendship networks.

To sum up, the contents and extents of the friendship networks of these four women were varied. Both Isabella Ford and the Fry sisters were financially independent through their family legacy. They also benefited from strong emotional and practical support from their siblings and built up reliable friendships for their lifetime, sharing their political affiliation and/or mutual support. Isabella Ford appears to have had a more extensive friendship networks alongside her political activism. These upper-middle-class Quaker women were atypical among Quaker women, yet they shared a kind of common sub-culture through kinship and family background alongside friendship networks.

5.3. Pacifism and the First World War

This section explores these four women's ideas on peace and their choices at the outbreak of the First World War. It argues that Quaker women were as divided over the First World War as Quaker men. The four women presented diverse political choices and practice. Especially, Isabella Ford's warning of England's imperialist greed shows extreme contrast with Isabel Fry's pro-war rhetoric. This section also argues that Quakerism was permissive and did not disown those who did not follow the Quaker Peace Testimony.

In 1912, London Yearly Meeting accepted 'Our Testimony for Peace'. This document asserted that 'War, with the whole military system, is contrary to the Spirit of God whose name is Love'. (LYM 1912, 114, quoted in Kennedy 2001, 309) In 1915, the Yearly Meeting confirmed the Quaker 'Peace Testimony from the earliest days of Quaker history to the present as the very heart of Quaker faith', (LYM 1915, 112-13, quoted in

Kennedy 2001, 318) I refer to these Yearly Meeting statements and minutes as the 'official' Quaker view. I use the term 'unofficial' to refer to local and individual Quakers views and activity.

At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Friends responded to the situation in various ways, depending on each person's conscience. The majority supported the War and the fight against the enemy to defend their own country, whereas the minority were pacifists. (Kennedy 2001, 351-5) This latter group included absolutists, who were against all war and military systems. These were men of military age who refused to register at all and were imprisoned. Of about 1,700 absolutists who rejected any alternative form of war work, 145 men were Quakers. (Hirst 1926, 538) There were also 'alternativists', who opposed the war, but who sought to aid the wounded, typically through serving with the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU). Out of over 1500 men, fewer than half of the FAU membership was Quaker. Twenty members lost their lives, nine being killed by shellfire or air raids, the others dying from illness contracted on the front. (Hirst 1923, 502) (see also Chapter 2, 2.3 and Chapter 4, 4.4.) British Friends officially provided alternatives for young Friends by establishing the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) in 1914 and unofficially, supporting the FAU. (Kennedy 2001, 315)

Female Friends were also divided during the First World War. A minority of female pacifist Friends supported CO and the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF). Some female Friends worked for the FWVRC to help the sufferers from the war in foreign countries 'to give an expression of their faith'. (Ruth Fry 1924, xx)

Contrary to Ruth, Margery, and Isabel Fry, Isabella Ford was opposed to recruiting women for war relief work as she claimed it could 'never satisfy women who wanted to take action to secure peace'. (Hannam 1989, 166) Instead, she was involved in the 'No More War Movement' (NMWM) in 1913, the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF), 1914-1919, and the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), which was formed in November 1914. She worked with Ramsay MacDonald, the chairman of the ILP, C.P. Trevelyan, Norman Angell, E. D. Morel and Arthur Ponsonby, the radical liberals, to end the war. Their strategy was to secure peace by negotiation. (Hannam 1989, 166) Isabella Ford, as a socialist feminist, saw the cause of war as capitalist greed, and, as an internationalist pacifist, she sought peace by negotiation. This position and her pacifism was supported by her liberal Quaker belief in human evolution and innate goodness, that of God in everyone, and the Inward Light. However, she did not involve herself in the Socialist Quaker Society (SQS) or, not surprisingly given the above critique, Quaker relief work.

Isabella Ford was an active campaigner against the First World War and frequently attended the WIF meetings, though, Brown argues 'her political allegiance lay with the Independent Labour Party rather than the Liberals'. (Brown 2003, 106) At the 1900 ILP annual meeting Ford put forward the socialist analysis that 'the Boer War was the product of a commercial spirit, and the result of it would now find a home in the Boer States, as well as our militarism and all the splendours of our civilisation'. (LL 24 June, 1900; Brown 2003, 106) Brown argues 'although the ILP tended to view imperialism as a product of capitalism, it also frequently relied upon anti-war arguments that emphasised Christian and pacifist ideas alongside its socialist ideology'. (Brown 2003, 106)

As seen in Chapter 4, Ruth Fry's pacifist politics were rooted in her Quaker belief in the Inward Light and that of God in every one. Her commitment to relief work was a practical task so that as a Quaker witness she felt could do something for those who were suffering. (Ruth Fry 1924) Therefore, I suggest that we have to see these two dimensions, ideal and practical action, separately. As for Ruth Fry, first of all, she did not claim relief work was the only way to work for the peace movement. Secondly, because of her delicate health she worked only in administration and was not able to undertake relief work 'in the field'. (Canter 1962, 525, Jones 1966, 93)

Unlike Isabella Ford, Margery Fry attended the Paris Peace Conference as a representative from the NUWSS in 1919: however, she did not find the strategy of peace by negotiation compelling, or peace work a practical strategy to end the war. (Alberti 1996, 88) She thought it was most important to help people in need and joined in with relief work during the First World War. (Jones 1966, 94) She addressed students at the University of Birmingham on 'Relief work in France' in November 1914. John Masefield asked her to contribute towards a travelling field hospital which could deliver treatment at the battlefield. (University House Archive ref. 5/9, letter dated 15 May 1915, University of Birmingham Special Collection) In 1915 Margery Fry worked for the organization of relief work in France.

Isabel Fry felt miserable at the total destruction of war. (Isabel Fry 1915, 2) However, she asserted that English pacifists and the Religious Society of Friends had worked seriously, but neither had influenced the public thought of England to prevent war. (Isabel Fry 1915, 8) She warned that the English pacifists might become 'champions of a German Jingoism'; therefore, she claimed the need to fight the enemy. (Isabel Fry 1915, 9) She

joined in Quaker war relief work as did the other Fry sisters. Joan Fry was one of the first Quakers in Germany organizing relief work after the First World War. (Sutton 1972)

5.4. Activism and Quakerism

This section examines the relationship between the activism of Isabella Ford and the Fry sisters. It argues there were varied degrees of their commitment to Quakerism even though two of them left Quakerism.

According to O'Donnell, nineteenth century feminist Friends might be encouraged by part of society into wider activism, but 'because of limitations on the Religious Society of Friends, some women Friends turned to the wider radical community for support.' (1999, 279) Holton argues that 'while they remained Quakers, many identified their spiritual pursuit with more secular channels.' (Holton and Allen 1996, 6) O'Donnell also points out that their religious faith undoubtedly informed their political views, but that they often engaged with the circle of friendship outside the Religious Society owing to the disapproval of their religious community. (O'Donnell 1999, 279-80)

An example of this case was Anne Knight and Elizabeth Heyrick. Anne Knight wrote in support of votes for women in 1847. (O'Donnell 1999, 259) As Malmgreen claims, Anne's Quaker background contributed to developing her strong radical views. (Malmgreen 1982, 104-105) At the same time, O'Donnell argues, her uncompromising attitude alienated her from her own community. (O'Donnell 1999, 260) Anne Knight's radical approach to the women's issue could not find support from her religious group,

which was less radical. In Isabel Fry's case, she directly opposed the Quaker peace policy arguing she need to fight the enemy, and she left the religious group.

As seen in Chapter 3 and 4, Isabella Ford, Isabel Fry, Margery Fry, and Ruth Fry's commitment was rooted in their Quaker identity, but their activism was atypical of Quakers of their time. However, their firm zeal for righteousness was inherited from the tradition and legacy of Quaker movement.

As primarily a socialist feminist, Isabella Ford's work and activism cannot be found in the Quakerism, yet her articles were found in Quaker journals such as *Friends Quarterly Examiner*. The obituary of her and Emily was published in *The Friend* (1924, 1930):

Sprang from Quaker stock,... all of whom followed the tradition of the Society of Friends by combining ardour in public service with the quiet intimacies home life and of private duty. At Adel (once the Cranford of Leeds) their house and garden were a centre of radiant sympathy and of lively comment upon the outlook in foreign affairs and in English social reform...All three were feminist and feminine...Of the three Isabella, the youngest, played the most trenchant and determined part in the movement for female suffrage and in the international organisation of the experience and judgment of women.' (*TF* 1930, 230)

When Isabella Ford was a member of the Leeds Arts Club, Alfred Orage invited the Quaker Post-Impressionist Roger Fry as a lecturer to their meeting. Though Isabella Ford and Isabel Fry gave classes to factory girls, they found different ways to engage with them to improve their lives. Isabel Fry left her home early and devoted her life to

establishing experimental schools, as an independent educationist, while Isabella Ford devoted her life to labour and women's movement.

With Isabella's enthusiasm for transforming relationships and developing a new life, she might have used novels as a vehicle for discussing class and gender issues. To an extent they delivered idealised male personalities and relationships between women, like Lucretia and Kitty, and Mr Estcourt in *On the Threshold* and Anne and aunt Emma, and Bernard in *Miss Blake*. However, in many respects they remain struggling and constrained by the restrictions of their time and place. It might be partly because the author pursued a kind of socialist realism at the turn- of- the century. Isabella's notions of citizenship engaged with inter-personal forms of politics. The importance of Isabella's message was joining of a female community with personal and political vision to make a better world of love, beauty and justice. (Hannam 1992, 220) The heroines of *On the Threshold* deliver women's spiritual superiority and women's special quality of caring. (Ford 1895, 52)

Considering Isabella's Quaker background and her ethical socialist friendship network, it seemed to be understandable why she supported the religious ILP rather than the SDF. (Hannam 1989, 1992, Livesey 2007) It can be found in her novels that she attempted to communicate the subjective reality of gender and at the same time the author cast her insights into women's lives in detail. Again, if we discuss her only as a trade unionist and a suffrage activist without studying Quakerism and her novels and its connection to her political affiliation, we might fail to discover her attempts and her sensitivity to convey women's real lives through the prism of her socialist feminist consciousness. In her novels, especially through *On the Threshold*, it appears possible that Isabella's affiliation

to the ILP (Hannam 1989, 1992) rather than the Marxist SDF was based on her religious attitude. (Ford 1895, 30, 188) Through the comradeship of new women and new men, expressed as ideal personalities, she clearly tried to work towards new relationships in work, friendship and love in her novels as she did in the Fellowship of the New Life. It was not clear whether the relationship between Lucretia and Kitty was meant to be a kind of a 'Boston marriage,' however there were expression of intimate feelings between them. (Ford 1895, 31, 38-9) There were also clear remarks of putting the priority of their mission for the new life and pursuing more meaningful life before conventional heterosexual marriage. (Ford 1895, 201-03) Nowhere did Isabella Ford write about sexual laxity or free love or erotic pleasure in her novels. Her novels avoided discussion of any physical aspects of relationships. The characters' relationships in her novels were depicted as emotional rather than sexual or physical. The new comradeship replaced sexual magnetism. The novel *Miss Blake* eliminated all the political background of the time on purpose, I suggest, in order to emphasize that all we need to do is to love and care for each other; in other words, to care for life, that is the author's vision of the historical progress and human evolution. To her, this was the main theme of feminist ethics, and, at the same time, the essence of feminist leadership. Isabella Ford actively engaged in the male dominated labour movement at the time. In Lancashire, she was involved in the tailoresses' movement at the same time she asserted women's community in her novels. I have already mentioned that male leaders of the contemporary labour movement did not count her as an equal leader of the movement, praising her seemingly as a lady from an affluent class with financial support. (Chapter 3) She had to assert herself if she wanted 'to do more than make tea and run fund-raising bazaars,' as she said. (quoted in Hannam 1989) Judging by her actions afterwards, she put more effort in to work with working-class women. She pushed her limit far beyond the prejudiced male

gaze, engaging actively in the women labour's movement, not only asserting women's community in her novel. However, her programme for historical progress was still frustratingly sketchy, lacking in detail. It appears that her vision of progress mainly focused on a moral and emotional, and spiritual evolution in mankind, a view shared by other members of the Fellowship of the New Life, like Olive Schreiner (Berkman 1989, 176) and Edward Carpenter in his *Toward Democracy*. (Chapter 3) However, it was not easy for the 'millenarian' socialists to lose their beloved friends. (Livesey 2007, 65) Olive Schreiner wrote to Edward Carpenter in the September 1889 in pain when she had lost her close friend Levy, an artist who had committed suicide:

The last thing I sent her was the 'Have Faith' page of *Towards Democracy*. She wrote me back a little note, 'Thank you, it is very beautiful, but Philosophy cannot help me. I am too much shut in by the personal'. (Rive 1988, 157)

It is interesting that, unlike Olive Schreiner, (Berkman 1989, 178) Isabella Ford did not change her belief in women's moral superiority. (Livesey 2007) Schreiner changed her view on women when she saw that they could be warmongers equal to men when she saw that pre-war suffragists supported 'England's entrance into the war.' (Berkman 1989, 179) Isabella Ford asserted constitutional democratic process rather than using force, emphasizing the difference with the WSPU, and her aim was the 'substitution of moral and spiritual force for physical force.' (Minutes of Executive Committee of the NUWSS, 8 Mar, 1915, Women's Library; Hannam 1989, 169) This point seemed to be proved when the WSPU supported the war. Indeed Jo Vellacott has pointed out the opportunistic aspects of the WSPU with the war. (Vellacott 1977, 411-25)

Isabella argued that ‘women have more to lose’, ‘they lose more than life itself’, ‘they lose all that makes life worth living for’. (Ford *Leeds Weekly Citizen*, 12 March, 1915) Therefore, she asserted, socialist women should be against the war and only they had been against the war in the socialist movement because of their special quality as women. (Ibid) Her ideas on the war and peace closely linked with her socialism and feminism. She saw the cause of the war was the interests of ‘the commercial and ruling classes’ in the imperialist capitalist contest. (Ford *LL* 29, April, 1915) She claimed her pacifism rooted on her Quakerism in her letter to Fawcett, she wrote ‘I don’t think I can ever get away from my Quaker upbringing’ (Ford to Fawcett, 23 June 1915) when she split with the NUWSS over the peace issue. She claimed that ‘to uphold the ideals of supremacy of moral force in human affairs’, and that the NUWSS should do more than relief work. (Statement by Retiring Members, *Common Cause*, 1915, 122) As an executive committee member of the Women’s International League (WIL) she worked closely with the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), the ILP, the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF), and other groups to achieve a negotiated peace. However, she had no contact with the Friends’ Peace Committee or Northern Friends’ Peace Board, Friend’s Service Committee, or any other Quaker organizations such as Friend’s War Victims’ Relief Committee (FWVRC). She perceived that a focus on the peace effort rather than relief work was more urgent and important to end the war. (Ibid) This point of view made her differ from the other Quaker women who engaged in relief work, especially comparing with the Fry sisters.

Even though Isabella Ford was very disappointed with Millicent Garrett Fawcett’s attitude towards the First World War, she did not change her belief. (Chapter 3) As for

their friendship, they recovered this afterwards. In her tribute to Isabella Ford, Fawcett talked about their friendship for over fifty years. (Hannam 1989, 202)

Moving onto the Fry sisters, none of them discussed the personal matters in the way Isabella Ford discussed in her novels, such as gender and class conflict. Should we conclude that Quaker women did not discuss personal matters even in their diaries or as Quaker culture in general? Whilst her work is on an earlier period, Catie Gill usefully suggests that consideration of diversity appears essential when we discuss Quakerism and women and I suggest this can be applied to the early twentieth century too; 'heterogeneity is evidenced in multi-vocal texts, through encoding individualised and collective voices, offered a variety of different feminine subject positions for Quaker women in seventeenth century.' (Gill 2000, 251) It is evident that through the voices of women Friends, their political identities were plural rather than mono-culture.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Isabel Fry asserted that England fight the enemy, whereas Isabella Ford exposed England's imperialist greed to secure their investment in Russia and France, and to get rid of Germany as a rival in the imperialist contest. Isabel Fry's anti-pacifist sentiments and pro-war rhetoric clearly illustrated that Quakers were divided over the War. She was not an Utopian idealist who believed that in the new millennium 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion fatling together' (Isaiah 11: 6-7) echoing the rhetoric in the Hebrew Bible. Her personal ethics forced her to make a decision for a personal witness rather than just to follow the ambiguous Quaker pacifist politics of that time. Therefore, she opposed the pacifist minority who seemed to her to be no more than verbally opposed to the war.

Margery Fry also did not belong to the pacifist minority. As an Oxford graduate, she represented a kind of ‘new woman’ in her time. However, drawing upon Livesey’s definition of feminism, she would not be labelled as a ‘feminist’ in a sense of ‘a champion of the women’s movement or a theorist on the woman question.’ (Livesey 2007, 127) Apparently she was not as involved as Isabella Ford and Olive Schreiner in the formation of the feminist discourse at the turn of the century and early twentieth century. However, she would be designated as a ‘new woman’ as her personal and public life was unconventional and far beyond the ordinary women’s lives of her time. In reality, the new women appeared a diverse group from progressive, radical farseeing thinkers of the time to privileged upper-class women. Considering her involvement in the women’s movement, I would use the term the ‘new woman’ for Margery Fry rather than ‘feminist’. In short, the concept of the new woman here differs from the ‘feminist’ according to their role in the formation of the feminist discourse of the time. This is, of course, apart from the meaning at the first use of the term ‘feminism’ in Britain in 1894 (Rendall 1984), which has not the same political meaning as our own time.

Margery Fry was concerned with women’s education as a highly motivated and qualified professional, had mainly Somervillian connections and maintained professional careers broader than Quakerism. In her family connections, she was the closest to Roger sharing artistic views and tastes, and friends, and living and travelling together. Her uncle Thomas Hodgkin encouraged her to read at Oxford. (Jones 1966) She was sent to the Paris Peace Conference on behalf of the NUWSS in 1919, yet, as above, she found the so-called international co-operation very disappointing and superficial. (Alberti 1996, 88) In 1922 general election Margery Fry supported the Labour Party candidate, Miss Edith

Picton Turbervill, the author of *Life is Good*, as Isabella Ford did as well. (Jones 1966, 123, Hannam 1989, 200) However, there are no more noticeable resources to prove any specific political and personal connection between Margery Fry and Isabella Ford as political comrades.

It is quite interesting that both Isabella Ford and Ruth Fry emphasized women's spiritual quality and superiority despite their very different political orientation and practice.

Ruth Fry became a leading Quaker women activist after her nine years' experience as secretary of the FWVRC as part of an 'intermediate group'. (Ruth Fry 1926, xix-xx) Jung claims there is a relationship of Quaker relief work and service work to the peace movement in the twentieth century because 'Quaker relief work became more than charity work – "a natural corollary of the peace principle" (Jung 2004, 86), as acts of healing and saving lives'. (Jung 2004, 88) Jung depicts Quaker humanitarian relief and service as a politically neutral position (Jung 2004, 88-90), quoting Ruth Fry's expression 'the spirit of love from man to man which refused to be turned into hatred at the bidding of Governments'. (Ruth Fry 1926, 302) However, the connection between this kind of effort 'to build a peaceful society' and the peace movement in the twentieth century relies on a very broad concept of what 'peace' means. (Jung 2004, 90-91) It seems that he accepted this broad concept of peace based on the fact that both the British and American Quakers were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their humanitarian relief work. (Jung 2004, 91-3) This seems the kind of diffuse connection between relief and peace that Isabella Ford criticised, although her arguments were also based on whether relief work actually implicitly helped the war effort.

Ruth Fry developed her ideas on peace through her writings and addressing various Quaker meetings after she had finished her nine years' position of the administration for relief work. She was the only one of four Quaker women in this thesis who worked within her religious circle and became a leader of the Religious Society as Kennedy argues. (Kennedy 2001)

Drawing upon O'Donnell's argument about Quaker women and feminism, in the nineteenth century feminist Friends might be encouraged by their own Society, but because of the limitation of the Society of Friends, some women Friends turned to the wider radical community for support. (O'Donnell 1999, 279) O'Donnell argues many early feminist Friends developed their feminist ideas away from their Quaker community and lacked the necessary group of like-minded women and found allies outside their community, as happened for the Priestman sisters and Anna Deborah Richardson in the Newcastle area. (1999, 304) Isabella Ford had vast connections with radicals outside the Religious Society and at the same time she identified herself as a Quaker. Her moral and spiritual pursuit did not conflict with the ILP and her socialist ideas, and also with Quakerism.

Holton and Allen argue that while women's rights advocates were remaining Quakers as liberal, they identified their spiritual pursuit with more secular channels. (Holton and Allen 1997, 6) Isabella Ford was a unique socialist activist in Quakerism: she had no connection with the Socialist Quaker Society or the female members of the group, like the Quaker novelist Theodora Wilson Wilson (1865-1941), who converted to socialism during the First World War. (Ceadel 1980, 51) O'Donnell points out that their religious faith undoubtedly informed their political views, but they often engaged with the circle

of friendship outside the Society owing to the disapproval of their religious community. (O'Donnell 1999, 279-80) In the case of Anne Knight who wrote for votes for women in 1847 (O'Donnell 1999, 259, Chapter 2), Anne's Quaker background contributed to develop her strong radical views (Malmgreen 1982, 104-105), however, at the same time her uncompromising attitude alienated her from her own community. (O'Donnell 1999, 260) This was not the case for Isabella Ford as it seemed that she kept her distance from Quakers as a body. Working with her socialist friends rather than with her religious community, her political values did not collide with Quakerism.

In the nineteenth century it seems that the value of the women's duties and places in the world was limited by gender prescription as represented, for example, in *The Friend*. (1854, 124) As O'Donnell argues, some women Friends in the nineteenth century internalised the ideology of gender division. (O'Donnell 1999, 261) In this way, so many of the prominent women Friends activists would hide themselves: there were so many unnamed women Friends who were ardent in public cause as well as their spiritual issues. However, in the early twentieth century, especially during the war, many women Friends, who had not been politically oriented, found room to dedicate themselves to public issues such as through relief work.

As Isichei indicated, by the mid-nineteenth century, for many well-off Quaker families, philanthropy was duty. (Isichei 1970, 216) Unlike the examples of Mary Ann Hewitson and Margaret Priestman, and Elizabeth Pease in the nineteenth century, (Chapter 2) the cases of the four women in this thesis show their families' support, especially from their liberal mothers, for these middle-class Quaker women to engage themselves with the radical cause in the early twentieth century.

Drawing upon O'Donnell's argument, there were many Feminist Friends in the north-east, while there were limits as to what was acceptable to the Religious Society. (O'Donnell 1999, 279) She argues the few local Quaker women who could be described as feminist in the early British women's movement seemed to be at a distance from their religious community. (1999, 280) As an example, the Priestman sisters, Anna Maria, a strong supporter of the WSPU, (Holton 1996, 108) and Mary, and the Priestman-Bright circle of kinship and friendship more widely had close links with the American women's movement through Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (Holton 1994, 214)

To sum up, unlike the cases used as evidence in O'Donnell's argument about the Quaker women activists in the nineteenth century, the lives of the women in this thesis reveal a permissive aspect to Quakerism in the early twentieth century. In this period, radical women were not marginalised within the Religious Society because of their radical activism. The activism of the women in this thesis was possible partly because of their Quaker family background, especially, the support and resources from their family and kinship networks.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has analysed the political and personal lives of four British Quaker women from the 1880s to the 1920s. It has explored the connection between socialism, feminism, pacifism and Quakerism, especially the development of pacifist feminist consciousness.

From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, women Friends in this thesis appear to have been encouraged by their own Quaker family background; and, partly because of limitations on women's roles within the Religious Society of Friends, partly because of their own motivation and orientation, some of them turned to the wider radical community or wider society. Their families played a leading role in the development of liberal tendency of British Quakerism. Even though they often engaged with the circle of friendship outside the Society, their religious faith undoubtedly informed their political views in various ways.

Isabella Ford was from a liberal radical and Quaker family based in Leeds. She had a vast range of social contacts from Leeds Arts Club to the Trade Union movement and the Leeds Labour movement. (Hannam 1989) As a socialist feminist from the end of nineteenth century, she tried to connect her concern for the Women's Question to her socialism. During the First World War she devoted herself against the War mainly with her circle of socialist friends and help to organise the WILPF to achieve negotiated peace.

Isabel, Margery, and Ruth Fry were from a liberal and one of the most 'weighty', wealthy, and prestigious English Quaker families. Ruth was born with delicate health but had strong commitment and devotion to relief work during and after the First World War. After her nine years' experience in the FWVRC, she published many peace pamphlets at her own expense based on her Quaker beliefs.

Elizabeth O'Donnell argues most radical Victorian Quaker women left Quakerism to follow their politic pursuit with like-minded friends outside of Quakerism, as Quakers were not radical enough in the nineteenth century. (O'Donnell 1999) Contrary to

O'Donnell's findings, the most radical, Isabella Ford found her circle of radical friends outside the Religious Society without leaving Quakerism. Ruth Fry was oriented religiously rather than politically and her activism represented the Friends' War Victims' Relief Work Committee at the First World War and aftermath. Quakerism did not disown those who opposed their official stand in the early twentieth century unlike in the nineteenth century. Isabel Fry left Quakerism because she did not agree with Quaker peace policy at the First World War. Margery Fry was not content with the strategy of trying to reach peace by negotiation, unlike Isabella Ford. She joined in with relief work during the War.

Both Isabel and Margery Fry left Quakerism. Isabel did not agree with Quaker peace policy at the First World War, but was not disowned. Quakers were divided over the First World War and did not disown those who opposed their Peace Testimony. Isabel and Margery still saw themselves as Quakers and their Meetings still counted them as such. (*TF* 1958, 539-40, Chapter 4)

Thomas Kennedy has argued that Quaker pacifism in the First World War was key to the revival of the movement, (2001) but it was not the dominant Quaker position. (2001, 351-5) He also argues that Quakers were confused at the First World War and the War was a test for them. (*Ibid*, Chapter 2, 2.3.) Ruth Fry's activism as secretary of the FWVRC is important to note as it reflects only one of the Quakers' responses to the outbreak of the First World War. Quakers were divided over the War and did not disown who opposed the Quaker Peace Testimony.

Isabella Ford was the most radical and 'political' as well as 'religious' of these four

women in this thesis as well as overall in Quakerism. Ruth Fry was more 'religious' rather than 'political'. They combined their radical concerns and religious mind and put them together into practice and remained as Quakers.

Through their activism, Quakerism could be revitalised in the perspectives of religion and society in their period. These women did not simply participate in political issues as members of a religious group. Rather, they were firmly based in their context and they had their own voice and they did not represent the overall Quaker tendency of their time. This thesis argues that their voices should be re-evaluated and their message should be discussed within the discourse of the formation of 'feminist pacifism' and/or the new tendency of the twentieth century Quakerism.

As Carolyn Burdett argues, single women in this thesis show an image of 'social mothering'. (Burdett 2001, 107) Their activism and personal lives proved that everyday life is political. Their singleness, and friendships between women appeared vital, and were important elements to sustain their personal and political lives in the context.

To sum up, the lives of Quaker women in this thesis show a wide spectrum of how Quaker women responded to their context. They pursued their concern through their own perceptions of peace and justice and left various examples of experiences and practice of British Quaker women in the early twentieth century. The next chapter argues that they exhibited an 'elastic Quakerism' that maintained their commitment to Quaker values even if and when they had resigned their membership.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarises the five main chapters, and clarifies the connection between feminism, socialism, pacifism and British Quakerism in the period between the 1880s and the 1920s. (6.1) It identifies and amplifies the original contribution that this thesis makes and explores the academic implications of this thesis. (6.2) Lastly, suggestions for future research prompted by this thesis and concluding remarks are provided. (6.3)

6.1. Thesis Summary and Originality

This thesis examined the lives of four British Quaker women at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The study was arranged to place the intellectual and cultural aspects of the emergence of pacifist feminism in Britain from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century especially alongside its connection with Quaker women and their web of personal and political ties.

Chapter 1 introduced the methodology and the historical context of this thesis.

Adopting the method of feminist biography, this thesis revisited the lives of Isabella Ford, Isabel Fry and Margery Fry and also used personal records and works by and

about the individuals including pamphlets written by Ruth Fry to trace these four women's informal networks and emotional lives. This was done in order to explore the web of the personal and the political in context, and to place Quaker women's lives in a broader cultural framework. Through close reading of personal and other written records, including novels, this thesis has focused on examining these women's ideas on peace and justice. Using these primary resources and following up the web of friendship networks, this thesis sought to examine four women's emotional lives and reconstructed their political and historical contexts. As Stanley argues, focusing historical research on networks rather than personal events, it becomes possible to look at the social and historical context of prominent women and also seize hold of their ideas and intellectual and political convictions. (2002, 13)

Through adopting microhistorical methodology Holton and Holton attempt 'to construct a kind of micro-level collective biography, featuring a network composed of a small group of friends and acquaintances.' (2007, 10) The microhistorical approach appears useful to explore the lives of particular persons, their relationship to each other, and their understanding of larger process and structures. (Ginzburg 1989, 1993, 1999) Drawing upon the insight of microhistorian Carlo Ginzburg that large-scale quantitative studies has distorted the actual reality on the individual level (Ginzburg 1980), this thesis sought to interpret the results of detailed research in a broader context.

As the Holtons observe in their study of the Priestman-Bright family circle, a treatment of biography that focuses on particular persons and the links that brought and kept them together has made possible a fresh appreciation of the role of women's

networks in the history of the women's movement in Britain, as well as a fuller recognition of some of their transnational dimensions. (Holton and Holton 2007) The intimate relationships between particular persons was seen to be based on mutual emotional assistance; close friendships needed to be maintained by absolute 'frankness'. (Holton and Holton 2007, 18) They also argue that 'they also served to reinforce an individual's sense of the rightness or wrongness of conflicting positions, and provided the occasion for reasoning the shared principles and values.' (Ibid) Personal letters mobilised their networks and the friendship circles depended on their private correspondence. They stress 'the importance of particular persons and their private relationships', 'a distinct family culture built upon the fostering of a particular sensibility', 'that emphasised emotional intimacy'. (Holton and Holton 2007, 16)

Between the 1880s and 1920s, British socialist groups all expressed a complex range of arguments around the Woman Question. Throughout the development of British socialism in 1880s there were critical moments. From 1885 to 1889 the middle-class non-Marxist Fabian Society insisted that socialists should pursue personal ethics. (Livesey 2007, 44) Meanwhile, the Marxist SDF argued that the Fabians and most middle-class could not grasp the misery of real life. (Livesey 2007, 44-5) The ILP criticised capitalism as immoral and inefficient, and argued that socialism would be achieved through gradual political change rather than through class struggle. (James et al. 1992) In common with the SDF, there was a tendency to see the Women's Question as marginal. (Hunt 1996, James et al. 1992)

The women's movement developed during the early twentieth century, especially during the 1914–18 War. There is no clear connection between pacifism and feminism

before 1914, but many feminists who were active in political campaigns were also involved in the peace movement, even though they were a minority. (Hannam 1989, Hannam and Hunt 2002, Brown 2003) The connection between pacifist feminism and socialism was complicated. Again, socialist feminist pacifists were only a small group connected with close friendship networks. (Ibid) The majority were patriots at the outbreak of the War and subscribed to the idea of the imperial nation as protector in the imperial contest even among Quakers who represented the peace elite. There was a need for a progressive feminist movement, and the 1920s was the turning point of feminist politics. As Hannam argues that understanding the gender politics is key to consider why socialist women were attracted to socialism. (1989)

Again, for many socialist women, peace was not a primary focus. Despite the differences within the peace and feminist movements of the late Victorian period, they could co-operate. (Brown 2003, 129) Brown speculates ‘there was not the same degree of ideological conflict between the social constructions of women and peace as there was between sex and class.’ (Brown 2003, 133)

The question of women and peace was addressed in many different ways. The Women’s Peace and Arbitration Association (WPAA) focused on moral purity rather than feminism. (Brown 2003, 134, 140) The International Arbitration and Peace Association (IAPA) included many different feminist perspectives, from evangelical social purity campaigners to secularists and neo-Malthusians and stressed arbitration and internationalism. (Brown 2003, 142) Brown argues ‘the Evangelical moral reformers who comprised the WPAA argued that if higher standards could be brought about in terms of relations between the sexes, then there would be an increase in

social justice and universal peace would be attainable'. (Ibid) She argues again 'in contrast, the Women's Committee relied on arguments of social justice through democracy and international co-operation'. (Ibid) The Women's Committee supported the secularist ideas and political liberalism of the IAPA.

During its founding years (1888–1899), the International Council of Women (ICW) focused on education and suffrage as their practical work, alongside assuming 'women's love of peace'. (Brown 2003, 154) Unlike later organizations such as the WILPF, the ICW was not formed specifically with the pursuit of peace on its agenda. Women activists appeared to co-operate broadly, offering lectures in various meetings until the outbreak of the First World War.

According to Ceadel, in the early 1920s war-resistance globally was led more by socialists than pacifists, but in Britain it was by pacifists. (Ceadel 1980, 73) And the pacifist societies in the twenties were based on Christian or socialist principles. There was also 'elitist quasi-pacifism' as existed in the 'Bloomsbury' group. The socialist attitude to war was very complex. They accepted military force to defend a socialist state and overthrow capitalism even though they were opposed to an imperialist war. Nevertheless all socialists supported stopping the war on principle. (Ceadel 1980, 73)

However, a minority of socialists were opposed to all war according to their socialist principles. The ILP socialists were a leader of rank-and-file pacifists of the twenties based on a moral and political attitude. (Ceadel 1980, 83) Clifford Allen, a leading socialist absolutist, later a Conscientious Objector (CO) and No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) activist, proclaimed that his socialism was based on the belief that

the life and personality of every man is sacred and every human being is divine. (Kennedy 1980) It means that true pacifism was based on a 'moral' rather than 'political' value.

The connection between pacifist feminism and socialism was complicated. The women's peace movement at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries relied on the abstract moral ideas of peace. A minority of socialist feminists among the progressive groups battled to make a clear stand against the imperial war and to highlight the women's question. At the outbreak of the First World War they had to decide and choose. Socialist feminists organized to promote peace by negotiation. Once the War was over, pacifist socialist feminists represented a small group in the international socialist movement.

Chapter 2 explored British Quakers and Peace from the end of nineteenth to the early twentieth century. From the late 1880s to the end of nineteenth century pacifism became one of the Quakers' main concerns. (Brock 1990, Kennedy 1980, 1981, 1989, 2001) During the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, there was a major shift from testimony against war to 'testimony for peace', (Brock 1990, 274, Jung 2004, 92) influenced by the liberal theology of Quakerism. (Brock 1990, 291, Jung 2004, Dandelion 2007) However, Phillips argues, 'prominent mercantile Quakers and a number of eminent Quaker peace emissaries supported a superficial conception of the Religious Society's history as an agent of reconciliation rather than the erstwhile emphasis on Quaker prophetic witness.' (Phillips 1989, 2004, 67)

An editorial in *The Friend* shows far more than ambiguous attitudes of mercantile

Quakers, asserting British Empire and its expansion before the Boer War. John Graham, a leader in the Quaker Renaissance, confused his liberal politics and the liberal tendency of Quakerism with the Imperial Nation's interests. (Graham 1912, 115-6, Chapter 2, 82)

When the First World War broke out, Quakers responded in different ways following their conscience. On the one hand, they took their responsibility to their fellow-countrymen at home and abroad seriously, on the other hand, there were a few Conscientious Objectors (COs) and absolutists as a witness to their testimony towards all wars. In reality, there was a large spread from imperialist patriots to absolutists, in spite of the Quaker peace policy. Kennedy's vast investigation about the absolutist war resisters and the Friends' Service Committee (FSC) leads to his account of the depth and persistence of Quaker resistance to the First World War and conscription, and with historic Quaker Peace Testimony as its basis. (Kennedy 1980, 2001)

Throughout the First World War years, the Women's Yearly Meeting was concerned with matters of temperance and social purity. (Lunn 1997, 2, Lloyd 2006, 228)

Many correspondences followed and discussed the theme of socialism and peace in *The British Friend* and *The Friend* at that period.¹ As an example, Mary O'Brien Harris reported on behalf of the Socialist Quaker Society (SQS)² entitled 'Modern

¹ S. G. Hobson contributed 'Concerning Socialism' to the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner* (FQE): 'There is no intention of certain natural and obvious reservations. An equal love for Quakerism and socialism dictates the article; it has been written with an ardent desire to see these two forces – the one moral, the other economic- approximate.' (S.G. Hobson, *FQE* 1898, 210)

² Adams argues that the SQS members' far-seeing vision against oppression and war was beyond the secular framework: 'a mere shift in the economic interests of one class over another within the current system was not the goal they had in view.' (Adams 1990, 37) He claims that like many others of their time, SQS members had high hope of human progress. (Adams 1990, 38) They identified their Quakerism with socialism towards human progress and Truth.

Movements and Young Quakerism' to *The British Friend* :

Just as we have fought for freedom of conscience, for full citizenship, for equality of the sexes, for free education, so in these later days I urge it to be our palpable duty, if we would maintain our great traditions, to change an industrial system whose very foundations are based upon selfishness, which, after all, is but another form of cruelty.' (*TBF* 1903, 244)

The SQS claimed socialism as an economic system that gave 'more freedom to the inner life.' (*TBF* 1911, 205)³ Tony Adams claims the SQS' commitment was to revive the vitality the faith of the Friends in the Truth, therefore, they stuck to a religious way of life. (Adams 1990, 39) Like other Christian socialists, Adams sees them as a religious renewal movement rather than socialist movement, 'by engaging in active witness and offering an example to their religious Society which they felt was in a state of comfortable decline.' (Ibid)

As for the question of feminism and Quakerism, prominent radical feminist Quaker women were still very much exceptions to the rule in the early twentieth century. (Holton 1997) They were encouraged to seek support for their radical causes from

³ Following letter shows their belief in spiritual growth based on Christianity and the vision of a 'New Life'. Mary E. Thorne wrote to *The British Friend*:

We claim that socialist principles carried into practice, by turning industry back to its legitimate sphere, will tend to diminish this world struggle, and make possible the attachment of material welfare for any given nation, without the invasion of the interests of another. We urge upon all who read this, that the highest aim of socialism is to render war – industrial, commercial and military – no longer necessary. (*TBF* 1911, 314)

Socialism may come to them as a spiritual evangel, a glad tidings of the possibility of sweeping away much that hinders the development of the soul. It tells of the coming harmony of the outer life with inner aspiration. Finally, in reflecting upon the real significance of Christianity – the vision of a New Life and the creation of a New World – we feel we can truthfully call upon Friends to recognise in socialism an economic movement worthy of their assistance. (*TBF* 1911, 315)

networks outside of their religious community usually through intellectual societies in London. (Holton 1999) The informal network of like-minded female friends and their intense and passionate friendships, which included emotional and practical support, were very important resources, and allowed them to sustain their mutual identities and personal and political lives. (Holton 1994, 2005, 2007, Holton and Holton 2007)

However, using the example of Alice Clark, Holton argues that her Quaker background influenced her sympathy with the militant WSPU's demonstration in 1907. (Holton 1996, 167) Among her family circle she was not alone. Her mother's cousin, Liliash Ashworth Hallett, Priscilla Bright McLaren and her sons, Charles McLaren and Walter McLaren and his wife Eva McLaren, his sister-in-law, Laura McLaren expressed sympathy with militancy. (Holton 1996, 167) Alice Clark was 'a Liberal by birth and upbringing' (Holton 1996, 161), granddaughter of John Bright (1811-1889), the second Quaker MP for 45 years from 1843 and the first Quaker cabinet member from 1868 to 1882. (Abbott 2003, 31) However, her new life and friendships including Gertrude Stein and Roger Fry in London in 1912 (Holton 1996, 186-7) 'a moment of her journey from Liberal Party affiliations to new fields of labour.' (Holton 1996, 181) She had been granted a fellowship established by Charlotte Payne Townshend Shaw, wife of the Fabian socialist George Bernard Shaw at the London School of Economics in 1912, and published *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* in 1919. (Holton 2007, 187) Her research of the history of women's productive labour seems to have been influenced by Olive Schreiner's *Women and Labour* published in 1911. (Holton 1996, 181) She resigned in 1926 and left Quakers to join the Christian Science of Mary Baker Eddy. (Holton 1999, 89)

On the question of Quaker women and peace, Quaker women were as divided as Quaker men at the outbreak of the First World War. Kennedy argues that Quakers could not deal with the actual war situation very well, 'being confused with the culture of manliness encouraged by the culture of Victorian gender roles, rather than the Quaker belief in that of God in every one'. (Kennedy 1989, 394) However, it was not only men who were confused and could not deal with the War properly. Quaker women also were divided and proclaimed to be prepared for militarism for the future, condemning the Conscientious Objectors (COs): 'who oppose conscription to sit safely at home while soldiers and those working in FAU [are] willing to sacrifice their comfort or even their lives for our benefit.' (Emily J. Bell, *TF* 1915, 872)

Chapter 3 examined the origin of Isabella Ford's politicisation and motivation of continued commitment to the ideal of collective comradeship without boundaries of gender and class and to the ILP and the Labour Party during her lifetime. Isabella's desire for a new life of beauty and concern for improving working women's lives shaped her socialism influenced by Edward Carpenter and the Fellowship of the New Life. (Rowbotham and Weeks 1977, Hannam 1989, Steele 1989, Livesey 2007)

In her biography of Isabella Ford, Hannam looked at the considerable differences between socialist women in the extent to which, and how, they looked at their politics through the prism of gender. (1989) Also she tried to draw the emotional dimension of Isabella's politics and everyday life, noting that the links between the personal and political were a very crucial issue among New Life socialists of the 1890s. (Ibid) Berkman defines them as romantic anti-capitalists of the late Victorians. (1989, 167)

Their attitudes of everyday practice of simple life might be interpreted into ‘the politics of every-day life’ or ‘life-style politics’, as Wilson suggests. (Wilson 1986, 46) They stressed and practiced simple life, vegetarian diet, small-hold farming, and sandal-making. (Chapter 3) Isabella Ford shared her vision with ethical socialism. Hannam’s narrative provides a presentation of a very advanced and idealistic socialist feminist in Isabella Ford. (1989) Isabella claimed that socialism was the route to gender equality. (Ford 1906) She clearly stated that women and men should harbour a desire to liberate the self from gender prescriptions and become friends through unceasing engagement to the women’s and labour movements. (Ford 1906)

Isabella explained the reason she joined the ILP was for ‘wider and truer views of life’. (Clayton 1896, 10) The Fellowship believed in conscience and insight and relied on it to build a new beautiful world only for beautiful people. They hoped and dreamed of an ideal and advanced form of life in the name of ‘Socialism’, one which offered another form of church or spiritual home for the ethical quality of life. As a member of the Fellowship, Carpenter sought after the conviction that emotional love, sexual feeling and intellectual attraction should be combined. (Stanley 2002, 27) As Beith claimed, to Carpenter the word ‘democracy’ meant ‘a thing of the heart rather than a political creed’. (Beith 1985, 11-12)⁴

⁴ As a member of the Fellowship of the New Life, Olive Schreiner wrote the following about Edward Carpenter’s poem ‘Towards Democracy’, a work which influenced the idealism of 1880s: ‘Of course Ed. Carpenter’s book touches us in a way it can’t others, just because it brings us back to that time – All we have dreamed or hoped or willed of good shall exist’ (Olive Schreiner to S.C. Cronwright-Schreiner, 8 May 1908)

She clearly mentioned her idealism when she was engaged in the Fellowship like this:

If I thought socialism would bring the subjection of the individual to the whole I would fight to the death... Better to die of cold or hunger or thirst than to be robbed of your freedom of action, of your feeling that you are an absolutely free and independent unit. (Olive Schreiner to Havelock Ellis, March 29, 1885, Rive 1988, 63)

However, Livesey contends that for Isabella Ford ‘it was not so much idealism and the politics of feeling which drew her in to the Leeds ILP’. (2007, 170) Livesey claims it was ‘the religious socialist tendency of following material and spiritual beauty in the 1890s.’ (2007, 175) Members of the Fellowship of the New Life in the 1880s had objected to the neglect of ethical ideals on the part of the Fabian Society and the SDF. Isabella Ford and Carpenter remained in the Fellowship after the split. Livesey argues that ‘this ethical idealism had become the animating force of the propaganda of the ILP in the 1890s.’ (2007, 175) As the ethical socialists argued that ‘socialism would bring a moral transformation of all areas of people’s lives and would lead to a society based on the principles of justice, love and beauty’. (Hannam 1992, 207) This Utopian vision of socialism, emphasising ‘comradeship, the development of an alternative socialist culture, personal change and the creation of new forms of everyday life and change in the relationship between the sexes,’ Hannam argues, seemed to attract women. (Ibid)

Livesey argues that ‘women contributed to the socialist movement to figure out how women activists modified the masculinized socialist culture and aesthetics and produced their own. (2007, 12) She claims that the role of female socialists, such as Olive Schreiner, Clementina Black and Dollie Radford contributed to convert the male oriented socialist culture and aesthetics to their own. (2007, 69) Isabella Ford also clearly claimed that both men and women should devote themselves to the women’s and labour movement to build a beautiful and just society. (Ford 1906)

Chapter 3 also looked at Isabella’s literary output, and examined closely her fictional works. In exploring her novels, I focused on the emotional atmosphere the author

represented. I examined how and what she conveyed through her novels: the matter of gender and class and her characters' engagement with socialist politics, and emotional difficulties. I found messages about her Quakerism as well as New Life socialist feminism in her novels.

Previous critiques of Isabella's novels have discussed how the form of the novel itself poses a question about the ethics of seeing socialist activism, the ethical ideal of fellowship and the hope for a new life of beauty under socialism. (Steele 1990, Waters 1993, 1994, Heilmann 1996, Livesey 2007)

Bush has argued that women's novel writing was a way of women 'expressing themselves and communicating with their society, at the same time, it could be a route to financial and emotional independence'. (2007, 83) That was possible because there was a broad readership to share their sensitivity and consciousness. Isabella Ford, Margery Fry, Ruth Fry all attempted to communicate with women developing ideas on women's community. They were already financially independent owing to their family legacy. The attempt to relate Isabella Ford's novels to her socialist politics, her personal life, her personality, and her career as a Quaker woman writer enriched this thesis' understanding and knowledge about the emotional life of Isabella Ford as well as her socialism, feminism, pacifism and Quakerism. As Heilman stresses feminists produced 'New Woman fiction which was a committed feminist genre' through writing social document, the political pamphlet, auto/biography, and fiction (1996, 197), Isabella Ford's novels should be included in the category.

In *On the Threshold*, Isabella Ford idealized her socialism through her heroines' hope

and desires for a new life and human relationships. (Waters 1994, Livesey 2007) The novel seemed to be self-confessive in many ways, first of all, of her Quakerism, judging from the heroine's representation of 'Inward Light'. (Ford 1895, 188) ⁵

In *Miss Blake of Monkshalton*, the author successfully delivers complicated female psychology in a detailed and sensitively devised way emphasising women's community. Alfred Orage criticised its plot and style, however, he failed to comment on her choice of language, which emphasised women's spiritual superiority. (Chapter 3) Grace Jantzen suggested that 'the radical choice of life is ultimately central to the peace testimony, especially its emphasis on justice and flourishing' (2005, 137) : 'while men retained the language of war (albeit the Lamb's war), women (though not all) chose nurturing language in the development of the early Quaker peace testimony'. (Ibid) In Isabella's novels, the message of 'Choose Life' (Jantzen 2005, 152) seemed a main theme through the way of her narrative using nurturing language and emphasis on women's spiritual quality of caring: echoing 'all we need to do is to mother-like love to each other.' (Chapter 3) Therefore, I would suggest that Isabella's novels should be considered and examined as Quaker literature and feminist genre, and also that Isabella's confessional novel can be a cornerstone to develop a concept of the healing image in connection with feminist pacifism.

To sum up, her early contact with the Fellowship of the New Life affected the political journey of Isabella Ford, which was different from other Quaker women

⁵ As for an example of self-confessive novel, Olive Schreiner expressed her feelings from her personal experience of three times of miscarriages after the death of her new born baby through the narrative of Rebecca, the heroine of her novel *From Man to Man*. (1926). Ruth First has attempted her research on Olive Schreiner 'to relate her work to her politics, her politics to her personal life, and her personality to her career as a writer.' (First and Scott 1980, 25)

activists. It seems that her religious attitude led her to the ILP rather than the Marxist SDF. (Hannam 1992, 207, Livesey 2007, 175) Isabella Ford had not worked within Quakerism in her political activism, however, she, as a Quaker, believed in ‘innate goodness of people.’ (Ford 1900, 178) In other Quaker women’s cases, there were sympathisers of the WSPU in the Priestman and Clark family circle. (Holton 1998) In the earlier stage of Alice Clark’s political journey, she was inclined to the WSPU, when she was in invalid with tuberculosis, for an example. (Holton 1999)

Chapter 4 explored the Fry sisters’ ideas and practice for peace and justice. Born into a ‘weighty’ Quaker family, these three women shared the resources of their family’s legacy. (Woolf 1940, Brown 1960, Jones 1966, Sutton 1972) Through marriage and business links stretching back to the seventeenth century, they shared supportive informal networks mainly based on blood ties. Beyond material comfort and privilege, their sense of loyalty and integrity was deeply rooted in their Quakerism, and their ‘Quaker conscience’. (Sturge 1967) The political activism of the Fry sisters and their personal lives were shown to represent their version of liberal Quakerism. However, it is extremely difficult to gain access into their emotional lives via the archived resources.

Isabel Fry left Quakerism, however, she strived to realise practical education for her whole life,⁶ and on occasions she helped with the FWVRC and Quaker settlement

⁶ Joan Mary Fry, one of the Fry sisters, also suggested higher education of women in the *Friends’ Quarterly Examiner* (FQE 1895, 565-576):

Our society has always prided itself upon the high standard of its educational views, seeking to bring within reach of all, not only of a favoured few, the advantages of a solid school training; and it therefore seems strange that, as a body, we have been rather slow to recognise that we cannot stop here, and that especially in the case of young women, the question of a college life is one which is too important to be left on one side. Several causes have, of late years, been tending to turn the attention of women to the higher branches of intellectual culture. Marriage is no longer looked upon as the one and only career open to

scheme with Margery, Ruth and Joan. (Chapter 4)

Margery Fry was a highly motivated intellectual with an Oxford degree. Her career was spent as a warden of a University House in Birmingham and as principal of Somerville, Oxford for twenty-three years. Margery always valued the dignity of individuals and professionalism and practical service. (Sturge 1967, 478-9) Sturge praised Margery Fry's professionalism and her attitude to life as 'living life with zest', 'loving to find beauty hidden in things as they are', 'liking new', 'looking forward', 'searching for a meaning in life' for her striving practical service for women's education and penal reform. (Sturge 1967, 476-80)

With the shock of the war in 1914, she left her university job and went to the Marne to help Quaker relief work. There, she took care of the organization of relief work in the Marne and Meuse area, and in fact in the whole of France from 1915 to 1918.⁷ Returning from the war relief work, Margery opened an office to work for penal reform in her own home in London shared with her brother Roger.

Ruth Fry's thinking on peace was firmly based in Quakerism and confidence in its great role and moral quality. Ruth believed and maintained that only Love can save and fulfil human lives. Her relief work was grounded in her belief that humanity bore a responsibility to end all human-made misery as well as her belief that endeavour

them, and with this idea has come a greatly enlarged sense of their needs and possibilities – needs when they desire independence and must earn their own living, and possibilities of doing really good work in the world of thought or science or art, when they are free to turn their attention to such subjects. (*FQE*, 1895, 566)

⁷ Roger Fry joined Margery for a few weeks of practical work for the Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) in France, even though he had given up the practice of Quakerism as a young adult, despite his pacifist sympathies. (Glover 2002, 201, 213)

was needed to realise spiritual advancement.

The Fry sisters might deserve the title of the supporters of feminism. However, to be more exact, I would not include them because their involvement in the formation of the discourse of feminism was not clearcut.

Chapter 5 discussed Isabella Ford and the Fry sisters' ideas and practice and their different approaches towards pacifism, and their Quakerism. These four women saw their vision of life was achievable in every day life. They were pioneers, who made things easier for all women who came after. In that sense all the women studied in the present thesis were 'New Women' of their time, women who strived to pursue the quality and meaning in life beyond contemporary gender prescription. Their activism proves their commitment to their context and they had their own voices, even though they did not represent the overall Quaker tendency of their time. This thesis argues that their voices should be re-evaluated and discussed within the discourse of the new tendency of the twentieth century Quakerism.

In reality, the four women discussed in this thesis were all cases of the atypical rather than the rule. On the two extremes stood Isabella Ford and Isabel Fry. Isabella Ford hated expansionism but thought war was not the answer, and so devoted herself to peace efforts through international co-operation with formal and informal networks surrounding her, denying any kind of war-effort including relief work.⁸ She claimed

⁸ The NUWSS organized massive war relief work and the national press reported their war effort in an account of 'The Woman Suffrage Movement and the War'. (Bush 2007, 265) Bush reasons that 'suffragist war work demonstrated the highest form of womanly patriotism.' (Ibid) Jo Vellacott discusses feminist pacifists and patriots during the First World War. (2007)

the policy of peace at any price and resigned from the NUWSS, not being content with its policy, and devoted herself to organize the WILPF. Isabel Fry on the other hand was sympathetic to the war effort even at the cost of her official Quaker affiliation.

The four women all lived independent lives, not simply ones free from the emotional support of men. Schreiner proposed in her early allegorical writings that ‘women’s freedom involves no longer carrying men emotionally’. (Stanley 2002, 57) These Quaker women lived lives characterised by an independence that went beyond that benchmark. Drawing on Stanley’s argument that Schreiner used the term ‘New Women’ for women who were working towards a new life of equality and not living on surplus produced by others (Stanley 1983, 238), the four women here strove to achieve the new life based in everyday practice of spiritual growth as well as active involvement in public life.

For Isabella Ford and the Fry sisters, writing served as a channel for changing the world and served the needs of independent and emotional minds. As they saw it, writing was a way of sharing their gifts with her contemporaries and successive generations. The importance of these women’s message was to encourage the joining of kindred female spirits in many different ways.

These upper-middle-class women seemed to have experienced complicated feelings when they endeavoured to maintain their faith commitments—as a result, we see serious differences in their practice. There were varied levels of their political energy and directions for the peace issues. By focusing on their personal materials as well as

their activities, titles often given to the Religious Society of Friends—for example, ‘peace elite’, ‘peace church’ (Brock 1990, viii)—are challenged as Kennedy has already exposed in the cases of men and their ambiguous attitudes at the outbreak of the First World War. (Kennedy 2001) The First World War was a test and practice of Quaker tradition and proved the malleability of the testimony within the Religious Society.

Isabella Ford, the only socialist feminist pacifist of these four women, played an important role to promote peace by negotiation through international co-operation. On the contrary, Isabel Fry, who did not agree with violence, was ambiguous. She felt the need to fight the enemy during the War. She obviously represented a patriotic zest for the Imperial Nation more zealously than the Quaker approach Phillips identifies as ‘Friendly patriotism’. (Phillips 1989, 10) Margery Fry did not agree with peace by negotiation, because she thought international co-operation seemed too superficial and that peace work was not practical at all. Margery always was ready to answer for practical service, and this attitude, Rachel Sturge claims, sprang from a Quaker tradition of doing something useful. (Sturge 1967, 479) Ruth Fry disagreed with all war and violence, as a committed pacifist based on Quaker belief. Margery and Ruth devoted themselves to relief work during and after the First World War as part of Quaker humanitarian witness.

Isabel and Margery left the Quakers. Isabel clearly disagreed with the Quaker stance on pacifism. Ruth was a long-term representative of Quaker relief work and became a leader of Quakerism after the First World War. An obituary in a Quaker journal shows that Isabella Ford was one of the most radical political activists in Quakerism. (*TF*

1924, 670) Isabella appears to have remained an insider even though she maintained a radical circle of friends outside of Quakerism.⁹ Her activism and political decision was rooted in her Quakerism, as she confessed here and there, and that was her religious and spiritual attitude towards the world even though she had not much connection with Quaker as a body. Therefore, for Isabella, we might say, the spiritual was the political.

Indeed, there existed cases, such as those of Isabel Fry, Margery Fry, and Alice Clark, of individuals leaving the Society because they were frustrated with the spiritual uncertainty as well as the uncertain Quaker attitude towards war. (Brown 1960, Johns 1966, Holton 2007) They wanted to be realistic and practical, while others wanted strongly held responses against wars, not just responses in principle. Alice Clark, who resigned from the NUWSS with Isabella Ford in 1915, worked with the FWVRC in Austria during the War. (Alberti 1989, 52) After the War Alice Clark joined the Christian Science Church and resigned her membership, however, she remained ‘a supporter of Friends’ work’. (*TF* May 25, 1934)

This thesis interpreted the reason Margery and Isabel Fry left the Religious Society as being due to an uncertainty of spirituality rather than a political gesture, and challenged Sturge’s claim that Margery’s rift from Quakers was due to ‘the burden of family reputation’ (Sturge 1967, 477) I suggest her concern for penal reform initiated from her personal experience of painful loss in the First World War (Sturge 1967, 478) and directly from the leader of Quaker COs, Stephen Hobhouse. Stephen Hobhouse discussed ‘true and false Conceptions of Peace’, condemning war as an

⁹ As for her Quaker background, in an obituary of Emily Ford written in *The Friend* (1930, 230) the Ford sisters were remembered as they were all ‘gifted’ and ‘feminists’, ‘sprang from Quaker stock,’ though Emily left the Quakers for the Anglican Church.

absolutist, and following Quaker traditional testimony against war, to ‘lay down your arms’. (*FQE* 1911, 207-229)¹⁰ It appears that the complicated web of the political and the personal elevated Margery Fry’s political activism and also battled with spiritual uncertainty and subsequently forced her to choose to leave Quakers.

This thesis illustrates the various processes of political affiliations among Quaker women activists in a same secular organisation. Isabella Ford and Alice Clark were executive members in the NUWSS, however, Isabella Ford opposed the Liberal Party and ‘Keep the Liberals Out policy’ (Hannam 1989, 147) and was worried about the influence of militants on ILP branches. (Hannam 1989, 149) Alice Clark, initially from the Liberal and the militant WSPU, however converted to Labour and the constitutional NUWSS. They both resigned from the executive being not content with NUWSS’s strategy for the narrow approach to peace instead of a policy for peace at any price. (Holton 1996, 181)

It seems that the four women positively chose the single life, being content with the sense of doing useful things and serving the society, and the quality of friendship. Perhaps they could not find a ‘New man’ who had ascended to the same spiritual and intellectual and emotional height with whom to share their lives. ‘The real thing’, as Margery Fry mentioned, did not happen. (Johns 1966) Although she had a personal tragedy of having lost a loved one at the outbreak of the First World War. (Sturge 1967, 478) It appears that the sisters relied mainly on emotional support from blood ties and informal networks because these felt secure so they could focus on their own

¹⁰ Stephen Hobhouse’s mother, Margaret Hobhouse attempted to gain release for the COs, but strongly supported the war; ‘Her son persuaded her that Christianity and war are incompatible, so she gave up Christianity’. (quoted in Kennedy 1981, 187)

vocation as was the case seemingly for many other well-off Quaker daughters at that time. (Sturge, 1967, 479) For the sisters, especially, emotional and practical support from their female siblings and brother seemed to have been very important alongside their friendship.

On the question of the single life, Margery resented her painful loss, 'the worst pain of all - simply watching the things taken for granted in other lives pass you by'. (Sturge 1967, 478) It is assumed from this narrative that Margery's decision and motivation for her single life was due to the fact that 'the real thing' simply did not happen to her and it was painful to her at some time in her life. Using the web of the political and the personal we can reach a fuller explanation. However, it is still impossible to tell without obvious proof. For example, Holton suggests that Alice Clark 'cherished friendship with a few men based on shared intellectual concerns, humanitarian values, and spiritual needs, still there is no evidence that she regretted the lack of intimacy with the other sex'. (Holton 1999, 85) Like a range of successful role models of a single woman in her family circle, such as Mary Priestman and Anna Maria Priestman, her own sisters, Hilda Clark and Alice followed the models of independent singleness, while other sisters, Esther Bright Clothier, Margaret Clark Gillett, also suffrage activists and relief workers, were married. (Holton 1996, 166) Margaret Clark (1878-1962) accompanied Emily Hobhouse to South Africa in 1905 for relief work. (Kennedy 2001, 390)

Drawing from the fact that none of the three Ford sisters and the three Fry sisters was married, it appears that the daughters from well-to-do Quaker families were highly educated privately or publicly and motivated to fulfil their sense of responsibilities for

the outer world whether political activism or humanitarian causes or women's education or the writing of history or novels, backed up by their family resources. They formed a new lifestyle as singles and shared experiences of female networks and leadership. I would suggest further research is needed on whether this kind of singleness and friendship networks became a sub-culture of Quaker women in the twentieth century.

In the example of Emily Davies and Anna Deborah Richardson (1832-1872) of Newcastle, Emily expressed at the death of Anna as 'loss of a most faithful and sympathetic friend.' (O'Donnell 1999, 298) Anna appreciated Mary Taylor for her 'radiant intellect', 'sound judgement of right, combined with sweetness' providing her 'academic stimulation'. (O'Donnell 1999, 295-7) However, O'Donnell describes that 'Anna's friendship with girls were almost painful in their intensity' and her feelings for Mary Grace Taylor which were 'very different from that with Emily Davies, as she was fighting against the disappointment of not being able to see her.' (1999, 295) O'Donnell suggests that 'the relationship was partly possible for Anna's passionate personality and romantic nature.' (O'Donnell 1999, 297) As a proof, O'Donnell shows that Anna Deborah Richardson once wrote about her friendship with Mary Taylor, 'I love her in a way I fear you would condemn as romantic.' (quoted in O'Donnell 1999, 295)

However, none of my four women left any trace of this kind of romantic relationship or feelings with their women friends and comrades whether it depended on their passionate personality or nature or something else. Isabella Ford, in particular, was very aware of the discussions and practice of heterosexual friendship and/or

homosexual love or romantic friendships, such as those involving Edith Lees, Virginia Woolf and Violet Paget (Vernon Lee). Obviously we cannot assume or generalise this as something to do with the culture of Quakerism as we already have examples of Anna Deborah Richardson and Mary Taylor, and Molteno and Greene.

Ruth Symes, Ann Kaloski and Heloise Brown argue that 'women's friendship is a topic ripe for interdisciplinary study due to its very flexibility.' (1999, 1) They also follow up the sense of the changing nature of the private and intimate relationship over time. (Symes et al. 1999, 3) O'Donnell argues that the romantic friendships between feminist Friends encouraged the development of feminism in the nineteenth century. (1999) All my four women had valuable and remarkable friendships with women in their lifetime, however it is still difficult to assume that any of these were 'romantic'. Rather it appears their concern were for others and for sharing a meaningful life. It does not necessarily mean these relationships were not romantic, however, those women never left any thread of their feelings about their friendship with women friends, except in novels in the case of Isabella Ford. An attempt to research private letters and diaries is of little use for some Quaker women, who never left a record of their emotional lives at all. Perhaps, it might be partly due to their awareness of their reputation as a 'weighty' Quaker and that they did not wish to let their personal feelings upset the corporate image of the Religious Society in a time of war. Therefore further researches for a fuller collective biography of Quaker women are needed.

The pacifist or patriot positions became significant issues in the time up to and during the First World War, and it appears obvious that the peace issue was one of the most

difficult for the Quaker women discussed here to deal with. Even though those two women left Quakerism officially, they did identify themselves as Quakers. These four women's different religious practice yet tenacious connection with Quakerism in one way or another shows, I believe, that they demonstrated what I call an 'elastic' Quakerism.

6.2. Original Contribution and Implications

This section begins by reviewing the main original contributions made by this thesis. This summary is enhanced by the further sub-sections looking at the implications of my work for Quaker studies, women's studies and peace studies.

The original contribution of this thesis lies mainly in its close examination of the personal and political in the lives of four atypical Quaker women. It builds on previous scholarship but also challenges it, methodologically and analytically. Highlighting the varied emotional relations these women were engaged in, also the swift change within Quakerism from being the closed group of the nineteenth to a more open group in the twentieth century, this thesis challenged previous interpretations of Quakerism as a mono-culture. I coined the permissive aspect of the group as 'elastic Quakerism'.

Previously, Hannam attempted mainly to follow up the matter of gender and class in Isabella's engagement with socialist politics. I focused more about her Quakerism, interpreting the process of her politicisation and political decision and its connection

with her novels. Her novels seem another form of narrative to 'convey Quaker women's peace testimony claiming the message of the value of all life, women's authority and choosing life, developing life and peace'. (Jantzen 2005, 149)

Through adopting the insight and example of Stanley's two decades of 'obsessive' research on Olive Schreiner (2002), we could reach a more thorough understanding of Isabella Ford's political and emotional lives and her Quaker attitude through close reading of her literary works. To 'know past lives', Stanley claims 'in feminist terms', 'the past and its irreducible things that happened must also be taken seriously'. (2001, 32) In this thesis, Stanley's theories about feminist research proved useful to understand particular Quaker women's political as well as emotional lives. To enhance Hannam's approach to explore the life of Isabella Ford through the 'web of friendship', an approach, which was common among many feminist historians in the late 1980s, this thesis examined her novels and extended the understanding of her and connected her political and personal life with her Quakerism in cultural framework. Waters defines Isabella Ford as a socialist feminist novelist, analysing her novels in psychological aspect: however, she did not investigate her Quakerism. (1993)

This thesis attempted to find whether my four women had any romantic friendships among women that were broadly accepted as common in the nineteenth century, as Faderman examined (1981) and Holton suggests. (Holton 1996, 60) Through intense and passionate friendships these women involved could rely on mutual support in occasions in their lifetime and sustain independent lifestyles. (Levine 1990, 60-75) Especially, for my subjects, alongside their friendship, their sisterhood was important resources for them to sustain their political and personal lives. Their singleness and

friendship with emotional and practical support appeared as an alternative lifestyle instead conventional marriage of certain prominent Quaker women from upper-middle-class of the time, adding to the examples of the Bright, Priestman and Clark. (O'Donnell 1999, Holton 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2005, 2007) Further research is needed to find whether this kind of alternative lifestyle or any other forms of mutual support shaped a sort of sub-culture of Quaker feminist in the twentieth century.

It would be worthwhile to search for other Quaker feminist writers and examine their literary works for a further research for Quaker studies. Theodora Wilson Wilson (1865-1941), who joined the Socialist Quaker Society and worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), wrote many fictions. (Boggende 2007, 107-128) Did she succeed Isabella Ford as a Quaker socialist feminist pacifist writer?

As for the assumption of the close connection with the women's movement and Quakers, it became clear that Quaker women were also divided about their response to war and peace, through a detailed examination of Quaker women and their responses to the First World War in this thesis.

As British Quaker women have received much attention from feminist historians, the link between the religious faith of Quaker women and their political radicalism has been examined. Following up the argument that 'the relationship between religious views and political action was more complex in Quaker women's involvement in a liberal politics', (Holton and Allen 1997, 1) Quaker women were divided widely on many political issues including peace as much as they were on women's suffrage, their views ranging from those of imperialist patriots to socialist feminist pacifists.

Implications for Quaker Studies

Firstly, this thesis extended the understanding of Quaker women through a feminist perspective and methodology focusing on the political and the personal. Unlike Gareth Shaw's approach to Quaker women, which focuses on the contemporary records of the Women's Monthly Meeting rather than the individual travelling Quaker women ministers' writings in his research on early Quaker women (Shaw 2005, 191), this thesis strove to search for women's own voices from individual women's writings published or unpublished including novels. Research to explore women's experience and place it within the context of a broader cultural framework is never fully complete and is, I suggest, usually omitted in mainstream history.

This thesis explored how Quaker women were divided over the peace issue at the outbreak of the First World War. As Lunn (1997) argues about the average Quaker's attitude to suffrage, the majority of Friends held a conservative position on the peace issue as well. Quakers were confused on the peace issue in terms of their religious position, whether they chose to be the agents of reconciliation or witness to social justice and peace or zealous patriots. The majority chose patriotism rather than their tradition of spiritual witness. In contrast to Kennedy's (1989) argument that feminist Friends were equally vocal on the peace issue, this study has shown that some women Friends could, in fact, be considered imperial patriotic feminists. The notion of feminism became contaminated to some extent by the shared value of patriotic politics.

The main original contribution of this thesis to Quaker Studies is to emphasise and

explore a collective biography of atypical Quaker women and to connect the political with the personal. As such, it has been very important to ground and connect the individual experiences and to place them in a broader framework and not to lose the historical and cultural implications. I described this process as a ‘dialogue between texts and contexts’.

Adopting feminist biography, Quaker women’s historiography is rich, enhanced further through close reading of Quaker written novels—something that is relatively rare in historical investigations of Quakerism. Feminist research methods brought me an emotional identification with the web of friendships and the emotional qualities of these women’s relationships. The particularity and the peculiarity of those women, their relationships and friendships were examined and their meaningful informal networks and blood ties—as the web of the personal and the political—explored.

From this point of view, this thesis suggests feminist socio-biography as the ideal research tool to explore atypical and peculiar women in context. First of all, applying the methods of close reading of primary resources, including novels, helped to show the subjects of the present study as real persons, individuals with emotional lives rather than historical figures defined by life-facts. This thesis sought to avoid generalising and theorising, focusing on observing closely the women *as they were*. The work done with personal records, I believe, proves the validity of the method and demonstrates the need for transcontinental archival research that would ultimately serve to enrich our knowledge of Quaker inter-regional, inter-continental and global historiography.

Secondly, this thesis raises a concern about Quaker women writers, especially New Woman writers, and their ideas of peace and justice, which is rarely discussed by Quaker historians. This thesis illustrated the Quaker belief in ‘that of God in everyone’ as a spiritual basis of Quakerism was clearly expressed in Isabella Ford’s novels. It argued that Isabella Ford connected her belief in socialism and Quakerism in her novel writing, expressing the idea of Inward Light as a core concept of her Quakerism alongside the socialist feminist ideas in *On the Threshold*. (see Chapter 3) This thesis highlighted the fact that Isabella Ford’s novels represented her socialism, feminism and Quakerism, and her spiritual life as a woman. For Isabella, the personal was the political and the spiritual was the political.

Thirdly, this thesis added to O’Donnell’s (1999) research by uncovering another atypical case of a most radical Quaker woman remaining inside her group without any radical support from it. When I initiated this research, I had expected to find a group of socialist pacifist feminist Quaker women, however, I could only find a few separated socialist Quaker women. Only Isabella Ford led a life of unceasing activism in the core of the British socialist and feminist movement, yet still remained a Quaker. Isabella Ford proved herself an example of a very atypical Quaker and her life characteristic of elastic Quakerism.

In this thesis, the examples of Boston marriage and single life were exposed as alternatives to the conventional marriage for some prominent Quaker women, remaining independent from the dominant gender culture and sustaining their political and personal lives. Were there any other ways or cases for Quaker women who proclaimed their politics and personal lives as well as spiritual equality, for example,

any Quaker women's community or mixed community experiments beyond gender prescription? Among the leaders of relief work, Joan Fry was one of the rare examples of married woman. Joan Fry's Quaker theology of peace would be worthwhile to research. In relation to women's participation to the relief work, was there any competition or debate to recruit for peace work or relief work among Quakers? Further research is needed to follow up a gendered process of formation of Quaker peace leadership. If it was gendered, how was the process organized at local, regional and national levels? Was this phenomenon compatible with the principle of Quaker tradition of spiritual equality?

Lastly, this research has showed that not all Quaker women who engaged in relief work were pacifists. Therefore, I would suggest future scholars initiate a historical discussion on pacifism and relief work. Alongside a philosophical discussion the gendered culture of the Quaker pacifist tradition is worthwhile to be examined as Lunn explored in her research in the women's suffrage case. (Lunn 1997)

As Kennedy points out, the British Quakers saw themselves as part of the nation engaged in the War, unlike the Plymouth Brethren and the Christadelphians who felt themselves separate from the world. (Kennedy 2001, 393) In the name of Isaac Sharp a letter distributed in the title of 'To Men and Women of Goodwill in the British Empire: A Message for the Religious Society of Friends':

We find ourselves to-day in the midst of what may prove to be the fiercest conflict in the history of the human race. Whatever may be our view of the processes which have led to its inception, we have now to face the fact that war is proceeding upon a terrific scale and that our own country is involved in it. (*TF* 1914, 599)

Soon after this letter was distributed, Joshua Rowntree sent a letter, 'To Clergy and Ministers of Scarborough and District':

Recurring to the circular letter from the Peace Society a week ago, may I say unofficially, that I think we shall be thankful as time advances for the pleading for a Christian peace made in so many places of worship last Sunday.

Now it seems as if judgement was descending on Europe for its blind materialism and jealousies, bringing a probability of suffering and privation to innocent multitudes. (*TF* 1914, 600)

The Northern Friends' Peace Board also issued a circular letter, titled 'What shall we do?':

May it never be said that our peace principles are an excuse for shirking duty. England needs her Quaker sons and daughters at the present hour. Men and women are wanted who will serve in the humdrum services of life no less bravely than the soldier on the battlefield. We must do our share by organisation and personal effort in preventing such a set back to barbarism. If the worst comes we shall be needed to spend days and nights in works of help and relief. And there may yet be need for a Quaker corps to carry the message of love and goodwill, to convey hope and material sustenance to the war ravaged districts of Europe, that 'England's love' may win back the affections of those whose fields have been trodden under the heel of our armies or whose homes have been shattered by the guns of our fleet.' (*TF* 1914, 600)

This rhetoric shows the idea of peace effort and relief work. A letter in *The Friend*

was asserting peace and justice;

We must plead for a peace founded upon the basis of absolute justice, a settlement in which the rights of all men are guarded, and by which all nationalities will be entitled and urged to submit all future disputes to a strong international court. We must urge that never again shall England be involved in efforts to support the balance of power.... Furthermore we must ensure that never again shall the people of England be plunged into war through our secret understandings.

We must at the present moment show that there are men in the country with a burning, living faith who will have no part nor lot in the war system because it is a denial of the Christian faith. (*TF* 1914, 600)

As mentioned above, there was a wide spectrum of Quaker thought or many facets of Quakerism between the 1880s and 1920s, from the imperial and patriotic to socialist internationalist pacifists. They all had different attitudes towards feminism, socialism and pacifism. Those different attitudes were printed in the Religious Society's journals and in personal records as well. Kennedy praised the Quaker Renaissance as a young liberal progressive trend - mainly male - of British Quakerism in the early twentieth century, failing to consider the complexity of Quaker women's experiences.

Implications for Women's Studies

In order to achieve a fuller understanding of a Quaker woman's lives and ideas, this thesis examined socialist feminist novels of Isabella Ford. Through the research on the novels, the intensity of the women's emotional ties and lives could be more vividly drawn and placed within their respective socio-historical contexts.

This thesis exposed all the different levels and concerns of the four women's political lives. It raised the question of how and why a sense of women's spiritual superiority was not doubted by Isabella Ford and Ruth Fry. Had it something to do with their belief in Quakerism, which emphasised spiritual equality in both gender from the beginning? Or did their emphasis on women's spiritual quality enable them to develop the discourse of the pacifist feminist politics?

These women's lives clearly proved the importance of their friendships with women for mutual emotional and practical support for their emotional and political lives in their contexts. Not just to demonstrate the existence of the networks of shared experiences and beliefs, political/personal affiliations, women's friendship with women should be examined in terms of its content and extent theoretically.

Feminist historians should be careful not to exaggerate and generalise the peculiar case as a rule. In the case of dealing with Quaker women's positive role and contribution in the development of the women's movement, feminist historians are attracted to the assumption that Quakers were radical in general, without closer examination. To point this out is, of course, not from the intention to belittle prominent Quaker women's contribution to women's movement.

Socialist women and Quaker women have especially attracted feminist historians, however, the connection has never been examined thoroughly in earlier research. The originality of this thesis is the very attempt to avoid exaggerating their contribution or simplifying their superficial role or link women with peace as 'natural'. Striving to trace the complexity and diversity of their politicisation and the moments of their

decision making through their political and personal lives as they were, this thesis demonstrates the development and the process of their choices in context.

Implications of Peace and Justice Scholarship

This thesis contributes to peace and justice scholarship by offering the case study of four different women, and by exploring the diversity and complexity of their choice of practice and ideas in their context. Also the ambiguous attitude and confusion over Quaker's pacifist tradition has been examined here through the four women's experiences.

This thesis questioned the assumption that the connection between women and peace is a natural one. As the category 'women' is not of nature, 'peace' is also a matter of culture not just the absence of war. Therefore I suggest that the discourse about women and peace should be placed within a societal framework.

6.3. Future Research

Further areas of future research are suggested as a result of this research.

First of all, more archival research into Quaker women based on family and kinship networks and their context, making use of detailed examinations including local and transcontinental archival research is needed. Holton's work on the Bright Clark kinship circle (Holton 1994) focussed on a prestigious and leading Quaker family –

more should be done on the lesser – heard voices. Based on Quaker women’s personal and political experiences, the phenomenon of permissive Quakerism could be more closely and widely examined. A research on Joan Fry’s activism would extend our understanding of the Fry family.

The Ford and Fry sisters, except Isabel, were aware of the importance of art, were there any Quaker artists, writers and who promoted peace ideas and education? Margaret Glover’s research on Birmingham based Quaker artist, Joseph Southall, who worked with ILP and joined the Socialist Quaker Society by 1916 (Glover 2002, 212) and who attempted to promote peace through art (Glover 2002) gives one answer. A research on Emily Ford, as a Quaker women artist activist would be worthwhile, as she drew a propaganda postcard protesting against the Factory Acts in 1908 (Hannam 1989, 144) and eighty banners for suffrage campaign. (Liddington 2007)

Second, to develop the discourse of the feminist pacifist politics, an interdisciplinary approach is needed, including its intellectual, cultural, philosophical and spiritual dimensions, such as the Quaker feminist theorist on gender and culture, Grace Jantzen’s inspiring emphasis on women’s life sensitivity, the message of ‘choose life’ (Jantzen 2005) gives us a lead here.

Lastly, as these women’s lives in their contexts clearly demonstrates that their friendships with women remained important relationships in their lives, the topic of women’s friendships should be considered theoretically.

6.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the main chapters of this thesis and highlighted its originality and contribution. The main original contribution of this thesis lies in its close examination of the lives of atypical Quaker women and their elastic Quakerism. It highlights the diversity and complexity of Quaker women's lives and the personal and the political in context. In doing so, it challenges feminist historians' superficial assumption of Quaker women's role in the women's movement and has attempted to place the theme of Quaker women and peace within a broader cultural context. Threads for future research were also suggested. This thesis raised the question of a more flexible approach to grasp the academic and lived dynamics of the subjects of women, peace and Quakers.

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