

78/158

Z

v. 1

*The Bancroft Library*

University of California • Berkeley

















All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between the Regents of the University of California and Rebecca Hourwich Reyher dated September 4, 1973. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California Berkeley. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Director of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the Regional Oral History Office, 486 Library, and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of the passages, and identification of the user. The legal agreement with Rebecca Hourwich Reyher requires that she be notified of the request and allowed thirty days in which to respond.



Suffragists Oral History Project

Rebecca Hourwich Reyher

SEARCH AND STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY AND INDEPENDENCE

With an Introduction by  
Nancy Hallinan

An Interview Conducted by  
Amelia R. Fry

and  
Fern Ingersoll

Copy No.   1





Rebecca Hourwich Reyher  
1953



AUTHOR'S PREFACE - Rebecca Hourwich Reyher

With the greatest skill and sensitive understanding, first Amelia Fry and then Fern Ingersoll interviewed me. They kept me on course and adjusted their schedules to mine over and over again, for my time was not my own as I was looking after a very sick sister. Fern's editorial genius accomplished the most difficult task of completing the memoir and bringing my story to life. For three years she and I were in constant communication. Often my sister's illness would bring everything to a standstill. Fern was always understanding and patient and kept the thread of the work going, picking up where we left off. Editing at its best is just that--sensitive understanding and encouragement, plus the ability to bring out order, which, in this case could so easily have become chaos.

I am deeply grateful to Amelia Fry and Fern Ingersoll for their editorial suggestions and judgment, and to the Regional Oral History Office for including me in the Suffragist Oral History Project.

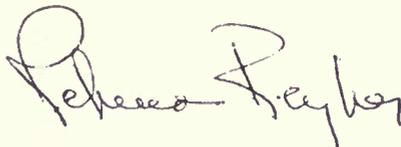
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rebecca Reyher". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed text of the preface.



TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Rebecca Hourwich Reyher

PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTION: REBECCA HOURWICH REYHER--A MOST FEMININE FEMINIST	iv
INTERVIEW HISTORY by Amelia Fry and Fern Ingersoll	vii
CHRONOLOGY -- Rebecca H. Reyher	xii

Part I EARLY YEARS

I PARENTS' BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCE	1
<u>Father's Background: Russian Revolutionary</u>	1
Political Interest	5
<u>Mother's Background: Russian Educator</u>	8
Mother's Father: Honored Schoolmaster	8
Mother's Grandfather: Civil Rights Pioneer	10
Mother: Homemaker and Teacher	11
<u>Home Influences</u>	12
Early Cure for Social Striving: the Soup Tureen Party	14
Sense of Social Responsibility: Encouragement for a Career	18
II EDUCATION	
<u>Influence of "Greats" at the University of Chicago and Columbia</u>	20
<u>New York School of Social Work: Study of Work Loads of Men and Women</u>	21
<u>More Thought and a Degree From Chicago</u>	23
<u>Leadership Experience</u>	25
<u>Social Life: Many Beaus</u>	28



Part II WORK WITH THE WOMAN'S PARTY

III	EARLY SUFFRAGE WORK 1913-1915	29
	<u>Woman's Party Parade: Inauguration, 1913</u>	29
	<u>Liberal Club and Feminist Alliance: Introduction to Feminist Ideas</u>	33
	<u>Street Meetings, New Jersey, 1915: First Suffrage Campaign</u>	35
	<u>Organizing in Brockton, Massachusetts, 1915</u>	41
	<u>Stand of Women's Political Union and National Woman Suffrage Association</u>	46
IV	WASHINGTON, THE SOUTH, AND MASSACHUSETTS 1917-1918	48
	<u>Washington Office: Picketing and Selling the <i>Suffragist</i>, 1917</u>	48
	<u>Traveling South for Suffrage</u>	51
	Virginia: Drawing-room Crisis	53
	Alabama: Goat-cart Publicity	54
	Tennessee: Combatting Hostility	57
	Attitude Toward Black Women: Change in Social Climate	61
	Fairness of Press Reports	64
	<u>Heading the Boston Office, 1918</u>	65
	Fund Raising	66
	Radical Board Member: Jessica Henderson	67
	Miniature-Artist as Spy	68
	Theodore Roosevelt's Statement	70
	<u>Mixed Issues a Problem of Washington: Smoking, Birth Control</u>	71
	<u>Summer Meetings on the Cape</u>	74
V	HEADING THE NEW YORK OFFICE 1918-1919; 1922	75
	<u>Board Members and Volunteers: Efforts of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer</u>	77
	<u>Fund Raising: Meaning of Economic Independence</u>	83
	<u>Fund Raising: Mrs. Belmont's Dilemma</u>	85



<u>Demonstration for Woodrow Wilson</u>	87
<u>Washington: Demonstrators from New York</u>	90
<u>Soliciting Support</u>	93
<u>Washington Office, 1921: Press Department</u>	97
<u>Suspicious of Activists in Early Twenties: Security for Harding Address</u>	98
<u>Reactivating the New York Branch, 1922</u>	101
Sidney Colestock's House	102
Mutual Concern of Woman's Party Workers	105
<u>Meeting with Lady Rhondda</u>	106
<u>Illness, Recuperation, and Continued Work</u>	112
VI <u>HEADING THE CHICAGO OFFICE 1923-1924</u>	114
<u>Seneca Falls Meeting, 1923: Equal Rights vs. Protective Legislation</u>	114
<u>Difficulty of Establishing Home and Working for Woman's Party</u>	117
<u>Activities in Chicago</u>	118
Importance of Publicity	118
Covering the City in Car of Judge Pam	121
<u>Relationship Between Washington Office and Local Offices of NWP in Work for ERA</u>	122
<u>Articles for Hearst's International</u>	123
Part III OUTREACH TO PEOPLE	
VII <u>AFRICAN TRAVEL AND WRITING</u>	127
<u>Plans for Professional Writing: First Trip to Africa</u>	127
View of Role of Women in Primitive Society: Same Arguments for Status Quo in Africa and U.S.	131
Articles and Other Accomplishments	131



<u>Second Research Trip: <i>Zulu Woman</i></u>	136
<u>Third Research Trip: <i>The Fon and His Hundred Wives</i></u>	138
Earlier Difficulty of Writing: Commercial Jobs Necessary	141
Concentration on Writing	142
<u>Sent by Doubleday to Do Book on Polyandry, 1957</u>	146
Difficulties Getting to India	146
No Publisher for Finished Book on Polyandry: Successful	
Struggle for Publication of <i>Zulu Woman</i> Recalled	148
<u>Change in Focus of Women's Studies and in Concern for African Women</u>	149
<u>The Bender Brothers: San Francisco and Capetown</u>	154
VIII CAREER STEPPING STONES	162
<u>Need for Professional Career and Home Base: Volunteer Work for Woman's Party</u>	162
Colorado Springs Meetings; Cavalcade to Coolidge, 1927	163
Philosophy of Cranks	165
Change in a Woman: Mary Caroline Taylor	168
<u>Member of NWP New York Board While Working for J. Walter Thompson</u>	169
Woman Considered "Important" Because of Husband: Wider Focus Encouraged	170
Judging a Radio Personality	172
<u>Trip to Egypt, Near East, Europe, and Russia, 1929</u>	173
Contacts with Women: Problems of Russian Women	175
A Papal Audience	177
<u>Former Job Unavailable: Study of <i>New York Times</i> and <i>Tribune</i> Articles on Women</u>	177
<u>Public Relations Assistant for Joseph McKee: Refusal of Political Career</u>	178
<u>Consultant, Sears Roebuck and Company: Research on Women's Reactions</u>	182
<u>Career Focus: Interpreting What People Say and Do</u>	183



IX	SATISFACTIONS FROM CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN WELFARE	184
	<u>Regional Director, Works Progress Administration, New York and New England: Nursery School Project</u>	184
	<u>Peoples Mandate Committee: Work with Mabel Vernon</u>	185
	Difficulty Securing Released Time: Help from the Woman's Party "Sisterhood"	187
	Purpose: Ratification of Buenos Aires Treaties	189
	Publicity and Fund Raising	191
	Episodes Needing Equanimity	192
	Women Admitted to Monastery	193
	<u>A Hat for a Heroine</u>	194
	<u>Executive Secretary and Member, Board of Directors, Dominican Republic Settlement Association</u>	198
	<u>Desire for a Faith</u>	201
X	BROADCASTING, LECTURING, TEACHING, AND MORE TRAVEL	203
	<u>Radio Programs</u>	203
	<u>Lecturing and Teaching: Women and Africa</u>	205
	<u>Interviewing "First Ladies" of Africa</u>	206
	Women Joining Men: Contrast with Past	208
	Career Women Aided by Fathers and Husbands	209
	Male-Female Relationships	214
	Admiration for African Women	215
	Contribution to <i>Tropical Africa</i>	216
Part IV PERSPECTIVES		
XI	THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT AND THE WOMAN'S PARTY	?
	<u>Other Personalities</u>	217
	Charlotte Perkins Gilman	217
	Margaret Williams, Florence Treat Whitehouse, Gail Laughlin	219



<u>Political-Economic Identity of Woman's Party Supporters</u>	220
<u>Suffrage Won, Varied Concerns of Women: Mabel Vernon Compared to Alice Paul</u>	222
Own Concern with Birth Control	225
Feminism Outreached Woman's Party	226
<u>Social Attitudes</u>	231
Women's Lib: Reaction to Feminine Mystique and Victorian Morals	231
Equality Between Sexes: Pills, Abortions, Vasectomies	233
Women and Money	235
Gigolos	236
Values	238
<u>Struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment</u>	239
Attitude of Woman's Party Toward Established Parties	239
Changing Stand on ERA by Established Parties	241
Desire to Speak Out Again: Old Arguments Neglected	243
XII <u>PERSONAL--PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS</u>	245
<u>Marriage and Birth of a Daughter</u>	245
<u>Desire to Resume Work: Difficulty Finding a Nurse</u>	249
<u>"Everybody Who Loves Me Leaves Me"</u>	253
<u>Separation from Husband: Effort to Preserve Father-Daughter Relationship</u>	256
<u>Continued Use of Maiden Name: Strain on Daughter</u>	257
<u>Economic Terms of Divorce; Retrospective View of Husband</u>	259
<u>Continuity of Living: Responsibility for a Sister</u>	261
APPENDIX	26
INDEX	306



## PREFACE

The Suffragists Oral History Project was designed to tape record interviews with the leaders of the woman's suffrage movement in order to document their activities in behalf of passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and their continuing careers as leaders of movements for welfare and labor reform, world peace, and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Because the existing documentation of the suffrage struggle indicates a need for additional material on the campaign of the National Woman's Party, the contribution of this small but highly active group has been the major focus of the series.

The project, underwritten by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, enabled the Regional Oral History Office to record first-hand accounts of this early period in the development of women's rights with twelve women representing both the leadership and the rank and file of the movement. Five held important positions in the National Woman's Party. They are Sara Bard Field, Burnita Shelton Matthews, Alice Paul, Rebecca Hourwich Reyher, and Mabel Vernon. Seven interviews are with women who campaigned for suffrage at state and local levels, working with other suffrage organizations. Among this group is Jeannette Rankin, who capped a successful campaign for suffrage in Montana with election to the House of Representatives, the first woman to achieve this distinction. Others are Valeska Bary, Jessie Haver Butler, Miriam Allen de Ford, Ernestine Kettler, Laura Ellsworth Seiler, and Sylvie Thygeson.

Planning for the Suffragists Project and some preliminary interviews had been undertaken prior to receipt of the grant. The age of the women--74 to 104--was a compelling motivation. A number of these interviews were conducted by Sherna Gluck, Director of the Feminist History Research Project in Los Angeles, who has been recording interviews with women active in the suffrage campaigns and the early labor movement. Jacqueline Parker, who was doing post-doctoral research on the history of the social welfare movement, taped interviews with Valeska Bary. A small grant from a local donor permitted Malca Chall to record four sessions with Jeannette Rankin. Both Valeska Bary and Jeannette Rankin died within a few months of their last interviewing session.



The grant request submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation covered funding both to complete these already-recorded interviews and to broaden the scope and enrich the value of the project by the inclusion of several women not part of the leadership. The grant, made in April, 1973, also provided for the deposit of all the completed interviews in five major manuscript repositories which collect women's history materials.

In the process of research, a conference with Anita Politzer (who served more than three decades in the highest offices of the National Woman's Party, but was not well enough to tape record that story) produced the entire series of Equal Rights and those volumes of the Suffragist missing from Alice Paul's collection; negotiations are currently underway so that these in-party organs can be available to scholars everywhere.

The Suffragists Project as conceived by the Regional Oral History Office is to be the first unit in a series on women in politics. Unit two will focus on interviews with politically active and successful women during the years 1920-1970; and unit three, interviews with women who are incumbents in elective office today.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

Malca Chall, Director  
Suffragists Oral History Project

Amelia Fry, Interviewer-Editor

Willa Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

2 January 1974  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley



SUFFRAGISTS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BARY, Helen Valeska. Labor Administration and Social Security:  
A Woman's Life. 1974

MATTHEWS, Burnita Shelton. Pathfinder in the Legal Aspects of  
Women. 1975

PAUL, Alice. Conversations with Alice Paul: Woman Suffrage  
and the Equal Rights Amendment. 1976

RANKIN, Jeannette. Activist for World Peace, Women's Rights,  
and Democratic Government. 1974

REYHER, Rebecca Hourwich. Search and Struggle for Equality  
and Independence. 1977

THE SUFFRAGISTS: FROM TEA-PARTIES TO PRISON. 1975

Thygeson, Sylvie, "In the Parlor"  
Butler, Jessie Haver, "On the Platform"  
deFord, Miriam Allen, "In the Streets"  
Seiler, Laura Ellsworth, "On the Soapbox"  
Kettler, Ernestine, "Behind Bars"

VERNON, Mabel. Speaker for Suffrage and Petitioner for Peace.  
1976



## INTRODUCTION: REBECCA HOURWICH REYHER--A MOST FEMININE FEMINIST

by Nancy Hallinan\*

Becky Hourwich Reyher and I have three things in common--above and beyond the fact that we're both women. We're women, yes, but of a minority sort. We're women who are divorced; we're mothers who have brought up children alone, each coping with an only daughter; and off to the side somewhere, despite some heavy odds, we're both dedicated writers.

But I knew none of this when I first met Mrs. Reyher. I arrived from England in 1938 to go to Vassar College, where my mother had graduated a generation before. I was seventeen, ungainly, shy beyond words, and utterly unsophisticated by American standards and possibly by European standards, too. Becky was a friend of my mother's, a "Woman's Party friend." And it was Becky who arranged a party for my mother on her visit here in New York, just before I was to take the train to Poughkeepsie. I have just described the seventeen-year-old I was, but here was Becky Reyher. She has a smile like sunshine, a wide bright smile; dark brown eyes full of twinkles (one might almost say mischief), and most infectious of all, a low, throaty laugh, a marvelous warmth. That's the Becky I met. In a single moment she crossed the generation gap, a phrase not much used at that time. I forgot my shyness. I completely forgot I was my mother's daughter! I was her friend, and she was my friend.

And so she has remained to this day: a friendship, the sharing of confidences, loyalty, love, and the utmost discretion in matters of the heart.

Another scene, some years later. In 1945 I was living in New York on Perry Street, not far from Washington Square where Becky lived. As a matter of fact, we often met in the markets where you could get eggs and fresh vegetables at bargain prices. My young about-to-be husband was living with me--he was studying to be a composer, I to be a writer. And we intended to get married some day when we could find the time and a nice big place in which to have all

---

\*Nancy Hallinan is the author of short stories and three novels, Rough Winds of May, A Voice from the Wings, and very recently Night Swimmers, which have been published to wide acclaim in this country and abroad. She is the daughter of Hazel Hunkins-Hallinan, an ardent worker for suffrage in the early days of the Woman's Party. Hazel Hunkins-Hallinan has been an active feminist in England for more than fifty years and has been chairman of the Six Point Group, a prestigious feminist organization. [Ed.]



our friends celebrate with us. Becky offered us her lovely apartment which had a terrace. Her generosity was so spontaneous. Yet there was a lot of work involved (extra cleaning, polishing, etc., and the borrowing of a punch bowl and glasses), and while all this was going on the New York Times telephoned to confirm the wedding announcement. Before Becky had time to answer it, the cleaning lady employed for the occasion, gave the Times reporter the following information: "Must be a wedding going on here, Mrs. Reyher's mending the couch cover!" That's all the man needed to know--while we collapsed with laughter. Becky: generosity, hard work, humor....

Those were happy days, I believe, for all of us. Becky was writing and lecturing. Faith, her daughter, was collaborating on a children's song book with my husband, who was composing the music. Becky's home was often our meeting place. She crossed the generation gap so effortlessly and gracefully that we never thought of her as belonging to another generation. Yet she had a great deal of wisdom. There was one particular time in my marriage when I was very upset, and felt betrayed and unhappy. Becky, though my special friend and a woman, might be expected to "take my side" in a painful situation. She loved me, I knew, and while she understood and sympathized with my anguish she was also fair to my husband and wise. She understood his predicament and was able to explain it to me, and more, the whole duality of any relationship. She showed me human truths; she educated me in a very special way. My eventual divorce hit me hard. Becky's words, after a certain length of time: "Nancy, the only way to get over one man is another. Now where is he?" Becky had herself experienced love, marriage, motherhood, divorce; and, unlike some feminists, she felt men were important. She acknowledges men in the universe! She does not look down on men as men, despite the terrible injustices and inequalities men have visited upon women and which she has spent so much of her life fighting.

Occasionally Becky would disappear. "Where is she?" I'd ask Faith. "Africa somewhere." "Again?!" "And she's broke. I don't know what to do. I'm worried."

Yes, Becky vanished into Africa for long stretches of time, and like any writer/anthropologist would find herself without funds, suddenly. I've no notion how harrowing that time or times must have been for her. She'd be back, however, and sitting with us at dinner. Africa was many things to her: her quest for both understanding and perhaps emancipation of the African woman, and also her own sense of adventure. Considerable daring was needed, and stamina, regardless of funds. I remember her telling us about one safari, and one horrifyingly vivid detail. "My dear, we found out the cook had not just one form of venereal disease, but three!" It was hard to believe. Yet Becky, herself always immaculately dressed, disappeared into Africa time and time again, despite such horrifying risks. Then she'd be back with material for her books and a multitude of adventures. She loved Africa and she loved the Zulu woman. She may not have loved the Fon, but she obviously had a way with him. Her feeling for and her writing on the African woman compares to the best writing of J. Prewer Jhabvala, who is such an experienced observer of the Indian scene. Both writers possess a special sensitivity to womankind, and



both have the wisdom to focus on the individual and, as Chekhov said, through the individual reaching the universal.

My second marriage brought me a baby girl. And this is where I remember two other favorite books of hers, Babies and Puppies are Fun, and My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World, a favorite with my daughter.

Through the years I think Becky and I have discussed and chatted about just about everything important to us: people, pets, careers, writing, teaching, but above all, family. Her daughter, and Faith's first son by her first marriage, her other grandsons, and of course my large family, and my daughter. Becky loved and admired her own parents. She has always been particularly close to her sister, Dicky Hourwich, and even as I write this she is nursing Dicky through a very painful illness. A key word to Becky's character is loyalty.

How can I sum up this complex and wonderful woman? Ultimately, the job is impossible. She is loyal, loving, stubborn, dedicated, idealistic, understanding; she is also enormously courageous, and graced with a beautiful sense of humor. She exists as a complicated self, perhaps many selves: suffragette, columnist, lecturer, teacher, WPA director, traveler (four continents!), author of motion picture documentaries, articles, books, a radio personality, popular anthropologist, many more. I have been asked to write about Becky in terms of "social history," and what I've really done is nothing of the sort. I've shared some memories. I offer my excuse in Becky's words:

"Home again, my mind and heart are full of memories I shall carry with me always, and for which I can give only these inadequate words of thanks."

That is the last paragraph of The Fon and His Hundred Wives. It is also my feeling about Becky.

Nancy Hallinan

February, 1977  
Washington, D. C.



## INTERVIEW HISTORY\*

This is a charming little apartment about a half a block from Washington Square in New York. A dominating feature of the room is a big chest with a very ornate mirror above it. The chest has inlaid flowers and birds on the front of all the drawers. It is very beautiful, made of contrasting tones of wood. The other dominating feature is a very large tropical tree which Rebecca Reyher tells me belonged to her mother and is several decades old. It has a history of growing up to the ceiling at which point it is cut back, only to grow to the ceiling again. Right now it is ceiling-height and ready for another pruning. There is a window that looks out on Washington Place over an array of lush green potted plants on the sill.

As one comes in, one sees an entrance hall with a closet on one side and, on the other, bookcases reaching almost to the ceiling and bulging with books old and new; there is another bookcase as one comes down the two steps into the living room. The hallway that leads back to the bathroom has a folding screen across the entrance because that is where Rebecca Reyher's files and papers and more files are stored and piled. There is an African painting of an African village with some African carvings under it on the bookcase. The big, comfortable puffy couch is complemented with a captain's chair that can be moved around the room for wherever the conversation is. There are many other sketches and paintings, each of which probably has a story.

Mrs. Reyher is very hospitable, a busy woman accustomed to a brisk pace in life. When it was time for lunch she had to run upstairs and take care of her sister, but she arranged to give me a turkey sandwich with a cup of milk beforehand so that I could have my lunch. She says we can get back to work within ten minutes.

She is a very friendly, warm person, and from the telephone calls that come during the interview, one can see that she does lead a very rich life. For instance, her grandson Daniel Jackson called wanting to come and get information and advice; he is writing a proposal to a foundation for funding a trip he wants to make to India. From her conversation it is clear that she enjoys her grandchildren's visits.

---

\*During the series of interviews which Amelia Fry recorded with Rebecca Reyher early in May, 1973, she taped the following notes while Mrs. Reyher was out of the room briefly to look after her sister who was confined to her bed and wheelchair. The notes have been slightly edited for readability.



She has her ideas well organized because at the present time she is also working on her autobiography, although I don't think she has started the actual writing. These are all things she has been thinking about, so it is easy for her to select the various significant points in her own life as we roll through it. Her papers are up in her home in Maine, so that although we do not have access to them, she has done enough homework that she can give us most of the vivid material on the processes involved in organizing for the Woman's Party, the color, the various events, the relationships of the people within the party, and Miss Paul's way of directing and organizing.

She is no-nonsense on matters of accomplishing her task as scheduled. Now we will get back to the interview.

Amelia R. Fry  
Interviewer-Editor

18 June 1977  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley



## THE EDITING

I received the raw transcript of Amelia Fry's interviews with Rebecca Reyher in the fall of 1973. Every page showed the spirit and keen intellect of a woman who had thought deeply on the problems of feminism as a result of analyzing situations she confronted and of observing women's lives on many continents.

Her memoir is rich in stories of her experiences while working for the Woman's Party, mostly in state offices rather than in Washington, D.C. Yet, only late in the editing process, when she at last was able to go to her home in Maine and bring back bulging folders of newspaper clippings, did I realize how much confidence Alice Paul and other leaders of the Woman's Party had had in her, a very young girl. These clippings and other memorabilia indicate how much advance publicity for Woman's Party activities was initiated by Rebecca Hourwich (she kept her maiden name for many years after her marriage). They also indicate how important were the activities which she arranged in numerous eastern cities and towns, in order to get and keep continued pressure on congressmen for the suffrage amendment.\*

As I read the transcript I longed to meet this woman who spoke so frankly about the different aspects of her exceptional life. On countless occasions we planned to meet in Washington or New York to discuss corrections or additions to the transcript. More often than not we were forced to change our plans because of the difficulty of getting someone to stay with her invalid sister, or the demands of a lawsuit which Mrs. Reyher was currently bringing against the television program "Sesame Street" for unauthorized use of her material.\*\*

Mrs. Reyher did not want to give the edited transcript only a cursory going-over for accuracy. She wanted to respond to my many pages of questions,

---

\*Listings of all the pertinent material which RHR was able to bring from her Maine home before the present volume was completed, appear in the appendix. She will deposit this material, together with her other papers, in the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Duplicate clippings have been given to The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

\*\*See appendix for two articles which explain why this was an important case for all writers.



and with the zest of a true writer, wanted to enliven the final version and make it more literary. This took over three years--time caught here and there, often at night while she cared for her sister. She added elements of her own lively personal style--copious descriptive phrases, capitalization, and underlining for emphasis. At first I thought to bring it more into line with the University of Chicago Manual of Style used by the Regional Oral History Office, but soon realized that were I to do that I would be wiping from her transcript a reflection of her colorful, dramatic self.

Difficult as it was for her to snatch the time and summon the emotional energy to add detail to the transcript, I felt--and she often wrote or said--that there was great satisfaction for her in doing it. She once wrote to me that while reading Kenneth Clark's autobiography, Another Part of the Wood--A Self Portrait, she found words in his preface that were particularly meaningful to her:

For better or worse, the author of an autobiography must be the chief character in his book, and when it is finished he may well ask what crazy impulse has pressed him on to make an exhibition of himself.

We exchanged many letters before the final version was completed. Often she wrote out long, unrecorded memories which I inserted in the original transcript. On several occasions we did meet in New York, and while I sat at a typewriter she dictated material to fill the gaps that either she or I had found.

Our time together in New York in the spring of 1976 was especially memorable. In her apartment or that of her sister, Becky Reyher, her daughter, Faith, and I spent several days together, days that were filled for the three of us with work and pleasure. Faith, who lives in Washington, D.C., and whom I had come to know and like while editing the transcript, was especially close to the events of her mother's life during the periods they were together. She remembered some incidents; Becky thought of others; I wrote them down.

So many-faceted has been her life, so intricately interwoven are her memories, that I found it was necessary to rearrange the material in the interviews considerably so that the reader would grasp the continuity of events. Although Mrs. Reyher originally discussed the complications in her personal life at the same time as she spoke about her work for suffrage and equal rights and her research and writing on Africa, she preferred, when editing, to place a fuller explanation of the conflicts between her personal and her professional life in a separate section.

To assist the researcher who may wish to hear how Rebecca Reyher discussed her life and career, a list of the topics with the correlated tapes has been placed in the appendix.

Yet, despite the care we took to include all the relevant facets of Becky Reyher's life, they have not all been discovered and explored in this memoir. Late in the editing process, I was struck by still another dimension--her interest and expertise in Americana, which she had not talked about in the



interviews as she had her knowledge of African art. During the past fifty years she had furnished her home in Maine--a landmark house which she had restored--with an exceptionally fine collection of Americana furniture, pictures, paperweights, pottery, and glass. Recently she sold both her African and Americana collections to the Joan Whitney Payson Museum of Westbrook College in Portland, Maine.\*

Her friend Hazel Hunkins-Hallinan, whom she has known since the days of the struggle for suffrage, wrote to me:

One of the most vivid characteristics of Becky is that she has the wonderful gift of seeing significant things beyond the vision of the eyes. [When I was with her] it was as if I would go to peep through a keyhole and I would see a room but Becky would peep through the same keyhole and see a drama. There is, in so doing, a talent for detecting significance where it lies, at least partly hidden from other mortals.

Many of the vignettes in the present memoir reveal this talent as do her writings. Some of those, particularly the sketches which focused on her little daughter Faith's activities and comments (which brought up questions related to feminism), have been included in the appendix. They bear the RHR mark--deep insights into the dilemmas and solutions of women (even very young women) expressed with a twist of humor.

Our quest for a title for the finished transcript epitomizes for me Becky Reyher's spirit, mind, and sensitivity. Her first thought was "A Struggle for Women's Equality and Independence." Later, wanting to point up her interest in the well-being of men as well as women, she considered "A Struggle for Human Equality and Independence." I suggested "A Woman's Struggle..." and adding to the other two goals the word "Expression"--suffrage being one facet of human expression, and her written and spoken interpretation of what people say and do being another. We finally settled on "Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence," because, Becky said, "It's obvious that it is a woman's struggle. Working with Becky Reyher is a joy because she never says the obvious. Life as she has lived it, and as she describes it, is many-dimensional, deeply ironic, and colorfully complicated.

Fern S. Ingersoll  
Editor

19 March 1977  
Washington, D.C.

---

\*The museum catalogue published in the spring of 1977 lists the acquisitions from Rebecca Reyher's collection.



## A CHRONOLOGY--REBECCA HOURWICH REYHER

1897 Born in New York City

Suffrage Work

- 1913 Participated in Woman's Party Parade, Washington, D. C.
- 1915 Liberal Club member--while taking courses in Columbia University's extension division.  
Street meetings, Newark, New Jersey with Women's Political Union.  
Organized, Brockton, Massachusetts for National Woman Suffrage Association.
- 1916 Entered University of Chicago.  
Taught women at Hull House how to stand up to unions, under auspices of the Woman's City Club.  
President of University Women's Peace Society.
- 1917 Married Ferdinand Reyher.  
Worked in Washington office of NWP [National Woman's Party] selling Suffragist, picketing.  
Trip South to tell about arrests for suffrage.
- 1918 (January-September) Headed Boston office of NWP.
- 1918-1919 (also '21) Headed New York office of NWP.  
Organized demonstration for Wilson (1919).
- 1919 (March) Left New York office.  
(May) Faith born (for a year after this, RHR stayed in the country, looking after Faith and regaining strength).  
Received B. A. as of original class of 1918, University of Chicago, for which RHR took courses over a long period of years, until required courses and credits completed in the fifties.

Work for ERA

- 1920 (Fall of 1920 and academic year 1920-1921) Studied at New York School of Social Work.
- 1921 (Summer) Full-time academic work at University of Chicago.  
(Fall to Christmas) Back to work at NWP Headquarters, Washington, D. C.



- 1922 (Spring) Reactivated work in New York; opened headquarters in fall of 1922.  
(Fall) Family went to Europe; RHR stayed behind; RHR ill, had to stay on back for six months; told could never work long hours again, but always did.
- 1923 (February-June) Stayed in family home; husband came back from Europe in the spring.  
(Spring) Rented cottage in Provincetown, Massachusetts.  
(Summer) Organized commemoration of first Women's Rights Congress at Seneca Falls, New York.  
(Fall) Established and ran NWP Headquarters in Chicago until following spring.  
Wrote articles for Hearst's International magazine.
- 1924 (August-May 1925) First trip to South Africa for Hearst's International
- 1925-1926 (One and one-half years) Lived with husband and daughter in Maine, writing articles on Africa; but decided at end of this year that she would make a home-and-work base in New York City.
- 1927 Associate editor of Equal Rights. (In 1925 and '26 RHR had contributed articles on a variety of subjects, among them daughter Faith's questions on feminism.)  
(July) Featured speaker at the NWP's Colorado Springs Convention. Was one of the leaders of the Equal Rights Envoys who went to see President Coolidge in South Dakota.

### Career Stepping Stones

- 1927-1929 Advertisement copy writer, editor, J Walter Thompson and Company, New York.  
On New York Board of the Woman's Party at this time.
- 1929 Personal escort for tour of Mrs. Simon Kuhn, well-known club woman, reformer, and philanthropist, to Egypt, Near East, Europe, Russia (interest in attitude toward childbirth and abortion).  
Unable to rejoin J. Walter Thompson because of Depression.
- 1930-1931 Public Relations Assistant in office of Honorable Joseph McKee (President of Board of Aldermen, later Mayor, New York).
- 1931-1933 Consultant, adviser, Sears Roebuck and Company.
- 1934 Illness--divorce.  
(Spring) Second trip to Africa--to Zululand (material for Zulu Woman, published 1945), returned early in 1935.



Contributions to Human Welfare

- 1935-1937 Regional Director, New York and New England, Works Progress Administration.
- 1937-1939 Assistant to director, Information and Motion Pictures Service, WPA.
- 1937 (On leave from WPA) Member of flying caravan delegation of Peoples Mandate Committee for Inter-American Peace and Cooperation.
- 1939-1943 Executive Secretary, and member Board of Directors, Dominican Republic Settlement Association (resettling Hitler refugees).
- 1943 Free-lance writing--magazine articles and books. (See list of books published in appendix.)

Broadcasting, Lecturing, and Teaching

- 1945-1949 "City Fun with Children" (weekly broadcast, Station WNYC, New York).
- 1946 "Behind the Scenes with the UN" (radio series), WNYC.
- 1948-1949 Lecturer, New York University.
- 1952-1961 Lecture circuits under Colston Leigh management.
- 1963-1970 Member of faculty, New School for Social Research, New York City.

More Travel (Including trips in 1924 and 1934, there were six African trips, covering more than five years' residence there.)

- 1949-1950 Up the West Coast of Africa to Nigeria and British Cameroons (setting of The Fon and His Hundred Wives).
- 1950-1951 South Africa--Went direct to Johannesburg to consult with Dr. M.D.W. Jeffreus, professor of anthropology at Witswatersrand University, formerly of the Cameroons, to see what current conditions in South Africa were, and to go back to Nongoma, headquarters of the Zulu kingdom.  
Supported self by writing articles for West African journals and South African newspapers and magazines.



- 1957            Three weeks in Paris conferring with Sister Marie-André du Sacre  
Coeur, noted French author, on the status of African women.  
To Belgian Congo, Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya to observe general  
conditions and relations of men and women for lecture material,  
to Pakistan and India for situation of women, and to Ceylon for  
book on polyandry which RHR wrote and would still like to publish.
- 1965            Thirteen African countries--interviewing African women leaders.



## PART I EARLY YEARS

## I PARENTS' BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCE

Father's Background: Russian Revolutionary

Reyher: All right. Are there a few things you want to tell me or ask me before we start?

Fry: Yes, what your childhood influences were and how your father came to this country from Russia. According to my notes, your father fled Russia.

Reyher: Let me explain that my father, Isaac A. Hourwich, in Russia was a prosperous practicing attorney who had the right to appear before their highest court. He came to this country in his early thirties, after having been exiled to Siberia for his revolutionary activities. He was one of the educated class in Russia who had what they called a "krughok"--it is the Russian word for circle--it is a technique that the communists have adopted. They determined to create a revolutionary movement by having a series of intimate, small groups with whom a leader talked, and whom he educated. Father at that time--the eighties, beginning nineties--was earning about 35,000 rubles a year, which was a very successful practice.

Of course, there was discrimination against Jews in Russia--and Father was a Russian Jew--but there were always a percentage of Jews in Russia who were educated and privileged, and he belonged to that percentage.

His father, Adolph, was a responsible bank employee because he knew languages, French and German fluently, and some English. [Showing picture] This is my father when he was six years old, and that is my grandmother, Rebecca Vera Sheveliovich, after whom I was



Reyher: named. This photograph was taken in Russia about 1866. I'm showing this to you so that you can see that their costumes might have been the fashionable costumes of any comfortable family in the United States, or Europe, of that period. I've put it in an American daguerrotype frame of the same period.

Father, though a privileged young man, was concerned about the repressive situation in Russia and was risking everything he had materially to try to get it changed. My grandmother, whom I showed you in the same family photograph, had not had her head shaved the way orthodox Jewish women would have had, but had her own hair arranged simply, in the current international mode. My grandmother had not married until she was twenty-two, and then married the man of her choice: a decision against the mores of her group.

My father was born in 1860 when the Darwinian theory had just burst upon the world, and my grandfather, and my grandmother, influenced by it, became agnostics. They decided that the Jewish religion was much too orthodox for them, and that they would lead a different kind of life, governed by more modern ways. They had only two children. They managed it somehow--I don't know what kind of birth control they used, but they did practice it apparently. They educated both those children very well, and they had high hopes for their son. They were not revolutionaries. Naturally they didn't believe in the Czar's autocracy, but it was nevertheless a great blow to them that their son who had such an important position in the community, who would have so much opportunity to become a man of wealth and influence, would risk everything for revolutionary activity. And finally be arrested and sent to Siberia.

My father was born in Minsk in the heart of the ghetto. In 1905, having fled from Russia in the nineties, he went back to Russia as a correspondent for World's Work, a leading American magazine, and for several newspapers. And his home town, Minsk, put him up for the Douma, which was the Russian parliament. He was elected. But after he had been in Russia for about a year, he decided that he did not want his children to grow up in Russia, he wanted them to grow up in a democratic country, and, therefore, he would not remain in Russia.

Before he first came to the United States, my father was practicing law in Nijni-Novgorod, a very old Russian city. He was married and had four living children: two had died. (My mother, whom he met and married in this country, was his second wife.) He was exiled to Siberia for his sub rosa political activity. He then escaped.



Reyher: His escape from Siberia was one of those dramatic flights that history was dotted with. These revolutionaries had their underground railways in Russia to help people to flee and friends to count on en route. He went across the border disguised as an elegant businessman in coach and horses, with underground allies alerted all along the way. His first stop was Sweden.

Fry: Did you say "coach"?

Reyher: Coach and horses, yes. Remember this was long-distance travel in the early nineties. First he went to Sweden, remaining for a few months, befriended by a labor leader who later became prime minister. From there he went to Geneva, a more international center, where he remained for many months. There he had all his documents and his name translated. His surname in Russia was Hoorveech (if pronounced); and since the international language in Geneva was French, his name was transliterated, H-o-u-r-w-i-c-h. And that is how we got our name, Hourwich, transliterated in French in Geneva.

Fry: Can you do all the spellings for me? How do you do the Russian?

Reyher: The Russian would be sounded as if it were Hoorveech, but -eech transliterated into French would be -ich because the French "e" would be "i". Because he was a university graduate and a graduate lawyer and knew that wherever he was he would have to present his documents, the first thing he did was to have them translated. And then of course when he came to this country, the same thing happened.

While Father was in Siberia he did a research study on the Siberian peasant, published in Russian as a book. Shortly after he arrived in this country he got a grant from Columbia University where he got his Ph.D. His accepted thesis was that book, translated into English as The Economics of the Russian Village, and published by the university.

When I was in Capetown in the 1950s, Leo Marquard who is on the University of Capetown's Board of Governors and faculty--an economist interested in international affairs and a BBC broadcaster--told me that The Economics of the Russian Village was still the standard book on the old Russian village and that they were using it at the university.

Fry: That was Marquard?

Reyher: Leo Marquard, who is a historian, writer, and broadcaster, well-known and respected in South Africa.

While Father was at Columbia, he also found the first Russian newspaper in this country, Progress, and edited it. He did that for a couple of years; but it was a hopeless endeavor, because there was



Reyher: so little money. I've been going over Father's papers, and I've given to Harvard complete files of that newspaper as well as Father's other Russian and English papers pertinent to immigration. I gave them at the request of Oscar Handlin, professor of American history at Harvard and head of the Charles Warren Center for Studies of American History.

At first Father practiced law, having been admitted to the New York bar and given the privilege to practice before the Supreme Court in Washington. Later he became an economist for the U. S. government, taught at various universities and gave lectures at many others including Columbia, his alma mater, and was on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

As immigration increased to this country, the great bulk of the Russian immigration was Jewish. Father wanted to reach that group; he wanted to communicate with them, frankly to lead and influence them. He became probably the best-known Yiddish newspaper writer of those years, and when he began he didn't know how to write Yiddish! He wrote it in English script which was translated. He had to learn literate Yiddish in order to reach the great bulk of the immigrants who were coming to the East Side of New York. He knew some Yiddish from having grown up in a Yiddish-speaking city, though it was not spoken in his home.

As years went on, one of Father's most significant accomplishments was a book he wrote, Immigration and Labor, the definitive pro-immigration book. By that time he was also a government economic expert with the title of Director of the Mining Section of the Census Bureau. He was doing this pro-immigration work on the side on his own time, every weekend, evening, and vacation.

The lobby for removal of restrictions on immigration, which were becoming stronger as the immigrant groups were coming in ever-larger numbers, usually centered in our home. One of the concerned participants, active because he was the son of Italian immigrants, was Fiorella La Guardia, later Mayor of New York.

Later when La Guardia was a Congressman in 1917, and I went to see him about the suffrage amendment, in Washington, he asked me (I had my own name though I was married by that time), "Why does a nice girl like you devote your time to this? You should be married and raising a family."

It would take far too long to go into the life of my father. The man at Harvard who has been most interested in immigration in this country, Oscar Handlin, whom I mentioned to you, who knew all about my father, arranged with me to give my father's papers about immigration, all his Russian papers and all those early papers, to Harvard, where they would be part of immigration history.



Reyher:

However, there is an institute in this city [New York], the Yiddish Scientific Institute, known as Yivo, that was very anxious to have at least my father's Yiddish articles and papers. I don't know Yiddish. It was very difficult for me to go through them; I could not understand or penetrate a single word. But the Institute said they would go through them and arrange them. I knew they were sympathetic and admiring, and I was happy to give them to that institute. I did what I could. Fifteen single-spaced, catalogued pages of Father's Yiddish writing and English material pertaining specifically to Jewish life, were organized and prepared by me and donated to Yivo.

Father was a very prolific writer to all the scientific and academic journals--the American Economic Review, the Statistical Review, the Political Science Quarterly. All of those and others, because they were in English, were also given to Harvard, unless the articles were on labor, and labor problems.

#### Political Interest

Father was an intellectual Socialist, and his papers on labor were given to the Yiddish Scientific Institute because they have a large labor and Socialist readership. Father was way ahead of his time in believing that if people had Socialist ideals they should cooperate with the existing parties, and not hold out for orthodox Socialism, but try to get Socialist ideas incorporated as part of the general political scheme. So when Theodore Roosevelt founded the Progressive Party, Father ran for Congress on the Progressive Party ticket but was defeated.

It would take far too long to give you my father's whole background because it would take volumes. But you have some indications of how he thought and worked. The thing that was most important about my father was that several times in his life he had to resign from important jobs that he held because he felt that a question of integrity was involved. When he was on the faculty of the University of Chicago, he was asked to resign from the faculty or give up his Populist Party activity. He was interested in his faculty teaching, but he believed in the Populist Party and the principle of free speech for university faculty.

The Populist Party was Bryan's [William Jennings] party, and they weren't having any of that at the University of Chicago. They were too conservative a university. A faculty member was not supposed to be politically active. Father felt in all conscience that he had to be.



Reyher:           Years later when I went to the University of Chicago as a student, some of Father's friends were still on the faculty and many befriended me. He had an inner core of goodness and I wanted to cherish it.

There were many other occasions in Father's life where there was a question of integrity. In all my life, and I have met many people, I don't think I have ever known a man of such shining, sterling integrity.

I was really very fond of him. I don't know why I should have a break in my voice except that I have a cold. That integrity of his had a great effect upon my life. One did not lead a selfish life. That was the core of his philosophy. He had thrown over one material advantage after another from the time he had chucked his lucrative law practice in Russia, right straight through his life.

Now the other side of the coin, as people will always say about professional idealists, was that, after all, when he threw over his practice in Russia, he had a wife and four children, who had been accustomed to a certain standard of living: a governess for the children, a cook and a maid, and the kind of household that prosperous intellectuals in Russia had at that time; somebody had to maintain it.

It was the problem that ravaged the Tolstoy household. When Tolstoy was prepared to cast aside everything material he had, Countess Tolstoy protested what would happen to her and her children. She became a noted virago because of it.

It was fortunate that my grandfather had a very good income and was able to pick up the tab because otherwise there would have been no support for those children. I have to interject quickly that when my father fled Siberia and was an exile in other countries he could not support his family, but was comforted by the thought his father could and would.

But as soon as he came to the United States he began to send regular checks to them, as often and as soon as he could. When I went through my father's papers in the sixties, there was a carefully preserved bundle of the monthly international money orders that he had sent his first wife in Russia throughout the years.

My first knowledge of divorce came when my brother Sasha--his proper name was Iskander--and I were told we could not have something we wanted. We would say to each other, "If we did not have to pay alimony--." I always suspected that my mother's salary checks helped cover the alimony.



Reyher:

In later years the four children of the first marriage not only all had university educations, but also extensive foreign travel and opportunity to study for higher degrees. As children, we questioned, "Why, if there is not money for this or that, can Rosa go abroad to Switzerland?" (Rosa later became a lawyer, and was made a judge under the Bolsheviks. She refused to meet me when I went to Russia, and left town rather than see me because the Bolsheviks were not supposed to fraternize with Americans.) Father's reply to such a question would be, "Those children were deprived of a father." At those times we thought maybe that was too high a value to put on one. I became very good friends with Father's children who came to America to study or visit, and I still maintain contact with the half sister, Vera Semmens, who married an Englishman and lives in the north of England.

As a child I was worried about divorce, fearful that my friends might discover that my father's father had been married five times, three of the marriages terminating in divorce. My grandmother, after whom I'm named, and he had a long and happy marriage. Nevertheless, as an older woman I sometimes remembered the difficulties of non-professional women in divorce, bearing in mind the experience of both the first wife, and the second (my mother), and the children involved.

Once my father and mother were married, frequently there were times when there were financial difficulties where integrity was involved! Integrity always won, because my mother, too, was a woman of uncompromising honesty and sincerity, and of great sweetness of character, and moral support. Also she believed that a man should do what his conscience dictated.

I mention all this deliberately because it isn't ever easy for people who are pioneers--and that goes for feminists today--to follow their deepest inclinations and yet meet the rigorous obligations that they may have committed themselves to in their personal relationships.

All this had a profound effect on my marriage and my responsibility to my daughter. I felt that if you had a child, you had definite responsibilities to that child, and that the child came first. You owed that child a good start in life. (Undoubtedly I was imbued with a middle-class philosophy. Only then could you afford the luxury of supporting a cause, full time, that you believed in.) That definitely affected my life in regard to working fully for the Equal Rights Amendment, later. For I had to support my daughter.



Mother's Background: Russian Educator

Mother's Father: Honored Schoolmaster

Reyher: Well, now for my mother, Lisa Jaffe Hourwich. She had been a teacher in Russia. My grandfather, my mother's father, had also been affected by the Darwinian theory. As a little boy he had been sent to a Hebrew school. My mother's family lived in the Ukraine, which had relatively very few Jews in it. My grandfather had his own boarding school to prepare Jewish boys for the "gymnasium;" and when I went to Russia in '29, and went to the Ukraine, my grandfather, who had left there in the early nineties, was still remembered as having had a wonderful school. He himself was the headmaster. He was self-educated in Latin, in Greek, and in mathematics.

Grandfather took his entire family to France and Germany so that they would have the opportunity of European travel, when my mother was sixteen! He always believed in the double-purpose lesson. If you could get a little moral precept in, so much to the good. Also he felt that just as he had fortified his family before they went to Europe with French and German, so he should prepare them to know English before they came to the United States.

He did not remember, though his children did, that when they got to Germany--the country they went to first--and started speaking German, nobody understood them. But when they spoke French in Germany, everybody understood them. My grandfather, therefore, decided that their French was better than their German. I don't have to tell you the other part of the story, that when they got to France and spoke their French which they now knew was so good, that everybody in Germany had understood, nobody understood them. [Laughter] The French asked them if they knew any other language and they said German. And when they spoke German the French understood.

Nevertheless, my grandfather who had met French-speaking, and German-speaking people, and had lessons from them as his children had, was determined to teach his children some English before they came to the U. S., but it was entirely book-taught English. They had never met any English-speaking people.

And again it is well to remember that English was taught to my mother when she was in her twenties, and my mother was born in 1866. In those days foreign languages were not taught the way they are now, so that people could easily get the pronunciation. There were no phonetics sections in books for that purpose. So, more or less, you



Reyher: guessed the pronunciation. And American pronunciation is not always easy to guess at!

My grandfather picked a nice little double-purpose ditty that he taught his children, thinking that if they learned to say it, they would begin to become accustomed to English sounds, and would get used to English speaking. Also, he was enough of an educator to know that often the beat of a verse gives you something of the feeling of a language. This is what my grandfather taught his children, and this is what they learned to say preparatory to coming to the United States:

Heerly toe bed, ond  
 Heerly toe rise,  
 Mochs ah mon heelzy, veelzy ond vize.

I cannot tell you how many times various grandchildren of my grandfather, who were born to speak English, and who had learned to say, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," repeated it first in that other way.

My grandfather migrated to the U. S. because he had sons, and didn't want them to be drafted into the Russian army. One of the sons, Joseph Joffe, was already a graduate physician, and Grandfather sent him to the Argentine to see what the opportunities were there for Russian Jewish immigrants. After getting his son's report, he decided against that country, and so migrated to the United States. But by the time they came, my mother was twenty-six. I have a photograph of her upstairs in her traveling costume which was really very handsome even though they came steerage; my father did not. They had no idea what steerage would be like, as they knew no one who had made the trip.

When my mother came to the U. S., there was a terrific adjustment to make--adjustment for the whole family. They had saved money. They had had a lovely home. Now they lived on the East Side in the midst of crowded poverty.

They were intellectuals. For instance, one of my most cherished possessions is a brown, ordinary copybook on which is the title Kreutzer Sonata, handwritten in Russian. When The Kreutzer Sonata was published, it was a banned book. The only way that people in Bachmut, where Mother lived, and where Grandfather's school was located, could have such books was for a single copy to be brought in for twenty-four hours by somebody who had bought it in the underground in the nearest big city. They would then tear the book apart and everybody would have to take a turn at copying their assigned segment of the book all night long in their handwriting.



Reyher: Sometimes the segments would be tied together and lent around. Sometimes each segment was kept in the owner's own handwriting and copybook, so that more people could be reading the book simultaneously. Mother was one of the people who would sit up all night to do her stint of copying. I have the Kreutzer Sonata extract as it was copied by her in that way. It was one of the things Mother prized and brought with her.

#### Mother's Grandfather: Civil Rights Pioneer

My mother's maternal grandfather, my great-grandfather, a man called Reuben Zirkin, was one of the pioneer Jewish farmers in the Ukraine in the 1830s, when the peasants were still serfs. He took up one of the homesteads that were granted by the Czar to any Jews who would leave the towns and settle on the land and cultivate it. By trade he was a goldsmith. After he had been in Ekateyrenia Gubernia--Catherine's province--a few years, he realized that since neither the peasants nor the tradesmen were allowed to go to the towns and sell their winter crafts or produce, at a time of famine, with no cash income, they would all starve. As the only person in the village who could read or write, my great-grandfather wrote a petition in joint meeting with the local Jews and the peasants. I mention this because there were so many pogroms in Russia in which the peasants helped the Cossacks destroy the Jews, that this kind of village cooperation and mutual endeavor was most unusual.

The petition on behalf of the Jews and the peasants called upon the Governor-General of the province to grant them the right to go to the nearest town where the Governor-General lived--similar to our county seat, the provincial capital--to sell their winter's products. So Reuben Zirkin could sell the gold earrings and other jewelry he made; the shoemaker, his shoes; each according to his trade, so that they all might have some small cash income.

When my daughter Faith was married for the first time, to a direct descendant of Governor William Bradford of Massachusetts, in a little village church in Maine where we had a nondenominational ceremony in 1939, sewed into her wedding gown as "something old" was a gold earring that Reuben Zirkin, my great-grandfather, her great-great-grandfather, a pioneer of civil rights in the Ukraine, had made.

Reuben Zirkin personally volunteered to take that petition to the Governor-General. He was a bearded, somber-robed old Jew, easily recognizable as such. As an orthodox Jew, he would not eat any food except the kosher food of his own household. All that he could carry with him was a large pumpernickel loaf that grew stale,



Reyher: and dry tea, with the hope that he could get hot water somewhere along the way. The proposed journey on horseback would take almost ten days, or certainly several days. All this has been recorded in Russian journals. When Reuben Zirkin arrived at the gates of the Governor-General's house, the guards at the gate just laughed at him and wouldn't let him through. Undaunted, he just sat at the entrance, and waited. When he would see the carriage of the Governor-General approaching, he would try to intercept it; but the guards wouldn't let him.

Finally his stoic, quiet patience won him the coveted audience with the Governor-General. The Governor-General asked him what it was he wanted, and Zirkin told him. The Governor-General listened attentively. "You realize that you have been breaking the law," he told him. "You were not supposed to leave your province." Zirkin quietly replied, "Yes." And the Governor-General continued, "You know you weren't supposed to try to get an audience with me?" He nodded another, "Yes." "But you see, Your Excellency," he added, "it was not only my possible imprisonment, and death, that were at stake but the starvation of a whole community. I had to risk it."

"You have broken the law, and for that I have to punish you," the Governor-General replied, "but your courage has to be commended. I don't know yet what your punishment will be, but because of your courage I will find some reward for you." He punished him by setting him to work digging the sewer trenches in front of his official headquarters. At the end of a few days he called him back.

"You have had your punishment," the Governor-General told him. "Your reward for your personal bravery, and for your effort on behalf of your whole community will be that your community, of all the communities in the Ukraine, will have the rights that you have asked for. The Jews, and the peasants, will have the right to come from their villages and stay in the towns to sell their products, so that they may have a cash income."

That was part of my mother's background, part of my childhood heritage.

Mother: Homemaker and Teacher

When my mother met my father, she herself was not a social activist; rather she was a very retiring person. As I told you, they met in New York.



Reyher: My grandfather moved his family to Chicago. My father had begun to teach at the University of Chicago. My mother studied law at Lake Forest University or College, thinking that she would eventually practice law together with my father. Before they all returned to New York she had almost completed her degree requirements. In any case she knew enough to take her bar examinations and qualify for admission to the bar. Hardly married, she was pregnant with my brother, and I came thirteen months later. Circumstances forced her to be a homemaker, a housewife. She never outgrew the disappointment of the lost dream, joint practice with her husband. I was very conscious of it, though she seldom spoke of it. And that, too, influenced my passionate support of women's independent careers.

Having grown up in a house full of servants but having knocked about and made do under all circumstances, it was my father who first taught her how to cook simple, basic food, and what to do to keep a household going. They were very poor, and all they had for dish towels were the embroidered, decorative ones she had brought from Russia.

When I was three they went to Washington, where Father took a government job because he no longer had the Russian newspaper, and his law practice was too precarious to support two babies.

My mother was a very good linguist. She worked half a day in the Berlitz School of Languages teaching Russian, and half a day at the Russian Embassy, teaching the Naval Attache's children in Russian, so that they would have completed their required school work in Russian when they went back home and would be prepared for their "gymnasium" classes. Of course their curriculum was standard and familiar to her. While she worked, my mother had a black maid-of-all-work who looked after my brother and me.

### Home Influences

Mother was a dedicated educator, absorbed in John Dewey's theories, and the most advanced theories of child development. She provided us with nursery school furniture that did not exist in any department store. She simply sent for a carpenter, and had tables and chairs cut down, and bureaus cut off, so that my brother and I, who were small, would have only small furniture in our nursery, and would have the kind of equipment that she pioneered in, but which is in universal use today.

She was a wonderful mother. She taught my brother and me in Russian. I have to explain to you why my mother taught us Russian.

THE HISTORY OF

THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF

SCOTLAND

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES

THE SECOND

VOLUME

LONDON

1704

Printed by

J. Sturges

at the

Printers

in

St. Dunstons

Church

Street

London

1704

Printed by

J. Sturges

at the

Printers

in

St. Dunstons

Church

Street

London

1704

Printed by

J. Sturges

Reyher: My father and mother belonged to a group of Russians who were really Russians-in-exile. In those early years they actually believed that one day they would go back to Russia, that they were here only temporarily. And they were still fighting the Russian revolution; they were still in touch with all the people who were interested in that.

Consequently my brother and I were brought up in a household which was Russian-speaking. I didn't speak any English except what Mary Deal, the colored woman who looked after us, taught me. (In the early 1900s a Negro in Washington was called "colored," and I am using the term to which I was accustomed.) I can still remember going to school in Washington when I was five and a half, with a very limited vocabulary, and not understanding any of the things that were said to me, until I began to catch on at the end of two or three months.

That is why I have had so much understanding and sympathy for the Spanish-speaking children who are in our schools today, because I know what it means to sit in a classroom and not know what is going on around you. It is only because I had a mother who understood what was happening to me, and who kept interpreting for me, and taught me at home to read in Russian when I was four, and also taught me later to read in English, that I was able to keep up with my class.

I never remember being taught to read. I can only remember reading. At four I was reading. At five and a half, and six, I was reading famous Russian poetry to my mother as part of my lessons. And this [showing book] is an old Russian folk tale that I wrote which my mother told me as a child. My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World,\* though published twenty-eight years ago, is still going

---

\*The book, published originally by William Soskin in 1945, with later editions published by Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, and in England by the Museum Press, has sold about 130,000 copies. It has also been published in innumerable anthologies, among the most important of which are Sounds of a Young Hunter and Holiday Round Up. A motion picture has been made of it by a subsidiary of CBS for distribution to schools, and a filmstrip was made by McGraw-Hill.

My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World is part of the Kerlan Collection at the University of Minnesota. This collection has what they consider the most notable children's books ever published, and where possible, the manuscript, and all pertinent correspondence and publicity.

From 1972 to 1976 RHR worked to sue Children's Television Network, producer of "Sesame Street," for use of material in My Mother is the



Reyher: on, in wide demand by schools and libraries.

Fry: "For my Russian mother, Lisa Hourwich, who told this story to me when I was a child and whose stories still seem to me the most beautiful in the world." So this was your first book?

Reyher: This was my first book. Or maybe the book of baby cartoons was first.\*

#### Early Cure for Social Striving: The Soup Tureen Party

There was so much I learned from my mother. This reminds me of an interesting link between a time in the twenties when I was speaking for the Woman's Party, and something my mother taught me when I was very young.

Underground in the rotunda of the Capitol, there used to be a round, cleared space connecting the two main wings of the building. Since it was primarily a passage way, there was little that could be done to embellish it. But enterprising historians fastened on it as a suitable background for statuary of the deceased heroes and patriots, all men, of course.

Abetted by a birdlike energetic sculptress who had made life-size heads and shoulder-length busts of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and a third woman whom I can't remember, Miss Paul demanded of the government that these women be included in this Statuary Hall, claiming that they belonged there.\*\*

---

Most Beautiful Woman in the World. The Writers Guild considered this such an important case that they submitted a brief of friends of the court "in support of Rebecca Reyher's application for reconsideration of the Court's judgment of dismissal."

See appendix for Law Journal article and "Brief of Amici Curiae-Writers Guild."

\* The Stork Run, Hastings House, 1944.

\*\*Consuelo Reyes says that in her research for a slide presentation of the history of the struggle for suffrage she found that the sculptress was Adelaide Johnson and the third bust was that of Lucretia Mott. [Ed.]



Reyher:

Their right to be honored along with leading statesmen and contributors to our national heritage cannot be disputed. Viewed strictly as works of art they were singularly lifeless and hideous. Styled like the heads of noted musicians that decorated upright pianos in the early 1900s to inspire young players, these heads were atop the usual statuary pedestal columns set against the wall. Without doubt they represented recognition of the pioneer effort of these staunch suffragists, but would that the busts themselves merited notice! I do not know if the busts are still there, for there were those who thought they were not worthy, but after the initial installation with due ceremony, Miss Paul never failed to use them and their awesome background to peg an occasion that needed or deserved publicity. For a long time it worked.

The faithful were notified and a knot of women, hopefully spreading wide enough to interfere with traffic, would gather to hear the latest message of contemplated action or homage to these pioneers. Some of the tributes were well organized and impressive, others were casual stepping-stones in Miss Paul's unflinching determination to keep the work of the Woman's Party in the news.

On one of my early trips to Washington Headquarters, Miss Paul sent me down to take charge of one of the meetings. There were a few dozen women standing in a huddle when I got there but no possible way of reaching them while I was standing on their level. It seemed a dismal and hopeless task, but someone thought of borrowing an office chair and produced it. I got up, determined to be as fervent and passionate as I could without falling off the narrow chair base. As usual whenever a meeting needed a little extra yeast to warm it up, my eyes fastened on a head that towered slightly over the others and a face that seemed to beam at me with a specially friendly smile. I did not then know she was Helena Ducey, a staunch local member.

Just as I was depending on her to help me rouse the group to warm enthusiasm sufficient to attract some of the constant passersby I heard her whisper to her neighbor, "Why, that is the little girl who gave the Soup Tureen Party!"

As I look back, so often special Woman's Party events carried me back to my childhood. When I was seven, we lived on a tree-lined street in Washington in one of a row of small houses with patches of garden in front, enclosed by an iron picket fence. The backyard had a high wooden one.

All the children on the street played together. Just before four o'clock we all disappeared and came back, bathed, brushed, and sparkling clean to play together again. All but one among us, Helena Ducey. She had one instant claim to distinction. She had nine first names. No one among us had more than two.



Reyher: Two or three years older than the rest of us, she did not join us in our block games. One child alone was asked to tea in her backyard, and to be invited was to be specially chosen. After a while, though, the sound of the other children seemed to be more attractive than the invitation, and even at seven I tried to analyze what made this invitation so special. Certainly the refreshments were pleasant, but the cookies were no different from what I might have at home.

However, there was one special difference. For the daily tea party Helena had her own small-size children's tea service, white and gold and flowered, with small silver spoons on each saucer. I was not certain this table setting compensated for lusty "Come in, partner" and other sports I got echoes from while with Helena, but I knew the recipient of the coveted invitation was considered honored.

That summer our family of father, mother, brother Sasha, me and the baby Dicky were to be augmented by my aunt and two cousins. Our father, always with an eye for increased efficiency and household simplicity, figured that our black general factotum who brought each one of us a plate of soup from the kitchen to the dining table-- Russian-background families started dinner with soup, cold in summer, hot in winter--could not possibly handle three more plates without spoiling dinner. Like all domestic problems, this one was discussed and solved at dinner. Father suggested a soup tureen, the soup to be served at the table, and Mother thought it a splendid idea.

I came home from school and saw the most dazzling table decoration. "What is that?" I exclaimed, and was told, "Our new soup toureen."

Even at that age I seemed to have sensed what created social distinction. I soon figured out that if Helena Ducey could command social attention and prestige with a tea set, a soup tureen was far more decorative and impressive, as all could see.

Out I rushed, and inspired by visions of the grandeur of refreshments in the toureen, not realizing it was meant for soup, I asked each block child separately in a conspiratorial whisper, "Come to my house next Saturday at one o'clock to a soup tureen party!"

"What is a soup tureen party?" I was asked.

"You'll see," I promised.

I kept thinking I should have consulted Mother, but the next day my aunt's and cousins' arrival put it out of my mind.



Reyher:

Suddenly Saturday morning was upon me, and just as I was looking for Mother to break down and tell her of the enormity of my attempt at social swagger, my aunt announced she was taking all the family children on a picnic to the zoo. I insisted I couldn't possibly go.

Ours was a home of reason. If you didn't want to do something, you gave a reason and if it seemed valid you were excused.

Not go on a picnic? Not want to go? Nobody could believe it, grown-ups or children. The truth was so terrible, I could not speak. Having given no adequate reason, unable to do anything but weep, I had to go. Off I went and wondered how I could become sick, even die, rather than face the neighborhood children on my return.

Meanwhile at home promptly at one o'clock the doorbell began ringing and one starched and dressed-up child after another filed up to the door. A party meant party clothes.

My blessed, understanding mother. In a flash she realized why I had wanted to stay at home, to confess to her alone, and somehow get the party going. Mother told each disappointed child, "I am terribly sorry. There is some mistake. The party is for next Saturday. Come back Saturday for the soup tureen party."

That night in a private talk session Mother cured me of all further ambition to be a social queen. She explained how unfair I had been to disappoint so many people, but after much weeping, hugging, and kissing, she promised that we would have the party next Saturday, that it would be a soup tureen party as I had told them, that the tureen would stand in the center of the table, that it would be filled with ice-cream, and that I could ladle it out with her help.

The block never forgot any facet of that unusual party. Years later, just as I was trying to impress an audience in the Capitol rotunda with a serious message, I was thrust back to the most unforgettable deflation of my whole life. Curiously it gave me a subconscious wariness of all future unknown gatherings.

Helena had long since given up pride in tea parties; she was a Washington lawyer. I had not seen her for years. I never saw her again--I never again tried to rival an acknowledged social leader. I am grateful for my early cure.



### Sense of Social Responsibility: Encouragement for a Career

Reyher: I wanted you to realize that on both sides of my family I was brought up to believe that one had an obligation to the world in which one was born. That one owed something to one's family, to one's wider community. It was so ingrained in me that I only had to find my place to be useful.

Also I was very conscious of the fact that my mother was so helpful to me in my career, so anxious for me to do anything I wanted to do. When my daughter was five, and I had a chance to go to Africa, it was my mother who said, "You must go to Africa." I planned to be gone six weeks. Later when I cabled my mother, and told her that I had a chance to be there for six months, she cabled back, "Of course, stay there." In every way, throughout my life, I could not have done the things I wanted to do if my mother had not believed that a woman had a right to have a career. She did everything she could to help me achieve and maintain one.

There is one unforgettable incident in my childhood that also made me responsive to social responsibility. You see, I regard the feminist cause as social responsibility. I don't regard it as just a woman's crusade. That my background taught me and made me feel so strongly. My brother and I had totally different temperaments. We were thirteen months apart, and it was five and a half years before another child came. We were very close, almost like twins. In Washington, we used to play in our yard with the iron picket fence around it.

In the adjacent alleys were much more interesting people than we were. That is, they were gay, black people who always laughed, and there was always a lot of activity among them. And I used to say to my brother, "Why don't we go over there and play with them and listen to what they are doing."

And my brother would say, "But you know, we are not supposed to go out of this yard."

And I would always sneak over there by myself, and Mary Deal would come out, and find me, and drag me back home and scold, "You know, you are not supposed to go out of the yard, and your mother would be very angry if she knew about it."

One day I got very angry at Mary Deal's interference, and I called her a nigger. That is what I had heard people in the street call blacks. Mary Deal complained to Mother.



Reyher: Mother talked to me about it. "Mary Deal has told me that you hurt her feelings; you called her a nigger." "That is what she is," I replied grimly. "She is not!" Mother insisted. We had quite an argument about it. "You have hurt Mary Deal about something that she has no control over, she cannot help it. She was made black."

Mother did not believe in spanking. I had never been spanked in my life, and I never was spanked after that. But she deliberately spanked me then, and told me she was hurting me so that I would realize that the hurt, the pain that I was having, was not nearly as strong a pain as I had put in the heart of this woman.

There are many more incidents that would indicate to you that I grew up in a kind, loving household where people really believed that the individual, man or woman, had definite basic rights that had to be respected. Responsible people worked to attain or preserve these rights, and if they didn't work for them as a cause, as my mother didn't, they worked for them in a more circumscribed way in trying to develop individuals to their fullest capacity, with an ingrained respect for others.

And so my heritage was my social awareness. My personal responsibility was to think of where I was going to work, where I was going to live, and what I was going to do to fulfill my social responsibility. So as a young girl, I began at fifteen as a volunteer in settlement houses. When I got older I realized that settlement house, community work, was not what I wanted, not personal, intimate community service, but that feminism, votes for women, was the cause that I had to throw my life in with. But I realized that as a feminist, and an independent woman, I also had to earn my own living, and that I tried to do, and did.

[Buzzer sounds]



## II EDUCATION

Fry: You told me your mother trained you at home, didn't you?

Reyher: I studied at home with Mother.

Fry: Was that through the grammar school years?

Reyher: No. That was up to the time I was five and a half and was supplementary to my school. When we moved a couple of times, I stayed at home with Mother until I got adjusted to the change. I finished grade school, and high school in Washington--public grade school, and public high school. The family then returned to New York. Because I had not had the right amount of geometry when I was graduated from high school, I entered Columbia as a special student, and took the same courses in the Extension Division that I would have taken in my freshman year of college. History, literature, government--the usual basic courses.

Fry: You had to do this because you couldn't get in [the standard program] due to your lack of geometry?

Reyher: Yes, my lack of geometry.

### Influences of "Greats" at the University of Chicago and Columbia

Reyher: I went to the University of Chicago in my sophomore year where they took me as a regular student, regardless of an incomplete in geometry. There, too, I chose my courses; I was permitted to do so. I had three courses with W. I. Thomas, the famous sociologist who wrote Sex and Society, and was one of the first acknowledged feminists in sociology. It was due to his influence--he later wrote a definitive study of the Polish peasant--that I was able to write a book like Zulu Woman. I loved his lectures; I sat enthralled in them.



Reyher: I took very full notes, and after I left the university that year, I read a lot of his books, articles, and monographs.

When I returned to New York, I decided against going to Barnard, where they had accepted me because I had been a regular student at the University of Chicago and I had made application to them. I decided I would rather be a "special student," because by this time I knew the courses I wanted to take. And there were greats at Columbia. I wanted their courses. I didn't want to take just history III, English II. I wanted to take Beard in democracy and government, Robinson in world intellectual history, Simkhovich in the "History and Development of Socialism," Boas in anthropology. I was interested in the current affairs of the world.

I had grown up, I was more mature than the average student. I had done a lot of thinking, and I wanted to get the benefit of these lectures. I was hungry for knowledge. I always took extra courses so that by the time I was married, in 1917, I had almost the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. But I still didn't have it when I began doing full-time work.

For many years thereafter I kept taking courses that would be helpful to me in what work I was doing and what I was interested in. When we began campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment, and concentrated on popularizing the civil and legal discriminations against women, I took John Dewey's course at Columbia in "The Spirit of the Common Law." At the New School [New School for Social Research] I took a course with Harold Laski in theories of government, and with Malinowski on sexual patterns of behavior.

At one time I felt that I was losing my Russian, in the sense that my Russian was automatic and domestic, but I didn't really know Russian grammar anymore. So I went to Columbia at night, and registered for four Russian courses simultaneously, from elementary to advanced. The teacher practically gave me private tutoring, urging me to drop everything to take a master's in Slavonic languages, under his direction, and become a Russian specialist; but I couldn't because at that point I was too committed to my Woman's Party work.

#### New York School of Social Work: Study of Work Loads of Men and Women

In the academic year 1920-1921, I went to the New York School of Social Work thinking perhaps I would be a community social worker, but found that social work was organized along denominational lines--Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. I had been brought up along such ecumenical lines that the thought of being put in such a pocket bothered me.



Reyher:

At the New York School of Social Work each student chose a project as part of his or her curriculum which combined a principle and theory with field work. Usually the projects were arrived at in consultation with the faculty and with their approval and consent. I came to the school with a predetermination to have them help me formulate a project I long had had in mind.

The year that I looked after my daughter, Faith, in the country I continued to be interested in problems close to me, and since I was a full-time homemaker I took a correspondence course at the University of Chicago called "The Modern Household" which at that time took the role of the housewife seriously and tried to analyze the various facets of a woman's work in it. That crystallized my long-time feeling that the role of the married woman in the household, if she did not have domestic help, was a long and arduous one and that her husband who was a working man did not begin to have either the long hours or as great a physical burden. I felt that if only one could take a given group of men and women and compare their work loads this could be brought out more clearly.

I went to the school and told them in preliminary interviews what my intent was and got wonderful cooperation from Miss Kate Claghorn, then the director of Projects and Statistics, and Mr. John Fitch who taught labor relations. We arrived at a definite questionnaire and agreed that we would interview a given group of men and determine how many hours they spent traveling to and from work, what their working hours were, how much time they had off for lunch, whether they had a mid-morning or mid-afternoon break, and how long their working week was.

We would also inquire whether they had an opportunity to sit and read during travel to and from work and then we would ask them the crucial question as to whether in addition to their regular work program they participated in the regular housework to any extent: Did they make their bed? Did they help in the preparation of their own or their children's breakfast? (This was many years before President Ford's preparing his own breakfast was publicized.) Upon returning home in the evening, did they sit down and read the paper and relax as they were pictured in most domestic life scenes, or did they help in the serving of the evening meal? Did they wash or dry the dishes? If the children were small, did they help in putting them to bed? Once the children were in bed, if they called for a drink of water or needed any attention, did they ever perform those services? And if the children were not well, did they either help with the care of the children, or take some of the load off their wives? Did they ever cook a meal? Did they ever give their wives time off on a Saturday or a Sunday? Did they ever take vacations together or separately? Did they ever do any of the household grocery shopping?



Reyher: It's many years since this questionnaire was formulated, and I do not have one before me. But through the years I have thought so much about this that in essence this is absolutely correct. I hate to admit failure, and I particularly hated to do so at the time I undertook this work. In theory, this questionnaire seemed foolproof. In practice it was not. Miss Claghorn and Mr. Fitch had talked very knowingly about the tables that we could prepare from the answers. They had paved the way for me with a group of clerical employees in one of the city departments. The men I was to question had been told about the questionnaire and the purpose of it. But when a young woman--I was then twenty-three--came to them with these questions, they not only thought it was an invasion of their privacy, which of course it was, but a most frivolous undertaking. And when we got to the key questions of what help they gave in their households, they were either amused or angry; at best, they thought it was a huge joke. Perhaps if I'd been more experienced or older, I would have known how to handle this or how to probe possibilities with my faculty advisors. I had thought about this so long before I undertook it. It meant so much to me that my inability to get the questionnaires taken seriously and produce data that could lead to some basic analysis, completely overwhelmed me. I just simply admitted I saw no way of doing it, and the faculty accepted it.

It is very difficult, in talking about this today, to express how foreign an idea this was in 1920. Many studies of this kind have since been undertaken by many people. The working day of the woman in the home and her husband have been compared, showing how much more arduous and longer her working hours are than his.

#### More Thought and a Degree from Chicago

When Faith, my daughter, was two years old, which was 1921, and I had been working for the Woman's Party steadily, for a couple of years, I was hungry for some more dispassionate social thinking, for analysis. What did all this campaigning add up to? What were the various philosophies of living? What were the relations, and roles of the sexes? The only thing I could think of was to get back to the Gothic halls and windows of the University of Chicago, the Sunday-punctuating bells of the chapel's resounding carillon--my concept of the ivory towers--and take a summer's term of work.

At the university there were nine courses an academic year. But in one summer, in any one of the four quarter periods, you could take either three or four courses. I took four courses which were almost a half year's work; I took "The Psychology of Religious Experience," with Dr. Edward Scribner Ames, and Tufts in philosophy.



Reyher: I took a great deal of philosophy, and religion, because I was beginning to wonder what one did about one's faith. I had such a nebulous and disconnected faith, that I wanted more thought and discussion.

At the end of that semester, and during the semester, the faculty at the university formally asked me what I was going to do about a degree. By virtue of taking that summer in residence, I had concluded my necessary credits toward a bachelor's degree. But I still hadn't completed certain required courses, as course one or course two, that are listed in all college catalogues--certain specific balanced requirements for a degree. The university faculty suggested, "You could come here for another three months and take those, or you could take them by correspondence." I left it up in the air.

By the twenties and thirties I had gone way beyond my bachelor's degree in credits. Years later I decided I couldn't continually explain to people that over the years I had accumulated far more course credits than were necessary for a master's degree, and yet I had no degree. Finally I did go out to the University of Chicago, spent a summer there, and got my bachelor's degree as of my original class of 1918.

To this day I am sorry that I did not do what so many university people suggested: work for a master's or a Ph.D., at least a master's in sociology, or social anthropology, in which I had accumulated a lot of courses and definite concrete knowledge. I really would have had better opportunities to do some of the things I wanted, including getting grants for my writing and research, had I had a more orthodox academic background.

Fry: But of course I guess you see the value in taking the courses that you took.

Reyher: I would never regret the courses that I took. They really did give me a breadth of understanding and experience, reading lists, notes that continue to be invaluable to me. They gave me an opportunity of being familiar with the thinking of really extraordinary minds; for instance, Dr. Ames, who was also minister of the Disciples of Christ Church at the university and was a great friend of Schweitzer [Albert]. He was very interested in what I did in Africa. He was quite helpful. I corresponded with some of my faculty and I kept in touch with them.



### Leadership Experience

Reyher: At the University of Chicago [in 1916] I was anxious to be independent, to start earning my living, and to have the feeling that I was doing it. By the time I went to the University of Chicago, I had had experience in campaigning for suffrage and I didn't want to just have classroom work. I was a young activist.

My father was a great friend of Edith Abbott, and Sophonisba Breckinridge. Miss Breckinridge was Dean of Women and Edith Abbott was Director of the School of Social Work of the university. Miss Breckinridge and Miss Abbott arranged for me to do a job with the Woman's City Club, for which I was paid thirty dollars a month.

The job consisted of leading a class at Hull House one evening every week, and preparing for it. What we had was a lively discussion group. Having learned to stand on my feet, and talk to street audiences, and audiences everywhere, I was expected to educate these women, members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who were already beginning to be the majority, in how to confront the men in their union, how to stand up for their rights, how to speak, and when to speak.

We spent a lot of time on parliamentary procedure, which I haven't learned to this day and which I was supposed to explain to them. It was something I was not equipped to teach, and so we had an expert from women's clubs come and teach them, and me, parliamentary procedure, which I didn't find the least helpful because that is not the part of women's work that I am interested in. However, that group really needed to know it. Later they became the famous Local Number One that led the Chicago strike that established the Amalgamated Clothing Workers as a force in the labor movement. Among my star club workers was Bessie Abramowitz, a fire-brand rebel leader of the union women, who later became Mrs. Sidney Hillman.

It was a very significant little piece of work which then seemed just a routine job, but it had good results for the women in the sense of having accomplished something, and only later I realized how much I learned from that group.

This was evening work, almost an hour's ride back to the dormitory by trolley. One way, closer to Hull House, brought me home more quickly, but across the Fenway. That entailed crossing a parkway that dipped down about six feet from the street, was about twenty feet wide, and dipped on the other side. It meant a quick scramble up and down, but it was dark and frightening.

When some of the dormitory girls heard I was doing that they told me to stop using that route, that it was dangerous. I was



Reyher: secretly grateful to be urged to stop, as I had been ashamed of my fears. During that period of night work different girls took turns to stay up until I came in safely.

That dormitory I lived in at the University of Chicago was characteristic of what our country was like at the time, middle-class America in the Middle West. It was what I wanted--an insight into another type of living. The dormitory was for women only. We sat at five long tables, about ten to a table. We were all supposed to change for dinner and Sunday supper. The tables were stilted--in conversation and in mood. I thought how much more attractive it would be if every table had a little fern dish with a little greenery, or a few flowers, in the center. Something to break the bleak monotony.

I was elected a member of the dormitory Board of Students because I was always prepared to do anything for the group of which I was a part, and so many others had so much less time than I did. In those days I always had time for any activity connected with my daily life. At the first meeting I suggested that we have flowers on our tables, some greenery. But having learned that you always had to have a plan before you presented it to a board, I told them the neighborhood florist had promised me that at a cost of five cents a week for each girl in the dormitory, we could have flowers on the tables all the time. Of course, it would have been something very modest.

I think there were fifty of us in the dormitory. And every one voted on my duly presented proposition. When the vote was tallied, it was overwhelmingly negative. The decision was that we should not do it because it had never been done before!

Fry: Was this typical of their attitude toward change in general?

Reyher: Well, I remember this so well, you see, because it made me realize that you had to work that much harder to present your point of view if what you proposed had never been done before--even if it were only a trifling matter like putting flowers on the tables in a dormitory where it had never been done before.

Fry: Do you remember any more of these experiences that gave you practical insights during your student days?

Reyher: Because I was already always wondering what happens to women under different circumstances, I would go occasionally into town, and watch women loitering around railroad and bus stations--I'm not sure there were buses; I think they were trolleys. Coming home late at night from my work at Hull House, I began to wonder what it would feel like to be a girl alone in Chicago at night and no place to go. I knew that even between ten and eleven the trolleys, as they became deserted, could be frightening. I mulled this over often.



Reyher: One late afternoon I went to the railroad station and watched it thin out, a few stragglers left. I then took a trolley that I knew had a long run. I watched that thin out until no one was left and the conductor looked suspiciously at me. I remember my telling him I was taking the ride back as I had no place to go. I do not remember what he said. He was pleasant and noncommittal, but I didn't like any of it. I came back to the quite empty station and waited for dawn to take the trolley back to the dormitory.

I had been uncomfortable about the whole experiment and was convinced a run-away girl with no place to go would perhaps be safe her first night but not easy in her mind, but I had completely forgotten my own position as a student at the dormitory experimenting about a night out.

The dormitory was locked when I came back in the early morning, and I had to ring the bell. The maid who answered said I was to go straight to the Head of Hall, Miss McClintock. Miss McClintock received me in her quarters in her bathrobe, and only then did I realize I had caused her and the girls genuine anxiety, and I was truly contrite.

I told Miss McClintock exactly what I had done and why. She was a most remarkable, handsome, grey-haired woman, about fifty. I can still see her deep blue eyes and sympathetic smile, as she listened carefully. Sympathetic and understanding of my motives, her final comment was brief and to the point, "Just don't do it again. Don't frighten us all again. Go to your room and get some sleep."

I had no roommate. I was exhausted and when I woke up I realized that Miss McClintock wanted to play down my adventure, had so warned whoever was on the lookout for me, and depended on me not to talk about it for fear of misunderstanding. Neither I nor anyone else ever mentioned that I had been out all night without anyone previously knowing of my whereabouts. It was apparently recognized as foolhardy personal research.

I was interested in rounded experience. I always had to break through the protective shell of my immediate environment to look toward what I might be doing later on. While at the University of Chicago, I was president of the University Women's Peace Society. It was not an elective office. Miss Sophonisba Breckinridge, Dean of Women, who knew my father, arranged it. The society needed money, and fresh from my suffrage campaign experience, I was able to arrange a benefit at a small theater, which netted ninety-one dollars. The society had hoped for one hundred dollars, but ninety-one dollars was sufficient to pay for some peace propaganda dear to Miss Breckinridge's heart.



Reyher:

Years later, when the People's Mandate Committee wanted to honor Miss Breckinridge who was setting forth on some Latin American peace and goodwill mission, Mabel [Vernon] asked me to bring my daughter, Faith, to the plane or steamer and have her present Miss Breckinridge with a bouquet of flowers, and a bon voyage greeting.

I got to know Miss Breckinridge and Miss Abbott quite well, and they were interested in what I did. They were extremely helpful to me, invited me to meals, saw me outside of class or office interviews. I had a very interesting year at the University of Chicago. From then on I always had very full and interesting experiences, not only studying and reading what I wanted, but participating in allied extracurricular activities. I had become too old, and too mature, to have become just an ordinary fraternity-going, dating coed.

Social Life: Many Beaus

In New York I had a lot of friends, had been "popular," went to a great many dances, danced all night many times, and loved it. As an extension student, a special student, most of my classes were late afternoon and evening. I had Friday evening courses. Frequently I danced all night Friday, went to the Henry Street Settlement House for my Saturday morning class, or to the university to a course, and didn't go to bed at all until late Saturday night. I did this for years. One semester I took a university course Saturday morning and held my class at the settlement house Saturday afternoon.

I really was--I am not being immodest--a popular girl, who enjoyed life, and had lots of beaus.

I did not move into the feminist movement as a protection against being a neglected young woman. Far from it. I married at twenty because I had so many beaus it just seemed to me that I was ready to be married. Unconventional though my life was, compared to other students, I was not prepared to have "affairs," or live with someone. That was far too radical a step for those days. I decided I would continue working, and would have an interesting life after I married.

There was never any question in my life of suffrage and feminism not being something that I was deeply interested in. It was a deep and possibly the most consistent and important of my activities.



## PART II WORK WITH THE WOMAN'S PARTY

## III EARLY SUFFRAGE WORK 1913-1915

Woman's Party Parade: Inauguration, 1913

Fry: How early in your life were you actually involved in the woman suffrage movement? Did you happen to take part in the very first Woman's Party parade in 1913, the day before the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson?\*

Reyher: Suppose I tell you about the parade first. I had grown up in Washington; I had gone to high school there. I told you the kind of background I had, that everyone was expected to do something for the community in which they lived, to help others, to serve mankind. To me this was a goal to be attained when I was grown-up. To be able to find some community service, was to be grown-up.

When I was fifteen, I began to work as a volunteer at the Friendship House settlement, to teach basketball--something I knew and could share, as I played basketball at school--to both boys and girls. Friendship House has become one of the best-known community houses in Washington.

Lydia Burklin, the director, was a remarkable woman. She was

---

\*The group sponsoring the suffrage parade on March 3, 1913, was at that time called the Congressional Committee. Later it was called the Congressional Union, and still later the National Woman's Party. [Ed.]



Reyher: eager to have me enter into the life of the community, to work not only with the children, but to my shame she sent me, since in those days social work was precariously unprofessional, to be a regular visitor among the neighboring families to urge them to save money. I, who had never saved a penny, and have only in my old age started to save money so that I won't embarrass my immediate family, rather than to uphold the principles of thrift--I was urging these people to put savings stamps in specially prepared little books provided by Friendship House.

I still remember some of the people I went to see about this. I was fascinated by them. One of the women who left an indelible impression on me, beyond just that of regular visiting, was the wife of a former miner in Pennsylvania who had just recovered from having had her eighteenth baby! There they were, these women, with children scrambling all over the place, and there was I coming to ask that miner's wife to save money while nursing her eighteenth child, unable to cope with any of the immediate circumstances of her household.

When I read in the papers that the Woman's Party was aiming to give women freedom, and was going to have a suffrage parade in Washington, here was a group that would have many brave, wonderful women whom I wanted to meet. Jane Addams of Hull House was one of my great heroines (I had read much about her) and her name was among them.

I went downtown to the Woman's Party Headquarters, actually then the Congressional Committee, and simply said, "I would like to be a volunteer to help in the parade." I don't know what they thought, but they immediately arranged for me to do what a little errand girl would do. I ran errands for everybody, hither and yon, and listened avidly to them talking. But no one could have been more obscure or more unknown than I was in that headquarters. I think they were downtown somewhere on "F" Street. I seem to remember walking down two steps to enter.

As they were planning the floats to have in the parade, somebody apparently noticed me, and said I ought to be on the one of southern belles, in costume. This one called for seven young women or nine, two by two on the truck in costume, with one leader. We wore wide hoop skirts, and little bonnets tied under the chin. I don't know whether they were made for us, or whether the Congressional Committee got them from a costumer. The girl in front was one of the La Follettes, a then-famous political family. She was not a daughter of Senator La Follette [Robert M.] of Wisconsin. I think she was a daughter of a Congressman. I don't remember her first name, or any of the others, but she was played up in the papers as a La Follette. I remember her! The New York Times carried a photograph of the float they thought was so beautiful, and yet so indicative of the change in the lives and dress of the then-contemporary women.



Keyher:

As the parade got started, and as we moved up Pennsylvania Avenue, I who had never seen dense, surging crowds in Washington before, or a riot in my whole life, saw the crowds begin to close in on the parade. It was really a riotous, menacing crowd. Men on the street were insulting and obscene, and wanted to do injury to the women who were parading on foot. Other men, in some way, wanted to provoke what is today called an "incident." We were wearing wide skirts and, before I realized it, as we passed by, men were trying to lift those skirts. However, there were too many people watching, and ropes to bar onlookers. One grown-up man broke through the barriers and tried to lift one of the girl's skirts and pull her off of the float. At that point a man with a walking stick, a fine stereotype of a gentleman, rushed up indignantly, and waving his stick, threatened if the hoodlum didn't move on immediately, he would break his back. The disturber slunk away.

When the parade was over, and the lines and barriers were down, and the onlookers and paraders intermingled, the rough crowds were terrifying.

Stories in the papers later said, and the gossip in Washington was, that the red-light district, which was at that time in the southwest section off of Pennsylvania Avenue, on Second and Third Streets, had lines that went way out into the avenue of men who had come for the inauguration and were waiting their chance to get into the red-light houses. All of these crowds blended in the parade.

I lived in the northeast section of Washington. The NWP [National Woman's Party] Headquarters presently, I think, are southeast—in any case, they are on Capitol Hill. I lived on Capitol Hill, down further toward Lincoln Park. The fashionable section by that time was in the northwest section. Most of the women in the parade were moving toward home into the northwest. A very small number were backtracking in my direction. Pennsylvania Avenue would have been one of the places that I could have gone down, or I could have gone down Massachusetts Avenue where I lived, at the corner of Tenth Street.

I don't remember which way I went, but I remember that we were warned by the police as we headed for home in our costumes, to get home as fast as we could because the streets were not safe for women who were wearing the signia of the parade. That is my still clear memory of Washington the day of the parade.

I had never before, or after, seen any kind of roughhouse on Washington streets. The parade inspired it, no question about it. The parade roused bestial passions and violent opposition. I was afraid to stay in it.

Fry:

Did you see any real violence?



Reyher:

As the parade got started, and as we moved up Pennsylvania Avenue, I who had never seen dense, surging crowds in Washington before, or a riot in my whole life, saw the crowds begin to close in on the parade. It was really a riotous, menacing crowd. Men on the street were insulting and obscene, and wanted to do injury to the women who were parading on foot. Other men, in some way, wanted to provoke what is today called an "incident." We were wearing wide skirts and, before I realized it, as we passed by, men were trying to lift those skirts. However, there were too many people watching, and ropes to bar onlookers. One grown-up man broke through the barriers and tried to lift one of the girl's skirts and pull her off of the float. At that point a man with a walking stick, a fine stereotype of a gentleman, rushed up indignantly, and waving his stick, threatened if the hoodlum didn't move on immediately, he would break his back. The disturber slunk away.

When the parade was over, and the lines and barriers were down, and the onlookers and paraders intermingled, the rough crowds were terrifying.

Stories in the papers later said, and the gossip in Washington was, that the red-light district, which was at that time in the southwest section off of Pennsylvania Avenue, on Second and Third Streets, had lines that went way out into the avenue of men who had come for the inauguration and were waiting their chance to get into the red-light houses. All of these crowds blended in the parade.

I lived in the northeast section of Washington. The NWP [National Woman's Party] Headquarters presently, I think, are southeast--in any case, they are on Capitol Hill. I lived on Capitol Hill, down further toward Lincoln Park. The fashionable section by that time was in the northwest section. Most of the women in the parade were moving toward home into the northwest. A very small number were backtracking in my direction. Pennsylvania Avenue would have been one of the places that I could have gone down, or I could have gone down Massachusetts Avenue where I lived, at the corner of Tenth Street.

I don't remember which way I went, but I remember that we were warned by the police as we headed for home in our costumes, to get home as fast as we could because the streets were not safe for women who were wearing the signia of the parade. That is my still clear memory of Washington the day of the parade.

I had never before, or after, seen any kind of roughhouse on Washington streets. The parade inspired it, no question about it. The parade roused bestial passions and violent opposition. I was afraid to stay in it.

Fry: Did you see any real violence?



Reyher: Well, I saw that a man would have had a stick broken on his back had he moved any further toward us. We weren't supposed to look around. We were supposed to be a pageant, a spectacle, an integral part of the parade, eyes ahead, engrossed, a group apart, representing an idea.

Certainly the atmosphere was one of jeering, of shouting--not on the part of women, but yelling and howling of a very hostile male audience. That was my impression. I may have been terrified by the experience. It was the only time I have ever been terrified on the streets of Washington, or anywhere.

Fry: That was a very significant parade because it was the first real activist demonstration that the National Woman's Party put on.

Reyher: Of course. It was an enormous parade, and it conflicted with the date of the inaugural parade. It came, I think, a day after.

Fry: It upstaged it. It was the day before, I think.

Reyher: Possibly the day before, but the point is the small politicians, the roughnecks always came to Washington for the inaugural parade. Today, politics has been somewhat sanitized by an infusion of the upper crust of society: with glamorous inaugural balls, and reserved seats in a series of grandstands as well as balls. Everybody who comes to the party is presumably rich, and gleaming with jewels, an important member of his community. Some of the petty politicians come too, to meet others like them. By "petty" I mean vulgar. There were plenty of them at Wilson's inaugural.

Remember, too, that people were on foot in those days more than they are today. The streets were more important to people. There wasn't the automobile traffic that there is today. Wilson was elected in 1912, inaugurated in March, 1913. I can only tell you that when Theodore Roosevelt would leave the White House, and even after his term in office, people would be standing and waiting at the gates of the White House for hours, not to see the President, but to see the brand new car the President would drive out in, because that was a sight for people to see in Washington when I was a very small child.

In 1913 there were still signs at the corner of Ninth and "F" Street--"Traffic Must Not Move at More Than Eight Miles an Hour." This was a time when the streets would be filled with pedestrians, whether they came to see the parade or not. And if any of them were unruly or boisterous, you would perhaps have had the impression of a much larger crowd and audience than you would have today, because today if they were on the streets, they would have come to watch the parade. They would not be apt to be there just because they were aimless pedestrians momentarily captivated by the promise of excitement. You have to take some of those circumstances into consideration. The crowds belonged to the period when streets were an integral part of daily life.



Liberal Club and Feminist Alliance: Introduction to Feminist Ideas

Fry: Why don't we go on now and say how you first started your suffrage work.

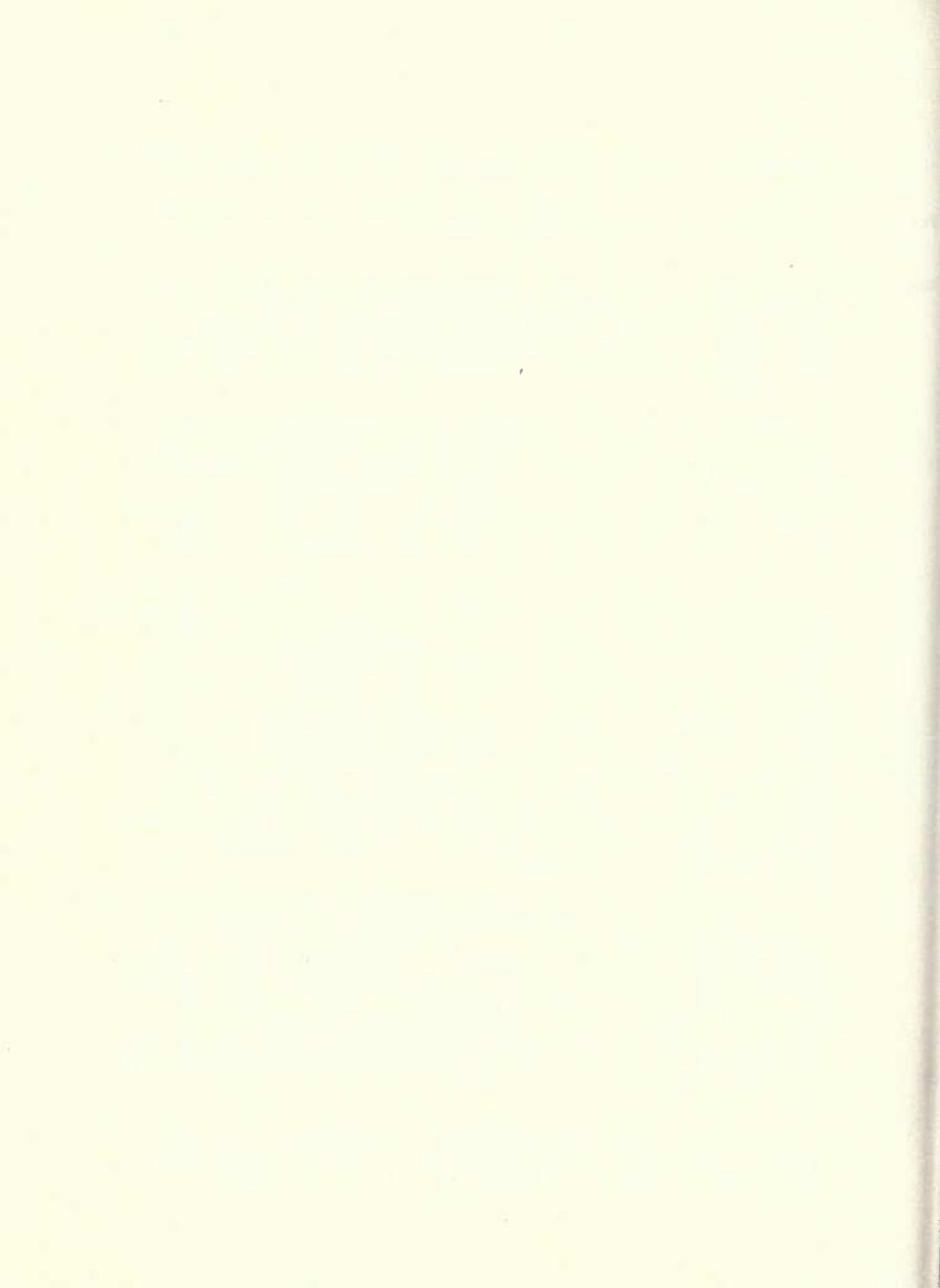
Reyher: I started when I came to New York in 1915. Actually I think I ought to state that when I came to New York, in 1915, through family friends my brother and I became members--we were the youngest--of the Liberal Club, a club off Washington Square, a meeting place for many noted intellectuals. Among the members were Henrietta Rodman and Alyse Gregory.

Henrietta Rodman was a married teacher who kept her own name, did not have any children, believed in dress reform and wore some of the strangest-looking garments that you could possibly imagine, and had "mannish" cropped hair. At that particular time the Vernon Castles, later famed dancers, had appeared on the scene. Mrs. Castle had bobbed her hair into a short Dutch cut, almost like the Dutch Cleanser ads; but short hair for women was a distinct innovation.

Henrietta wore her hair that way because she thought it convenient, and she didn't believe in women spending too much time on nonessentials. She also believed in no-nonsense dress for women. Nowadays when women wear very handsome caftans from the East, they wouldn't be surprised to see a woman draped in a piece of material just flowing with the head cut out in the center and her figure showing, striding easily. But in those days, a woman's dress had a waistline, a shoulder line, and a definite significance as a costume of allure to enhance her appearance. For a woman to wear that kind of robe, particularly of some kind of rough material so that she looked as if she were dressed in a gunny sack, was most unusual. At that time women who did begin to wear and believe in modern dress at least wore a piece of modern jewelry or some embroidery, as a concession to their femininity, but not Henrietta.

Henrietta was a woman of great strength of character and undaunted purpose. She organized the Feminist Alliance, and she made me secretary of it because I was young, and eager, and would run around and do errands for her. (Throughout my early youth I was always made an officer or a secretary of an organization by very wise women who got a lot of work out of me for nothing.) I still cherish the letterhead of the Feminist Alliance; I am very proud of it. Later Henrietta got one of her students from the Wadleigh High School where she taught, and kept me on the Board, when I could no longer give her quite so much time.

Henrietta's program and declaration of principles for the Feminist Alliance opened up to me all the different practical things that women needed in their immediate environment if they were to lead lives



Reyher: that in some way recognized their identity as human beings. Primarily it was centrally stressed they had to have an opportunity to carry on a career at the same time as marriage.

Because there was a fight on in the public schools where she was a high school teacher, Henrietta had become a dedicated feminist. Though she never became pregnant, she became involved. The fight was in protest against the discharge of women as soon as they became pregnant. The system preferred not to let married women teach, and to force pregnant married women to take a long leave of absence. She was fighting for the right of the married woman to continue working when and as she saw fit.

This logically led to her pioneering for day nurseries to which married women could send their children. They could look after them at home in the early morning, and in the evening, and by leaving them at the day nursery still carry on their professional work.

Through this little group--the Feminist Alliance--a man, an interested, sympathetic architect, drew up plans for a cooperative apartment house in which many of us were planning to live, and in which we were going to buy apartments. There would be a cooperative nursery on the roof, and other ultramodern features, such as a cooperative laundry where we could wash our clothes downstairs in the basement. Practically every apartment house in New York has such a laundry today, but it was practically unheard of then. There would be delivery men who would leave packages at a joint entrance, where there would be the kind of energy and time-saving cooperative arrangement that many people have today through commercial enterprise, but which was available then only to prosperous hotel residents.

Individually we aspired to have apartments that wouldn't have decorative mouldings, heavily carved ceilings and woodwork, or emphasis on appearance, so they would be easier to maintain. The land for the cooperative apartment house was bought and it was eventually built. It was taken over by a commercial group, however, because World War I had started, though the United States had not yet entered, and many of our founders were caught up in that. Although it was not ultimately financed and owned by the feminist wives, it nevertheless was one of the first cooperative apartment houses in New York. It is located on Twelfth Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues.

Fry: You must have been working with the Feminist Alliance when you were about seventeen or eighteen, while you were a special student at Columbia.

Reyher: Yes. I attended all the meetings like an eager, young beaver. I sat in on very important key meetings with a group of older, dedicated women who really wanted to create that pilot cooperative apartment house.



Reyher: The Feminist Alliance, through its many discussions, made me very well aware of what a feminist's domestic requirements were. Later it led me to try to make that study of the relative hours of labor of a man or a woman in connection with their work, which I've told you about. But that was later, in 1920-1921, when I was studying at the New York School of Social Work.

I was not ready, in 1915, for Henrietta's type of dress reform, because I was a vain young girl and I wanted pretty clothes. But I was ready for her ideas that a woman had a right to work after she was married, the right to work whether she was pregnant or not, and that she ought to have equal pay for equal work, and that there ought to be facilities to look after her children while she was at work. I was very conscious of that because of my mother's background. Had my mother had a day nursery of like-minded friends, or other friends who wanted to work away from home, she would never have given up her dream of working with my father. And so that in itself made me think the Feminist Alliance, Henrietta's organization, was frightfully important.

#### Street Meetings, New Jersey, 1915: First Suffrage Campaign

I also met Alyse Gregory at the Liberal Club. Alyse was going to be a traveling suffrage organizer with her own car and a few helpers. She would be the main speaker.

Alyse was a writer who later married one of the Powys brothers and went to England to live. At that time, she needed three or four young women who would tour in her car with her in the summer of 1915 to cover the state of New Jersey.

I had already planned, due to my club work at the Henry Street Settlement, to be a recreation worker in charge of a holiday house for twenty-five or thirty young girls up the Hudson. Actually I was supposed to be there in case of trouble or difficulty, and be a young student companion to the girls rather than an older, more unwelcome disciplinarian.

It was the right approach, I believed, a nice thing to do. I was flattered to be asked, and I was interested. But I was far more interested in the suffrage campaign. So when Alyse Gregory asked me, and I was already committed to go to the holiday house in June and had virtually started there, I appealed to Matilda Spence. She was in charge of several of these recreational vacation homes for club-workers. Her aunt was founder and director of the noted Spence School. Matilda was older than I was, had a lot of experience, and good connections to find whatever personnel she needed.



# THIRD WARD SUFFRAGE WEEK

## SUFFRAGE STREET MEETINGS

In charge of the Women's Political Union of Newark

- Monday, August 23, Cor. Fifteenth, Springfield and Jones
- Tuesday, " 24, " Morton and Howard
- Wednesday, " 25, " Prince and Kinney *— James + Prince*
- Thursday, " 26, " Montgomery and High *Blow*
- Friday, " 27, " Monmouth and Waverly *— Court St. + Belmont Ave*
- Saturday, " 28, " Belmont and Waverly

**All these meetings will be at 8 o'clock**

### SPEAKERS

- MRS. ELLA REEVE BLOOR
- MRS. LOIS PRATT BABCOCK—formerly a voter
- MISS ROSE WEISS
- MISS REBECCA HOURWICH
- MRS. M. J. REYNOLDS—formerly a voter
- MR. J. A. H. HOPKINS, State Chairman Progressive Party
- MR. W. J. MORGAN, The original "Jitney Bus" Man

**COME AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS**

**Women Vote in 12 States!—Why Not in New Jersey?**

**Vote "YES" on Woman Suffrage, October 19th**

**Voters must register Sept. 14 or Sept. 28**





Reyher: "Don't worry," she assured me, "I will find a replacement. I will explain to Henry Street that this is really more important for you to do, and that I advised you to take this other job."

So with a clear conscience, I went to work for Alyse Gregory as a volunteer. The Henry Street job had a salary of thirty dollars a month plus maintenance. With Alyse I got no cash money but I got my room and board. It was my first experience with "cause hospitality." We crisscrossed the state, helping to arrange meetings, calling upon local women, working with and for them, and independently. We were working under the auspices of the Women's Political Union of New Jersey. Before the National Woman's Party was formed, the Women's Political Union worked in New York and New Jersey for suffrage. It was contemporary with the Congressional Union, headquartered in Washington. The women of the Women's Political Union later turned to support of a federal amendment.

Alyse Gregory told some of the Executive Committee about me. Mrs. Mina Van Winkle, who was the New Jersey State Chairman, felt they needed somebody in Newark; it was a big city. Minnie J. Reynolds, a great character, who was the publicity chairman, had said she would take a young girl to live with her in her apartment if she would go around and help organize meetings because Minnie J. (as everyone called her) was doing most of the writing of publicity and had no time for it.

Minnie J. was a woman such as I had never before encountered. She wore a black cotton wrapper all day upon a stocky, nude body. This was for comfort and coolness. She was an old newspaper woman, then in her fifties, with pulled-back, iron grey hair. She looked sturdy, square, well built, like a steamboat to keep afloat in all weathers; her voice, low and deep, like a fog horn. She smoked continuously, but was fearful her hands would get nicotine stained, and that the women who might see her at suffrage meetings would disapprove. Being in public relations she was well versed in the fact that you have to have a good image in any cause trying to carry public support. So she rolled her own cigarettes and had made herself a cigarette holder of a sturdy, black wire hairpin that just closed around the cigarette, and that she could hold easily in her mouth while typing or writing. The filters and tobacco she kept in an open wooden box under her bed. Dishes would accumulate in the sink until everything was out of the cupboard, when we had a great washing under the shower because she couldn't be bothered taking the time after each meal, and she wasn't going to have me take the time either. I was quite willing not to be the household drudge, and with her sense of justice she wasn't going to have me do the dishes if she didn't.



Reyher:

I started by going out with some of the workers, helping to arrange street meetings. Somebody would lend us a car, and we would turn up where the traffic was greatest at a good intersection--we studied where there would be a good corner--then we would park the car and have our meeting. We arranged beforehand for our speakers who spoke from the car just above the crowd. Sometimes we would print publicity dodgers [leaflets] beforehand; sometimes we wouldn't. During the speaking one or two of us would circulate among the crowd, or go about stopping passersby and urging them to stop and listen. Often the speaker got up to an empty corner. The technique was to attract a crowd.

Occasionally Mrs. Van Winkle took me somewhere with her to some garden party or some other occasion to meet uncommitted women and talk with them.

Once I went to Passaic to see a "prospect," a woman who might be persuaded to give time, a car, money, or all three. I went into a post office because I had to wait for something, or somebody, and I noticed a lovely, young girl sitting there. She came up to me and said, "I have seen you at the street meetings. Oh, I think you are doing something wonderful. I wish I could do something like that."

"What do you do?" I asked.

"I go to normal school in winter--I am going to be a teacher--but I am doing nothing now."

"You ought to be out helping us," I said.

"I would love to," was her eager reply. I took her address and phone number and told her she would be hearing from me.

When I came home I told Minnie J. Reynolds that we could have another volunteer if she were agreeable, and her instant reply was, "Certainly, bring her along. She can stay here with you." She had a spacious apartment, but we always had to get our own meals, or eat out. I've forgotten about the housekeeping except that it was very sketchy.

The girl was Mary Dubrow, who came to the National Woman's Party later as an organizer, at Miss Paul's request, when I told her about her. She stayed for a year, or two, and then left because she felt that there would be nobody who would look after her as time went on, that she did not have an independent income as many of the women in the Woman's Party did, that she would have to become a teacher, and have a profession and be financially independent and secure. Over the years, when she could, she would speak at a meeting or go to Washington to help lobby. She was one of the most devoted workers



Reyher: in the Woman's Party. But she never remained beyond a limited period as a paid worker, because of her commitment to financial independence.

The state campaigns for suffrage were extremely active ones. Though these were the old suffragists, the divergence between the Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman's Party, while these state campaigns were going on, had not become so acute as later. Both groups had many interesting and dynamic women. A lot of men were attracted by them, and respected their techniques and experience. They felt that if they wanted to go into politics, and get some pointers and practical knowledge, there was nothing to equal the suffrage campaign for getting into direct contact with the voters.

There was a man who was starting a party of his own. I think they were the Committee of the Forty-Eight--liberal reformers. J. A. H. Hopkins was the leader who was starting this progressive party in New Jersey. He was a millionaire, and his wife [Alice Turnbull Hopkins] was on the board of the Women's Political Union in New Jersey. The Congressional Union, which was later to become the National Woman's Party, had broken away from the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1914. As I've said, the Women's Political Union in New Jersey was contemporary with the Congressional Union and also worked for a federal amendment. Mrs. Hopkins was a very handsome woman, who later also became independent by opening a dress shop. Mrs. Hopkins, of course, was Mr. Hopkins's introduction to us.

Mr. Hopkins decided that what he needed was practice as a street speaker, and he could get it through working for woman suffrage, which he strongly believed in. He offered his services to us for our street meetings. He also offered us his handsome car, and since we were already being trained in the idea that you took what you could get from wherever you could, if it helped your cause, we accepted with pleasure.

We didn't realize that the car, even for those days, was about half a block long, or so it seemed, and that he had a Japanese chauffeur who came with the car. We came into a neighborhood with this spectacular red car and this Japanese chauffeur; and Mr. Hopkins usually had with him Alan McCurdy, one of his lieutenants in his political work. The two of them were both handsome and impeccably dressed in the kind of summer clothes that in those days distinctly separated the upper class from the working class, and we got hooted as soon as we got there. Today their kind of clothes would be in any men's wear store where men making that kind of income could buy them. But in those days that was one of the marked differences between the upper class and the working class. And street meetings were usually held in crowded neighborhoods of lower-income residents.



Reyher: "Why don't you get yourself an American car? Why don't you get yourself an American chauffeur?" the crowds yelled derisively.

Mary Dubrow, Mrs. Reynolds, and I conferred about this. The first thing we did was to politely suggest the chauffeur not come, that Mr. Hopkins drive his own car, and we blamed all the hostility on the chauffeur. People always, if they make noisy fun of the appurtenances of money, have a slight jealousy of it, I discovered. We needed the car; it made a difference having the car to depend on because we didn't have to waste time arranging for a car for each evening, and we could cover several meetings in one evening.

I had not yet spoken on the street corner; I would get the crowd for the others to speak. Mary Dubrow was wonderful, lively, interesting, impassioned, always held her audience--not Mr. Hopkins. He was grand in every other respect, so helpful, so interested. After I heard Mr. Hopkins, and realized what a stilted, halting presentation he had, I said to myself, "I can certainly do as well as that, and it will give us variety if I get up and speak too."

So I got my original street-corner speaking experience in Newark, New Jersey, mostly in working-class districts, because I gained courage from hearing another novice and watched audience reaction carefully.

In those days, as I have tried to explain, I was torn like an amoeba in many different, unpredictable directions. I was high minded, and full of a sense of social responsibility, and social consciousness. But I was also a pretty girl, anxious to have pretty clothes, follow the fashions; that was important to me. It is a confession that from the vantage of these many years seems ludicrous, but it was part of me then. In those days, styles were rigorous. Every three months the calendar changed, and so did the new styles. You stopped wearing a straw hat as of the first of September, no later than the fifteenth, when you began to wear a fall hat, and you wore fall clothes, and winter clothes, and spring clothes, and summer clothes in a definite sequence, and I believed in all of it. I accepted it. I didn't fight it, I went with the tide.

But in this campaign I was working all day, had worked all summer, and the fall had come upon us, and I was still wearing a straw hat, and suddenly I was aware that everybody was wearing fall hats but me. At that time you didn't go out bare headed, you wore a hat once you left the house. I had to look my best for a street meeting, I thought, at least as well as I could. But I had neither fall nor winter hat. Occasionally fashion decreed it was permissible to be ahead of the fashions. A winter hat might be preferable to a straw one in September. It was a real problem to me, as much of a problem as my getting up a good meeting. I solved the problem, as I



Reyher: have learned to try to solve many problems throughout my life, by "What have I got at hand?"

What I had at hand was not a department or clothing store because such stores were not open during the times that I might be free, and small neighborhood stores were not yet dotting the landscape. I was conscientious, I was always busy during the daytime with work that I was pledged to do, that had to be done. The only store that was open after five o'clock or at odd hours was a neighborhood drugstore. I went into the drugstore to see what they possibly could have with which I could cover my straw hat. They had a chamois cloth meant to be used for dusting. People were wearing chamois hats that fall, beige chamois hats were very fashionable. I had a little straw toque, the kind of toque that No-No Nannette brought back, hats that come down over the head--

Fry: Like a cloche?

Reyher: A cloche, exactly. A little modified cloche. I figured that I could cover it--a little in advance of the styles because this was 1915-- I could cover it with beige drugstore chamois. I did, neatly, almost expertly, but it looked so stark and bare, and I couldn't use the trimming that I had had on the straw hat. The question was, what could I put on that would give it color? Provide dash! I realized that the only colorful thing there in the drugstore was a sponge, and that if I got a lovely burnt orange sponge, sort of brick red, I could cut it up and make it look as if it were two wings, one on each side meeting in the middle, and it would really be a smart hat. And it was most attractive. I was delighted and comfortable.

In those days, they didn't have these little plastic hats for a woman to slip on in case of rain. We were supposed to have an umbrella, but we weren't carrying umbrellas at a street meeting. The first time it began to rain, my head began to feel quite heavy, and it felt heavier and heavier, and I kept thinking, "What am I going to do?" There is only one thing to do, I decided, and that is bend down and get the water out of that sponge. Squeeze it out. I did, behind the car where nobody could see me.

However, a few weeks later somebody told me, "You know, Mr. Hopkins said, 'By God, I am learning things from those girls every day. I tell you, the other night one of those girls who goes out with me every night, showed me what you can do. She was wearing a rain hat that took the rain, and all she had to do was lean over to squeeze her sponge out.'"

I got full credit for my ingenuity to protect myself. [Laughter] I had not given up slavery to fashion. That took me a few years to come to. But the twist on the hat made me realize how hungry men, too,



Reyher: were for social change and how eagerly some of them were watching those of us they considered to be looking for new directions.

At the end of the New Jersey campaign in October I was engrossed in it. Campaigning for suffrage had become my full-time program--sixteen hours a day, seven days a week.

The referendum vote in New York, and New Jersey, was two weeks ahead of the vote in Massachusetts where they were also having a campaign for woman suffrage. It was suggested to me by someone of the women I worked with--I don't even remember who, now--that she would write to the chairman in Massachusetts, and suggest that I should go up there for the last two weeks of their campaign. The chairman sent for me.

#### Organizing in Brockton, Massachusetts, 1915

When I reported at the Boston Headquarters the chairman, or her deputy, who interviewed me, said, "We know that you are a seasoned campaigner, and we need somebody to go to work with the Board Chairman in the city of Brockton, which is a neighboring shoe town."

I have to explain that there truly were a very limited number of young professionals as we had become: Alyse Gregory and the girls she trained were spending their entire time, all day long, and evenings until eleven and twelve o'clock learning the techniques of getting out a crowd, preparing a spontaneous meeting, or providing or arranging for an audience, doing all the things that hopefully gathered together people to hear our message of why women should get the vote.

We were called organizers, and that is what we were. We were patterned on labor organizers, who at that time were men going to labor meetings, and trying to get memberships, and strength for labor legislation. Patterned, too, on the English women who had taken to the streets to make their cause known, except that we were not violent.

I arrived in Boston on a Saturday morning, and I was told that I should report to a hotel that night in Brockton, and that the chairman would meet me there on Monday morning.

I had a half sister, in Boston, one of my father's Russian family. Several of his Russian children had come over here to get graduate university education, and had a choice of staying here or going back to Russia. This half sister, who had come here at the



Reyher: age of eighteen, had gone to Johns Hopkins for graduate work and had chosen to remain and was working for the Children's Bureau in Boston.

I had arranged to have dinner with her and one of her co-workers. They naturally asked me all about what I was planning to do, and I told them where I was going to stay. My sister exploded, "You can't go to that hotel, that is one of the most notorious houses of prostitution in Brockton." "Nonsense," I said. "I'm being sent there by the Massachusetts Suffrage Committee." My sister pleaded, explained, got angry. "I don't know what to do, but I think I ought to telephone Father, because I think you are being stubborn about this. I think you ought to at least wait until tomorrow morning until we clear this up. We've just done a Children's Bureau study there, and we know Brockton." The embarrassed friend, at so vehement a family argument, agreed. I said, "Well, let me go and stay at the hotel tonight. I'll call you tomorrow." Since the arrangements had been made, and they knew how eager I was to seem grown-up and responsible, keeping to set plans, they reluctantly agreed.

When I got to Brockton it looked like any other hotel to me, and I checked in. Next morning, though Sunday, the local chairman came to see me, and told me how glad she was I was there, and how sorry she was she couldn't have me stay with her but she was having trouble with her husband, and so she couldn't offer me hospitality, but that she would be in constant touch with me and would help me in any way that she could.

I began discussing plans, and getting to know what the situation was. I asked her whether I could use her car, and she said no, that we couldn't depend on it, that I would have to rent a car, and she would pay for it. There was no organization, no committee, no other interested, active woman that I could see. I saw I was going to be on my own. I discovered that there was one driver--a taxi driver in a Ford car, a woman--in town, and that she would probably be free to drive me around and take me to my meetings, and that I might arrange. So I engaged the only woman jitney driver in town to campaign with me. It seemed like an auspicious beginning.

That night, after I had gone around with her, one of the first women taxi drivers in a fairly rough working-class neighborhood in a definitely industrial town, I realized she was certainly not a delicate, carefully nurtured, protected girl, not at all like the majority middle-class membership we had, or seemed to attract.

I found her very interesting, and it didn't matter to me if she was a little "speedy" in her ways, calling out to men drivers, attracting attention wherever she went.



Psyher: That night, or the next one, I was really in trouble. It was late, pushing eleven o'clock. When I came in from our street meeting, I started to go upstairs—there was no elevator, just a wide staircase that opened into the lobby. The hotel had only three or four floors, and I was on the top floor. I noticed that a fairly drunken man was coming up the stairs with me and mumbling to me.

As we got to my floor—my room opened onto a little hall that had two doorways—I hurried and was able to get to my room and lock the door. I noticed the key was loose. The drunken man began banging on the intervening door and demanding, "Let me in."

Frantically I noticed there was no telephone in the room. "I've the room next door to you, and I will come in that door if you don't let me in this one," he called. Hurriedly I pushed the bureau against the intervening door and he began rattling it.

I figured if I open my door and try to run downstairs, he will open his door and attack me in the hall. He is so drunk and so belligerent, so rough, what am I going to do? I looked out of the window to see if there was any fire escape, but it was one of those old-fashioned hotels that had ropes draped on the windowsill for you to throw down in case of fire. I thought, "I can never get down that. The rope is old; it will probably break. They have got it draped here to meet the requirements. I will never get out of this."

I had what seemed like two or three hours of agonizing argument with that man—he would bang on the door, and stop—until I finally worked my way out. I don't remember the details of how I inched the entrance door open, without making a noise, and he banged on the intervening one, and made a beeline for the floor downstairs and to the main desk.

By the time I got down three flights of stairs into the lobby, I was practically hysterical.

"How dare you have that kind of a man in your hotel, and let me have this kind of an experience? What am I going to do?"

"We will give you another room," the clerk said, trying to soothe me and ignore what had happened.

"The next room you give me is probably just like that. I was told--" And then I told him that my sister had warned me about coming there.

"Why didn't you tell me what kind of a place you are?" I foolishly demanded.



Reyher: "We didn't engage this room for you, your chairman of the suffrage board engaged the room for you," he countered hastily.

"Well, what am I going to do? I just don't want to be unprotected in this hotel through the night," and I was hysterical and weeping. "I will find something to do in the morning," I comforted myself.

"Why don't you call that driver of yours?" he suggested, which hadn't occurred to me. "She lives in this hotel."

I called her from the desk--she had a phone--and told her what had happened. "I will come down and get you, and you can come up into my room," was her instant reply.

She had a double bed and offered me half of it. I thought to myself, because I was in such a hysterical state, "For all I know, she is a procuress. I am in bed with her. What do I know is going to happen to me?" For reassurance she kept saying to me, "These things always happen," and "Stop worrying." I made sure of where the rope was, going down from her window, and lay there just scared numb. I cannot describe what kind of a night I spent lying there stiff beside her, wakeful, alert, ready for anything that might happen, prepared to meet it.

Early in the morning, I called the Board chairman and said, "I've got to see you. Something terrible happened in the hotel here last night, and I am leaving for Boston. You had no right to put me in a hotel like that"--and I told her what my sister had said.

"Please wait until I come down," she urged. No doubt I was a fool, but I was easily moved, and when she told me a cock-and-bull story, I accepted it and felt I could not destroy her by reporting the circumstances to Boston. She and her husband were at loggerheads: when she would bring her car in at night, he would put nails in it so that she couldn't use it the next day, and when he would bring his car in at night, she would do the same to him. She claimed she was trying to get him to move out, and give her an allowance, and he wouldn't do it. He was having an affair with a woman in his office across the street from that hotel. She had taken headquarters in that hotel so that she could sit there after dark and see if they were silhouetted on the window, and if she could in some way keep track of them and catch them and get evidence, she could succeed in getting what she wanted. Otherwise she was penniless!

She claimed she had no idea that the hotel was like what I pictured it to be, or that this would happen to me.



Reyher: "Please don't tell them about this at [Boston] Headquarters," she pleaded. "It would ruin me. Go through with this for the next two weeks. I'll help you in every way I can. I realize that you can't stay here at the hotel. You'll have to come and stay with me. But," she added, "I don't know what my husband will do to you once you get there, or how he will treat you. And I won't be able to give you any meals. I will have to get you out of the house as early as possible each day, before he gets up. You will have to realize that you may hear some terrible quarrels. But after all, it's only for a few days."

So I moved from my room at the hotel, but I was in Headquarters, which was still in the hotel, all day, and at meetings every evening--that is what I came there for--and the jitney driver would bring me to the local chairman's home late at night. In the morning sometimes Madam Chairman would give me breakfast, but sometimes she would sneak me out before her husband might see me or get hold of me.

I do not remember any of the meetings in Brockton. There were so many hundreds of meetings in the years that followed. I only remember our final big outdoor rally which Anne Martin came to speak at. She was impressed by it, and later it was she who recommended me to Alice Paul.

All I remembered of Brockton was the hotel and my local chairman. It taught me early a little bit about women who were, from their point of view, helpless, without money, who would do anything, anything, to manage to get what they wanted at the expense of anybody. And this was part of my unforgettable suffrage experience, classified in my mind as such.

This woman begged me never to tell this story to anybody either in Washington or in Massachusetts, and I never did, for many, many years after, long after she was dead, and long after this was just a memory and an experience with meaning only to me in the general context of what happened there.

Fry: This was the year when New Jersey, and New York, and Massachusetts all voted the suffrage amendment down.

Reyher: Yes, they all had suffrage referendums, all voted against women.



Stand of Women's Political Union and National Woman Suffrage Association

Reyher: When I was due to go to Massachusetts, Father, who had had a long correspondence with Alice Stone Blackwell--I gave his letters, or rather I sold her letters to Father to the Schlesinger Library\* at Radcliffe--Father said to me, "You know, I have a friend in Boston who is the editor of the woman suffrage magazine up there. Wouldn't you like to go and see her?"

"Father, you know," I replied loftily, "I am working for the National Woman Suffrage Association in Massachusetts, but in New Jersey I was working for the Women's Political Union, and they are at loggerheads with the National Woman Suffrage Association. They don't agree about whether there should be federal work done for the suffrage amendment, and I think that if Miss Blackwell knows that I have been working for the Women's Political Union she wouldn't be interested in seeing me. So therefore I perhaps ought not to meet her at this particular time."

Today, I am very sorry because I would have loved to have met her, having read her letters to Father, which were mostly about Russia. I refused to meet her for fear that I might compromise my attitude, which now was pretty strong for the Women's Political Union slant for federal action.

Fry: Was the Women's Political Union a part of Alice Paul's group at that time?

Reyher: The Women's Political Union, as I recall, was a group that did not work with the National Woman Suffrage Association. Their basic difference was that the Women's Political Union was beginning to believe that there should be federal action, though the Woman's Party had not been formed, as far as I can remember.

Fry: It had been formed but was not organized--

Reyher: In any case it would have been the Congressional Union.

Anyway, I had a very strong feeling for federal action, and I didn't want to be affiliated in any way with people who opposed it.

---

\*The letters of Alice Stone Blackwell and Isaac A. Hourwich are now a part of the Alice Stone Blackwell collection in the Schlesinger Library.



Reyher: I remember, too, that having worked so hard in those two campaigns, New Jersey and Massachusetts, and this being November [1915], and the college semester having started, I had arranged to go to the University of Chicago by the first of January [1916] to continue my university work. They had a quarter system, and I could make up the lost time by the following September. Mentally I just simply finished that specific activity, finished my feminist and suffrage work and prepared to continue my studies in Chicago, which was my primary concern.

Fry: You finished it in Boston?

Reyher: I finished my suffrage work there in Boston in November. In January I went to the University of Chicago. I told you of the Hull House group I helped lead while there, which gave me an idea of what women were doing in the labor movement, of what was being done in Hull House by a woman like Jane Addams, and what was being done by other women. I saw what Miss Abbot and Miss Breckenridge were doing. I had the help for my work in this club of some of the women who were career women in the Immigrants' Protective League, a couple of very strong-minded women. I began to feel that it was very important to spend your life not just being a campaigner doing the same thing, but also growing intellectually and doing something about one's independent future, and that way eventually one might be more helpful to the status of women. I concentrated on my work at the university, coming back to New York to study at Columbia in the fall of 1916-1917. I did no further work for the suffrage movement until I knew that I was going to be married in July, 1917.



## IV WASHINGTON, THE SOUTH, AND MASSACHUSETTS 1917-1918

Washington Office: Picketing and Selling the Suffragist

Reyher: In the spring of '17, I wrote Anne Martin, who had come from Washington from the National Woman's Party Headquarters to be my featured speaker at our Brockton, Massachusetts rally just before the election on the suffrage referendum. I don't remember if she came direct from Nevada, her home state, where she was very active and later ran for the U. S. Senate, and then went on to Washington. I knew she was very active in the National Woman's Party. I wrote to her that I had been reading about the Woman's Party, that I would love to come and work for them because now I was going to be married and was not going to continue being a full-time student. She promptly spoke to Miss Paul, and Miss Paul asked me to come to Washington to be one of the famous Bastille Day, July 14, picket line. I was married on the thirteenth, so I could not be there on that day.\*

Fry: That was—

Reyher: That was 1917. That was the first demonstration where the women were thrown in jail, and they were expecting it--had, I believe, been threatened with it.

Fry: And I think they came from several states.

Reyher: They came from all over the United States, and Miss Paul thought it would be a very good idea to include a young student. I asked her if I could have time off to be married, to come later. We agreed on a two-week postponement. I came on the first of August to begin my full-time work for the National Woman's Party. I didn't know what

---

\*Marriage to Ferdinand Reyher. See Section XII PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS.



Reyher: I was going to do, Miss Paul didn't know what she was going to have me do, except go out on the picket line for a few hours each day as a sort of preliminary training.

This was the summer of 1917. We, the United States, had gone to war in July. The city was full of people walking up and down Pennsylvania Avenue dedicated to the war. We pickets were regarded as a national disgrace, as saboteurs because the prevailing attitude was that everyone had to throw his full energies and efforts into the war.

While I was on the picket line, among the people who passed by were many I had gone to high school with, or previous friends and neighbors, and even though they were not in Washington specially for the war effort, they turned their noses up at me, practically spat at me.

One day a beautiful blonde came down the street. I had known her at the Liberal Club as Faye Albertson. Now she was a new, young bride, Mrs. Walter Lippmann. She walked up to me and practically hissed, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

The people that I knew at the Woman's Party Headquarters were one kind of people, and the people that I saw and knew on Pennsylvania Avenue were a totally different group. It was as if I lived in two different worlds. Certainly the Woman's Party was a special kind of world. I felt it from my first day at work.

Miss Paul looked at me and probably thought that I was just a little softy, and needed toughening up. In those early days, she had all the attributes of a corporation president, and by that I mean praise, because she ran the organization with great precision, single-minded devotion, pared-down economy, and with an uncanny gift of getting the most out of what she had in limited resources, human and financial, for her ever-present goal. But she also had an old fashioned corporate executive's attitude toward her workers, and that was to see how much mettle they had, with no nonsense about it. Her office was a large room where she saw newcomers several days after they arrived. Volunteers, or potential organizers--it didn't matter--they didn't know what they were going to do, or what was expected of them. They were told by this one and that one, as if dangled on a string, designed deliberately to make us a little uncomfortable and to give a few people a chance to get reports and evaluate us as to how good or bad we might be or were. And then Miss Paul sent for you.

I will never forget that first interview. Miss Paul sat at a desk in a room seemingly completely dark except for a small desk lamp. Later in reliving it I felt she deliberately created an



Reyher: atmosphere of the tough executive. There was no subtlety about her. Direct, blunt, she asked why I wanted to do this. She wanted to probe sufficiently, without wasting time, to discover if I had any weaknesses, and to what extent she and the movement could depend on me.

One of the ways that she toughened me--I don't know the various ways she toughened others--was that she would ask the office to give me twenty Suffragists, which at that time sold for five cents, were large and conspicuous, and would tell me, or tell them to tell me, that she wanted me to go in front of the Sheraton Hotel and sell them. At that time the Sheraton Hotel was in the heart of town, and it was like the old Ritz in New York on Madison Avenue. It was then Washington's most fashionable hotel, particularly at the lunch hour, and she sent me there to peddle the magazine to the people going in and out to see whether I would do it, and how aggressive I was about it.

I hated every minute of it. I wasn't aggressive to the point where I would push the magazines at the passersby, but I would stand there and hold the Suffragist up and say, as had been suggested, "Wouldn't you like one of our magazines?"

But I was miserable. That was not my idea of how to popularize our great cause, but I would do it if I had to, but I didn't want to do it. I didn't like doing it.

Fry: Did you sell many?

Reyher: I always sold them. I never came home until I sold them. But it wasn't easy.

One day along came Jim Hsm Lewis, the Senator from Illinois, a famous character who had pink-red whiskers and was short, heavy set, and amiable. Apparently he had noticed me as I had noticed him, for the only thing I could do to offset my misery was to notice everybody coming in and out. He came right up to me and said, "How much are your magazines?"

"Five cents," I replied.

"I will buy the lot."

"Oh, that is so nice of you," I said with genuine gratitude. "What are you going to do with them?" I asked with equally genuine naivete.

"I am going to dump them so that you can go back home. You told me you had to be here till they were sold."



Reyher: "I will have to give you your money back because we are sent here to sell these magazines for people to read," I parroted my instructions. In all honesty I couldn't dump these magazines. "I couldn't just bring money into Headquarters and say that the magazines were sold," I explained.

"You are just hopeless," was his reply.

I must have looked so childishly disappointed because he said, "I will give you two dollars anyway as a contribution." By now I felt comfortable with him, as if he were a real friend, and because I had just come out, I said, "Thank you, but you have to take one copy yourself, and you have to fold it so people will see it."

He thought that was a grand joke, but that he did, which was sweet of him. He took the Suffragist into the dining room with him, and I don't know but can imagine what stories he told. It was a triumph of sorts.

I don't remember anything else about being a news girl for Suffragists, except some people were nice, and some people were nasty, but I was very happy when I left Washington two weeks or a month later to go on an organizing trip, and no longer had to stand at corners and hawk the Suffragist.

Fry: Was this when you did do some standing on the picket line?

Reyher: We always had to take a few hours a day on the picket line. That was part of it. Everybody at Headquarters who was working, no matter what you did, except the cook or somebody like that, went out on the picket line.

Fry: Did you get arrested?

Reyher: I never was arrested. The authorities had arrested everybody that big, slam-bang time, July 14, and then they didn't arrest anybody for a few weeks thereafter during the summer. I went South to tell about the arrests and the women in jail. It was rumored there were due to be further arrests, and I was to drum up protests from home districts to a Democratic Congress.

#### Traveling South for Suffrage

Fry: Was that in that Suffrage Prison Special train that went across the country?



Reyher: No, that was later.

This was a separate group. We were telling the South about the women who were in jail and the women who were picketing.\* Maud Younger was going to be our chief speaker. I went ahead to make the arrangements for her meetings.

Mrs. Frank Gould, who was one of the wives of the millionaire sportsman, divorced from him for many years, had a car and a chauffeur, and she offered to drive us. I think she wanted the excitement and publicity. She was quite a problem because she got so fascinated by the speaking and by the meetings that Miss Younger would be speaking at the front of the car and she would be standing up at the back of the car and holding a meeting in direct opposition to her without realizing it. It took a great deal of tact to explain that she couldn't do that.

---

\*See extensive listing in appendix of newspaper clippings pertaining to this trip south to explain the picketing. The articles are in Rebecca Hourwich Reyher's collection, which has been promised to the Schlesinger Library.

The headlines, dates, and cities give an overview of the trip. The following statements made by Rebecca Hourwich as advance agent for Miss Maud Younger and Mrs. Frank Gould, who traveled in a "large purple, gold, and white decorated car," give an indication of the thrust of her arguments for the pickets and for suffrage.

"The first pickets convicted were pardoned by the President. The second pickets convicted are now serving sentences at Occaquan, Virginia. They are being greatly humiliated. The third pickets convicted were released by the trial judge on their own recognizance. There is a section in the Clayton law--a law written by a former member of Congress from Alabama--protecting picketing. It was written in behalf of labor unions. Despite that law, our pickets were convicted.

"During the recess of Congress we have supplanted picketing by a Dixie tour. So far, we have been handsomely received by governors and others in authority. The South has displayed its chivalry whether the South agrees with us or not. And right here let me say that those who attend the open air speaking the evening of October 31, whether they agree or not, will be well entertained and thus rewarded."

Birmingham [Alabama] Age, 16 October 1917

"We are sending speakers out all over the country to let the people know just why we are picketing. We want everyone to know



Virginia: Drawing-room Crisis

Reyher: We had a drawing-room meeting scheduled in Lynchburg, Virginia, at the home of Mrs. Dexter Otey, who was either the wife of a later governor, or related to the governor, or certainly a member of one of the important families of Virginia. Apparently she hadn't been told we were bringing Mrs. Frank Gould. She thought she was going to be hostess at a meeting at which Maud Younger, who had impeccable credentials, was to speak.

I didn't know that Mrs. Gould had lived in Lynchburg, and had had quite a scandalous, quarrelsome time with her former husband there, and that most of the women coming to our meeting did not want to receive her "socially," and that, on the other hand, some of them were coming out of curiosity to see what she was like in this new role of hers.

---

the President is a friend of ours, and has said that the pickets never annoyed him and that our banners have never been seditious or treasonable. With women working in men's places, to release men for the trenches, at the request of the government, suffrage becomes an immediate necessity--a war protection, a war measure. And then, if our men fight for democracy abroad, surely we can fight for democracy at home, for the enfranchisement of twenty million women."

Tuscaloosa [Alabama] News, 16 October 1917

"We are meeting with great encouragement in the South. Congressman Heflin of Alabama, Governor Dorsey of Georgia, and other men of prominence have taken up our fight and we expect equal encouragement in Florida."

Pensacola [Florida] News, 5 November 1917

In response to Mayor Litty's refusal to allow Rebecca Hourwich and Joy Young to arrange for an outdoor meeting in Memphis, Rebecca Hourwich said:

"We have been received in eleven states in the South. We have met courtesy and attention everywhere. We have met champions, among the most prominent of whom is the attorney general of Mississippi. We have met mayors, governors of every state, and nowhere have been refused a hearing in the South until we came to Memphis. The South seemed to show its open-mindedness by always coming in great numbers to hear our side. In Mobile there was a crowd of nearly three thousand; crowds shivered in the cold,



Reyher: Before the meeting, Mrs. Otey took me aside and flatly stated, "I won't have that woman in my house."

"We can't do that, Mrs. Otey. She brought us down here," I tried to explain. "I don't know what to do," I told Mrs. Otey, "until I speak to Miss Paul, but I cannot tell Mrs. Gould that we haven't got a meeting for her, and that she is not included in any of our activities." Mrs. Otey was adamant.

"I will introduce Miss Younger and will not introduce her."

"Mrs. Otey, how can we do that?" I pled.

"Well, you will just have to leave it to me and my friends." At least she seemed to be yielding, accepting Mrs. Gould in her home.

Because I was so upset about it, I cannot remember exactly what kind of revolving-doors arrangement we finally had in that afternoon tea and meeting whereby Miss Younger and Mrs. Gould were never in the same room together, and certain people came into the room with Mrs. Gould, and certain people didn't, and Mrs. Gould was maneuvered away before she could speak, and we averted a further scandal [laughter] and were able to move on.

I mention this to show some of the problems that we had in those early days when we had those drawing-room meetings, and primarily were concerned with getting our message across through influential women who operated on a Victorian social code.

Fry: I wonder why Mrs. Gould didn't tell you.

Reyher: That she had lived in Lynchburg and been ostracized? Mrs. Gould had a voice like a megaphone. She certainly did not give the impression of being sensitive or aware of subtle crosscurrents. She knew that she had been snubbed. She had been a circus rider, or something of that character, daring and flamboyant. She was accustomed to being snubbed in certain circles, and whether she cared or not, she didn't

---

but remained to hear us in many places. The mayor of Memphis will go on record as not having been sufficiently broad-minded to give these prominent women, known from coast to coast, an opportunity to voice their message when they have traveled four thousand miles to deliver it. We repeat again, Miss Young and I, we think the mayor has made himself conspicuously ridiculous."



Reyher: show it. As far as I was concerned, I wasn't making up the roster of speakers on the basis of who was "acceptable" or who wasn't; I was taking suggestions and "orders" from Miss Paul. But I also knew that human civility required that I treat Mrs. Gould with the courtesy she was entitled to if it was her car that was escorting us on this trip.

Of course, I reported the Otey reaction to Miss Paul, but Miss Paul thought that we ought to continue with Mrs. Gould further on the trip. The tour started in Washington, went along the East Coast to Alabama, up to Tennessee, and back. Somewhere along the line, Mrs. Gould's trip ended, I never knew whether according to prearranged plan or why, and we began to get offers of cars. Whether Miss Paul resolved this in some manner without telling me about it, or whether Mrs. Gould got bored with us, I don't know. I do know, however, that in Virginia Mrs. Gould's presence created a very difficult situation, particularly in Lynchburg.

It was the first of several times when I questioned Miss Paul's judgment in connection with using anyone who could be useful: the tattered philosophy of the end justifies the means.

Alabama: Goat-cart Publicity

Fry: Was this when you went into Alabama and began--

Reyher: My next important meetings were in Alabama because that was the heartland of the South, the home of the Bankheads, and by this time there were other women in jail. They were well-known women, whom the South would have been proud to acknowledge as their own. Among them were Mrs. John Winters Brannan, whose husband was a noted physician, chairman of the board of Bellevue Hospital here in New York, whose father had been the famous editor and publisher, Charles Dana of the New York Sun. Ruth Draper, the monologist, was her niece. Mrs. Brannan was a beautiful, distinguished aristocrat, a witty, lovely woman. Women from all over the country were in the group, socially important, personally attractive, married to men who were part of the economic heartbeat of the community.

The assumption was that when people would read in their local respected papers that these women were being thrust into jail for asking for their civil rights it would horrify them, and they might begin to bring pressure on Congress. On the other hand, in the South particularly, there were staunch Democrats who were infuriated to think that when the President was involved in a war that such women would not put all their efforts into supporting him.



Reyher: The problem was how to get people to hear our story, and win their sympathy. We always felt that if we could tell our story to a large number of people, and get enough good newspaper reports, we would accomplish our purpose. I, who was the advance agent, had that responsibility in the towns to which I was sent. Joy Young, another organizer, went to other towns in the South.

Wherever I went I asked everyone how I could get publicity. That included local National Woman's Party officers, women who had written Headquarters of their interest, people whose names were given me by Headquarters, and local editors. They all agreed that newspapers would not give us publicity unless we focused on one large meeting. How could I get a large audience? There were many established techniques before radio and TV: distribute a lot of dodgers [leaflets] by hand, get placards made, do what any lecturer or theatrical troupe did and get some man to carry placards for you advertising the coming meeting.

We were already being called every kind of name, and I didn't want it said that this was a colored movement, and yet it was only the Negroes who were helping us carry our placards. Under any other circumstances people would have realized that they were the worst-paid workers, and they were the usual sandwich men. Some of my advisers assured me they were the sandwich men for other causes, but I thought it was a mistake.

I thought it was a mistake in the deep South to have our only posters of the suffrage meeting on a Negro's back. If we couldn't find a white sandwich man, we had better find something else to do. Also they were expensive for our budget. Somebody suggested, "Why don't you get a horse and wagon?" but that was too expensive.

I found that I could get a little goat and cart within our budget. With it came a little colored boy, who was only about a yard high. I had signs made, which I nailed to both sides of the cart, and I had him drive it over and over again on the public square of Mobile. The signs proclaimed the date and subject of the meeting: American women thrown into jail for demanding the right to vote.

Before the meeting started we had two thousand people filling the square to overflowing. The estimated figure was given me by the police. That little sign captivated their imagination, and that little goat cart made people laugh. They thought it was an ingenious way to advertise a meeting that wasn't getting publicity otherwise.

We got an overwhelming response, banner headlines in the newspapers, and a barrage of telegrams to Congress and the President. We had truly penetrated Alabama's ignorance and indifference.



Reyher: Over and over again we reminded our audiences that the war-time President Wilson had asked us "to concentrate public opinion and then come back to me," and that was exactly what we were doing. Also we played upon their emotions and their traditions. We told them that these well-bred, cultured women were being abused, were forced to scrub toilets, an unsanitary and dangerous humiliation.

In Alabama we had stunning response.

#### Tennessee: Combatting Hostility

Tennessee was next on my itinerary. I first went to Jackson, in Tennessee--did I tell you this?

Fry: No, you didn't.

Reyher: When I got to Jackson, I realized that I would have to start all over again getting out a news release fast, but I also realized from the things people were saying to me at the hotel and elsewhere that there was a preliminary story in my just having arrived there, that we had a hostile press, and a hostile public. I felt that I should get out a story immediately before I saw anybody, or I did anything.

I didn't have a typewriter with me. I was walking along the street and thinking I ought to find out if there were a public stenographer, or if there were somebody who might type for me. Since it was a small community--we happened to be there since it was the home of a key Congressman--some of the streets weren't even paved. I stopped a very nice-looking woman on the street to consult her.

"I think you should go to Sue White's typing agency," she advised.

She seemed very interested in what I was doing, asked a lot of questions, and I told her we were meeting with open hostility, and she replied, "So I gathered."

When I got to the agency, there was a young woman at the reception desk who told me that I really should see Miss White, the head of the agency, because she would be so interested; that Miss White had gone on an errand but would be back any minute. When Miss White returned, she was the woman who had sent me there!

"This is all ridiculous," she fairly stormed. "I am going to champion you here. I have a little influence in my community; I was born and bred here. I will start by being your chairman tonight if



Reyher: you would like me to be."

"Of course, I would," I naturally replied.

"I will welcome you as you should be welcomed," she was already planning the evening. "I will put in a few telephone calls and make sure that we have people there who might otherwise be frightened to come. I will see to it that we have the right kind of audience to hear what your speaker has to tell them, because after all, they should hear both sides."

Maud Younger of California was the Woman's Party national legislative secretary, an excellent lobbyist. She did not give that impression. A glowing pink-and-white skin, flashing blue eyes, blondish-wavy hair, a little plump, she might have been a suburban housewife, anywhere. To speak, she wore flowing chiffon robes. Such clothes were not as popular in those days as now, and also flowing robes with great big picture hats were considered garden party clothes. They were not the kind of clothes usually worn to address an evening meeting. But that was her style and it suited her, gave her immediate individuality.

No one could have been a greater contrast to her than the young woman who had established her own secretarial agency in this small town. She too was blonde, but ramrod slender with flashing brown eyes, with not a spare pound on her, with very well delineated features, and a very incisive way of speaking with a mind that showed through like a steel trap. Maud occasionally wandered. They made an excellent team.

We had been refused a meeting hall, and it was Sue who got us one. Through her, we got the city hall, but the city hall had been closed to us after the town officers decided not to welcome us, and she got us something equally good. Sue White and I got to our scheduled evening meeting early, as soon as the hall was lit up and opened. Maud was to come just in time for her speaking, resting after her train trip.

The hall was filled right down to the last seat. Down the aisle came this fluttery, chiffon-clad, sweet woman. Right behind her stomped the sheriff with his posse of several huge men, all in uniform. They had come to protect the audience against the subversive women who were there to stir up trouble in their community, and to emphasize that they were there to keep law and order. Periodically, the great, big, burly sheriff kept banging his stick against chairs and the floor as he strode up and down the main aisle swinging wide his arms, parroted by his cohorts. The sheriff sat down in the aisle seat in the front row, on one side, and Maud sat down on the other front seat opposite him.



Reyher: As soon as the sheriff was in his seat, Sue got up and opened the meeting. She had an oratorical style that was like William Jennings Bryan's, very dramatic, with her voice deliberately raised and far flung, possibly because we had no loud speakers in those days. Her face aflame, her voice vibrant with passion, she reminded the audience that we had all been strangers at the gates of Egypt at one time and it behooved everybody there to welcome these strangers at their gates, and it behooved each and every one of them as intelligent, patriotic citizens, who once had suffered a defeat--we were in the heart of the South--to listen to women who were asking for civil rights such as every person in the South believed in.

From then on, Sue and Maud had the audience with them. They asked innumerable questions, they didn't want to leave. Several times the janitor had to flash lights off and on to remind them there was a closing time. It was a complete triumph.

"I can't let you go through our state and waste your time," Sue told me. "This is something that I believe in and I will have to escort you. First I will take you straight to the governor, who is a friend of mine in Nashville, and we will proceed from there. And I guarantee you from then on you will have a fair press, and good audiences."

And when we left Jackson, Sue went with me on the train. She took either me alone, and later Maud alone, or both of us together, I don't remember exactly now, to see the governor, as she had promised. In welcoming us, the governor said, "Any friend of Miss Sue's is a friend of ours." Without committing himself on the suffrage amendment, or equal rights, he nevertheless wished us God-speed. "I hope you will have a good audience, and a fair audience," he concluded, which, of course, was what Sue wanted him to say.

Fry: Later on, Tennessee was the important state that was the last one to ratify the suffrage amendment, and I think that was Governor Roberts--

Reyher: Sue took us all around the state. We had very good meetings, excellent response, stirred up real protest, won tangible support.

Sue became increasingly involved, and later she was largely responsible for Tennessee going for the amendment; she couldn't have been more active.

Inevitably Sue decided to come to Washington, and devote herself to the suffrage amendment. The governor was considering her for an important appointment. He told her she could have anything she wanted. She had wanted to be Commissioner of the Blind because she felt the blind were being neglected and she could do something for them. But she decided it was more important for her to go to Washington to work for suffrage.



Reyher: Miss Paul was delighted to have her. She lived at Headquarters, continued to live there for several years. While working full time for the NWP, she went to law school, and became a lawyer. She became the secretary of the National Democratic Party, worked very closely with the chairman. Sue was one of the great voices on behalf of equal rights, and the Equal Rights Amendment, and I feel that one of the greatest things I ever did for the amendment was to find Sue White and to bring her to Washington, because otherwise she would not have come. The circumstances made it such.

Fry: Did you tell me that Sue White, by the time she was secretary to the Democratic Party, was no longer with the Woman's Party?

Reyher: She became a full-time, paid worker of the Democratic Committee in Washington, but there was nothing that had to be done for suffrage, or equal rights, that Sue did not do, and did not campaign for as much as she could.

Fry: Do you remember what decade that was in?

Reyher: Yes, of course I do, because you see we went down to Tennessee in the fall of 1917. She came up early in 1918.

Fry: When she was Democratic secretary?

Reyher: I cannot tell you exactly when she started working for the Democratic party. But it is a matter of record and can be checked. By that time it was well in the twenties, and much before '27, for I got her to do something in '27 through the Democratic Committee, so I know that she was there then.

Fry: Could you describe the precise roots of this hostility that was building up towards you in the South? It sounds at present a little bit as though the people in the South were hostile to the authorities who had jailed the women.

Reyher: It was both, but it was more than that. You see, the press in Washington was mixed in their attitudes. The women were in jail. The basic feeling of the public at first was, "We are at war, our President should not have this embarrassment during the war. This is an obstruction of the war effort."

In fact, some of our speeches which we used then and later included, "Remember that when the women first started working for suffrage, way back at the time of the Seneca Falls conference, they were told then, and at the time of the Civil War, much later, 'You must remember this is the Negroes' hour, you must not interfere with the war effort, nor interfere with reconstruction. These are crucial national efforts.'"



Reyher: And here we were, many years later in the twentieth century, being told we must not interfere with the war effort. They were again saying that when the war was over would be time enough for us to press for woman suffrage. That was the primary hostility we had to meet.\* Also Washington and the South were strongholds of the Democratic party. Our responsibility was to turn the hostility to understanding, sympathy, and support. We played upon their sympathies, emphasized that fine women were being imprisoned for demanding their rights and standing up for their rights. Particularly in the South we took this line, since once the South had done the same at the risk of their lives and property. Eventually the audiences began to be sympathetic. That is my analysis. It might not be the analysis of other people, but that was certainly my analysis when I was there and it is certainly my analysis as I look back upon it.

As time went on during the war, it was our continued responsibility to kindle sympathy for women who were asking for their rights as against people who felt all effort should be put into the war.

#### Attitude Toward Black Women: Change in Social Climate

Fry: Was there any effort to bring in black women to speak, or was this impossible?

Reyher: There never was such an effort, and I'll say that absolutely, definitely. Certainly no such effort to bring in black women as we moved through the South, because the women we were working with would at that time not have asked Negro women to come into their homes to a drawing-room meeting. Nor were there, at the time of the war, Negro women who were working for suffrage or equal rights with any of our women in the active centers that I knew about. That all came very much later. And let me add that there was a great deal of social prejudice in this country, much of which has been overcome--not all of it. When I went South there would have been a distinct prejudice against working for equality with black women.

---

\*RHR later added: "We were attacked in the South because Jeannette Rankin had come and spoken for us. We were pacifists and we would not repudiate her (I and a few others), but we emphasized our 'patriotism' because it was questioned if we were seen to be allied with her."



Reyher: When I was a child growing up in Washington one of the stories that I can remember told by my parents would illustrate this.

Father belonged to a group called "The Economic Circle," as I've mentioned before. Its members were what today would be called a brain trust, men from the different government departments who had been asked to come to Washington because of what they could contribute to planning, and the intellectual atmosphere.

Fry: In Washington?

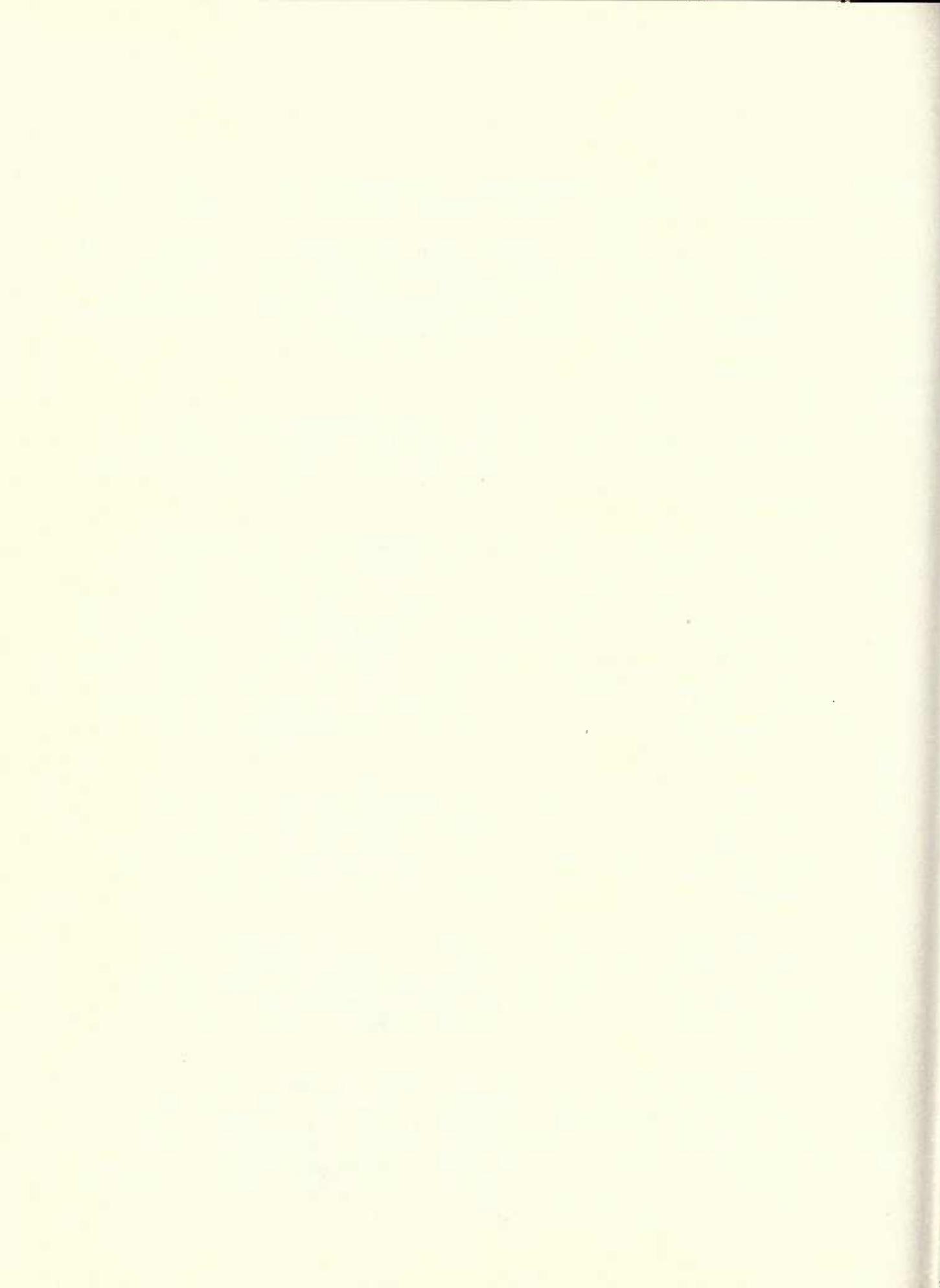
Reyher: Yes, this was in Washington. Each month the circle would have a speaker, and the speaker would be someone who would discuss current issues with them. Once in a while they would have a headline speaker, and then they would include their wives; it would be a social occasion.

A young man, a recent Harvard graduate, had started a much discussed magazine in New York. It sounded very promising to these economists, and they thought it would be very interesting to have him come to the Economic Circle to speak. A man and his wife who had a large house that could hold about forty people counting husbands and wives, which would be the average such meeting, offered their home, and this man came to speak, and everybody was very much impressed with him. The man was just beginning to be known as an obscure editor, William Edward Burkhardt DuBois, founder of The Crisis, and the now renowned NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The hostess had prepared a lovely buffet supper in a dining room that opened from a drawing room, you could see the lavish supper laid out. At the end of the meeting, every man and woman in that audience came up and thanked Dr. DuBois, and the hostess and the host, and said they were very sorry, but they would have to leave!

The only people left with the speaker, and the host and hostess, were my mother and father. Not even among this brain trust was there a single man or woman who would be caught eating with a man who was black, though they had invited him to come and speak to them. This was in the early 1900s. I was brought up on that story.

And whenever I heard about Dr. DuBois becoming a Communist, and bitter about our country, I thought of this story and concluded, "How could you expect him to be different?" Also I remember that when President Theodore Roosevelt invited Booker T. Washington to have breakfast with him at the White House the newspapers were scandalized, and they all carried stories and editorials about it in Washington. That, too, was in the early 1900s.



Reyher: We were talking of 1917, war time. The South certainly had not changed at that particular time. None of our hostesses would have asked a Negro woman to come to a meeting. We had no Negro women on our boards. They weren't our friends. They weren't people that we knew socially, and personally. So that that was not a failing of the Woman's Party, it was the result of the general social climate. The social climate has changed radically in these years. This is a half a century later.

Fry: Well, that is good to know. In the records there are references to the Negro Women's College Association or something like that which you know worked for suffrage--

Reyher: Very likely, and there were distinguished intellectual Negro families and women. And there were a few intellectual women whom all of us got to know later. But I am talking now about the First World War that we were in. That also changed conditions just the way the Second World War did, with which we are more familiar. But the general attitude toward Negroes at that time was such that it was taken as a matter of course that if a woman had a meeting in her home, and was white, particularly in the South, there wouldn't be any Negro women there.

I will give you an example of prejudice in the thirties, when Alice Movius held a drawing-room meeting in her home in Boston, which I was arranging as a volunteer for the Equal Rights Amendment to get lagging attention revived. Alice was a cousin of Governor Saltonstall and of Alice Longworth, very valuable to us in Massachusetts. We had an active Massachusetts board with Alma Lutz, the writer, and her friend Margaret Smith among them. Margaret was a writer, too, and they were both active intellectual women. Others included Camilla Whitcomb, from Worcester, another part of the state, and a prominent Catholic whose name I can't remember.

Just before the meeting, about two or three days, Alice Movius, who was a devout Christian Scientist--and Christian Scientists then included some people rabid against the Catholics--said to me, "Rebecca, I want to warn you that if that woman"--referring to the Catholic board member--"comes to my house, I will turn her away from the door, I will not have a Catholic in my house."

"Alice, I wish you had told me this before we had arranged the meeting," I told her. "Surely you understand that we are holding a public meeting at your home. You have graciously opened your home, but it is a meeting of the National Woman's Party to which all are welcome. We will under no circumstances tell anyone that we have qualifications for attendance except their interest. We have invited them to come to hear about our cause, our side in connection with the Equal Rights Amendment. If you so desire, we will cancel



Reyher: the meeting, but we will not establish a religious prejudice as a possibility of somebody being sent away from the door."

She fussed, and she fumed, and reluctantly concluded, "I suppose we will have to let her in." These are some of the things that one came up against in those days. If you were honest you remembered them, and remembered them as something you had to face up to.

So that if in the thirties a woman could refuse to open her home to a Catholic, in Boston, where the localized prejudice had been very strong, and from where, you know, Mr. Kennedy [Joseph] moved his family away because he wouldn't have them grow up under that prejudice, and then that prejudice was so overcome that his son became President, if you didn't know that, you wouldn't realize how radically the social climate of this country has changed.

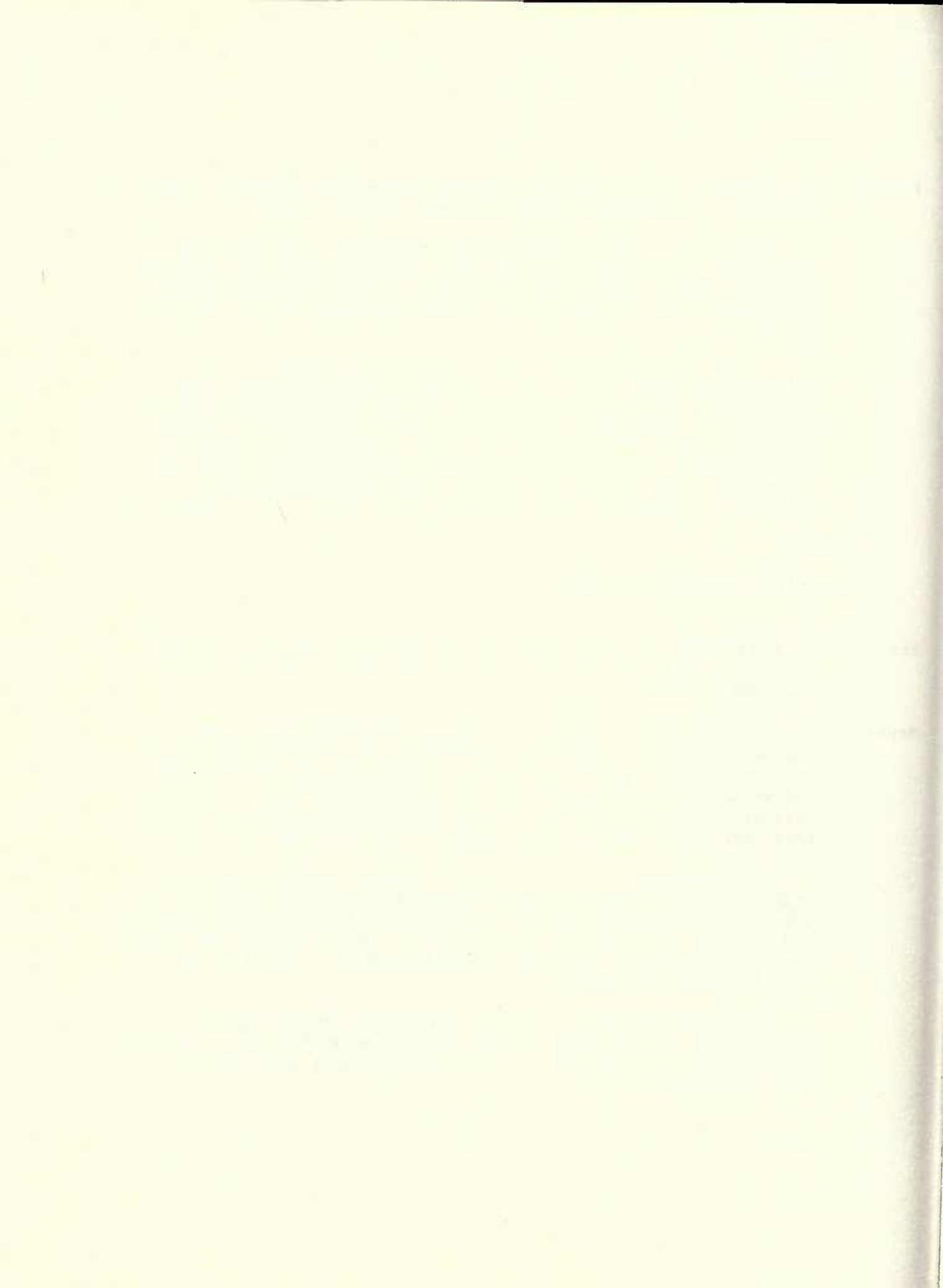
#### Fairness of Press Reports

Fry: I was wondering as you moved through the South how fair the press reports really were. In other words, for historians who will be researching this--

Reyher: As I recall, once we had our meetings, they were fair reports. Or let me put it this way, I was interested more than anything else in coverage, and we got excellent coverage once we had our meetings, and we did get what our people said reported factually. We had no misrepresentation of facts. We had no scandals. Once we had the meetings, and we had good audiences, we had a tremendous reaction.

In the South on my first trip I think we had an increasing printed reaction opposing women being jailed, which resulted directly in widespread pressure from people telling their congressmen and senators what they thought about it. No, I think it was a very successful series of meetings, unquestionably, a very successful trip from that one angle.

I covered Virginia, Alabama, and part of Tennessee; Joy Young covered some of the other states, and met me at the end of the trip which ended in Tennessee. I can't tell you what happened in her parts. And Joy is dead.



Boston American, Sunday, 3 March 1918

**MISS REBECCA HOURWICH**, national organizer of suffrage movement, who is now working in Boston.



## MALONE TO OPEN SUFFRAGE BATTLE

Former Collector of New York  
Speaker Here on  
March 24

The first gun of the campaign for the passage of the Federal amendment is to be fired on March 24 by the National Woman's Suffrage party in Massachusetts. The speaker will be Dudley Field Malone of New York, who will talk on suffrage in the Park Square Theatre at 3:30 p. m. Malone recently resigned his position as collector of the port of New York and has since given much of his time to the suffrage cause.

For the purpose of bringing attention to bear upon the coming meeting, and also to organize Massachusetts thoroughly for the Federal amendment, the National Woman's party has sent one of its most charming members to Boston, Miss Rebecca Hourwich.

### IS NATIONAL ORGANIZER

Miss Hourwich, whose official title is that of national organizer of the National Woman's party, is a prominent political figure so far, although admittedly young in years. She is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Isaac A. Hourwich of Brooklyn, N. Y., and her father is a noted economist and an authority on immigration and Russian-American law. He was a member of the original Russian Duma in 1906 and a prominent figure in Russian politics in that time.

"I was born in this country," said Miss Hourwich, "and my mother tongue was Russian. It must have been a curious thing to have heard the mixture that I talked, as a little girl. I had a Southern nurse, and the English that I learned was a broken darkey dialect. I spoke Russian and that tongue before I learned English at all."

### IN FIRST PARADE.

Her girlhood in Washington was followed by study at Columbia and at the University of Chicago, where she plans to return as soon as the Federal amendment has been ratified. Here she is studying economics and sociology.

In suffrage work she campaigned in 1915 for the Referendum in New Jersey, and later took charge of the work in the Brockton district for the Massachusetts Woman's Suffrage party.

"I marched in the very first suffrage parade that we ever had in Washington," she added gleefully, "and then later I helped with the publicity and the organizing of the one that we had in Chicago. I have campaigned in eleven different States, covering all points of the country.

"I picketed in Washington in the Spring, but I was not arrested because I was on the 'Dixie Tour' through the South at that time with Miss Maud Younger and Mrs. Howard Gould of New York. We interviewed every Governor and every Mayor throughout the South on that tour, which met with wonderful success."

### LITTLE TIME FOR HOBBIES.

"We are sure of victory in the Senate, but we must keep our fires burning to prove to the country our continued interest in suffrage and make ready for State ratification.

"Hobbies? Well, suffrage doesn't give you much time for hobbies, but if I had time for any indulgence it would be to curl up on a couch, plied with cushions, in front of an open fire, and read. But such indulgences are not for suffragists—not until the Federal amendment is ratified."



Boston Sunday Globe, 31 March 1918

# NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY HOLDS STRATEGIC POSITION

1918

## Overlooks Approaches and Entrance to State House From Suffrage Campaign Headquarters



MISS OLIVE MILLS BELCHES.



MISS REBECCA HOURWICH.

It remained for a young Russian girl, daughter of a New York lawyer, Isaac Hourwich, to discover a strategic position in the historic George Ticknor house, 9 Park st. to conduct the campaign for the ratification of the Federal Suffrage amendment by the Legislature of Massachusetts.

Miss Hourwich was sent to Boston from Washington as a State organizer for Massachusetts for the National Woman's party. She rented the balcony chamber of the historic mansion just at the top of the well-worn granite steps which Gen Lafayette trod when he was entertained here as the city's guest in 1824.

Yesterday the Woman's Party of Massachusetts took possession of its headquarters, which commands a view of the paths that lead to the State House and the Beacon-st entrance. There is a balcony watch tower, reached by a narrow staircase. When the Woman's Party moved in its baggage Miss Hourwich left for a week's vacation, the headquarters being in charge of an office manager, Miss Ruth Small of Newton. At present the destinies of the Woman's Party of Massachusetts are guided by a woman farmer in Framingham, Miss Olive Mills Belches.

Miss Belches' leadership of the suffrage campaign in the Woman's Party of Mas-

sachusetts is directed from the farm, which she manages with her brother. She is one of the most ardent suffrage workers in this State. It is claimed that she brought every suffragist in Framingham into the ranks of the Woman's Party of Massachusetts. The vice chairman for Massachusetts is Mrs Louis D. Bemont of Framingham.

Results of a final poll taken by the National Woman's Party of the Senators, received from Washington yesterday, seem to indicate that the suffrage amendment is about to go through the Senate. The bulletin said: "The long opposition, bit by bit, is falling away."

"The amendment is about to pass, not because of Democratic support, but in spite of Democratic opposition. With the Fall campaigns looming just ahead, the Republican and Democratic National Committee—which two years ago might have given ungrudgingly what they have now been forced to concede—have placed the official party stamp on National suffrage. There still remains to be converted only a little group of stiff-necked gentlemen of the old school."

As soon as the National amendment passes the Senate the Woman's Party of Massachusetts will start a campaign for the ratification of the amendment in the State Legislature. One of the leaders in this campaign will be Miss Hourwich, who has had much experience in Washington. She campaigned for several months in the South with Miss Maud Younger and Mrs Howard Gould.



Springfield Union, 6 June 1918

## Want Public to Use Influence

### Suffragists Will Have Federal Amendment Rally Here Tuesday.

For the purpose of increasing the pressure of public opinion to induce Senators Lodge and Weeks to vote for the Federal suffrage amendment, a big outdoor meeting is to be held in Court Square Tuesday evening at 7.30. A speaker of national importance will give an address on the importance of having the Nation adopt the Federal amendment.

Miss Rebecca Hourwich, national organizer of the National Woman's Party for Massachusetts, has come to Springfield to organize and make arrangements for the meeting. She is the youngest member of the working staff of the woman's party. She has campaigned in 11 different States, covering all sections of the country.

Miss Hourwich is the daughter of Dr. Isaac A. Hourwich of Brooklyn, N. Y., who is an authority on immigration and Russian-American law. The young enthusiast spent her girlhood in Washington, later studying at the University of Chicago and Columbia University. For the last three years she has devoted all her time to the suffrage cause.

"We are daily hoping to hear that the Senate has passed the Federal Suffrage amendment," she said. "If it isn't passed this session, we have to do all our work over again. This is the first time in history that suffragists have had anything to lose. We can't believe that our Senate will go on record against American women at a time when they are giving their very all to the Nation. All our Allies have granted some form of suffrage to their women since the war began.

"We feel that America can't lag behind her Allies. I came from Washington a few months ago and have

since gone about the State urging all people to show that they are behind the President in wishing to see American women recognized as equals and made more efficient for war service. We are having a difficult time now.



**REBECCA HOURWICH.**

Suffragist Leader to Speak at Mass-meeting in City.

ing to Senators Lodge and Weeks that an overwhelming sentiment exists in favor of their voting for the amendment."



Heading the Boston Office, 1918

Fry: And this traveling was all in 1917?

Reyher: This was all in the fall of 1917.

When I returned to Washington in the late fall of 1917, and went back to New York for Christmas, Miss Paul asked me whether I would go to Massachusetts to run the Boston Headquarters. They had a good board there that felt they needed a headquarters to get the state ready for a possible referendum and to acquaint the state with the suffrage amendment.

We opened a headquarters in Boston within sight of the gold-domed capitol. They were indeed a wonderful board, women who have remained my good friends to this day. Among them were Mrs. Henry Dennison, of Framingham, whose husband headed the Dennison Paper Manufacturing Plant. Framingham was then having a health experiment conducted by the Metropolitan Insurance Company. Dr. Donald Armstrong had come to direct that, and his wife, Eunice Armstrong, who was an intellectual, and active liberal, was on our board. Later she was active in Scarsborough, New York.

Among the other truly distinguished women was Mrs. Lewis Dennison Bement [Grace], of Framingham. A Vassar graduate, she was committed to equal rights, and suffrage for women.

Later when she and her husband moved to Deerfield, she started a nursery school for children for mothers who could afford to pay, and those who could not. From that grew the nationally-known Bement School. Mrs. Bement retired, and died two or three years ago. It was a school to which Harry Hopkins sent his orphaned child, and Ambassador Bullitt sent his daughter by Louise Bryant when they were divorced and he was sent as Ambassador to Russia. It was considered a uniquely valuable small boarding school for children whose mothers as well as fathers were unable to look after them.

Also on the Board were Mrs. Genevieve Morrill Fuller whose husband was killed in the war, and who at that time had several small children who later became important and well known, including a four-star general, Benjamin Apthorp Fuller, who was then in an improvised laundry baby basket tucked away in a large closet when she held a large meeting for us. Among the guests at that meeting was Mrs. Andrew Peters, whose husband later was mayor of Boston. We always had important people come to our Massachusetts meetings because we had such an important network across the state and such a devoted board. There are a lot of others whom I can't remember.



Reyher:

I stayed in Massachusetts from January 1918 until the following September.\* I would go away perhaps for a week, or a weekend, and meet my husband. Today women in active work or politics have such marriages, but it was considered most unusual and eccentric then. Women constantly queried me about it.

During that time our featured speaker for a large mass meeting was Dudley Field Malone, who once had been in charge of protocol for the State Department, and had resigned his post as Collector of the Port of New York in protest against the treatment of women who had been jailed. Handsome, dynamic, impassioned, he was most effective.

Since we didn't have television or radio, mass meetings in theaters were the only way of getting large audiences, and a great deal of advance publicity was imperative. We did put that meeting over. It was my first experience organizing such a large venture, and a first experience for the Board. We all learned together, and we got the audience by a variety of techniques, improvising as we went along, as there were no "advance men" or professionals among us. We printed thousands of tickets--marked orchestra--and dropped them into residential mailboxes, covered billboards and distributed posters, all free except for printing. We sent interviews to papers, and had our distinguished board individually interviewed. We tried and succeeded in getting straight news and society-page coverage. We did all the things we could to lure an audience there, and we had a packed house of very much interested people.

#### Fund Raising

One of my prime responsibilities was to raise money. One of my memories in this connection was going to see a woman who had a beautiful home, and was reputedly very wealthy because she had invented and manufactured a vegetarian paste called Vegex. This

---

\*See appendix for extensive listing of newspaper clippings regarding the activities of the NWP in Massachusetts, planned by RHR, in 1918--organizing new branches, contacting the press when the NWP made important moves in Washington or other parts of the country, holding meetings to increase support for the suffrage amendment.



Reyher: vegetarian paste had given her a palace on the outskirts of Boston to which I went.

She received me in a baronial drawing room with a huge Gothic fireplace, with a roaring fire. She kept throwing coconuts into it. As they fell, they would glow, and the milk would make a lovely fragrance.

"I wanted you to have this fire, because it is lovely, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is lovely," I replied.

I knew that these were imported coconuts from some of the southern countries and cost several dollars a piece. I was very taken by this atmosphere of casual luxury. At the end of our interview, she thanked me, and told me how very interesting was what we were doing, how much she believed in it. But I came away without a single cent! And I thought, "If only I had just had a few of those coconuts I would have sold them to the Board and we would have had some money for the time that I spent there." [Laughter]

Radical Board Member: Jessica Henderson

Well, I didn't tell you, and I would like to say, that though most of our Board were certainly upper-class, and gilded, and very influential, radiating that influence around the state, and their husbands were conservative and conventional--what today would be called "establishment"--we had one member of the Massachusetts Board who was a distinct character--Mrs. Jessica Henderson.

Mrs. Henderson was a pacifist, an antivivisectionist, with her own office, her own chauffeur, and campaigned very strongly for all sorts of causes that she believed in. Mr. Henderson was an officer of the John Hancock Insurance Company, personally very conservative, and conventional, devoted to his wife, much amused by her, never opposed to any of her activities.

Mrs. Henderson was equally devoted to him. In order to carry on her peace work from home and not embarrass her husband in case they were raided, as this was war time, 1918, she had devised an intriguing little scheme to hide her literature. In her large pantry--theirs was a large home in Wayland, with its own swimming pool--she had many rolls of toilet paper. In each little cardboard roller she secreted the literature, and all her incriminating papers.



Fry: Was it pacifist?

Reyher: All pacifist, and subversive, if it were to be so called, all secreted to protect her husband, not to embarrass him.

When Mrs. Henderson invited you to dinner, she would have the dining room maid ask you whether you would sit on the vegetarian side of the table, or the meat side. There were six children, of whom three or four were usually home. The meat side had wonderfully fragrant steak that I yearned to eat, but I felt my loyalty belonged to the vegetarian side, as Mrs. Henderson was a vegetarian, and her husband was not.

It was there I was first introduced to luxurious kinds of vegetables that today we have in all our "luxury" stores, but then were only rarities, bottled heart of the palm, or imported small, marinated artichokes, all sorts of imported rarities.

Later Mrs. Henderson was the Treasurer for the Sacco-Vanzetti case. That was long after I originally came to Boston, I think it was in the thirties, and one of them, either Sacco or Vanzetti, dedicated his book of poetry to her.

But during the war years she was our only acknowledged radical.

#### Miniature-Artist as Spy

But all organizations were suspect during the war--not nearly as suspect as they have been as we have learned about police states from some of them in Europe, and borrowed their techniques, or improved on them. However, then, espionage was generally quite amateur, at least it seems so in retrospect.

At our Boston Headquarters, a lovely large-windowed room with a balcony from which we could see the gilded dome of the State House, I noticed we had a woman who came regularly and stayed for hours. She was a poor, shabbily dressed artist who had painted a couple of miniatures--very good ones--of some members of the Board, and she asked me whether she couldn't do a miniature of me. She would love to do it, she said, I was such an interesting subject. I said I couldn't afford it, but she argued she would do it for very little money. I decided that would be a lovely gift for my husband, and she offered to do one of the usual miniature size--about two-and-a-half by three inches--for twenty-five dollars.

I never got that miniature, though I gave her the money and I saw it practically finished!



Reyher: I began to notice that she would stop painting me and do sketches of everybody who came into the office. I began to have an uncomfortable feeling about her. I began to suspect that she was checking on who was crossing our threshold. I was reinforced in my suspicion because a member of our Board who belonged to one of the radical, intellectual meeting places in Boston told me that she recognized her, that she came to every one of their evening lectures, and always sat with a sketch pad and drew everybody present.

One day I gathered my courage, for it was against all my principles to accuse anyone of anything, and confronted her, "I think you are turning over all these drawings of unsuspecting people to someone. I don't think that you are interested in everybody that comes in here because they have an interesting face. I don't feel it is fair to the people who come in here. Also, I want to have a chance to have private conversations in this office that aren't overheard by anyone, I sit out here in this main room."

We had a large central board of directors table where she posted herself to listen to everything that might be said. "You are just going to have to give up drawing in this office at any time convenient to you. You are going to have to come here at stated intervals. And when I want to dictate, I am going to have to ask you to excuse us."

She left in a great huff. She never did any more drawings. I am convinced that she turned in her profiles to someone.

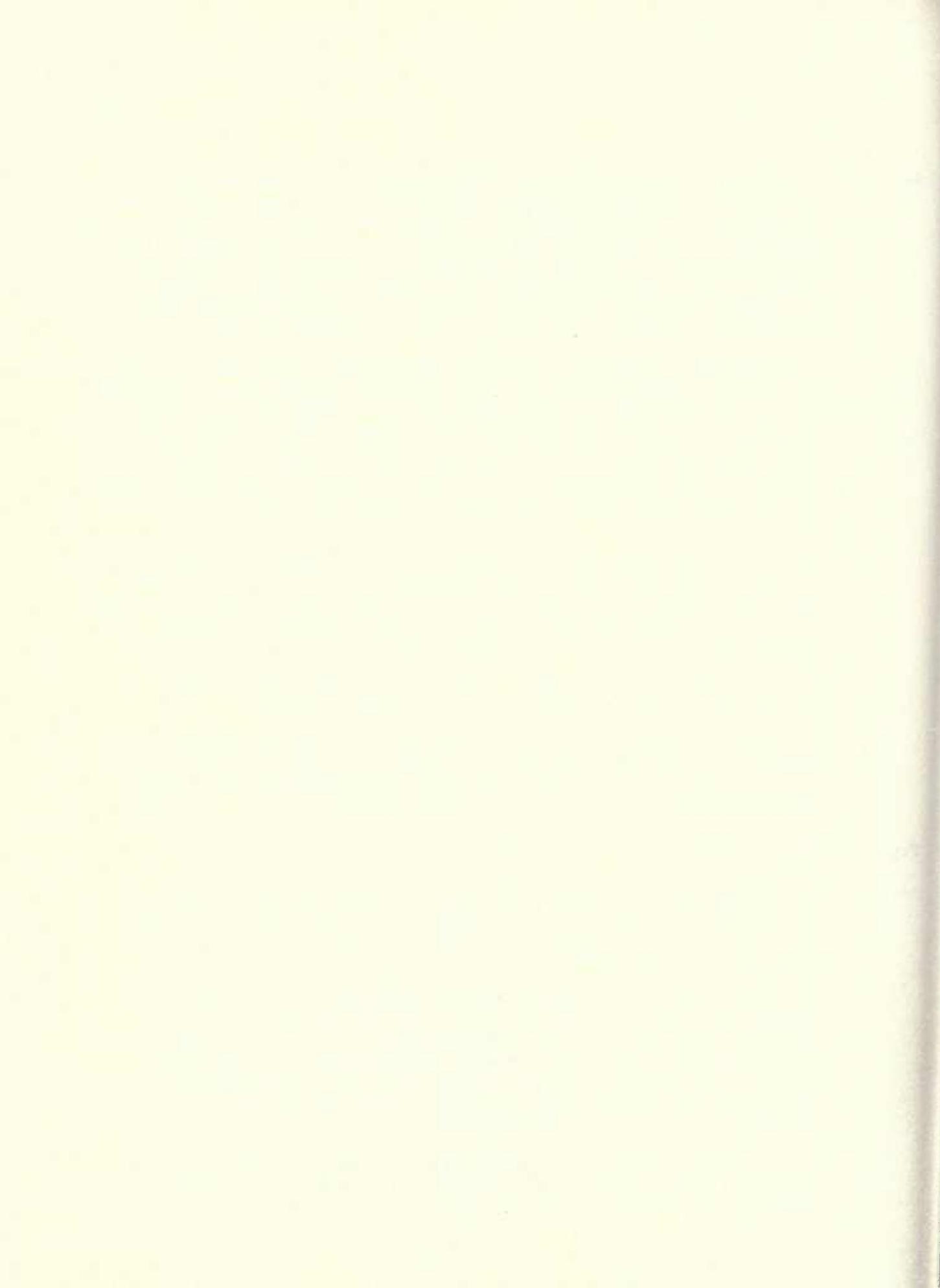
That is exactly the kind of thing that we were up against in the campaign. These were the early beginnings of people who were out to get, to record, in face and speech absolutely everybody they could who was suspected of subversion to the war effort.

Fry: Did you report that to Alice Paul?

Reyher: I don't think so, because I think that in those days I had the feeling that Alice Paul did not want to be bothered with anything that was not a fact, or with anything that wasn't concerned with the day-by-day work program.

But I definitely reported it to Genevieve Fuller, a Board member, whose husband had been killed in the war, who was a good friend, and did not believe in petty spying. I don't remember who else I talked it over with, another friendly member of the Board, one or two perhaps, so as not to have sensational talk about it, yet to discuss what I should do. I didn't arrive at this decision entirely on my own. It was too important, I thought.

I always worked very closely with the Board because it was really a small, intimate relationship. You either worked with a Board or you didn't, I learned early. There were cases of friction,



Reyher: of jealousy. There were women who felt that maybe I was getting more attention than I should, which was unavoidable because I was always in the office. If a newspaper person came in, I would invariably say, for I was not a headline chaser, and I appreciated the importance of some of our women, "I will get you so-and-so to talk to." But they wouldn't wait, and commentary on some news affecting us would come out as having been given by me. Somebody, and there were such, who felt that she would like that publicity for herself, resented it, and there were always a few cases that had to be clarified. However, I really think that considering that I was really devoted to my work, and worked very hard at it, daytimes, evenings, weekends, and that the volunteer women who were working with us were very sincere, that we had relatively very little of that. Nothing that one could really, you know, do anything about, but something I remained aware of throughout my suffrage work--give publicity seekers their due, be wary of them.

#### Theodore Roosevelt's Statement

Theodore Roosevelt was vociferously miserable the winter of 1918. He wanted to serve his country, to raise a regiment to lead into war; but Woodrow Wilson was adamant in his determination to keep Roosevelt out of the war, and out of the limelight he so frankly craved.

Friends of Roosevelt's in our Massachusetts Branch hatched the idea it would be mutually beneficial for the suffrage amendment and Roosevelt if he came out in support of it. Correspondence with Miss Paul and those eager to arrange this went on for some time without my knowing anything about it. Miss Paul seldom did anything impulsively, usually she had every detail of a plan carefully calculated.

One day when there was no one at Headquarters I got an urgent telephone call to come to the Beacon Hill home of one of our Board members immediately, that Colonel Roosevelt was there and wished to make a statement.

I asked for time to call at least one other Board member to come with me, but I was told the former President was in a hurry, that he could not be kept waiting.

When I got there on the ground floor of the house I could hear the former President protesting in the adjoining room that he could not be kept waiting any longer. As he bounded out, I was introduced to him and he demanded, "Have you got the statement for me to sign?"



Reyher: Again I can only remember my horror at being so unprepared at so important an occasion.

"Somebody give me a piece of paper. I'll write one," the former President Roosevelt grumbled.

A sheet of paper was handed to him, he leaned against the hall wall and wrote upon it.

In seconds he was through, and so was I, and I expected to leave as quickly as I had come. Someone came out and took the paper. It was valuable as a collector's item, but a folksy banality doomed to get no attention in the press in time of war.

I do not remember the identity of the Board member. The statement sent to Miss Paul by the hostess never saw the light of day. I heard nothing more about it from that Board member or Miss Paul.

But some of the other local Board members were miffed that I had not consulted them and had tried to push myself into a solo interview with a former President of the United States!

Mixed Issues a Problem of Washington: Smoking, Birth Control

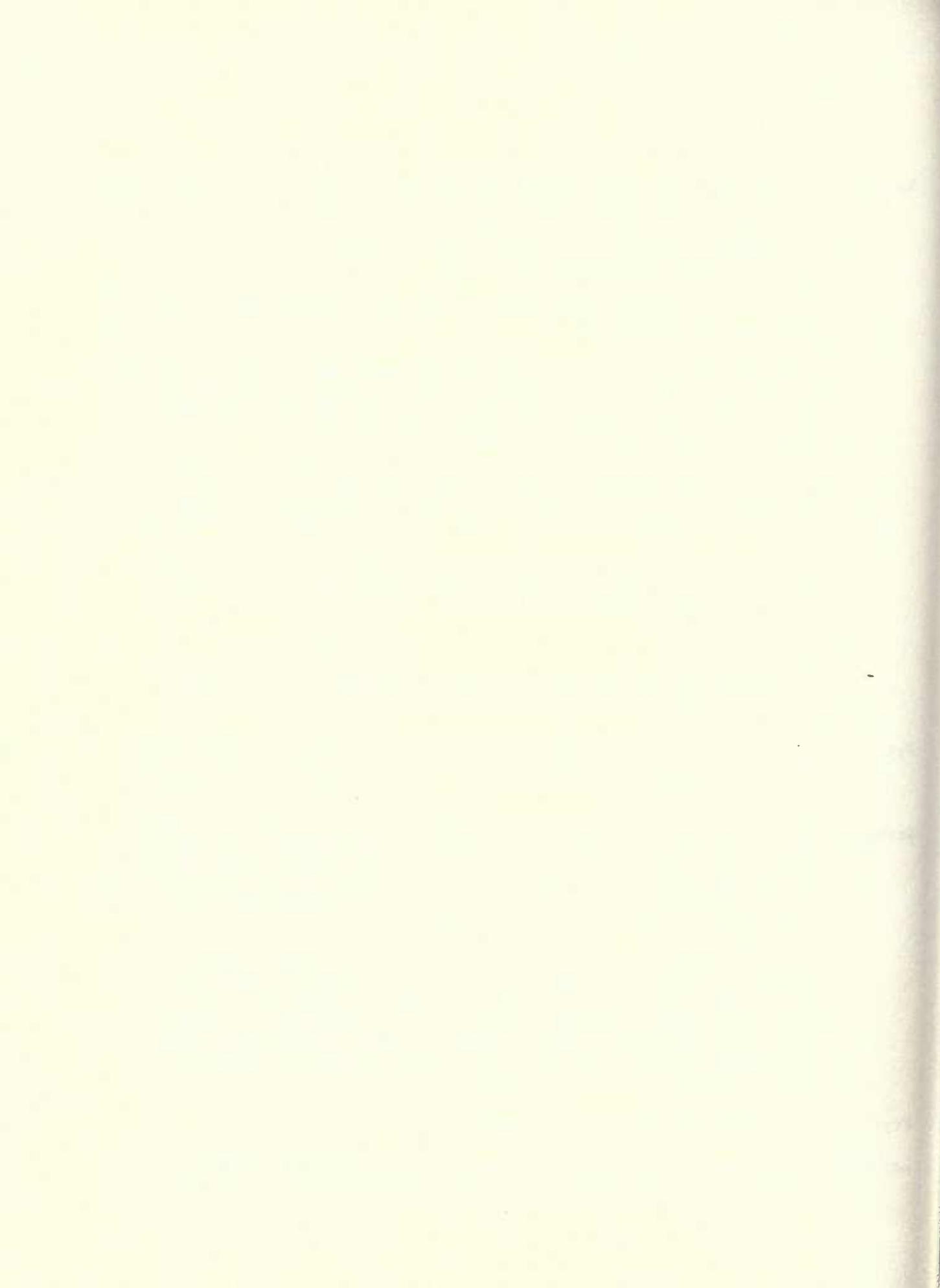
Fry: Did you have much trouble with mixing issues like the issue of the war, and the issue of war and peace and the issue of suffrage would be a good example?

Reyher: We had no trouble with our Board members in the state organizations that I can remember, because they were either wise enough, or had enough background themselves to know that they had to concentrate on the one suffrage issue. Or they were women who were so wrapped up in what they were doing that side issues didn't bother them.

It was in my visits to Washington, and the times when I worked there for weeks, when that would occur. I mean, for example, that at Headquarters you would have to go upstairs to smoke a cigarette. Some of us gave up smoking later for health reasons, but the fact that we professional suffrage workers could never be seen smoking a cigarette, and that we were asked never to smoke a cigarette in Headquarters--that really bothered us.

Fry: Oh, yes, tell about Alice Paul--

Reyher: Alice Paul, you see, had told us that we were never to smoke downstairs in the Headquarters, and actually if she were expecting



Reyher: somebody important she made sure that there wasn't a lot of smoke drifting down from the offices upstairs.

It was only several years later--I don't remember just when--when Doris Stevens, a National Council member, who was married to Dudley Field Malone and was living on lower Fifth Avenue, and was no longer working in the Headquarters, decided that it was just ridiculous that women couldn't smoke in public. She decided to make her own protest because she was so angry about it, and the fuss that had been made, that she went into the Biltmore Hotel in New York, under the famous clock where everybody used to meet for their appointments, and started smoking.

The manager of the hotel, who knew she was Doris Stevens--Mrs. Dudley Field Malone--because she was very well known, very pretty, frequently photographed and written about, came up to her, and told her she would have to put her cigarette out, or be escorted out. So Doris chose to be escorted out, and she was, not roughly, but definitely with her arm held. This was in the twenties, when women couldn't smoke in public in the lobby of the Biltmore Hotel. And the ads, much later, of Lucky Strike cigarettes had an ad of a man smoking and a woman putting her face in toward him and saying, "Blow it my way, I like the smell of it." [Laughter]

So that you can see that so many of these little prohibitions were part of one's life. One constantly chose to buck at certain things, not to buck if it would hurt the cause. I think we all felt that Miss Paul was too narrow-minded and straight-laced, but that she did have a good program and good goals, and if we worked with her, and for those goals, and for that program, we owed it that kind of faithful allegiance. I personally felt that way.

I would never have made a speech in which I talked about birth control, or the right of women to have abortions. I knew that was obviously something that she had said we should not do. On the other hand, I realized the importance of birth control to women's rights not many years later. In the summer of 1919, when I went back to the University of Chicago for a summer session, I decided that instead of living at the dormitory, I would live at a Settlement House, and that would give me added experience, and added interest.

I went to live at the University Settlement, which was in the stockyards district. Mary McDowell was the director, a magnificent, earthy, practical leader. I asked her what I was expected to do. Every resident paid nominal room and board, but was expected to contribute regular hours of service. She told me she wanted me to go into the playground that was attached to the house two evenings a week, and sit there with the mothers, and talk with them, and report



Reyher: to her what they were interested in, what they would like to have the house do, and what generally concerned them.

At the end of the first week, I came to her and bluntly asked, "Miss McDowell, why don't you have a birth control clinic here the way Hull House has? All the women here tell me that they have eight, nine, and ten children, and what they want is a birth control clinic like Hull House has."

"Are you serious?" she replied.

"Of course, I am."

"My dear," she explained, as if to a child, "we are in the heart of a Catholic district. The priest works with us. We do everything we can for these people. Most of those women's husbands are in the stockyards. But," she added, "if we opened a birth control clinic, the priest would order them not to come near us under fear of excommunication, and we would have to close down our house. What good would that do to them or us?"

So I went to my old friends at the Immigrants' Protective League, whom I used to meet with when I had that class at Hull House a few years before, and asked for their consent. "Isn't there something that can be done for those women?"

"Well, we don't know. Maybe the birth control women will find something," they temporized. I was shocked and showed it. "You don't understand," they told me. "We talk with these women. When we say to them, 'Well, after all, why can't you douche?' those women reply, 'How can you get up and douche eight or ten times a night?'"

I am telling you fragments that I remember from many conversations. I do not remember what every woman told me, but I remember that as a young married woman I was told, repeatedly, that these women were having nine and ten children because they slept in the same beds with their husbands, and if the husbands wanted intercourse they were available eight or ten times a night, and that unless those women were fitted with an expensive device, a pessary, or something those women were going to continue to have that many children.

So I was well aware of what the birth control problem was, and beginning to wonder whether that wasn't one of the basic problems that women had to consider as part of their whole feminist problem, even though I still felt that what Alice Paul was doing and what the equal rights movement was doing was frightfully important, and fundamental. But I was getting feminist problems from many different angles. The suffrage amendment did not begin to cover them, it merely had priority.



New Bedford Times, Sunday, 11 August 1918

# BIG SUFFRAGE RALLY AT MARION FRIDAY

## Miss Milholland to Sing as One |Feature of Program Which Has Been Arranged



MISS REBECCA HOURWICH.

A big suffrage rally will be held at the Town hall in Marion, Friday, Aug. 16. Several noted speakers will be present, and it is expected that the series will be started off with a bang, and that the cause of suffrage will have a big boost during the next few weeks.

Among the speakers will be Will Irwin, the war correspondent who has recently returned from the trenches, and Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles, daughter of the late Thomas F. Bayard, erstwhile ambassador to England, who for the last few months has been working in a munition factory at Newcastle, Delaware. As a special attraction Miss Vida Milholland, daughter of John Milholland, millionaire and philanthropist, will sing. During the week she will be the guest of Mrs. John Couper Edward at "Tidewell," Marion.

Miss Milholland has spent many years of her life in study abroad, and has sung in the drawing rooms of many of the society leaders both in this country and in England. At one time she sang in the home of Mrs. Lloyd George. Her favorite and justly famous song is "Alive, Oh!" a Suffrage



MISS VIDA MILHOLLAND.

Marseillaise. Miss Milholland, as an ardent advocate of the cause is always ready to sing this and is always willing to help out at any of the patriotic rallies.

### Tea To Be Given.

A tea will be given in honor of Miss Milholland and Mrs. Hilles next Thursday at 5 by Mrs. John Couper Edwards at "Tidewell." Miss Irene Henderson of Wauland, daughter of Walter H. Henderson, senior partner of John C. Page & Co. will play coming especially for the occasion. In the receiving line will be Mrs. Samuel D. Warren of Mattapoisett, Mrs. Robert Goham Fuller of Dover, and Mrs. Alice Lee West Morris of Mills. West is a cousin of the Roosevelts.

The tour of these speakers is being arranged by Miss Rebecca Hourwich, daughter of Dr. Isaac A. Hourwich of Brooklyn, N. Y., a distinguished Russian, and an authority on international law. She has pushed her campaign in eleven states, covering all sections of the country, and was formerly business manager of the "Suffragist." Accompanying her is Miss Ruth J. Small, daughter of A. W. Small, the Boston banker.

Miss Hourwich in an interview stated that her aim in starting these meetings was to put before the public her demand for the immediate passage of the federal suffrage amendment as a war measure. This demand she explained by pointing to the large number, 15,000,000 in all, of women now engaged in war service. The casualty lists show, she asserted that 750,000 women have given their lives both here and abroad since the war began, the first being the women employed at the munitions explosion at Eddestone. Women have not only given their lives, she added, but they have proved themselves absolutely indispensable; and now measures for the conscription of women have been advocated for fear that some valuable workers would escape being used.

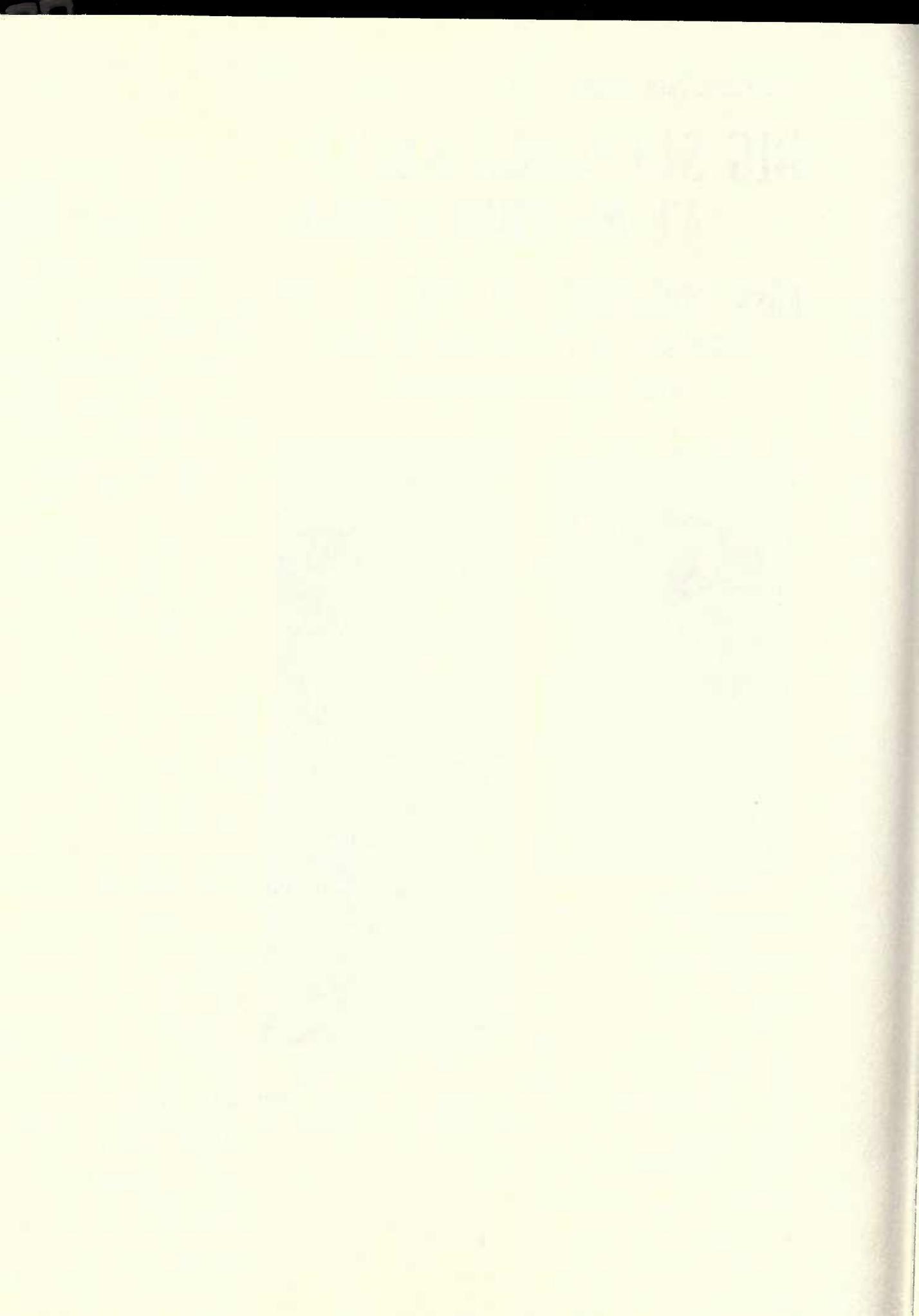
The incongruity of this state of af-

fairs she showed by asserting that conscription without votes is an insult, and hardly representative of a real democracy.

### Cited Bill in Congress.

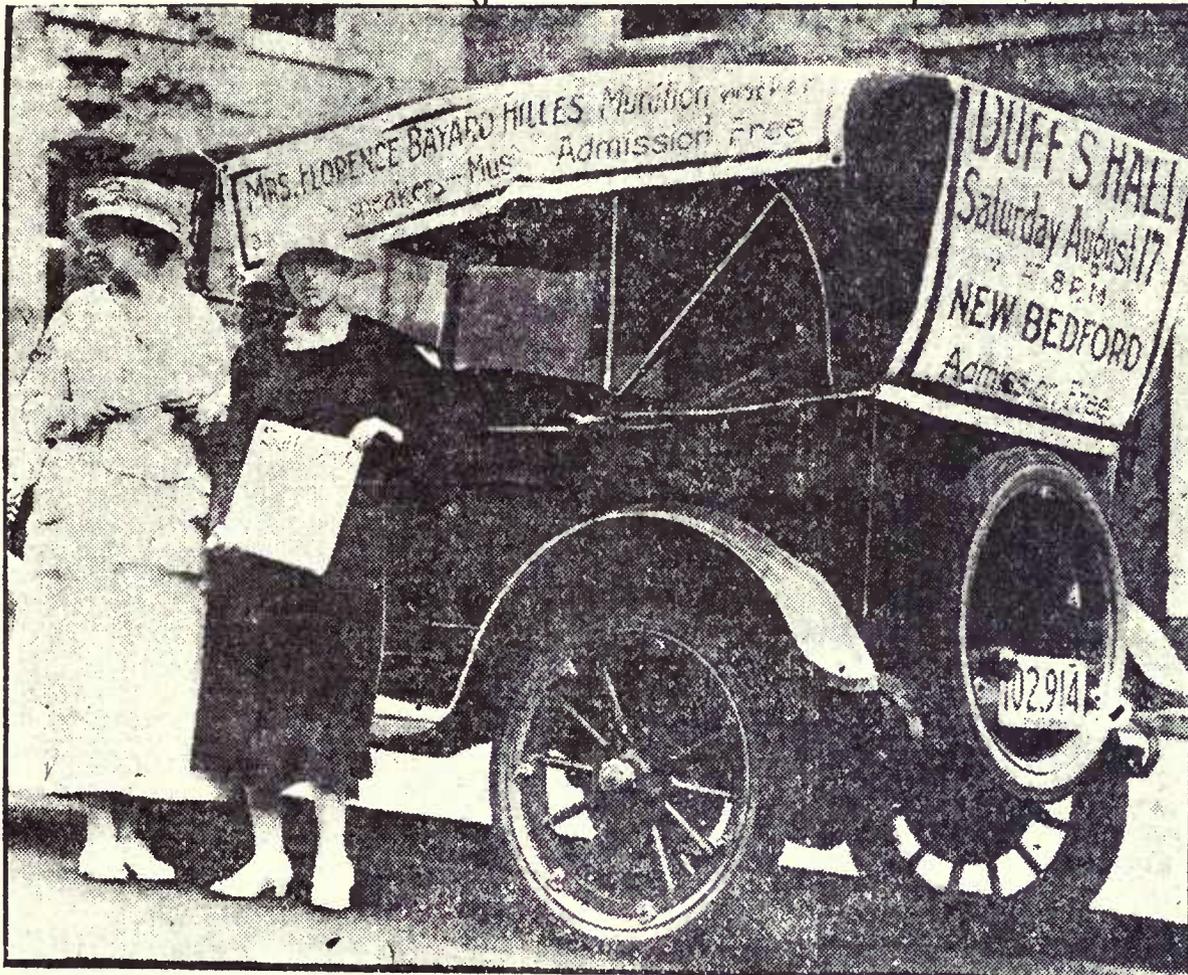
Miss Hourwich then cited the bill introduced by congress calling for the immediate enfranchisement of 127,000 foreigners now in the service of the American army. Citizenship has been proposed for all the youths in the army under 21 years of age. The arguments for these bills seem logical according to her statement, because the right of political freedom is so closely bound up with the country's service. All who serve a government ought to be assured of its privileges.

This, according to Miss Hourwich, is the principle on which the women demand the immediate passage of the proposed federal amendment. The state of Georgia has already passed a bill for the conscription of women, but their enfranchisement has not even been mentioned. Miss Hourwich closed the interview by emphasizing the fact that women are ready to serve in this great crisis, but that they insist on political citizenship for the sake of protection, and also to give their service the stamp of dignity and equality.



# BLAZING SUFFRAGE TRAIL ON CAPE

New Bedford Standard - Aug. 1918



## HERE TO BOOM. EQUAL SUFFRAGE

**Miss Small of Boston and Miss Dominick of Washington Ride About Town in Gaily Decorated Car.**

"Suffrage Over the Top" is dangling from the bumper of a gaily decorated car daily traveling the streets of New Bedford. The Massachusetts branch of the National Woman's party has sent two young girls to blaze the trail on the Cape. Miss Ruth J. Small of Newton Highlands, daughter of A. W. Small, a Boston banker, has given up the past year to suffrage work wholly. She has lent her car, "Viey," short for "Victory," and is the driver on the trip.

Miss Rebecca Hourwic, daughter of Dr. Isaac A. Hourwic, a distinguished Russian of New York, and a noted authority on international law, is the other.

Miss Ruth Janis Small spent years studying abroad and is a member of an old New England family, and a niece of Dr. Laura Porter, one of Boston's first women doctors.

Miss Hourwic spent her girlhood in Washington, later studying at the University of Chicago and Columbia university, specializing in sociology. Miss Hourwic has done settlement work and club work in New York, Chicago and Washington, but for the last three years has devoted herself to working for the federal suffrage amendment. She has worked in 11 states, covering all sections of the country.

She is a national organizer of the National Woman's party, and was formerly business manager of the "Suffragist."

The girls are here for a series of meetings at which Will Irwin, noted war correspondent, Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles, daughter of Thomas W. Bayard, former ambassador to England, and Mrs. Agnes Hosmer Morey, vice chairman of the national advisory council of the National Woman's party, will speak.

The schedule is: Nonquitt, Wednesday, Aug. 4; Marion Town hall, Friday, Aug. 16; and Duff's hall in this city, Saturday, Aug. 17, at 8 p. m.

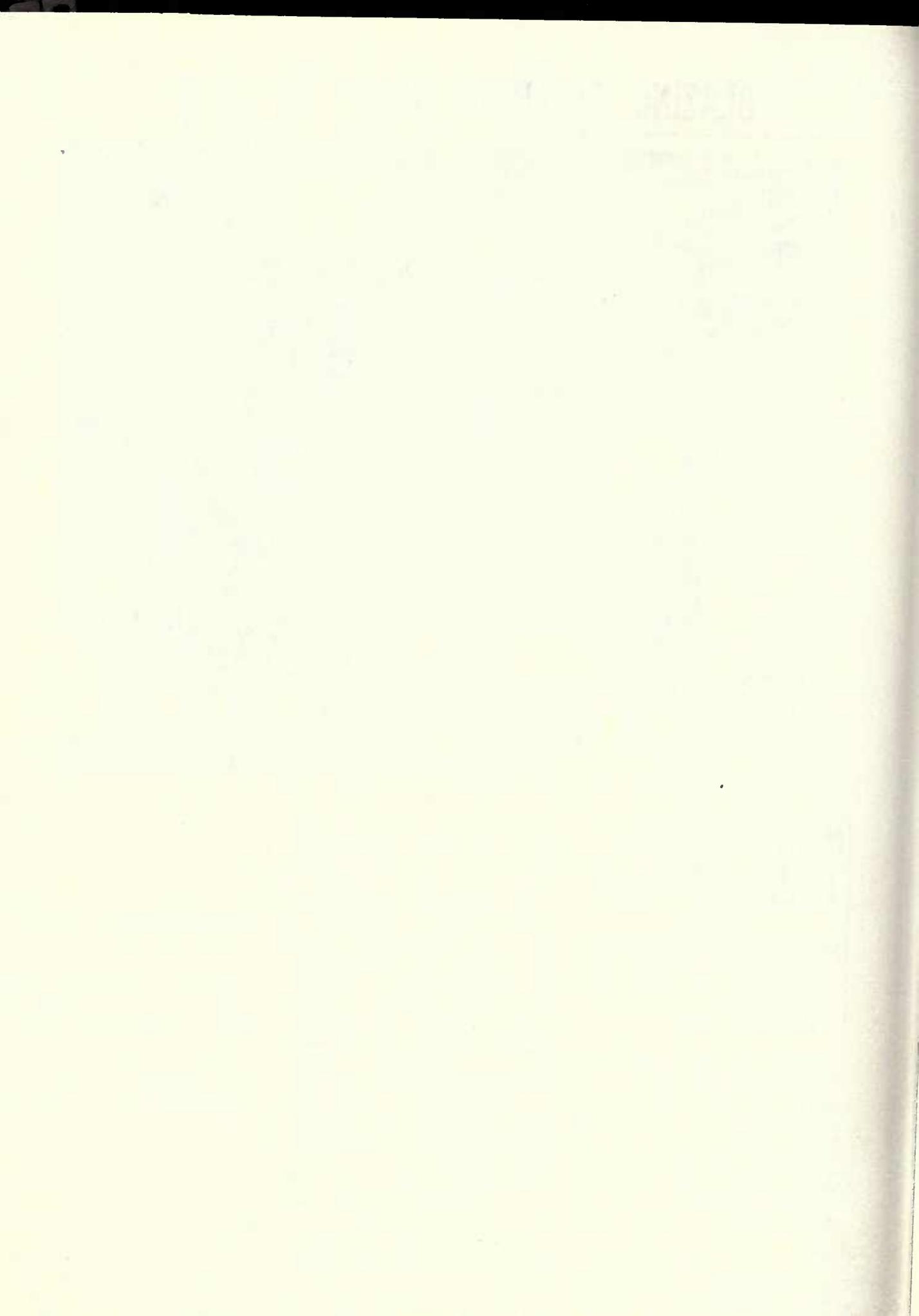
The meetings are being held under the auspices of Mrs. John Couper Edwards of "Tidewell," Marion, and Mrs. Samuel D. Warren of Mattapoisett.

Miss Small and Miss Hourwic are staying with Mrs. Edwards.

New Bedford Standard  
August 1918

Error: "Miss Dominick of Washington" should read "Miss Hourwich."

The two figures are:  
1st. Ruth J. Small  
2nd. Rebecca Hourwich



Reyher: But this experience in Chicago which led to my feeling so strongly about birth control came later. As I was saying, in answer to your question about the problem of mixed issues in the Woman's Party while we were working for suffrage, I would never have considered speaking about birth control at the time I was working in the Massachusetts office.

### Summer Meetings on the Cape

Well now, I hadn't quite finished telling you about my work as head of the Massachusetts Headquarters of the Woman's Party. During the summer of 1918 I had gone down to the Cape [Cape Cod] and helped arrange summer meetings. Some of our most important ones had as the featured speaker Florence Bayard Hilles, whose husband was a lawyer for the DuPonts, whose father had been Ambassador to Great Britain, also connected with the DuPonts. Mrs. Hilles, a NWP National Council member, was strongly in favor of the war, and though she was then a woman in her sixties, she was working in a munitions plant. She wore her munitions uniform to come and address our meetings on suffrage. We were very happy to be able to get somebody like that to speak for us who looked patriotic, was for the war as well as for the suffrage amendment.

I stayed with Mrs. John Couper Edwards at Marion, from where all our work radiated. Mrs. Edwards was wealthy, had been a great beauty, at one time socially prominent in Washington. Her home reflected her exquisite taste. I can still visualize her living room, remember her lamps, colors and china. I think her sister Genevieve Fuller prevailed on her to be so active that summer. Both of her sons were in the Service, and she was influenced and encouraged by Mrs. Hilles' presence. I think Miss Paul hoped to get some money from her, but I do not remember if she did. Mrs. Edwards paid the expenses for the Cape meetings.

After the year in Massachusetts I felt that for personal reasons--my marriage--I ought to be in New York. My year with the NWP, as head of the Massachusetts Headquarters, ended in September, 1918.



V HEADING THE NEW YORK OFFICE 1918-1919; 1922

Reyher: When I returned to New York that fall of 1918, Miss Paul asked me to run the New York office. I was to organize support for the suffrage amendment, both in New York State and New York City. I would be responsible to the Woman's Party boards of both the state and the city.

Fry: Did you tell me that you had to organize the office because there wasn't one there yet?

Reyher: There wasn't an office as far as I know. Maybe I came to an office, but there was no organizer, or staff.

The office was a building owned by Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont [Alva], a large private house, converted into offices on East Forty-first Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues, just a hundred or more feet from the New York Public Library. Spacious and imposing, the office was on the ground floor. We had lots of street traffic, and opportunity for very good window displays.

People would stop and look and come in, and ask for literature. Literature was available, and it helped to create interest. Newspaper people were attracted by the windows, and they were constantly in and out. It meant we had interested people, and also a constant flow of cranks. At that time in New York, we didn't have as dangerous a community after dark as we do today, and we assumed the cranks would be harmless.

The secretary would leave at five o'clock. I usually stayed until six to get correspondence signed, to plan for the next day, and to call women whom I had not been able to reach. I usually had the cranks--people who drifted in for no reason.

I had a particular woman who was quite a nuisance, quite obnoxious. Very large, very heavy, she would come in and plunk herself down in a nearby chair, be in my way, and interfere with my work. I realized she was not quite normal. One day she said, fixing her hard eye upon me, "What would you most like to have?"



Reyher: "Well, I would like to be able to go on with my work; I am very tired, I would love to get home to have a cup of tea, but I must get on with my work."

"Oh," she replied, "I'll let you get on with your work after you have your cup of tea."

I replied, "We have no arrangements for cups of tea."

"Oh, but I can give you a cup of tea right now." She opened her perennial, disreputable-looking bag, and brought out a lump of sugar, that was coal black, and handed it to me. "Here, my dear, is your cup of tea."

She looked at me as if, "Damn you, you eat that or I will hit you on the head."

Quickly, I told her, "You know, what I like my tea for is the hot water that warms me. I don't think just the essence of tea would help me."

"Really, I am very tired," I added, hoping to divert her. "It is getting late. I think we had better begin to go, I think I will have to call my husband."

We didn't have dial phones at that time. She realized I had given the call to Central and that I was in touch with a phone, and that if she had been trying to poison me in a crazy moment, she hadn't succeeded.

The next time she came, I said that she was really taking too much of our time, and that she could not come into Headquarters at the end of the day when I was concentrating on our work, that I had asked the superintendent not to let her come into the Headquarters at that time. Of course I had not, but if I saw her coming, I would lock the door. I had an eye cocked for her. I managed not to have her around any more.

That was my only frightening experience, in a headquarters on the ground floor in the center of town, where I stayed late often, and worked right off the street. Nobody else ever approached me, or tried to do anything untoward or be a nuisance. I give that as an example of how safe the streets were for a young, attractive woman at that time, right in the heart of town, one block from Forty-second Street.

We carried on a very active campaign all over the state. Woodrow Wilson was President and we had determined to continue "to go out and concentrate public opinion," as he had suggested to us.



Fry: Did you go there right after you left Boston?

Reyher: Right after Massachusetts.

Board Members and Volunteers: Efforts of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer

Fry: So this is the fall of 1918.

Reyher: Yes, 1918. We had a very good Board, very interested, some quite influential. They would frequently drop in at Headquarters. They didn't do very much, consistently, but once in a while, somebody would do some small or specially significant thing.

Our Board included Mrs. John Winters Brannan, who I think I mentioned was the daughter of Charles Dana, a great newspaper and literary figure, and Mrs. John Rogers [Elizabeth], who was a great friend of Miss Paul's. Her family were the Kents, who had a town named after them in California, and towns named after them in Connecticut; they gave money to Yale, and to many organizations and institutions. Mrs. Rogers definitely wanted to work exclusively with Miss Paul on a national scale. She would come in from time to time to see how things were going.

But Mrs. Brannan worked very closely with us and was a great help. This meant seeing important people to urge them to influence congressmen and senators, getting new members, writing personal letters for contributions, helping arrange large and small meetings.

There were a lot of other active women. Mrs. Robert Adamson, whose husband had been a city official, was another. There were all kinds of people who came in as volunteers, and helped when we had to arrange a meeting.

One of the women who always opened her home to us for a large afternoon meeting--practically all of them were, automatically excluding professional and working women--was Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer [Luisine], who gave a part of her art collection to the Metropolitan Museum, valued at \$10 million.

Mrs. Havemeyer became very much interested in what we were doing, wanted to participate, to be personally involved, and was a great help to us. After a meeting at her home she would open her private gallery to the audience, which meant arranging special guards and protection. She became increasingly captivated by speaking herself, wanted to speak at meetings, to have opportunities arranged for her.



Reyher: She had two married daughters, neither one of whom respected her or her ability, and one married son. The daughters were both university graduates with very good minds. One of them, Mrs. J. Watson Webb [Electra], collected folk art, and helped establish noted folk art museums. One was Mrs. Frelinghuyesen who was very active in social life in New Jersey and whose husband bred prize cattle; her son or grandson was until recently a Congressman from there. The daughters thought Mrs. Havemeyer's Woman's Party work didn't amount to very much.

Mrs. Havemeyer would take me with her on speaking trips, both of us would speak. She would be the headliner, the attraction to draw the audience, as an example of a very wealthy, well placed woman who had arrived at her faith in suffrage and equal rights entirely on her own, whose family and friends were completely removed from the suffrage campaign. She had started her art collection herself at the age of sixteen, buying a ten dollar drawing in Paris, going on her own initiative to Mary Cassatt, the famous painter, for advice and guidance. She had a good untutored mind, had not been trained in research. Without warning she would grow eloquent, and list the wrong discriminations, for the wrong states. Most women didn't know the difference and we could gloss it over and be grateful for the warm effect and enthusiasm she generated wherever she went.

Sometimes it was embarrassing. One of the dreadful times was when we had a dinner meeting in upstate New York, in Albany, at which many assemblymen and state senators were present--one, Senator George R. Fearon, of Syracuse, was our chief opponent in the state, a Republican of brilliance, wit--though often directed at us, and biting sarcasm.

The meeting could have been a disaster. It was a mistake on all of our parts. We should have had for our leading speaker somebody from Washington of outstanding reputation, and professional expertise, not just a New York State Board member, no matter how illustrious her name. Instead we had Mrs. Havemeyer, and some of the local upstate women.

Mrs. Havemeyer, knowing that these were all people accustomed to specifics, and not just generalities, decided that she would do what I did on our joint trips, cite specific examples.

I should interject that borrowing good material from a speaker was standard procedure. When I first went to Massachusetts and had to make frequent speeches to audiences large and small, with due notice, or with no warning and time to prepare, I used Maud Younger's speech almost verbatim [laughter] until I began to add to it. Every one of us used to steal a skeleton speech from someone else, and then as we got more confidence, embroider it.



Reyher: So that when Mrs. Havemeyer used some of my favorite stories and gave a little history of the suffrage movement and the Woman's Party coming to Washington, I was secretly amused but approving. Often I heard the familiar little story that I had stolen from Maud come out of Mrs. Havemeyer's lips. It was the one about Woodrow Wilson arriving at the White House the day before the inaugural parade. Looking out the window and seeing all the streets deserted, he asked, "Where is everybody?" and he was told, "Down on Pennsylvania Avenue watching the suffrage parade." This always proved a great story to start a speech in those days.

That particular evening upstate Mrs. Havemeyer started her speech with a bang with this little story that she had borrowed from me, that I had borrowed from Maud. Inspired and fortified by the applause, she borrowed other well-known cases from one or two other speakers, and swung into examples of discrimination that had affected other audiences, attributing them to New York State.

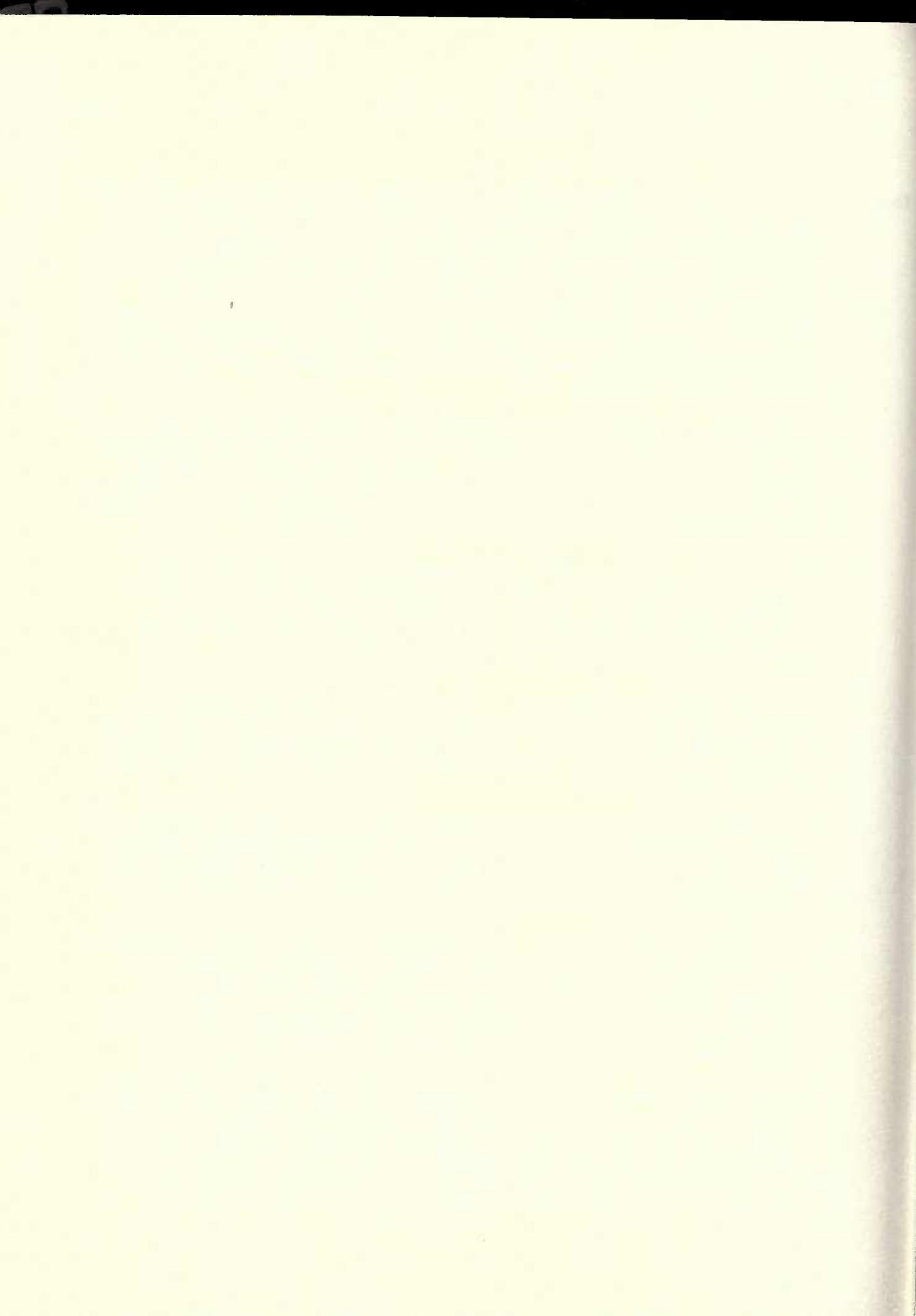
She had picked them up from speakers who had used them as examples of the national need for a federal amendment. She used them, because she was there, in New York, as New York State discriminations. She had hardly sat down when this brilliant man got up, our Enemy Number One, Senator Fearon, a lawyer.

He hated to disagree with Mrs. Havemeyer, the distinguished speaker, Senator Fearon began, but as someone who had been born and bred in New York State and studied law in that state, he had to, as a matter of conscience, clear the record of New York State. And then he cleared the record.

Mrs. Havemeyer sat there boiling, furious. When he finished, she rose and challenged, "I do not care what this distinguished Senator has to say. He too can be mistaken. We have here an authority who has worked on these discriminations [laughter], who has studied them, and she will tell you that I am right."

To be confronted with this dilemma was such a horrible experience that it was as if I had a sudden attack of amnesia. I never can remember what I said with all those people staring at me, but whatever I did say, they laughed uproariously, and it broke the ice. It succeeded in not making a fool of her, and it didn't make a fool of me, nor did it damage our work, and I glossed over it.

I have lain awake nights for years trying to recapitulate what happened there and what I could have said, but I couldn't. It was so painful it was blotted out. Fortunately when the question period came, the chairman was kind enough, when it was a question about a specific discrimination, to say to Mrs. Havemeyer, "Now, Mrs. Havemeyer, would you like to answer that, or would you like Miss



Reyher: Hourwich to answer that?" (I was keeping my own name and I will tell you about not keeping it afterwards.) And Mrs. Havemeyer took it very nicely and the meeting proceeded as if nothing had happened.

I would like to add a few things about Mrs. Havemeyer because she was such a distinct character, and emerged as a personality through the Woman's Party. She was steeped in the traditions of the subordinate role of a woman, yet a widow of enormous wealth who controlled her own money, and most of the money which eventually her children got. Once she asked me to spend a weekend at her country home in Connecticut. It was a lavish house--the type that wealthy people seldom any longer live in. It had its own greenhouse, and we had "hot house" grapes from it at our meals. Liveried servants served us, everything was on a muted, but elegant scale, which of itself--because I was curious and had a reportorial instinct--was interesting to me. Corn on the cob was served as a special course wrapped in damask napkins, pierced with silver handles, the way the upper-class French did. Mrs. Havemeyer had spent years in France.

Invited as our only guest for lunch was her sister Mrs. Harry Peters from Long Island, who driving alone, came not only in a Rolls Royce but with the only coachman sitting on top of the car seen in even those days.

Fry: On top?

Reyher: Yes. The two of them were in front, in two tiers, the driver sitting on a single jump seat in front of the enclosed car, the coachman above him; and they seemed higher than Mrs. Peters because the Rolls Royce was so designed. The coachman, if that is what you would call him, had on purple livery, as did the driver, to match the color of the car. Out stepped Mrs. Peters in tiers of black chiffon with a tall, Queen Mary hat and many strings of pearls, and made an entrance into the wide hall. It all smacked of stories and pictures of English royalty.

The three of us sat down to lunch, one of the most agonizing in my experience. The two sisters immediately began needling each other. At first it was not so much what they said, but the effect upon each other. Mrs. Havemeyer had on a very curious, awkward, ill-fitting dress made out of some kind of cheap black and white calico. Suddenly Mrs. Peters, looking at the dress in ill-concealed disdain, said, "Luizine," which was Mrs. Havemeyer's first name, "if you are planning to go see this woman,"--whatever her name was, we were scheduled to see her to ask her for a thousand dollars--"it is time for you to go up and dress."

"But I am not changing, I am wearing what I have on," Mrs. Havemeyer replied.



Reyher: "You can't be serious," Mrs. Peters said.

"I certainly am."

"You can't be. Why, you look ridiculous."

"I made this dress myself."

"Nevertheless, it is still ugly."

"It is the best that I can afford. I made it myself, and it is all I have to wear."

Whereupon Mrs. Peters lost her temper. "I would never give one daughter a bull for \$55,000 and another daughter a polo pony for perhaps the same amount, and keep repeating this type of gift, and leave myself without clothes fit to wear!"

I sat numb, unable to move, not knowing what to do. I didn't want to remain through this type of family quarrel, but I did not want to emphasize its unseemliness by abruptly leaving. All I could think of was, "It is getting late, and I ought to get my papers in order," and fled. Mrs. Havemeyer did not change her dress, and said nothing more.

The woman we saw was a dear friend, large, fat, and also wealthy, and she wrote a check for the thousand dollars before we left, despite the cheap dress. Mrs. Havemeyer taught me that a kind-hearted woman who might be a little rattle-brained, which she sometimes was, could just as easily write a few checks every quarter and leave herself penniless as somebody who had a smaller bank account. The other thing I learned about her was that wealthy as she was she was worried about money. Funny as it might seem to some, the lack of money bothered her.

I first thought her pettiness was stinginess. Then I realized that she had taught herself to be economical.

Once in upstate New York on a lecture tour, we occupied adjoining bedrooms with a "bath" in between. She was so unworldly she didn't realize that she was a jeopardy to the hotel as far as security was concerned. The hotel assumed that she probably had a box full of jewelry. Of course, she didn't have a thing, at least with her. The house detective had to knock on her door, day and night, repeatedly and say, "Mrs. Havemeyer, you must lock your door. Otherwise, we can't be responsible for you." It had never occurred to her to lock it.

While we were there I noticed that every afternoon she insisted on going to her room between four and six. I thought she was very wise to take a rest, and told her so.



Reyher: "Oh, my dear, I don't rest," she scoffed. "I mend the dress that I wear to speak in. Don't you think it is nice?"

"I think it is lovely," I replied sincerely. It was covered with tiny black jet beads in an all-over pattern.

"I think it is lovely, too, but you know, I got it out of the poor box [laughter] my daughter Electra gets from Mary Harriman. I always sneak up and go through it. If there is anything in the box that I can wear, I take it!"

"Electra has told Mary Harriman, 'Please don't send anything black anymore, and please don't send anything that could be used in the evening because, if you do, Mother will sneak it out of the box and wear it!'" Which is exactly what she did. I think both of these stories indicate that she really had no false pride, and since she was apparently worried about money, she was going to save money wherever she could.

When we would go for a short walk, she would say, "Let's see if we can't get some bananas. If I send for them downstairs, it will cost too much." And she would buy, literally, 2¢ worth of bananas, and bring them upstairs to her room and gloat over the bargain she had made. In those days a fine large, single banana might cost 5¢.

When she came to speak for me in Chicago, which I will tell you about later, when I ran the Headquarters there, I alerted all the papers about her arrival. Chicago at that time was particularly very much interested in art, had a wonderful Art Institute, with a spectacular impressionist, and post-impressionist collection, which was the major type of art of Mrs. Havemeyer's collection. The papers, many art lovers, and society people were terribly interested that she was coming to speak at one of our Woman's Party meetings. Naturally I squeezed as much publicity as I could out of it. As Mrs. Havemeyer got off the train, there was a long crush of newspaper people and photographers to meet her. She was an authentic celebrity.

The first thing she did, as they were photographing her, was to hand down a cardboard box to me, which obviously was her box lunch, and say, "I had a couple of those lovely chocolate leaf cookies that you like so much left over from my dinner."

That was the lead in absolutely every equal rights story. [Laughter] Miss Paul was furious, but you couldn't keep reporters from writing what they thought was a good story, and it was because everybody loved her naturalness, her basic humanity.

When we were together in upstate New York, she left two days ahead of me because I had to follow up our interviews, make sure we



Reyher: got the checks promised, tie up loose ends of our visit, and make certain women would see their congressmen, senators, and assemblymen, and key politicians. Mrs. Havemeyer had left a little bottle on the bottom shelf of Listerine, with about 2¢ worth left in it, just about a half an inch. I debated whether to take it because I didn't have any Scotch tape, which is what I use whenever I travel, to seal up the bottle, and I was afraid it would leak on my other travel accessories. I decided I had better risk it and take the bottle to New York. I said to myself, "I know Mrs. Havemeyer. She is going to call me about this."

As soon as I got back to Headquarters, the very next day, she called me and asked, "I wonder if you noticed that I left something?"

"I certainly did. You left some Listerine in the bathroom."

"Good girl. Did you bring it?"

"I did."

"Very good girl." She was delighted. I thought that if that would please her, and if she had these idiosyncracies about petty funds, I would respect them.\*

#### Fund Raising: Meaning of Economic Independence

It was on that trip with her that we went to ask a lot of the young married women who came to our meetings whether they would make monthly pledges to us as well as give us some cash. I still remember distinctly calling on one young woman who was supervising a home as an executive might operate a plant. Her house was a beautiful, large one. It had a stately drawing room, a book-lined library, a wide reception hall, and many paintings. There were two or three cars in the garage. It was apparent that regardless of what she might spend on anything else, her servants and the maintenance of that house at a rough estimate cost her about thirty thousand dollars a year. We became canny about such estimates. Obviously there was enough money for her to make a substantial contribution.

---

\*In "Mrs. Havemeyer Eulogized by New York Branch," Equal Rights, 19 January 1929, RHR is mentioned as a representative of the New York City Committee of the NWP to Mrs. Henry O. Havemeyer's funeral.



Reyher: Mrs. Havemeyer told her some of the usual things, summarized some of the discriminations against women, outlined the high points of the campaign to remove them, and the urgent need for money to carry on. She started by asking for a thousand dollars. Rapidly she came down the financial scale. Nonplussed but unable to recognize failure, she asked, "Well, will you give us a hundred?"

"No, I am afraid I couldn't afford that," our hostess replied.

"Perhaps you could give it to us by the month," argued Mrs. Havemeyer. "Perhaps you could give us five or ten dollars a month." Mrs. Havemeyer was trying to be practical, to show this troubled, reluctant woman how to contribute. "I am afraid I can't do that, either," our hostess told her almost in tears.

"Well, couldn't you do it out of your vegetable money?" demanded Mrs. Havemeyer.

"I don't think you understand, Mrs. Havemeyer," she tried to explain apologetically. "I write the checks, my husband signs them. I don't see five dollars in cash from one month to another, and if my husband doesn't approve of what I write in my checkbook, he either won't pay it, or I don't do it again. I could never give you a monthly pledge because he doesn't approve of what you are doing."

I learned then--and this was only one case--as women told us one story after another of how they had to make money, or get money, sometimes to maneuver to pay the money that they had promised us. Invariably women would say, "Well, I can always charge a hat or I can always charge a coat." I learned this charging and getting cash from sympathetic shopkeepers--for a fee--was a much used technique. These women didn't have any cash they could call their own, even though their husbands trusted them to be the supervising executives responsible for the spending of thousands of dollars. My experience in trying to raise money for suffrage and equal rights taught me much about the meaning of economic independence for women.\*

There were many, many other women whom I went to see about money, some famous, others obscure. The famous did not always contribute.

Mrs. Belmont arranged for Mrs. William Randolph Hearst to see someone from the Woman's Party. These arrangements were all a

---

\*Cf. Rebecca Hourwich, "Money, Money Everywhere and Not a Cent to Spend," Equal Rights, 27 March 1926.



Reyher: stereotyped, subtle camouflage of women happy to have Mrs. Belmont's social favor in return for a cash contribution. Mrs. Belmont laid the groundwork, left no room for misunderstanding. I was sent to see Mrs. Hearst presumably to detail the program.

It was the coldest interview I ever had. Mrs. Hearst's home was then on Riverside Drive in a large high-ceilinged apartment. A long hall similar to the one at the Metropolitan [Museum of Art] contained a series of men in medieval armor stationed at intervals against the wall. A few high-backed carved oak chairs and benches with red velvet cushions interspersed them.

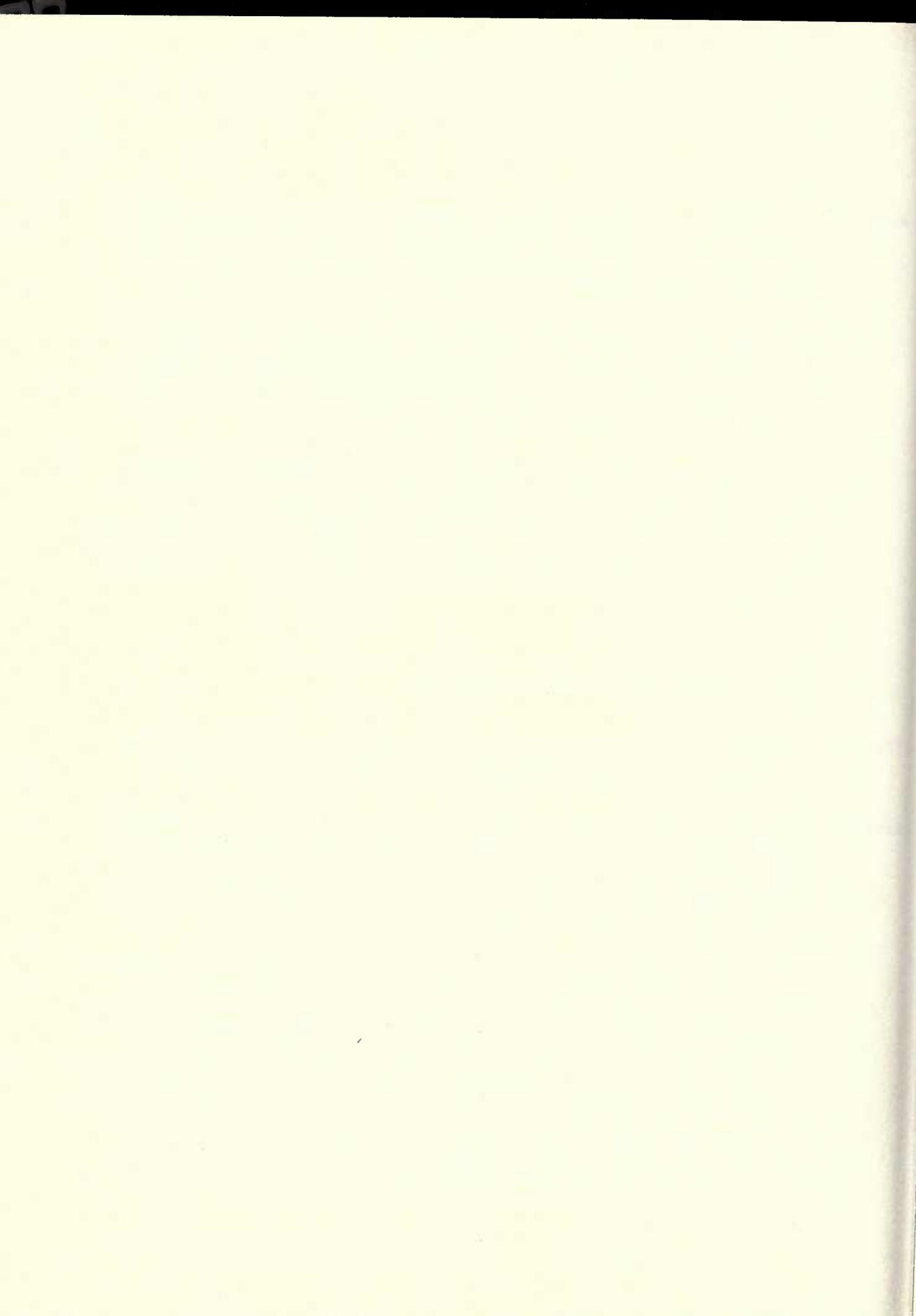
Mrs. Hearst received me in this barren, stilted hall corridor, never smiled, barely moved a facial muscle. In her hand she held a check. She was totally disinterested in what I had to say. Her commitment for whatever reasons was to Mrs. Belmont, not to the cause of suffrage or equal rights. I almost shuddered as I left. I do not remember whether she produced what was expected of her, or how much she gave.

Fund Raising: Mrs. Belmont's Dilemma

Fry: There is one more thing that I need to pick up. I think you have a little story about your fund raising and going to Mrs. Belmont for some funds, and I want to make sure and get that in.

Reyher: As I think I have told you many times, we had in our local branches in New York, Massachusetts, other places, local membership dues. We maintained our own headquarters, and expenses, and paid for them. We were expected to send half of our branch dues to Washington to help maintain Washington Headquarters. Some of the time we did it, and because of the lack of funds, some of the time we didn't.

This particular time, we had sent out invitations, had had cards printed, for a meeting which we had hoped would raise much needed money, increase membership, and carry on the organization. The cards arrived, the time was drawing near for the meeting. Membership dues were due, but we didn't have them. The till was absolutely empty. Usually, one of the Board members would see us through, if it was just a relatively small amount of money. But I couldn't reach any of the Board members. It was just one of those awkward times when there was no money, and there was nobody to be reached locally who would pay the amount of money needed. Postage was low, but this was a very large printing that we were sending out.



Reyher: Headquarters secretaries were meant to be reliable, innovative, able to cope with local situations. It was an admission of failure to be in such a situation. But I was desperate. So I called Miss Paul and asked, "What shall I do? I can't lay the money out for this, and I can't reach anybody who will."

Miss Paul thought a minute and decided, "Well, you will have to call Mrs. Belmont and ask her for the money."

It was an unwritten rule that nobody approached Mrs. Belmont, who was generous and gave money when a particular need arose for it, and later gave us the national headquarters in Washington, or perhaps had already given it to us. Mrs. Belmont was not to be disturbed, only Miss Paul was to talk to her. Miss Paul, always a stickler for details in planning any act, large or small, advised, "Tell the butler who answers the phone you are calling for me, and Mrs. Belmont will speak to you." And that is exactly what happened.

When Mrs. Belmont came to the phone, and I told her what I was calling her about, she got very angry. "I wish you wouldn't call me to ask me about money. I just don't have any. I have a grocery bill at Charles for \$4500 and I don't know how I am going to pay it." She was then living in a house that was reputed to have about fifty rooms, on Madison Avenue, in the Fifties, which was later sold to the Archdiocese of New York. On the surface she obviously was a woman of great means. She did, as a postscript, give me the money that we needed after she had exploded, but she did teach me something I have never forgotten.

I learned all along the way, as I have been trying to tell you, from all these many experiences that would explode around me, that after all it doesn't make much difference, if you can't pay a grocery bill of \$4.50 or \$45 or \$450 or \$4500. If you can't pay it, you are in trouble. And this is not a plea for the rich, it is just simply an effort to understand the people that you are dealing with, which is what we constantly had to do. We were dealing with a cross-section of people of every kind of financial standing.

Fry: And they all were tyrannized by grocery bills.

Reyher: No, but apparently they were all tyrannized by demands made on them for money which they often were not able to meet.

Fry: For our western readers of this, we might explain that Charles was the leading luxury grocery in New York at that time, a Tiffany of food.



Demonstration for Woodrow Wilson

Reyher: I have not yet told you that the most important thing we had to do that year in New York was to organize a very large demonstration for President Woodrow Wilson when he came to New York on his way to Versailles [March 4, 1919]. In connection with that, we got a great many women to come together to greet him, a great outpouring of masses of women to remind him he had suggested we "concentrate public opinion."

World War I was over. An armistice had been declared. Woodrow Wilson was going to Versailles to the Peace Conference where the heads of state of the Allied countries were gathering to hammer out the peace terms.

On the eve of his departure, Wilson was scheduled to speak at the Metropolitan Opera House to several thousand enthusiastic supporters and well-wishers. From there he would leave for his boat. It was important to have masses of women in relays, coming to the Metropolitan before he got there, standing in as close formation there as they could, as a sort of impregnable wall, throughout his speech, and to be there when he would leave. We had to try to have enough women with enough banners so that people would be bound to see them, so that not the President but they would dominate the scene, and the headlines.

Of course, the New York Headquarters were full of people from Washington, from everywhere, specially arrived to arrange this. To her dismay I told Miss Paul that I would do whatever was necessary but I could not go out on the street and join in the demonstration, that my doctor had advised against it. I didn't tell her why.

Fry: You--

Reyher: Because I was due to have a baby. This was in February or March, and I was due to have a baby in May. When I went to see my gynecologist to ask him if he thought I could carry a banner in a street demonstration, he was flabbergasted. "Yes, you can do it," he said, "but either you will have a miscarriage and give birth to your baby right then and there, and it will be trampled by the policemen's horses, or you yourself will faint, and be trampled by them. You will disrupt the parade, and you will be utterly no good to it. You are not indispensable to that parade, I am sure. If you want to help, stay indoors."

Miss Paul was disgusted with me because she didn't like to have any of her plans thwarted, and she thought I would be better out on the line demonstrating than I would be indoors at Headquarters. But



Reyher: it was just as well I remained at the office, because there were an unprecedented lot of problems descending on us like an avalanche from every direction. All Hell seemed to break loose.

We were on street level. People tried to smash our display windows, to break into our headquarters, not one or two people, but dozens. Mounted policemen were on guard in front of the Headquarters, but I don't remember their being of much help.

Women's sticks--they carried banners mounted on them--were broken, you could hear the sound of splintering and breaking wood. Women constantly had to come in and get banner replacements. This was no simple, orderly demonstration. This was unleashed brutality unchecked. Women were roughed up and attacked before they ever even got to the corner, let alone to the Opera House a few blocks away.

Finally, we had to have the women who were going to be demonstrators at the Opera House wrap their banners and conceal them, go in a taxi, or in a car, and get where they wanted to be strategically and not march to the Opera House as we planned, because they would be forcibly stopped before they would ever get there.

Fry: Was that the police--

Reyher: The police were protective on the whole, I suppose, for they did finally stop the fracas in front of Headquarters.

Fry: Were they?

Reyher: The police along the route were mostly protective. I can't remember definitely, but I don't remember active, open police hostility. Maybe they weren't friendly or protective at the Metropolitan Opera House itself, either, because after all, their responsibility was to protect the President, and there the women were breaking down the barriers, the barricades, so they could get where the President would see them.

At that point, I was not there. I only knew that many women, not the NWP hard core, but the volunteers, came back to Headquarters, hysterical, and some sobbing, complaining of brutal treatment. This went on until after eleven o'clock, until the President had finished his speech, left the Opera House, and they had all come back, or gone home.

Then the problem was that the volunteers had to connect with their escorts, or their husbands. They looked bothered, worn down by the emotional experience. My husband had come to take me home, and I couldn't go. I couldn't close the Headquarters because there were still women trying to connect with their husbands. One woman, not a staff or Board member, was hysterical. Minna was married to Maxwell



Reyher: Bodenheim, a well-known writer. She kept repeating, "Oh, where is he?" as if in a hypnotic state. "Where is Max? He will probably fight the police looking for me, and he, because he is a radical, will be killed."

"Why don't you telephone home?" we urged.

"What's the use, there is nobody there," she kept saying.

Finally I telephoned one of the Board members, and complained, "What am I going to do? I have had a very long day. I have been here since nine o'clock this morning. I am really getting sick. It is after midnight, and my husband insists I go home. I have just one stray left, I can't close the office, and put her out on the street. I am afraid that something might happen to her. Somebody might be lurking near the office."

"Well, we can't do anything about it either," was the only reply I got. Nobody had any help to offer, nobody even had suggestions. One of the last members left at Headquarters suggested, "Why don't you take her home with you?" That made me angry. Some of these women had large houses or apartments.

"We have a floor in a brownstone house, but there are no doors between our bedroom and our living room, and there is just no place to bed her down, and I am tired, and I want to go to bed."

They shrugged it off. "There is nothing that can be done."

By this time it was way past midnight, maybe one o'clock, and Minna was still making a wailing and weeping fuss. My husband got angry, "You had better try your husband again, or I will."

He called Minna's home and Bodenheim answered sleepily, "I wasn't able to find Minna, and so I went home. I figured she would eventually come back here."

I can't tell you how furious I was. We ordered him to get into his clothes, and come and get Minna instantly, which he did. I always had a scunner on him, for the awful time they gave us, and on her who didn't have the guts to get up and go home on her own!



Washington: Demonstrators from New York

Reyher: The rest of the time we did a good, solid job in those Headquarters. From there we sent regular groups of women to Washington for demonstrations and lobbying. Sometime in the December before the New York Wilson demonstration, there was a special one that Miss Paul planned, and we coralled about seventy students for it.

At the Washington Headquarters people were accustomed to having young women around (particularly Anita Pollitzer) who did absolutely anything that had to be done for anyone--they were practically like messengers on roller skates. One of the young women who came for that demonstration, a very self-important writer--Louise Bryant--was typical of those who took advantage of it. She was upstairs entertaining women about herself and her exploits--she had been to Russia, and was the widow of Jack Reed, author of the best-selling Ten Days That Shook the World. She had not yet married William Bullitt, later U. S. Ambassador to Russia. She had a string of affairs, and a string of husbands, and was accustomed to acting like a queen who exacted service from her subjects.

She told me in a lofty aside that she had a trunk downstairs, and that she would like to have it brought upstairs. Those stairs were in a house where the rooms were about twenty feet high, and there were no regular porters available to maneuver the stairs.

Some porter, or some handyman, was prevailed upon to get that trunk up the stairs, but he left it sitting where it would require jiggering it from one end to another and getting it into her room. Louise Bryant asked me if I would do it. I was much smaller than she was, and I answered sharply that I would not, I wasn't strong enough.

Fry: But you still couldn't tell her you were pregnant.

Reyher: I didn't tell her I was pregnant, because I wouldn't have done it for her anyway, and she was absolutely furious. I think Anita Pollitzer came and did it. But Louise Bryant told me that she noticed that I was very hostile and unfriendly, and she was going to report me to Miss Paul. Like a child I replied, "Just go ahead."

Whether she did or not, I don't know. But I do know that on that particular trip to Washington, I found it very difficult, because women were constantly standing around and seemingly waiting for me to pick up chairs, and bring them somewhere, and do all the things that all of us who were younger, perhaps ten or fifteen years younger than Alice Paul and so many of the other leaders, usually had done; and now I just wasn't able to do it. I think they noticed I



Reyher: was reluctant; I was aware I was and I was very glad to get back home. I mention the Bryant incident for other reasons.

Volunteers at the NWP were mostly wealthy women who could afford to give not only money, but time. The professional workers were salaried for very meager sums indeed. The cleavage was there, however, and for those who wanted to emphasize it--as some did--a line could be drawn, as it had been in philanthropic organizations, between the "honorary" and the paid worker.

Louise Bryant was trying to assume a quickie social cachet she did not have to add to her dead husband's fame.

Many women tried to use the Woman's Party for social climbing. Mrs. Belmont often shrewdly took advantage of it to raise money for the NWP from women who had married money, but were socially insecure.

I had many experiences with such women who expected me to get them full publicity value in return. Before a drawing-room meeting one such sponsor, a beautiful blonde, Mrs. Cobina Wright, who later went to Hollywood and became a well-known columnist, brought me a photograph to use of herself with her baby--later known as Cobina Wright, Jr. She hesitated, and then bluntly indicated what was on her mind. "Couldn't you get in some way that I was married to Owen Johnson the writer? He was very well known, and his father was an Ambassador."

As tactfully as I could I explained that only one husband per caption was customary for a mother and child, and that the current one.

Fry: Did that demonstration include putting yourself in a position to go to jail?

Reyher: At that time all demonstrations did. The arrests were erratic and unpredictable. I don't remember the details of that demonstration--there were so many--and my responsibility was to see to it that the young women whose fares we had paid--the various students--arrived and reported for the conferences, interviews, and for the duties assigned to them. Mine was a monitoring job. The women at Washington Headquarters had planned their schedule.

I know that we came when Congress was in session and it was possible to do a lot of lobbying. I don't think that picketing was nearly as important--this was mid-winter--as the lobby. It was imperative that each one of the young women see a definite legislator, and that we checked to make certain they had.



Reyher: As I remember it I spent all my time lining them up. Anita [Pollitzer], who was based in Washington as the National Organizer working with Miss Paul, saw to it that everyone did what she had laid out for them. Anita was then at the height of her youth and vigor, and there was no way of escaping her pressure. Miss Paul had trained her well.

The work in Washington, when people came to Headquarters for the demonstrations, was almost always the same, in a routine pattern and design. The day began with a series of meetings to inform, educate, and inspire women from different parts of the country. The climax was usually a gala dinner at night.

Unfailingly there was full-time lobbying of congressmen and senators, and also interviews with people who might be influential in getting others to lobby. It was a chain of influence, each link holding the other together. Some women were more effective or influential than others. Attention and effort were not concentrated on one important theater meeting or mass meeting. Emphasis was on personal influence and effort.

Fry: Did you do any lobbying with congressmen?

Reyher: I did a limited amount of lobbying with congressmen, for I was so seldom in Washington, and when there I was both reporting on state work done, and preparing and conferring about new programs.

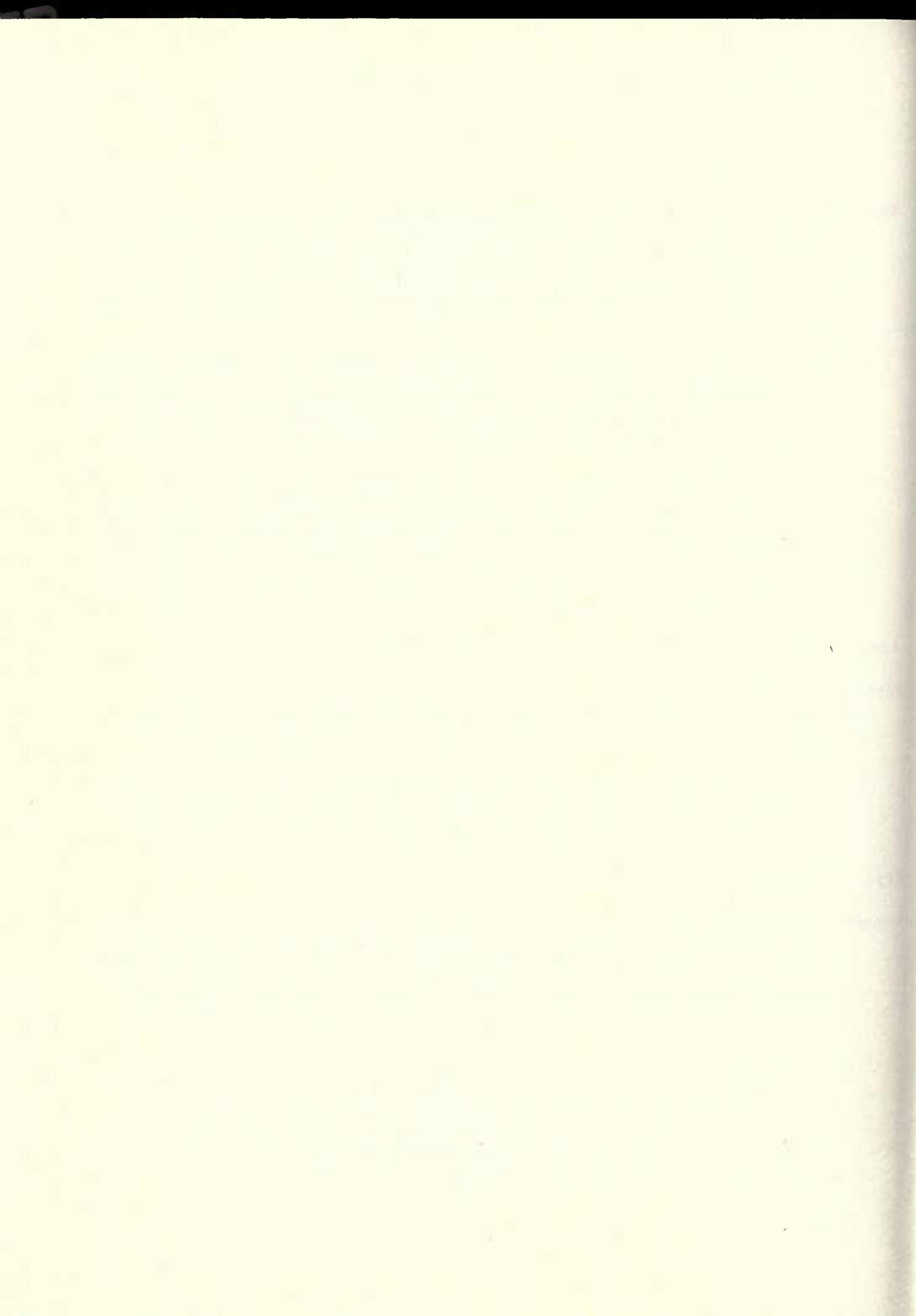
I don't remember just when it was that I went to see La Guardia [Fiorello H.]. Later Mayor of New York, he was then in Congress, I think. I went to see him that particular December. Actually I no longer remember just when he was in Congress.

Fry: We would have to look that up.\*

Reyher: Usually I went lobbying with someone on the Board or a woman who had political, social, or economic influence in her home state or city. She went to see her Congressman or Senator, but needed somebody along who knew the arguments to present. At that particular time, except for La Guardia, whom I saw alone, I don't recall that any of the

---

\*La Guardia was in Congress 1917-1921, and again 1923-1933. Later Mrs. Reyher said she felt it was probably 1917 that she went to see La Guardia since she was married in July 1917 and was in Washington the following fall. This also is consistent with a date for the meeting given in Section I. [Ed.]



Reyher: Congress meant anything special to me. Later, as time went on, I went with various people to see congressmen and senators from states where I had been active--from Maine, New York, Massachusetts, from various places--but not at this particular time.

Fry: That [later time] would have been for the Equal Rights Amendment.

Reyher: Yes. That would have been for the Equal Rights Amendment. I remember going to see Senator Hiram Bingham of Connecticut, with Alice Movius of Boston, a Board member.

In later years Alice and I became very good friends and I often stayed at her home. From the beginning I was able to ask her to do anything Miss Paul wanted. She was a first cousin of Alice Roosevelt, both named for the same relative, a cousin of the late Governor Saltonstall, a member of a leading Massachusetts family.

Blonde, willowy, and beautiful, she was a convinced advocate of the amendment, but she was also bred in the tradition that above all women must be charming, a little flirtatious.

Apparently Senator Bingham had been a girlhood beau some fifteen or twenty years before. He asked us to lunch in the Senate dining room and the conversation roamed far from the amendment. I don't remember which way Senator Bingham voted or what report she or I made but I was painfully conscious that it was a frivolous lunch rather than a political one, and that valuable time was being wasted. Yet, even then I realized that the very fact Alice Movius had come to see him about the amendment would have impressed Senator Bingham. Miss Paul understood these subtleties.

### Soliciting Support

That winter of 1918-1919 we built up the organization in New York. We had many interested people working steadfastly; we organized a series of Sunday supper meetings at which we got important people to speak and gave women an opportunity to bring friends who were not yet interested or active. We got some consistent publicity. We would help the Washington officers who came to New York, such as Doris Stevens, and Anita Pollitzer, who soon became nationally known, and always Miss Paul, whenever she came. We were their liaison. New York Headquarters was frightfully important, since it was in the largest, most influential city. We made appointments for them, arranged for them to see women who might help if they were sought out.



Reyher: Sometimes they read or heard of a woman they sent me to see. There were many of these single interviews in many places. Miss Paul had received a letter from a complete stranger enclosing ten dollars or twenty-five dollars from an address on Fifty-seventh Street. Promptly I was asked to go see her and ask her for \$500. Mrs. Floyd Williams, Margaret C. Williams, not only gave me \$500 after a lunch with her son and daughter, to whom she announced with a sunny twinkle, "This young woman has just asked me for \$500," but also she became the New York City Treasurer [of the Woman's Party], and kept all the books with the help of her bank. Eventually she was a member of the National Council and one of our staunchest supporters.

I was not always so successful.

Some years later when I was no longer on the NWP staff, I was doing a story for the Herald Tribune magazine section, "A Dish to Set Before a King," and I was interviewing famous hostesses who had entertained the Prince of Wales, among them Mrs. John Henderson [Mary Newton Foote], who lived in a magnificent high-perched house known as the Henderson Castle. I was staying at the Woman's Party Headquarters in Washington.

Fry: Was this the same Mrs. Henderson who was the radical Woman's Party member in Boston?

Reyher: No, this was another Mrs. Henderson. Mrs. Henderson of Washington, D. C.

Miss Paul extracted a promise from me that I would try to get Mrs. Henderson to give the new historic Headquarters an antique or some memento from one historic Washington landmark to another. Ever-practical Miss Paul called after me that Headquarters could even use a bathroom mirror.

Mrs. Henderson greeted me by remarking, "You young women are shameless, exposing your legs so." I had fancied my simple navy dress, a little below the knee, embroidered in pale grey, with matching pale grey stockings and blue slippers. Mrs. Henderson, plumpish, was encased in trailing layers of black lace and chiffon from which a black toe barely peeped forth.

I got the story because she was proud of her menus, and with it a lecture on healthful diets and foods. Triscuits had not yet become generally known. Mrs. Henderson had her butler bring me a few on a silver salver to taste. She insisted I take a few home to get used and habituated to them. That is all I carried away with me!



Reyher: Even Miss Paul, not always given to humor, laughed merrily when I handed her the fruits of my visit.

I traveled throughout New York State on several trips. On one trip upstate, in Rochester, I saw Mrs. Gannett, mother of Lewis Gannett, the literary critic, whose wife, many years later, did the illustrations for my mother book that I showed you. Mrs. Gannett was very active in her community. She took me in to see her husband, thirty years older than she, a venerable, long white-haired figure, the retired minister of the Unitarian Church. The family had been pioneers in abolition and in equal rights and suffrage, and had been close friends of Susan B. Anthony. Dr. Gannett, a Biblical patriarch of another century, told me how happy he was to see that "young people were branching out on Susan's work." I went on many automobile trips to try to get newspaper and local attention in many places, to gain small, local strongholds. It was sporadic and scattered.

There was always the problem of publicity, how to keep the public constantly aware of existing discriminations, and the urgent need for a suffrage amendment to give women necessary political power, and then to remove the existing political, social, and economic discriminations.

We had to plan programs, to constantly make news newsworthy. Miss Paul was skilled in guiding newspapers and women whose support would guarantee a story, if presented in a fresh way. Society departments in strategic cities were depended on to produce columns of news space. We were expected to cultivate reporters and journalists to get their advice and cooperation.

There was neither TV nor radio; we depended on newspapers to provide news. Monday was a bad day for news, for supposedly little happened on weekends, and papers were short staffed. Reporters were grateful for stories they could rely on and did not have to work for. I got to be quite expert at writing for special newspapers, in their style, and almost always could depend on some space in a Monday paper.

While I was in New York State, Silas Bent, a well-known author who wrote several books, heard from the newspapermen that I was working very hard and bombarding them with stories; he came to Headquarters and interviewed me. He did the first New York Times Sunday Magazine story, using me as sort of a "hook" to hang the story of all the discriminations against women. It was a big spread, and an important article by a very well-known journalist, so good that my husband who used to play cards with him at different places, ran across him in Grand Central Station, and laughingly charged, "So you have been sending flowers to my wife."



Reyher: Silas Bent looked at him in bewilderment. I used my own name, and he sent Rebecca Hourwich yellow roses in gratitude for the story, and he didn't even know I was married to Ferdy Reyher.

Actually this incident may have occurred later when I went to reactivate the New York office in 1922, since the article was on discriminations rather than the fight for suffrage.

Fry: There seems to have been a break in your work for the Woman's Party from 1919 to 1921. What happened during those years?

Reyher: I got sick after that Woodrow Wilson demonatration. I had a very bad cold, and it looked as if I were going to have pneumonia, maybe lose the baby. Anyway, I didn't. Miss Paul, and everybody, kept calling me because there was so much follow-up to do at Headquarters. When would I come back to Headquarters? I may have gone back to Headquarters for two or three days, I don't remember, but at the end of March I never again went back to that Headquarters in New York. After the birth of my baby, I did go back, later, but in a different arrangement.

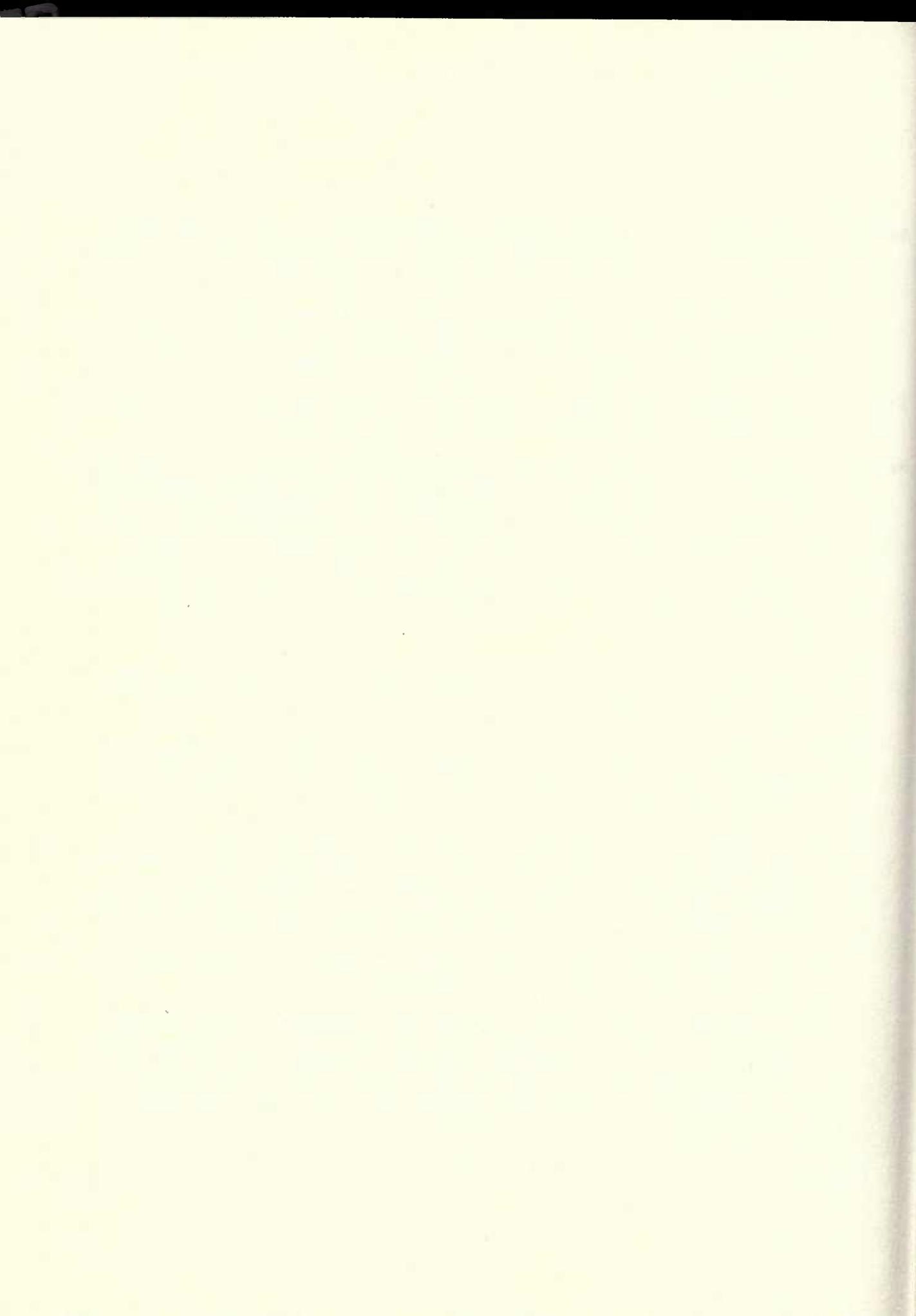
Faith was born May 1919. I nearly died of hemorrhaging. The year after Faith was born I remained in the country and looked after her, and recovered my strength.

The fall of 1920, and the academic year 1920-1921, I studied at the New York School of Social Work. My husband was in Europe; and Faith, her nurse, and I lived with my family.

After that year's study at the New York School of Social Work, 1920-1921, and the following summer at the University of Chicago, to try to get my university record in line for a degree, I realized my husband was not coming back from Europe at the time promised, and that I was faced with getting a job to support myself and Faith.

I wrote Miss Paul and asked if she could use me in New York so that I could have Faith with me, or nearby.

Preparatory to reactivating the New York Headquarters Miss Paul suggested I come to Washington for a few weeks and familiarize myself with the vast amount of research that had already been done on the discriminations against women in the various states, and the direction and emphasis the national campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment was taking.



Washington Office, 1921: Press Department

Fry: Do you have any impressions of what was happening at the Washington Headquarters in 1921?

Reyher: Upstairs was the bailiwick of the press department, and my temporary desk was set in their midst. I have only a composite impression of this press department. Here were some of the most colorful and dynamic women in the National Woman's Party, generating an air of excitement and drama on their own. It was here I first met Eleanor Taylor, once a red-headed rebel at Vassar, now married to Ben Marsh, twenty years her senior, a distinguished lobbyist for some liberal labor group. At that time Eleanor was the mother of a four-year-old son.

Florence Brewer Boeckel was Mabel Vernon's particular friend. Throughout Florence's life, when Mabel and Florence were no longer active with the Woman's Party, any piece of writing for the Peoples Mandate Committee, or for any occasion, Florence wrote for Mabel, or advised her on it. A former newspaperwoman, she was married to Dick Boeckel, a Washington-based newspaperman. Later they both together edited a very successful Washington newsletter. Florence always wore large-brimmed picture hats, and had a romantic, very feminine aura; but actually it was camouflage for hard-headed precision.

Pauline Clark, a classic-featured blonde, very involved in the editorial department, married Clinton Gilbert, a Washington columnist for a chain of newspapers. She left the National Woman's Party for a well-paid government job in economics and labor research, retiring to New York, her original base, many years later on a handsome pension to support her daughter, after Gilbert's death.

Betty Gram, a National Woman's Party lobbyist, was being courted by Raymond Swing. When they married, and even after their divorce, he continued to use her surname as his middle name. He became the well-known, international radio commentator, Raymond Gram Swing.

There were others, but I can't remember them offhand, and the ones I remember were life-long friends.

Miss Paul never felt quite comfortable with these workers. They left telltale cigarettes around, and though they were restricted to smoking in their enclaves, their potentially politically dangerous fumes permeated the lower floors, she complained. Miss Paul was convinced that the majority of Americans would regard women smoking as dangerously radical, and it would lose support for the amendment if key workers at Headquarters were smokers.



Reyher: Some of the Headquarters press women belonged to a dining club that met regularly, and for the few weeks I was there Eleanor Taylor arranged for me to join them. Once a tall, distinguished lawyer and his artist wife were there, and when I asked who they were, I was told the Dean Achesons.

I felt that that small original group of women writers had established far-flung lines penetrating the current of national politics. But what I was most impressed by was that this little group of married women writers were successfully combining professional work with a home and family life, and they had their children with them. However, they had sympathetic husbands, and two incomes, so that they could afford domestic help, usually black and then very inexpensive.

Eleanor Taylor's problems and solutions at that time, and in later years, were particularly interesting. She and Ben and their son Michael lived in a cooperatively-run house of several families, the well-known economist Stuart Chase among them. By the time Michael was seven or eight Eleanor and Ben had a little daughter, Ursula, and had separated. Eleanor, Ursula, and the maid moved to New York where Eleanor became a very well-paid, successful copy writer at J. Walter Thompson, an advertising agency for which I also later worked.

Ben insisted on keeping Michael. Ben was away all day and Michael lived with friends of Ben's. Every two weeks Ben permitted Michael to come to New York for the weekend, and Michael always begged to stay with Eleanor, his baby sitter, and the maid he had known for years. Eleanor had to abide by the terms of the agreement and send Michael home to Ben. Many a Monday morning Eleanor would come to the office washroom, her face ravaged from weeping. I felt so deeply for her and so enraged at Ben standing on his legal rights as a father that I would have to take cover for a few tears of my own.

Suspicious of Activists in Early Twenties: Security for Harding Address

Fry: Were you in that delegation of a hundred women who went to see President Harding in April of 1921?

Reyher: I don't think so, in fact, I am sure not, but I was in Washington, later, when the Woman's Party had an outdoor meeting in front of Headquarters that President Harding was due to address. All sorts of platforms were built outside for the audience, and that would indicate that Harding was sufficiently friendly to come and speak for and to us.



Reyher: But what I remember most vividly were the security preparations. We had to empty the house of all personnel, guests and workers, all domestic servants, and all service personnel of the most casual kind. The Secret Service came in and closed off all the closets, locked rooms behind them, made sure that there was no one in the building, and then put other guards on top of the buildings, so that nobody, if they had managed to hide, could throw something from one of the open windows.

At that time our Headquarters were directly on the street--I think it was First Street--one of a series of attached houses since torn down. The NWP bought the present Headquarters since then. At that time you walked in off the street, up a very high stoop, to but one house. But in each of the series there were three or four floors, above the level where the speaker's stand would be. If somebody were so minded, they could easily have thrown something on Harding from one of the other houses.

It was an experience to remember. Every one of our women, regardless of who they were, every one of the household servants, had to be put out of the house, could not remain in it for X amount of time before the meeting, and for so much time after. I am using this as an indication that regardless of the fact that such precautions had to be taken, this was going to be, nevertheless, a fairly unguarded meeting. Harding did come and speak at this outdoor meeting for us on the steps of the Woman's Party Headquarters. Just exactly what the date was, I don't know.

Fry: I wonder if those precautions were normal or if they felt that the Woman's Party might be too activist and therefore threatening, more threatening than other organizations. Do you have any sense of that?

Reyher: No, I didn't have that feeling at all because even at that time a President was heavily guarded, and it was so obvious that a President was going to speak with a backdrop of private residences, with nothing behind him, so that it seemed to me that these were just normal precautions. It was just that I was interested in the nature of the precautions that were taken.

Of course, at that time, during the Harding administration, I think Mitchell Palmer was Attorney General for Harding. True, Mitchell Palmer's administration had the worst red-baiting, and the worst Communist scare to date. It was the beginning of what lasted a long time, and has never really left us.

One of the beaux that I had had when I was still a high school girl was a young man called Robert Scott. He was then doing what so many young men did--studying law at night, and working for a Congressman.



Reyher: By this time, however, he was in the Attorney General's office, and was the Assistant Secretary to Mr. Palmer. I remember teasing him, "I understand your office thinks that we are just a bunch of Reds. Is that what you think?"

"You know perfectly well that if we did think that, I wouldn't tell you," he replied, laughingly.

Fry: That brings up this spider web chart that I have here on one of these notes. You probably saw it. That was put out--and they felt at the time there was this connection between ex-Senator Wadsworth's wife and John Weeks, the Secretary of War. Because Mrs. Wadsworth was head of the national association opposed to women's suffrage, she had been the head of that, and I guess the periodical that she put out was still going in the early twenties, and it was very much a Red--

Reyher: Let me just reply to that the only way that I would be able to. There was a very definite Red scare beginning with the twenties. They were trying to smear the Woman's Party along with all other organizations that were trying to change what today is called the Establishment, and in those days was called the "status quo." It didn't make any difference what you were trying to do or what your actual goals were. It is also perfectly true that some of the women who were very strong anti-suffragists were hard-core conservatives. But on the other hand, just because a woman was an anti-suffragist, didn't mean that she was necessarily a Red-baiter. Mrs. Taft was an anti-suffragist, a lot of the women who had been brought up to believe that that was not the role for women were. For the most part they were harmless, as were their arguments, and even their campaign as far as the Woman's Party was concerned. Most of us laughed at them and believed them harmless. Some of the young women who were working as organizers in the Woman's Party did have radical affiliations. There is no question about it. But when I say radical affiliations, they were not involved in radical movements. For instance, Joy Young was married to Merrill Rogers who had been on the editorial board of the magazine that was put out at that time by Max Eastman--

Fry: The New Masses?

Reyher: The New Masses. And I don't believe that any other person connected with the Woman's Party had as close and definite a link as that. But insofar as I know, Joy was not at all involved in the New Masses and no one who worked for the Woman's Party actively was involved in any other kind of radical campaign. Because one of the things that Miss Paul was adamant about--the only way we are going to be able to have the Equal Rights Amendment passed is if we stick to the issue of equal rights only.



Reactivating the New York Branch, 1922

Fry: Your aim at this time was to get some money in the till and have your daughter with or near you, that was why you wanted to work in New York, wasn't it?

Reyher: Yes. It was after those weeks in Washington from September or October to Christmas in 1921, that I came back, in the spring of 1922, to reactivate the New York branch which had no headquarters--the suffrage amendment having passed, the work for the Equal Rights Amendment not having fully expanded.

Helen Todd, a striking-looking artist, had persuaded Otto Kahn, a noted benefactor of the arts, to endow an inexpensive home for writers, sculptors, and painters. Located in the Village, the several brownstone houses thrown into one were pleasant looking, but inside they were bleak and barren of all but rudimentary comforts.

Since I had no apartment in New York at the time, someone at Washington Headquarters suggested I put up at Helen Todd's temporarily while phoning a long list of members to see how much support I could get to establish a new New York City Headquarters. The only available phone at Helen's for me to use was on a wall in a hallway, and some of the tenants complained about my monopolizing it. And I found it difficult to stand for hours.

I took my problem to Mrs. John Winters Brannan, a Board member, who was always helpful and had a delightful sense of humor. Her apartment on the upper East Side was sunny, a symphony of damask brocades, oriental rugs, and gleaming, well-kept antiques. She sat proud and erect among them, a crown of upswept grey-white hair culminating in a topknot emphasizing brown, sparkly eyes stern and merry by turn.

"You come here and phone, Rebecca," she urged. "But I can't offer much more than Miss Todd, for I couldn't stand hearing you all day. Your voice carries. But if you don't mind, I'll fix you up in the bathroom, for that has a strong door and it is shut away from my part of the house. We'll see if the phone cord is long enough." It was!

I don't remember how many days I was closeted in the bathroom, but I raised enough pledges for a small rent for a temporary headquarters.



### Sidney Colestock's House

Reyher: Sidney Colestock was running a well-kept rooming house and restaurant on Sixteenth Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, across the street from a Jesuit academy. This temporary New York Headquarters I chose in the spring of 1922, though "way down-town" for our Board members, had distinct advantages approved by Miss Paul. It was in a unique small pension-type of hotel, could be rented by the month, and had a switchboard. That meant if I were not there--and to start with I could be the only office staff--messages would be taken. We need commit ourselves for a month at a time, and once installed we were ready for immediate action. Conversely, we could leave on short notice when ready.

Since I planned to live in the hotel, and the money available in the New York City treasury of the Woman's Party was nonexistent until I raised some, Miss Paul agreed to my renting the large parlor floor living room, very light with fireplace, large desk, good closet space and bathroom, for about sixty dollars a month. I believe I contributed about thirty dollars a month--half--for also using it as my living quarters.

The house had a distinct clientele and atmosphere. As in the house where Helen Todd lived, three large brownstone houses had been converted into one establishment. There was a sprinkling of tasteful antiques, a good restaurant with outdoor garden, a tenancy of writers, editors, and social workers of various sorts, as the owner and presiding genius was Sidney Colestock, a retired well-known social worker.

Several incidents marked my stay on Sixteenth Street. Various friends followed me there as a convenient hotel-type residence but much less expensive. I spent the week in the office, and on the weekends went to see Faith, who was living across the Hudson River with my parents with Eliza Glover, her nurse, to look after her.

Since her clientele were notoriously casual, Miss Colestock, who had her own apartment on the premises, was adamant about not answering the doorbell herself after ten P.M. when the switchboard was shut down and the house was shut up for the night. Consequently, there was barely a night that someone did not stand in front of the three houses and call out to rouse friend or neighbor to let them in, because they had forgotten their key. They were men, chiefly, but sometimes women. Some I knew by sight from seeing them in the restaurant, some I knew to greet, and many were not even acquaintances.

But since I sympathized about lost or forgotten keys, and since my room was on the floor above the main entrance door, and my couch



Reyher: bed abutted into a window directly above it, I got into the habit of leaning out, and if I knew one of the lock-outs, dropping my key out of the window with the admonition, "Just leave the key outside my door."

Occasionally I noticed that the policeman on the beat was apparently watching and aware of my help. Sometimes a plain-clothes man, whom I thought was a neighbor, joined the policeman, and they exchanged a few words.

One night, there were heavy footsteps in the hall, and a pounding on my door. I was awakened and frightened as they were double parlor doors with an ordinary lock and key, and two determined men could easily have pushed them in.

"We want in," they demanded, while I cowered in bed wondering what to do, as the switchboard was off, and there were no other tenants on my floor. If I called for help, no one would hear me.

Finally in sheer bravado and anger at my fear, I called, "I will not open the door. Get out before I call the police."

I looked out the window and the usual policeman was not there. The men stomped out and I noticed as they came out the front door that they were policemen!

Next morning at seven o'clock Miss Colestock called me on the phone, which was unusual, and in a cold, impersonal voice asked me to come to her office as soon as I could dress. She said it was urgent.

Sitting with her when I came in were two policemen. Miss Colestock did not waste time on formalities.

"Miss Hourwich," she said, "These policemen are accusing me of running a house of prostitution, and they claim you drop your key for all entrants."

I was truly taken aback and frightened at what suddenly seemed such easy material to build into a case. But an underlying teasing thought was giving me angry courage.

We had been campaigning on the injustice of the law pertaining to prostitutes, proclaiming that though it took two to perform an act of prostitution, the men always went free while the woman was held guilty. As the New York State NWP organizer I was a vigorous campaigner on this issue. The Tenth Street Night Court where prostitutes were booked was only six blocks away. Often I had gone there to watch the proceedings and my indignation at the police and their handling of the women never flagged. I had a burgeoning thought that I was being framed by my own careless stupidity.



Reyher:

Miss Colestock, conducting the interview with the police, told them that I did not realize I had jeopardized the safety and reputation of her house by well-meaning, ill-considered kindness to key losers, that she could assure them it would not happen again, and then before dismissing them, pulled a little rank on them by bluntly stating that they better check with their captain about who she, Sidney Colestock, was and how highly regarded in the community.

When the police left she told me that as a young girl I had no concept of the fine line between decency and crime, and to what length certain elements would go. She did not clarify her statements and I was too confused and upset to linger for a discussion in abstractions, but I think she, too, was hinting at an attempted frame-up.

However, I promised never to pass out my key again, and I covered in bed and pretended to be asleep when I heard calls by key losers.

This was not my only brush with prostitution. Later when I was running the Chicago Headquarters I noticed that the prostitutes there were booked in a court held in a room on the upper floor of a downtown centrally-located office building, and were escorted out handcuffed in an elevator with ordinary passengers all of whom stared, and some passed nasty, loud remarks.

I wanted to see what an arrested prostitute encountered, and as I had published some articles, and was seriously interested in the prostitutes' treatment, Judge Hugo Pam of the Superior Court, a friend, arranged for me to be booked as a prostitute--but not of record--to get the full procedure and treatment.\*

I, too, came down in the elevator and looked down hoping no one I knew would catch me in this role. I was pushed and shoved into the patrol wagon, and mauled by medical examiners on arrival at the jail.

---

\*RHR wrote at least two articles on the subject of injustice to prostitutes. In "The Ends of Justice," Equal Rights, 5 December 1925, she focused on a "scarlet woman" in a small Maine town who had gotten a "rotten deal" when all the responsibility for venereal disease was placed on her. In "They Call it Justice," Equal Rights, 9 January 1926, she wrote of her experience in court, in the Black Maria, and in the detention center when she arranged to have herself booked as a prostitute in order to understand what happened to women in such a situation. [Ed.]



Reyher:

Less than twenty-four hours of it left me even more bitter that the prostitutes' customers were free of any punishment, while the prostitute paid the full penalty.

The temporary Headquarters in Sidney Colestock's house may have been too far downtown for members of the Board but not for the newspaper people. In those days the Woman's Party was considered newsworthy and reporters always kept in touch with us. Among those who drifted in shortly after we opened was a plump young reporter from the Evening Mail who wrote a very good story, Mary Margaret McBride, a novice.

In later years, when Mary Margaret was the top woman broadcaster, she never forgot that we were both young and obscure together, and whenever I published a book she put me on her star program.

#### Mutual Concern of Woman's Party Workers

The Woman's Party did not remain long at Sidney Colestock's house, only a few months, but while there it served as a living headquarters for other Woman's Party women coming to New York. Among them was Vivian Pierce who was beginning to lay the ground for her national organization, the American League to Abolish Capital Punishment. She worked alone, coralled a few volunteers to help, and later moved to California from where she established a highly successful organization, which was responsible for abolition in several states.

At the house she seemed listless, and hardly able to push herself through the day. Mary Gertrude Fendall, former National Treasurer of the NWP, came to see her, took her to a doctor, and confirmed her suspicions. Vivian was suffering a recurrence of an earlier tubercular condition. Six months' immediate bed rest would check it, otherwise she might become seriously and fatally ill.

Vivian had no money, or anyone in her family to help her. Mary Gertrude began organizing a campaign. She got Doris Stevens, who was not using her comfortable heated house in Croton, about an hour from New York City, to lend it for treatment headquarters. Mary Gertrude said she would take Vivian there and act as nurse and housekeeper. But money would have to be raised for medical care, drugs, and living expenses. All this had to be done quickly and quietly so as not to hurt Vivian's pride and arouse her opposition to anything that smacked of dependence.



Reyher:

Mary Gertrude kept the names of the donors secret. I only know that this was not presented as a money-raising scheme to some of the heavy donors. Vivian's colleagues put up the money that cured her, money that none of us could normally have spared. My share was fifty dollars a month for four months out of a \$200-a-month salary. I had to borrow the money.

#### Meeting with Lady Rhondda

It was the spring of 1922 when the temporary New York City Woman's Party Headquarters, of which I was in charge, were in Sidney Colestock's houses on Sixteenth Street. Alice Paul, National Chairman, usually called in the evening if she had something special on her mind. This time she got me before I had had breakfast.

Lady Rhondda, she told me, was in the United States on a hurried trip to publicize her claim to inherit her father's seat in the British House of Lords, as she was his only heir, and had already inherited his title and vast fortune, and to promote her magazine Time and Tide.

Miss Paul had urged Lady Rhondda to come to Washington but she regretted that she could not, nor speak in New York at a hurriedly arranged meeting for her. Rather, she countered, could not someone come up and see her at her Connecticut hotel, and the Woman's Party arrange to publicize an interview with her explaining the purpose of her American visit?

Miss Paul was calling to tell me she had made an appointment for tea for me with Lady Rhondda at four that afternoon. She had told her I had had very good luck with the New York papers, and assured her that with her limited time that was the best solution because it would be impossible to arrange for a well-known newspaper or syndicate to send one of their reporters on such short notice.

I put the phone down and wrote the exact address of the hotel and town. It barely registered that it was in the New London area.

There were always immediate morning chores to be done. This day the phone kept ringing unceasingly with pressing trivia. About noon I got off to Grand Central and opened my purse to discover I had forgotten I had planned to go to the bank that morning, and I had with me less than ten dollars, barely more than five. The only train I could take would leave almost immediately, I was headed beyond the suburban area--I cannot remember the exact town, but my plan to grab a glass of milk, or a cup of coffee at a quicky lunch counter was washed out.



Reyher: During the approximate two-hour journey, I was beginning to be very hungry, but comforted myself that some hot tea and lovely little sandwiches would be waiting for me.

I figured I had enough money for a taxi to and from the station to the hotel, usually a dollar. On arrival I went to the station agent and explained my dilemma, I had no ticket to get back to New York. I offered to leave my watch or fountain pen as security until I could send him a check.

The station agent, a kindly middle-aged man, refused the security, gave me a ticket, assured me it was illegal, said he would pay for it himself, and would trust me to send the check.

Somewhat less agonized I drove to the sprawling hotel that had a large veranda overlooking the sea, set up with immaculate and inviting tea tables.

The headwaiter was expecting me and said Lady Rhondda had been delayed but had asked that I go ahead and have tea without her, and that she would join me as soon as she could.

But suppose she couldn't make it, I instantly thought. The waiter had not said ingratiatingly that Lady Rhondda had arranged for me to have tea, and what if she didn't show up until tea was way over and I was expected to pay for my own tea? I couldn't risk it. I had no money to pay for it.

Practically starving by now, I waited in the lobby to catch Lady Rhondda as she came in. Only in retrospect did I realize that she was deliberately snubbing me, and indirectly Miss Paul, and the Woman's Party, for not doing better by her.

Businesslike, breezy, she dashed in, saying, "Have you had your tea? I am sorry to be so late, but I am about to leave the country and everything seems to pile up."

Tea was not mentioned again and hurriedly, and disjointedly Lady Rhondda told me her story, but very efficiently produced her fact sheets. She knew that the only train I could get back before late that evening--and she was not inviting me to dinner--would be leaving in a matter of minutes, and she talked fast and to the point.

I found her brusque, self-centered, rather heavy and stocky, utterly humorless. Unlike American feminists she made utterly no concession to fashion. Her hair was pulled back, her suit was well tailored, but dull, and no one would ever have given her a second glance. Nothing about her suggested her commanding position, consuming ambition, dynamic energy, or imaginative initiative. At



Reyher: first glance she seemed commonplace, and ordinary. Her story was arresting, but she was not. Only the logic of her claim to a seat in the House of Lords, and her determination to get it, were impressive.

I caught the seven-something train back to New York, sat by the window, and tried to sleep. I was beginning to be sick with hunger. A man came and sat beside me and soon moved away muttering to the man in front, "She must be crazy," for I had started my standard speech on equal rights--"Did you know that?" listing a long list of discriminations--to rebuff a pick-up, knowing that would get rid of him quickly.

When I got to New York I think I took the Sixth Avenue bus for 5¢ instead of the Fifth Avenue bus for 10¢. Anyway, I spent my last cent for carfare. Sidney Colestock's restaurant was closed and it was too late to call someone to take me out to eat. I have always remembered it as the hungriest day of my life.

The story I wrote next day made all the papers as a news item and the Christian Science Monitor carried it on the front page giving me a by-line.

Lady Rhondda's aristocratic and prestigious background did not suggest the fiery feminist she would become. Born Margaret Haig Thomas in London in 1883, she was the only child of David Alfred Thomas, later Viscount Rhondda, and his wife, Sybil Margaret, daughter of George Augustus Haig, a member of the noted family to which Earl Haig belonged. Educated by governesses as a child, she was sufficiently enterprising and imaginative to start and print her own magazine, the Shooting Star, for her limited circle of readers, her family. At her insistence she was sent to boarding school in her early teens, which she thoroughly enjoyed. Later for three years she was a London debutante, which she apparently hated. This was followed by one year at Oxford.

In 1908 she married Sir Humphrey Mackworth, whom she divorced in 1923. Though she had been brought up a Liberal, because her husband was a Conservative, she joined his party. But early in her marriage she ceased being interested in party politics, though her father was an active politician, and apparently also lost interest in both her marriage and her husband. Despite her extremely conventional background she was part of the early militant suffrage movement, and served five days in prison on hunger strikes for setting fire to a mailbox with a chemical bomb.

From the beginning of her active participation in the woman's movement she wrote frequent articles supporting it, and referred to it always as her real education. I learned all this from the story she gave me.



Reyher:

Her father, she insisted, was her other major source of education, for he made her his personal assistant and proxy in his vast coal and other corporate interests. Both father and daughter traveled back to England from the United States on the Lusitania when it was torpedoed in World War I, in 1915, and Lady Rhondda floated in a life belt for three hours before she was rescued unconscious. Almost losing her life left a deep impression on her. She felt that her life had been saved to give it additional purpose and direction. In later life she became deeply religious, a conscious, devout Christian.

In 1918, a month before he died, Lord Rhondda, a Baron, was created a Viscount, with the title passing to his daughter. While still a young woman Lady Rhondda inherited both her father's title and vast business interests. Immediately Lady Rhondda, who controlled and directed her father's vast estate, laid claim to his seat in the House of Lords. Her claim was a landmark case and is included in all histories of the House of Lords and the British Constitution.

She claimed that her disqualification as a peeress in her own right from sitting in the House of Lords was part of the general disqualification of women from public office which had been changed by the Sex Disqualification Removal Act of 1919.

The claim was disallowed by the Committee of Privileges of the House of Lords. The decision was based on the premise that if Parliament had intended such an important constitutional change as an alteration of the composition of the legislature, it would have done so expressly, and that the exclusion of women from the House of Lords was not an incapacity of women but a characteristic inherent in the legal nature of a peerage. The latter was the view of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Birkenhead, who has always been held responsible for her defeat.

The first election at which women voted in England was in 1918, when they had to be thirty years old. Now the qualification for both men and women is eighteen.

In the Act of 1958, Parliament created a new system of life peerages available to women. A distinction exists between life and hereditary peerages. In the House of Lords of about a thousand hereditary members, only about one-fourth are peers. Hereditary peers are a very small number and are not usually women. The Peerage Act of 1963 concerned hereditary peerages.

Lady Rhondda died in 1958 and never was able to take advantage of the acts opening the House of Lords to women.



Reyher: When I saw Lady Rhondda she was equally concerned with the magazine she had founded in 1920, Time and Tide. I remember it as a very lively, interesting magazine, a very well-known, left-wing, feminist weekly; but after some years it was neither left-wing nor feminist.

At the peak of its popularity Time and Tide commanded international attention. Individual freedom and opposition to tyranny were its basic tenets. Bernard Shaw so respected the magazine and its founder that he never accepted any payment for his frequent contributions. G. K. Chesterton, Rebecca West, and Gilbert Murray were among the many well-known writers who contributed to it regularly. Theodora Bosanquet, Lady Rhondda's close friend and companion, Sir John Betjeman, and C. V. Wedgewood were on the staff. Lady Rhondda was both editor and publisher, though at the beginning she started with a staff editor.

Lady Rhondda poured money into the magazine but it never became self-supporting. In 1958 the magazine was saved temporarily from bankruptcy by some of its friends and readers. By then it had become conservative, anti-Communist, and hardly aware of the feminist struggle. Lady Rhondda valiantly but unsuccessfully tried to find new support, preferably a buyer with friends to carry on. In July 1958 when she suddenly died in London she had spent about a quarter of a million pounds on the magazine, her personal funds were exhausted, and there was not enough money to cover the major legacies of her will.

For thirty-eight years Time and Tide had been her absorbing passion. Even they who did not agree with her, or who were rebuffed by her aggressive insistence on single-minded devotion to the magazine such as hers, conceded that she had courageously carried on, never acknowledging the possibility of defeat. Nobility of purpose and political acumen were considered her greatest assets. In 1933, her autobiography, This Was My World, was published, which delineated her philosophy of life. Even in the short time I had with her I realized that she was inimitable, a distinct personality, a most unusual woman.

When Hazel Hunkins-Hallinan, for many years Chairman of Britain's Six Point Group, the historic leading feminist amalgamation of Britain, was in New York on a recent visit, I asked her what had been her impression of Lady Rhondda.

"Oh, I never was close to her. I was just a tea-bearer in those days"--the British equivalent of "go-for girls."

I realized then that Lady Rhondda felt that she had rated at least a reporter from the New York Times to be sent to interview her, and she was miffed by a whipper-snapper tea-bearer sent instead.



Reyher:       The Monitor front-page story and the news items were sent Lady Rhondda by Miss Paul, but I never heard from her again--nor did I every try to see her when in England or try to contribute to Time and Tide.

Seeing her gave me one quirk of wry amusement. As a child growing up in a Washington whose papers still gave a great deal of space to the social life of the diplomats and government officials, I read constantly of Lords and Ladies and felt deprived that I had never seen one. I asked my father why we never had Lords and Ladies in our home.

"Because we do not move in those circles," was his reply.

Aged thirteen, I wailed, "But I would like to see one."

Ever sympathetic to childish yearning, Father thought he had a solution.

"You know Baron Korff is a member of our Economic Circle. We meet each month at different homes. It will soon be our turn and I will ask your mother to bring you down and I will introduce you."

"But I don't want a Baron. I want a Lord or a Lady."

Since my family could not help me, I decided I would find my own solution. I read a notice in one of the local papers that a Lord So-and-so (his name is no longer even a memory) was planning to conduct a limited group on a European tour and would be glad to call on anyone interested. Promptly I wrote him and told him I would be interested in having him call on me.

On a sunny afternoon while I was in school, Mother was gardening in our modest little front yard when a gentleman with stick and gloves stopped her and asked if she could direct him to Miss Rebecca Hourwich. Instantly Mother thought, "What shenanigans has Becky been up to?" She managed to give the Lord a cup of tea and some sort of abject apology as well as explanation. Her withering scorn of my lack of consideration of a man of serious purpose to satisfy my silly obsession remains with me to this day.

Lady Rhondda was my first encounter with a Lady! Not long after, two or three years, I went to South Africa, then a British colony, and met many Lords and Ladies, and banished forever that lingering childish fantasy. In today's world, the titled mingle and work with the rest of us and are no longer seemingly a group apart, not even to a child.



Illness, Recuperation, and Continued Work

Fry: Did you stay in the combination living-working quarters on Sixteenth Street?

Reyher: I chose that combination living and working headquarters on Sixteenth Street because it was cheap and the National Woman's Party still had no money. I ran that headquarters without a secretary, concentrating on arranging and holding drawing-room meetings. That fall of 1922 we opened mid-town headquarters, which I ran.

One of our most active volunteers, Adelaide Stedman, coveted my job--not openly, but in ways uncomfortable to me. She was older, and had cultivated presence. She spoke holding a red rose.

She arranged a series of effective supper meetings which increased membership and money. It was not my style. I wanted to go around the state publicizing discriminations and widening our support.

I became physically uncomfortable in the office, fidgeted in my chair. Mrs. John Winters Brannan, one of our most distinguished Board members, was married to Dr. Brannan, who was either Director or one of the controlling voices in Bellevue Hospital, a noted physician. Mrs. Brannan told him about me and he said I should go see Dr. Frederick Holden, a leading gynecologist, later President of the American Birth Control Society.

Dr. Holden told me that I had not had proper treatment after my hemorrhaging, when Faith was born, that a slumbering infection had fired up and that most doctors would operate and perform a hysterectomy, but that he preferred to put me to bed flat on my back for a few months. I lay in bed for six months and was completely cured, but I was in pain and badly frightened as Dr. Holden said that I would never again be able to do more than half a day's work. Obviously I had to resign my job at the Woman's Party.

Although I listened attentively to Dr. Holden at the time, I never followed his regimen in later years. I have worked like a horse twenty hours a day some days, with very little vacation, and I have had my ups and downs from the point of view of health; but I have kept going all these years.

I have earned my living, and that was what was important to me. I was definitely not going to be a semi-invalid who would have to be coddled because that was against all the plans that I had made.



Reyher: In the spring of 1923, after some months in bed, I took my daughter's nurse--who is part of my story\* because if I had not had her, through all the jobs I did, I never would have done them--and with Faith I took a cottage in Provincetown [Massachusetts].

That summer of 1923, when I was in Provincetown, Miss Paul phoned me and asked if I could help organize the commemoration of the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention. I spent several weeks there, and left Faith with Eliza in Provincetown.

That fall I went to Chicago to establish and run the Woman's Party Headquarters. It nearly broke my heart to leave Faith, whom I left with her father. I had so enjoyed being with her most of the previous year. After the months in Chicago, I never went back to working for the Woman's Party full time except for snatches of time.\*\*

I went to Africa in the summer of 1924.

---

\*See Section XII PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS.

\*\*A letter from Alma Lutz, writer of many biographies of women and an active Woman's Party worker for equal rights, to Rebecca Hourwich, dated 28 June 1930, indicates the way RHR was asked to do "spot jobs" in later years. She writes:

At the suggestion of Mrs. Wiley and with the hearty approval of the Massachusetts Committee I am writing to ask you if you will organize for us this fall preparatory to the Regional Conference which is to be held in Boston in November. So far as I know, the definite date has not been decided upon. I understand your salary would be fifty dollars a week and half would be raised by the National Council and half by the Massachusetts Branch. I do hope that you can accept.

On the back of the letter, RHR has penned, "This was long after I worked for the NWP regularly and had worked for the J. W. Thompson Agency. But Miss Paul and others always tried to get me for spot jobs."



## VI HEADING THE CHICAGO OFFICE 1923-1924

Seneca Falls Meeting, 1923: Equal Rights vs. Protective Legislation

Reyher: The summer of 1923 there would be the Seneca Falls commemoration of the first Woman's Rights Congress, so a pageant and other events were planned. Miss Paul phoned me and asked me if I would go to Seneca Falls [New York] to help with preparations, because by now I had done other sporadic things for her since the time I worked in the New York office. In Maine I have detailed notes on the Seneca Falls meeting. It was a several-day conference, and I went to help with the hard-core organization, to help people who were planning it to get speakers to places on time, to get things moving smoothly, to coordinate details, to help the organizers of the pageant, to make the community aware of every event, to make certain the publicity reached the papers, local and outside. After all these years I can't remember the dramatic things, the highlights of principle, or the literature, or the points that were made that would really be of great interest to you now.

The whole purpose of the meeting was to emphasize the fact that the pioneers had held that first meeting at that place and time so many years before, and that we still had not made very much progress. To sum it up, that was our goal. But who spoke, or who did what, and how it was done and how it was emphasized, I can't remember without some notes. I only knew it was a small landmark in our work. I didn't have to have its importance emphasized to me. Personally I had to make sure it was going to be a good commemoration, and I centered all my activity on helping to achieve that.

Fry: These three cards are the notes I took on the Seneca Falls meeting from the Equal Rights magazine. If you would like to just look at them.

Reyher: I think what is significant in your notes is that you have put down



Reyher: that Mrs. Ada Wohl\* of New York, a working woman herself, spoke on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment and women in industry, and said that Wisconsin, the only place where the blanket equal rights bill had been passed, passed it with the reservation that the equal rights would not apply to industry, whereas she, and other women whom she represented, wanted that definitely nullified, they wanted full equal rights.

That was significant because New York State was the center and the heart, as an industrial state, of the opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Also the National Consumers League, of which Florence Kelley was chairman, and the National Women's Trade Union League in which so many prominent women were active, including Frances Perkins, later Commissioner of Labor under Roosevelt [Franklin D.], were based in New York where they carried on vigorous campaigns for protective legislation for women in industry. It should not be overlooked that Mrs. Roosevelt, who worked originally in politics with the Democratic Party, and the Women's Democratic Committee, had a flock of working women closely allied to her. Among them was Molly Dewson, later nationally known in Democratic politics. There was one particular woman affiliated with her, Rose Schneiderman, whom I used to debate with often at various meetings, or to oppose where she alone was scheduled to speak. Rose Schneiderman was bright, reddish-haired, cocky, earnest, and a heart wringer. She was a toiler, and anxious to protect other women from the hardships she had experienced. These women were determined to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment because they believed it would nullify protective legislation that they had worked so hard to establish.

We are sitting now in a building that belongs to New York University. Diagonally across the street from us is another New York University building--we are surrounded by the complex of the Washington Square College of New York University. One of the buildings, on the corner of Washington Place and Green Street--we are on Washington Place--was the scene of the infamous and tragic Triangle Fire, the worst fire in American industrial history. Women workers trapped in that fire jumped from windows, maiming themselves, or were incinerated in their factory, which had no fire protection, no escape or sprinkler system. Women working for protective legislation used that fire as an illustration of how helpless women workers were. We in the NWP who believed that you had to have protective legislation--decent regard for human life--for anybody in industry, would reply that women, or men, would have died in a fire in a building so shockingly exposed to fire hazard.

---

\*When going over the transcript, RHR said that she was not sure that this was the correct name.



Reyher:

As another illustration, you are sitting in this room opposite another building of New York University. That building puts on bright lights and wakes me up several times a night--because I don't shut my Venetian blinds, which keep the air out at night. Women come into that building to clean at night and turn those lights on and off.

There has never been any so-called "protective legislation" in this state, or in most states to protect women from working at night to clean buildings because it is one of the most undesirable scrub jobs available, and most men prefer other jobs, and are graciously willing to let women take the ones like working across the street. Only in the past two years when they began to pay women greater wages, and there were a whole flock of women cleaners, have their grievances surfaced.

Columbia University wanted to put in men instead of women on house-cleaning jobs as porters. Women cleaners objected, and said it was a discrimination directed against them as women. Only then were discriminations against working women acknowledged as sexually based.

In practice, most of the time, in New York State, though they had historically protected women in industry, they gave them an outlet to work on the worst-paid jobs that they were "protected in."

Mrs. Roosevelt, when she was living in Washington, came with her husband to the state as an avowed anti-suffragist. In 1918, she refused to go with him to vote in New York, when women had their first opportunity to vote, because she still was not convinced that women should vote. Proof of that is included in Joseph Lash's biography of the Roosevelts, Eleanor and Franklin, published in 1971.\* In the twenties Mrs. Roosevelt was one of the strongest opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment, influenced by her labor friends. She was a magnificent woman--I personally thought so--even though she had put her foot in the door, and kept me from entering when I wanted to present the Equal Rights Amendment at the State Democratic convention in our early days here [New York], and opposed us in every way. We knew that in her we had a strong opponent.

---

\*"Eleanor took no part in the League [League of Nations] fight, as political activity was still Franklin's domain. Nor did she take part in the final battle for women's suffrage although she declined Alice Wadsworth's invitation to join the National Association of Anti-Suffragists and counseled Sara to do likewise. When Franklin went to Hyde Park to vote in November 1918, he went alone, even though New York women had acquired the vote by state referendum in 1917." P. 235.



Reyher: Later I learned to admire her greatly. One of the finest things about her was that before she died she recognized that the Equal Rights Amendment had to be passed, and that this whole question of protection of women in industry was illogical in a modern state where all workers needed protection.

I feel that that one point that was raised at Seneca Falls was important and influenced what came later, but I frankly can't remember that the whole event was more than a magnificent celebration of the fact that those pioneer women had started something that was fermenting, and going on, but far too slowly.

Now what else would you like to ask?

Fry: Let me ask you, for you to put on the tape, what the significance was of the unanimous approval of the amendment as Alice Paul gave it to the convention.

Reyher: I think it was important because it could be given to the press as unanimous, but we mustn't forget that this was a meeting that was sponsored by the National Woman's Party, and that the overwhelming majority of people there were people who were closely affiliated with it. All that it showed was that there was a unity of purpose within the organization. But I don't think that it was any more significant than any other organization that would like to have a demonstration of its unity, and unity of purpose. Does that answer that?

Fry: Yes.

#### Difficulty of Establishing Home and Working for Woman's Party

Fry: After the Seneca Falls meeting, did you work more closely with the Woman's Party?

Reyher: In the fall, after that meeting, I wrote to Miss Paul that I was going to be free to work on a full-time basis but that every six weeks I would need time off, but during those weeks I would go wherever she wanted to send me. She sent me to Chicago to be the head of the Chicago office and I was there that winter and spring. I went there--

Fry: After Seneca Falls?

Reyher: Not directly after Seneca Falls, but after my experience there. Seneca Falls was in the summer of 1923 and in the late fall, early winter of 1923 I went to Chicago. My daughter was born in 1919 and



Reyher: she was four in 1923, so that it would be that previous winter that I had been in bed and had gone up to Provincetown with Faith and her nurse and it was the summer of '23 that Eliza Glover told me that she was going to be married, and she left us that fall.

I left Provincetown in the fall and told Miss Paul that I could go out on a field job if I could periodically see Faith, and come back to her. And she was apparently happy to have me and sent me to Chicago. My husband, I forget what the reasons were, looked after Faith for the fall, but felt that he could not do it. He had writing assignments and had to be free. We both knew of a school in Connecticut where one of the women artists who had been doing a lot of portraits of famous women had sent her little girl as a boarding pupil. Ferdy went there, saw it, and arranged for Faith to go there, too. I knew nothing of it until it was an accomplished fact.

I hated to have Faith in a nursery boarding school and I hated that winter beyond everything else, and it changed a lot of my attitudes about working mothers, and the things I wanted and had to do. It also affected my marriage. I had gone to Chicago because there was no money in the till.

### Activities in Chicago

#### Importance of Publicity

In Chicago, we were up against having to dramatize a cause that was wavering in the public interest. This was the winter of '23-'24.

Our chairman there, Dr. Dickinson, a busy, middle-aged, no-nonsense type of practicing physician, was a feminist and wanted in every way to promote the amendment. Her brother was interested in aviation, and she arranged for an open cockpit plane for me. Throwing leaflets from an open plane was what they had Clare Booth--later Clare Booth Brokow, and then Luce--do at Seneca Falls. It proved a good story, and I thought it would make a good story here. But Chicago was a windy city. The pilot flew me over the city to throw leaflets down in every densely populated section to tell about the meeting we were going to have. Immediately we were involved with the police, who rightly said that some of those leaflets, as they banked up in the wind, might have injured someone, and that we had to have a permit, which we didn't know, and the pilot did not warn us. The leaflets and the brief flight got a story, but I thought I would be blown out of the plane and I was scared, and terribly uncomfortable



Reyher: because there was so little place to sit--we were wedged against each other seated a little below the open windows.

We tried a lot of attention-getting techniques.

Fry: I am wondering what the leaflet said.

Reyher: The leaflet simply said, "Come to our meeting"--it gave the time and place--"and hear our story."

In retrospect, nothing was as important to me as the techniques we had to use, to resort to, to dream up, to get people to listen to us, because that was the basis of our campaign. The cause was established. It had been going on since 1848. But to captivate and hold the interest of the legislators, and the press, and other key people was the primary responsibility for those of us who were working professionally.

Miss Paul, in Washington, was primarily responsible for the legislative campaign, and she had people working with her, but our responsibility was to get local attention that would reflect back to Washington, and I was always out in the states trying to get the attention of the people who would influence the Congress.

So that, for instance, the Chicago Tribune, which was virulently opposed to us, had several editorials, one very much against me personally. I have forgotten on what grounds they attacked me; but I remember that, by appointment, I went to see Captain James Patterson, a famous newspaperman and one of the owners of the Tribune, to complain about that type of editorial, and he presumably gave me a friendly editorial as a result, but it really wasn't friendly.

Fry: Neutral, you mean?

Reyher: Well, it started by saying that I had come for an apology, and created a mood that was neither retraction nor apology.

But the point is that we did go out in the states and stir up interest and comment, and insofar as I could I did a good job on publicity. With the limited facilities we had at Headquarters my primary responsibility was to get as much publicity as I could, to have it sound, to keep it on the ball, on the cause. And to get as much attention and continued interest as possible from the local members, to increase membership, to get more donations, to hold more meetings, and to address meetings held by others. There was never a week without some small drawing-room meeting somewhere, never two or three months without a big mass meeting.



Reyher:

Our continuous problem was, how were we going to continue to hold big meetings? When Helen Hayes starred in a play in Chicago, we starred her, too, and had a successful meeting. But we always aimed for something more spectacular, something to attract attention. Ganna Walska was an opera singer. She had come to Chicago as the wife of one of the McCormicks [Harold F.], a famous millionaire family there. He brought her back to one of the large mansions set in a McCormick complex of many mansions in a small area.

I went to see her at Doris Stevens's suggestion. Dudley Malone, Doris's husband, had got the divorce for Ganna Walska that made it possible for her to marry McCormick.

Doris never minced words. "Go see Ganna Walska and see what she will do for you. She will have to do something for me if you use my name." Ganna Walska did not have to be urged. She offered to open her house for a meeting. Her husband's family and friends would have nothing to do with her apparently, and if she were to have a swarm of callers, a meeting would serve the purpose.

I knew that everybody in Chicago was curious about Ganna Walska. When we had an afternoon meeting for Helen Hayes I was able to speak, too, and tell the audience what our cause was, and what we wanted them to do. That was a limited endeavor. Ganna Walska would pack the women in, if only out of curiosity. Little did I know how strong the urge to see her was.

I don't remember whether it was my brilliant idea, or somebody else's--because we worked in a group--that we would announce we were inviting only the presidents and maybe the vice-presidents of clubs in Chicago, and we would send them an invitation to our coming meeting at the home of Ganna Walska.

We not only got continuous terrific publicity, but the day of the meeting we got lines that went round and round the house on the sidewalk several times around, as for the opening of a great motion picture. We got what some people said was overdone publicity. We had legitimately asked women to a meeting. No doubt we sent more invitations than the house would hold. That we didn't tell. That is standard procedure. We wanted and needed an audience. But some people were disgusted that we would ask Ganna Walska to be a sponsor; I was in the clear because it was Doris Stevens who had suggested a meeting, I arranged it. We were always looking for something weird or wild to do that would attract attention.



### Covering the City in Car of Judge Pam

Reyher: Through my father, I got to be very good friends--by this time I was separated from my husband--with Judge Hugo Pam, who was a judge of the Superior Court [Chicago]. He was said to be the judge in the Front Page story that was written by Ben Hecht and Charlie McArthur. It was a roaring farce on Broadway, and there was a judge involved in it that was based on a Chicago court. McArthur and Hecht were newspapermen in Chicago at the time the story was written.

Judge Pam was very kind to me, he lent me his car, and chauffeur, and in that windy city it meant a great deal to have a car at our disposal.

When Mabel Vernon came to Chicago he [Judge Pam] gave a dinner for a few of us. Judge Pam was a very kind friend, and was very helpful to me in many ways. Helpful to all my friends, too. If anybody got arrested for speeding in any state, I would pick up the telephone and call him and ask him to help clear the person, and he always did. He was very helpful also with my arrangements to go to Africa.

Judge Pam was invaluable in the Chicago campaign. It was a very large city, and I couldn't have got around it with the time it would have taken to go from the North side to the South side and to the West side, if I hadn't had his car much of the time.

My secretary in the Chicago office was a young woman whom I am haunted by. She crops up in my mind at the most unexpected moments. I won't use her name. Later she came to New York, and ran the first commercial birth control products office, with over-the-counter sales and by correspondence. Daughter of a minister in Illinois somewhere, southern Illinois, she was so interested in the work of the Woman's Party after attending a meeting that she came and said she wanted to come and work for me, and she did. A few years later, while living in New York, she committed suicide. I never knew why.

I called upon all my friends that I knew at the university. We had a lot of people who helped. Some wonderful women. One of them was Mrs. W. I. Thomas, the wife of the professor whom I had so greatly admired as a student. She was an ardent and active pacifist. Mabel [Vernon] had a lot of friends who helped us in Chicago. There were any number of people in any number of different fields who all helped and tried to get people of influence to bring pressure in Washington. I don't know to what extent it helped, but I am sure it helped some.



Relationship Between Washington Office and Local Offices of NWP  
in Work for ERA

Fry: This is the next day, May 4, 1973, with Mrs. Reyher.

Reyher: Let me emphasize again that in Washington you had the hard-core organization that was responsible for policy, responsible for the amendment, for the many changes that the amendment had, because various people suggested a different wording. They were responsible for the lobbying on behalf of the amendment, and the jockeying of who should introduce the amendment; they were the continued liaison with Congress as to when the amendment might have a hearing in committee, when it might possibly be brought up on the floor. All of this happened in Washington.

The branches around the country, the state organizations, existed for the purpose of strengthening the national organization, to bring pressure any time when it was necessary onto the Congress, to help get funds and to help create publicity. As I have tried to emphasize all the time, our early techniques had to be different from the techniques that are being used for any kind of strong movement today, because we had no mass media for communicating with mass population. We didn't have radio, we didn't have TV, and we had to have either mass meetings that then would get a lot of attention in the press, or we had to have a cumulative series of small meetings. Our great problem was not to let the amendment die from lack of attention. Any movement, if it isn't constantly expanded and growing, tends to die. Any movement has to create a news angle. What we were supposed to try and do in the various branches was simply that. So that, for example, the pageant at Seneca Falls and the celebration held to honor and mark the pioneers-- all of that was done to create national publicity, to remind people that there were still inequalities that had to be removed.

Of course, Washington was also responsible, as you know, for a very substantial body of research. They issued leaflets and literature which they gave local branches to distribute. Particularly in New York, Massachusetts, and Illinois, all of them key states politically within a region, we had the literature which was printed, and researched in Washington, but which we distributed around the state, to demonstrate that this was a movement based on thorough knowledge and research. On that basis we felt there should be a campaign.

I have been stressing techniques with you because I know you have been in touch with Mabel Vernon and with Alice Paul and with other national leaders. I came in and out of Washington, I did very little national work except to familiarize myself with it, so as to



Reyher: come back into the states, and work there. I was working in the states in the early days when very few people ever had street meetings, not just the Woman's Party or the suffrage groups, but on the whole very few people had meetings, except during a political campaign.

During a political campaign, either local, state or national, it was customary in our country to go to the people, to go to them on the fair grounds, or on street corners or in somebody's home, or in some public hall, or a theater, and have a mass meeting. We were following an established technique but not a polished one because political campaigns were sporadic, and we wanted ours to go on all the time. We had to emphasize that there were women who were going to participate in this feminist activity because women had not yet to any extent participated in local political activity, where they might be known on the political scene or the local scene. When I did a series of little vignettes for Equal Rights about my daughter, Faith, showing how a little girl of seven, if she weren't squashed, would ask normal questions about the apparent inferiority of women, this became more apparent to me.\* When we were in Maine, in a little village of thirty-seven people where we have a home, and there was a local election, and a car turned up with a lot of men in it, they all came to talk to the village. It was during the day when there was nobody but women home. The audience consisted of women on one side, and speakers, men, on the other. When we got home, Faith inquired, "Why were the men all on one side, and the women on the other side?" That was typical of a village political meeting in the twenties.

---

\*This series of vignettes ran in Equal Rights during 1925 and 1926. Some of these short pieces are included in the appendix of this volume: "The Embryo Feminist," 1 August 1925; "Faith Bobs Her Hair," 12 September 1925; "Why Can't Daddy Help?" 31 October 1925; "Mother Must Not Be Disturbed," 28 November 1925; "That's What Mothers Are For," 31 July 1926; "Signs of the Times," 25 September 1926.

Others in the series include: "Sex Antagonism," 29 August 1925; "The Eternal Male," 5 September 1925; "Mothers Are More Important," 19 September 1925.

RHR recalls still another article in this series in which she wrote about "Faith's wanting to know why I didn't wear a little brass ring like all the other women. We had more brass than gold in our house."



Reyher: We in the NWP were demonstrating that women weren't only the audiences in these scattered meetings, but that we were the speakers. We came to the meeting, and we created a coeducational, man-woman audience. This was not so common then because women were not yet accustomed to street corner meetings, and to standing around at street corners to the extent that they are now. We perfected meetings, made them more popular, responsive currents to the temper of the times!

For instance, in the first suffrage parade, Inez Mulholland, a strikingly beautiful young woman, led the parade on horseback. Generals had ridden in parades on horseback to create a more marshall and dramatic atmosphere. Women had not ridden in parades on horseback except back in the days of Joan of Arc, and Lady Godiva. We were creating our own mythology of women on the march, women active, and dramatic. I have been trying to tell you that we had to create a little backlog of drama, that would help the federal activity. Alice Paul insisted on it. We were not doing state-by-state work, though we were trying to have discriminations removed in each state if that would at least create better conditions on the state level. Does that help?

Fry: Very much.

Articles for Hearst's International

Reyher: At the end of that year [in Chicago], I realized that my only chance to earn some kind of a decent living so I could plan to be with Faith regularly was to make myself a little bit better known than other writers.

While I was in Chicago--and before I had gone to Chicago, while I was working for Miss Paul, and writing, I had got in touch with Norman Hapgood, who was the editor of Hearst's International magazine, told him that I was very anxious to write certain articles for him, that I was traveling around the country, and I might have a chance to do them. I outlined several of them.

He took one article which he liked from me called, "A Jersey Town All Jews." That was a town that my uncle, my grandfather, and my grandmother on my mother's side had settled in. My uncle, whom I've mentioned, had gone to the Argentine to see what the opportunity there would be for my mother's family. There had been a Baron de Hersch assisted colony there. My family chose the community they did because it was a Baron de Hersch experiment in this country. It hadn't succeeded, but fragments remained, and that was this town in New Jersey. My uncle went there to be the town doctor. He was a



Reyher: remarkable man, the only Socialist in the town. The men who supported the townspeople by bringing factories into the town hated him; he was always on the side of the workers. When he died, which was many, many years later, after he had left the town and gone to New York to live, the entire town turned out, all the families, with all their relatives and friends--hundreds of them--who walked on foot to the cemetery a mile out into the country because they so loved him. He had delivered every baby in that town, he had never had a horse or carriage, he walked alone in the middle of night wherever he was called. Many a husband had come and pulled him out of bed and walked him home to deliver his child. His fee never rose above five dollars for each child.

I knew that town and I loved and revered my uncle. I told Mr. Hapgood about it and he had me write an article, for which he paid me \$500 and expenses.

I decided that for the rest of my life I was going to write articles, at \$500 and expenses!

The next article I told him about was based on what I had heard from some of the people who had come to Chicago from Minnesota where the Farmer Labor Party was just being organized. We were interested in the new party because we hoped they would help to get people interested in the Equal Rights Amendment. I had heard from them that there was a laundry somewhere in Wisconsin that was the only cooperative laundry in the country that was successful. I gathered it was a laundry to help the women of the family. Remember this was in the days of clothes washed in tubs with a hand wringer.

I took a weekend off from my job working for equal rights in Chicago, and got a story I called, "A Happy Town." This was a town where the men got tired of having their wives complain--particularly in bitter weather, when they had to take the clothes off the freezing lines--about having to bend and strain over great big washes. The wives told the men, "Look, you have a cooperative dairy where you bring your milk, and you bring your cream. Why don't you set up a laundry alongside for us, and take our clothes in and out as you go there, and we will start a cooperative laundry."

It was the only one in the country that was successful, and it was successful, I believed because the men listened to the grievances and pleas of their women. It was so successful, it made for a happy town. This town, River Falls, Wisconsin, had its own private zoo, its own private hospital, and it was beautifully landscaped, a perfectly lovely town. That was the second story which I wrote for Mr. Hapgood, for which I also got \$500 plus expenses.



Reyher: The only story that I had ever gotten any money for before these two articles I had written in Provincetown, when I helped the Provincetown Players because my husband was putting on a play with them and I sent it to the Monitor as free publicity, and they sent me four dollars for four hundred words.

I had jumped from four dollars to \$500, and I was really dizzy about it.

I got my connection with Norman Hapgood by asking him if I couldn't do some stories about women and the many discriminations against them with which I was familiar, and he couldn't have been less interested.

Originally I could not get an appointment by phone, or letter. He always put me off. I was having lunch in New York with one of our Woman's Party active women, Mrs. John Jay White; I kept getting up all the time because I had been told to call Mr. Hapgood's office, he would try to sandwich me in. Each time his office said, "He hasn't come in yet." Mrs. White asked me, "Who is this man whom you are calling?"

"Norman Hapgood, the editor of Hearst's International. It means so much to me if I can get him to see me."

Mrs. White, fluffy, white-haired, very pretty, had a very pronounced upper-crust voice, "My dear, why didn't you tell me it was Norman that you were calling? Norman is my goddaughter's husband. I could have got you that appointment immediately. Now let's see what we can do about this."

She went directly to the telephone, and asked for Mr. Hapgood. She said it was Mrs. John Jay White, and he came to the telephone immediately.

"Norman, what do you mean by spoiling my lunch with a simply lovely young girl? She says she has been trying to get to you for months, and you haven't seen her."

The upshot of that was that he claimed he hadn't been there, that he hadn't gotten the messages, and I got an appointment with him the next day. Out of that grew several appointments. He said he would be interested in various plans of mine for going somewhere, and that I should outline where I wanted to go. After those two articles I thought of every part of the world that I would like to see--I thought he might send me to Russia because I knew Russian as well as English--and he laughed at me, "There are much more experienced writers than you that I would send to Russia, and there are much more deserving writers."



Reyher: I realized I would have to suggest going somewhere that nobody had ever gone to before.

It was important that I build up a background for myself, an opportunity to earn a living, have Faith with me, and then I could also do things for the Woman's Party, and the cause I believed in. This was the ideal life I dreamed of.

I felt that I was going to try to reorganize my life. I will tell you about that, and how I went to Africa, and how it did change my life, and how I worked on behalf of African women as well as our own women, and what I was able to do for the Woman's Party and for equal rights thereafter.



## PART III OUTREACH TO PEOPLE

## VII AFRICAN TRAVEL AND WRITING

South Africa and Mozambique, August 1924-May 1925

Egypt, 1929

Zululand, also Mozambique and Swaziland, spring 1934-early in 1935

Up the West Coast of Africa to Nigeria and British Cameroons, 1949-1950; based on the Cape and in Durban, writing and traveling, 1950-1951

To Belgian Congo, Angola, Nigeria, Uganda, Ruanda Urundi, Kenya; also Pakistan, India, and Ceylon, 1957

(For later African travel and additional perspectives from the 1949-1951 and 1957 trips, see Section X)

Plans for Professional Writing: First Trip to Africa

Fry: Now this is in 1923, one of the periods when you did your paid work in the Woman's Party.

Reyher: Yes. While I was in Chicago running the Woman's Party Headquarters at the Auditorium Hotel, my hours were seven days a week from breakfast to midnight many a day. I loved the work and there was always a lot to do. But, as I've told you, I wrote the two articles for Norman Hapgood, the editor of Hearst's International magazine, and he paid me \$500 each for them.

I then decided that the thing I ought to try to do was to be a professional writer, and write about women, and those things that would



Reyher: be of interest to women. In this way I might find a way of working and having my daughter with me.

On a trip to New York I went to my daughter's school in Connecticut and arrived the day after a parent-teacher meeting. I had this very much on my mind. But how to do it? The head of the school, Miss Langley, had been at the University of Chicago, and was a friend as well. I came to apologize, and make my peace with her because I hadn't been there the night before at the parent-teacher meeting. And she laughed and said, "I know you. If you had known that the speaker at the meeting was the head of the Mallory shipping lines, which have just done a nine-year survey of South Africa, you would have found the time to get here, because that would have interested you. His son, his little boy, is in Faith's class."

Well, all I could think of as she was talking was that I had by then offered Norman Hapgood just about every subject in every country I could think of to cover as a writer. Nevertheless, I wrote a letter to Mr. Mallory, and said I would be very much interested in coming to see that survey I had missed hearing about.

He was interested in knowing how I happened to know about it. I had forgotten to mention our children.

He was very nice after my next letter, and told me to come down and see him. He was one of those executives with an office the size of a tennis court. And he sat way at the end of it and watched me walk up to him, and sized me up before I got to him. He was wonderful, he turned everything they had on South Africa over to me. I discovered that it was a thriving country with a lot of American investment, and hopes for more, altogether very interesting and colorful.

Before I got through my research, I got Norman Hapgood to promise to send me there for six weeks.

Fry: Before you got through with what?

Reyher: Through with all my research on why this country was important, and why I should be sent there. All the other details of how I would get there, how I would manage to work out my expenses and transportation were my problem, but I was able to do it.

Norman Hapgood gave me an advance of cash and said, "I am giving it to you because of all the enterprise you have shown, and because you have written other articles for us that we liked, and because I think we may get something out of this. But I don't think anybody in the world will be interested in South Africa. It is way off in another part of the world. Most people have never heard of it, and if you did write anything about the country, who would be interested



Reyher: in reading it? But go ahead and try it for six weeks. See what you can get."

So I went for six weeks. I left in August 1924, after working for the Woman's Party in Chicago through that spring.

In New York, my father was ill. My family were all abroad, and I was with him night and day until July when he died. Faith was in Maine with her father in a house we had bought that spring that I had never yet lived in.

I presented my credentials to the South African government, and read through the literature and talked to the people the South African government brought for me to see. Then the Native Affairs Commissioner, Dr. Charles Loram, planned my trip for me. Years later he came to Yale as the head of their Human Relations Department, and telephoned me urging me to be a member of his graduate study group. This was 1935, I had first met him in the twenties. "Dr. Loram," I answered, "I would love to come and be one of your students, but I can't possibly do it because my daughter is entering college, and I have to support her through it and support myself. But I do appreciate your remembering me. I certainly remember you." How I would have loved to do it.

Dr. Loram planned my entire first trip to South Africa. Government officials and he insisted, "You will never learn a thing about Africa, or South Africa, if you stay here only six weeks. You will come and you will go, you will barely have time to turn around. If you stay here six months, we will plan your trip for you and we will see that you have the most interesting and valuable trip."

Fry: Did you stay for six months?

Reyher: I arrived in August and left the following May.

I called my mother and she urged me to take advantage of the opportunity, as did my husband. Both looked after Faith.



View of Role of Women in Primitive Society: Same Arguments for Status Quo in Africa and U. S.

Fry: Now we need to go into this first trip to South Africa, and what this meant to you personally.

Reyher: What I would like to emphasize is that I had a magnificently meaningful trip. Through Dr. Loram, I was able to see what life was like on all levels--particularly rural areas, what in those days was called "the bush." I was able to see what African life, on which the whole economy depended, was like. I was very much impressed by everything I saw, by the complexity of an interracial society, by all the unique problems based on racial discrimination and differentiation--all against a natural background of incomparable beauty.

Dr. Loram arranged for me to go first and stay with Sir Charles and Lady Saunders. Sir Charles at one time had been the Governor-General of Zululand, then an independent province under Queen Victoria; Sir Charles was quite an elderly man but a knowledgeable one. He sent me to Northern Zululand where Mr. Fynney was the Magistrate in charge, and I lived with him and Mrs. Fynney and was shown schools, farms, daily life around me, with the net result that of all the things that I saw myself, and heard about, that which most moved me and that I was most interested in, and I wanted most to come back to and spend my time studying was the life of a Zulu woman. Because here I realized fully for the first time that I had spent all my working life and all my active life, thinking about what the actual status of women was, how it affected every facet of her life. And here I came to an area where primitive life showed exactly how difficult the role of a woman in primitive society was.

And the thing that interested me most then and later, as I did much more thorough research, was that the arguments given that the status of African women should not be changed, or improved, were exactly the same as were given in our own country against change: that the women were happy as the day was long, that they smiled, that they had a lot of authority in their own sphere, that they wouldn't want their status changed. And of course, if you point-blank asked any African woman whether she was happy or not, naturally she would say she was, and particularly if you asked her through an interpreter in front of other people, that is exactly what you got.

#### Articles and Other Accomplishments

Naturally I was interested in the economics and politics of the country and brought back material for many articles. I interviewed



Reyher: many different kinds of people of varied economic and social status, including the Prime Minister. I opened Irma Stern's first exhibit of paintings. She was an almost-unknown, brilliant, ridiculed painter. I predicted that one day she would be a significant artist. Today there is a special museum of her work administered by Capetown University.\*

I wrote "Why the Prince of Wales was Sent to South Africa" for the Hearst papers, outlining the strategic importance of a peaceful southern Africa to its British connections; "Where the Jazz Begins," which was indeed transparently apparent, for Collier's--now out of existence; "Cotton Farming in Zululand" as a possible hope for agriculture; an article on the distinctive Cape architecture for Country Life

---

\*In the article "A Significant Artist; Miss Stern's Exhibit; American Woman's Appreciation," which appeared in the Cape Argus or Cape Times when the Irma Stern exhibit was opened, RHR was quoted extensively. Among her remarks were the following paragraphs:

"I have just returned from a fourteen weeks' tour of South Africa, and I am leaving in a week to go further. I found South Africa breathlessly beautiful, maddening, intoxicating. I am bewitched and enchanted by your country.

"When in Cape Town, each morning from my hotel window I saw a bobbing red sail on a jade green sea, against the Persian blue sky; at night the little cobbled streets and stark white houses were covered with elusive patches of blinding moonlight; high above loomed Table Mountain, black and sinister, with the stars lighting a pathway across its ridge.

"Faced with the necessity of describing this store of beauty, I feel cheap, impotent, choked, unable to express it.

"But Irma Stern expresses for me and she will for others. She sees all the colour, the wildness, the passion and the peace of your country, and she reproduces it because of the vibrant, glowing quality of her work. In the depths of her pictures are glimpses of some fundamental realities as in all that nature pictures to you.

"I shall go home secure that my images of Africa will never leave me, for I shall carry back a few of Irma Stern's pictures."



Reyher: and one on the historical and geographic influences evident in the antique furniture for Antiques magazine; and "Men Without a Country" about the Indians who had come to South Africa as indentured servants decades before and been promised civil rights and when denied them had enlisted the services of a young Indian lawyer (later known as Mahatma Gandhi) who here tried out his first ideas of civil disobedience.

His son, Manilal Gandhi, left behind by his father to continue his work and edit his paper when he returned to India, helped me enormously. He and his friends were so pleased with my article when published that they sent me gold earrings by a student at Harvard.

Manilal Gandhi gave me a true stab in the heart. I can still remember the moment of agonized embarrassment when he said to me, "It is way past lunch time. You must be hungry. Would you mind eating with us?"

Some of the men and women I met warned me that I was being "too friendly with the Indians," and under no circumstances was I to be seen driving in a car with them.

I asked Manilal Gandhi, "Do you think that with your Indian brains and sophistication, and the black man's braum and strength, you will one day accomplish more through solidarity?" He dismissed such an idea. The National Congress of all blacks had not yet been dreamed about in South Africa.

I went to many mission schools, tried to penetrate not only the then-called "native problem," but also the status and problems of the Coloured people, those of mixed race, despised by both the Europeans (whites) and the natives (blacks).

My guide here was chiefly Canon Lavis [Sidney Warren],\* whose clothes were threadbare, his trousers visibly patched. He lined up the children of his school and paraded them before me, demonstrating that some of the Coloureds might be blonde and blue-eyed, but with a "drop of Coloured blood" were restricted to a Coloured area and Coloured schools.

On my first meeting Canon Lavis brought me to his study and waved me to a chair. I was young and easily embarrassed. The chair had no seat, just a rickety frame. In desperation my eye fastened on a diversion.

"This is a strange photograph to find on a study wall ten thousand miles from home."

---

\*Canon Lavis was an English Episcopalian. [Ed.]



Reyher: "Not at all. Abraham Lincoln is one of my heroes. Every night when I go to bed I recite the words of the Gettysburg Address along with my prayers, and if I did not I would not have the courage to go on with my work."

Over the years I saw Canon Lavis, later Bishop Lavis, whenever I came to Africa. I sent him a few books, and a nice silhouette of a standing Lincoln opposite the Gettysburg Address that I was pleased on a later trip to see hanging on his wall.

But my greatest and proudest achievement, which took years to accomplish, was that I was able to finally organize a Committee of American Friends to Honor Bishop Lavis, and to raise funds for a small but significant memorial to him. I ended up by having a file folder that is about three inches thick. I asked just about every important Episcopalian that I could think of to finance the memorial I had in mind, because it wouldn't cost very much. It had to be done extremely quietly because it would have embarrassed Bishop Lavis frightfully if it had been known that anybody was starting such a committee on his behalf, and it might have hurt his church work.

I asked a committee here in New York--the American Episcopal Clergyman's Committee for South Africa--if the wonderful young layman who was in charge of the committee, Mr. William Johnston, when he next went to South Africa, would sound out the board of St. George's Cathedral, as to whether or not they would accept a simple plaque. He brought back written permission from the church.

Then I got Joan du Toit, a good Episcopalian, whom I met through my good Woman's Party friend, Genevieve Fuller, to be co-chairman of the committee with me. I got her because she had an American background as well as a South African one. She got her minister, an Episcopalian in Milton, Massachusetts, to be our treasurer, because I definitely was not going to handle any money personally. He went to his bank and did whatever was necessary so our name was legal; and so there we were, the Committee of American Friends to Honor Bishop Lavis that consisted of Joan du Toit, myself, and the treasurer. One day I got a friend of mine who wished to remain anonymous to give a thousand dollars. And a thousand dollars was going to be enough for a stone plaque, I think, with a bronze facsimile head. The church in South Africa had a sculptor who would make the plaque for love and little money.

St. George's Cathedral is the oldest church in South Africa, strategically situated in Capetown, across the street from Parliament. Hanging today on a wall is the plaque with a sculptured outline of Bishop Lavis's head and the words of the Gettysburg Address that inspired him.

The plaque when finished was installed in the sixties in a ceremony attended by the American Ambassador and other dignitaries.



Reyher: In '64 or '65 when Gretchen Sinon, Mrs. F. W. Sinon, one of the committee and principal donors, went to Africa with me, Bishop Lavis was still alive and the South African papers carried our photograph with him as we presented a check from our committee to the church hierarchy for the plaque. Among our contributors had been the Honorable Robert McGregor, whom I first knew as the American Consul in Durban, South Africa, who was later Ambassador to the Congo.

The church hierarchy wanted a stained glass window, but we were adamant about the nature of the memorial. And though it is not in a prominent place, it is there for all to see for generations to come.

You may not realize that in a sense I did have a guilty conscience, that I didn't continue working harder for the Equal Rights Amendment, that I should have done more about it. So that whenever I did anything as an individual that I felt had any social significance that nobody else would do, I was particularly happy and proud of it. I felt that the presentation of the plaque was a unique opportunity to do something for good race relations and good American relations with the black people there. I really did put an awful lot of work into it. I wrote a piece about it for Ebony magazine, with a photograph of Bishop Lavis before the plaque was installed, about a bishop in South Africa who ranked Lincoln next to God. And I also wrote a piece about it for a magazine that New York University used to publish. And I feel that as time goes on, it will prove a concrete, helpful effort.

Perhaps my next proudest satisfaction and achievement was a cover-featured article for the Nation after that first trip, "Three Black Women." The three black women included Mrs. Tanga Jabova, wife of the only African professor at Fort Hare, the leading university for Africans.

At first she refused to see me and told me in a weary voice, "You will not understand me, you will condemn me as other European women do, for leaving my four-year-old daughter while I went abroad to study for a year. But I needed to: our women are desperate for leadership." When I told her that I had left my five-year-old daughter, her daughter's age, we began to understand each other.

Over the years I kept up with her, and her daughter. Later I saw her when her husband was the first African to address the faculty, students, and trustees at a commencement--six weeks before her death. She was dying of cancer, but she left the hospital, dressed in fashionable European clothes, and received distinguished guests at her home at the reception that followed. The Cape Times of Capetown let me write an obituary tribute to her on the editorial page, the first time an African woman had been so honored.



Reyher:

The second African woman was Christina, a forerunner of my heroine in Zulu Woman, whom Mr. Fynney took me to see at the royal kraal in Nongome in northern Zululand. Christina was then fifty, still regal in bearing. She had acted on conscience and lived by it. She wanted to marry a humble sweeper of the kraal. A succession of Zulu kings refused to give their permission. As a good Zulu, she told the bishop who interceded on her behalf that she could not defy her king, and as a good Christian, she could not marry except at the dictates of her heart, and so she remained loyal to her own concept of what was right, defying the Zulu state and Christian church, the two strongest forces in her community lined against her.

The third black woman was Sanni. I had been taken to an Easter outdoor service at dawn in the hills of Ciskei. One man after another rose and tried to impress the men and women gathered on the hillside. Finally a woman beckoned for permission to speak, and never have I heard such moving prayer as poured out from her. Going home I asked the guide who she was, and what she had prayed about.

"Oh," said he, dismissing her as someone wholly unimportant, "Oh, she, oh Sanni. She was praying for her sons, and other women's sons in Johannesburg."

That first South African experience left a lasting impression on me. It would not be appropriate to list all the articles I wrote of a general character. The women inspired me with the lasting ambition and desire to know more about Africa and to try to gain friends for the people and their culture, history, music, and art.

I made up my mind that if ever I could, I would go back to Africa and settle down in Zululand and study exactly what the life of a Zulu woman was like. And Mr. Fynney, who was then Chief Magistrate, promised me that he would do absolutely everything in his power to help me because he felt that would be an important undertaking.

#### Second Research Trip: *Zulu Woman*

My first trip was in the twenties, I went back to South Africa in the middle thirties. I was determined that I wouldn't go again on any long trips without my daughter. This time I took my daughter with me. Faith was at the Lincoln School in New York, a progressive school founded by the Rockefellers and Teachers College, attended by all the Rockefeller sons. The school said that if I could arrange to help Faith send her assigned studies once a month from September through January, they would let her come back to join her class and graduate with it in June because she was due to go to college the following fall.



Reyher: So we went off to Zululand, landing by ship via England in Capetown. Mr. Fynney was no longer Chief Magistrate, but he made detailed arrangements for me. He lent me the services of his son, a grown-up, mature man, to work with me as an interpreter. Because the son had grown up in Zululand the Zulus regarded him as practically a white prince.

Thanks to all the people who helped pave the way for me, I was able to settle down in Zululand and get the story of Christina, the first wife of the then Zulu king, the first woman in Zulu history to ask for a divorce because she could no longer tolerate the circumstances of her life. Sixty-eight wives and innumerable concubines had been added on after her.

There I learned the stories of many other Zulu women. There I also learned some of the ways of how you could get the trust and confidence of women whether you knew their language or not. I learned that words are not the only means of communication, that people could tell whether you were honest and sincere, and whether you were of one heart with them, as the Zulus would say. And I was definitely of one heart with Zulu women, and they poured their hearts out to me.

And the other thing I learned in Africa was like something I learned during the suffrage campaign. When we first campaigned we would work with a woman who would be our hostess who arranged a meeting for us. The suffrage associations, at first, and later the Woman's Party, didn't have money to pay for expenses, and hotels if they could arrange "hospitality," and the "hospitality" meant that we would stay at the home of one of the women concerned with our meeting.

However, in many cases it meant that the woman felt that you were a stranger, you came into the town and you might never come back again, and that you would not know who the people were that she was talking about. And many times she had entered the suffrage movement because she was a desperate woman with a pent-up heart. What hospitality came to mean to me in a trail of at least thirty states, not only while I was working for suffrage and equal rights, but in later years on research tours afterwards, was listening to a woman talk about what was bothering her, chiefly, about the "other woman." Such women felt trapped and helpless, that there was nothing they could do about it. When I got to Africa and was talking to Zulu women, through an interpreter--though I didn't know the language I had a technique by which the interpreter had to stop every two sentences and translate literally what the woman said--I didn't need him to translate to me that she was talking about the other wife, translated in our language as the other woman. That was one of the things that made me realize that women with pent-up hearts were the impetus for a feminist movement in any country.



Reyher: When I first came back in the thirties with my material for Zulu Woman, there was nobody who would publish it. I got the material in the thirties; it was published in the middle forties. There was nobody who thought the story of a remote African woman would be of the slightest interest to any American women here. Finally, an anthropologist who read the manuscript said, "Why, this is real anthropology. You may not be a trained anthropologist, but this is anthropology."

This was Hortense Powdermaker, a noted and distinguished anthropologist. She arranged for Ruth Benedict to read the manuscript. When Ruth Benedict, one of the most noted anthropologists, read it, she agreed with Hortense, "This is indeed anthropology, and I will do the foreword to the book." She wrote the foreword to it and that made it possible for the book to be published by Columbia University Press, but there were many hurdles still.

Third Research Trip: *The Fon and His Hundred Wives*

The publication of Zulu Woman, very well received, reviewed, and digested in Life magazine, made it possible for me to do my second book on polygamy in another part of Africa [the Cameroons] to show that this wasn't just a custom limited to South Africa.\*

---

\*In an insertion to the transcript, January 1976, Mrs. Reyher noted: "The orthodox anthropologists say that polyandry is the status of having many spouses and polygyny is what is popularly known as polygamy. But there is a book on marriage in Africa published by the Oxford Press which is the acknowledged authority on the subject (Survey of African Marriage and Family Life, edited with an introduction by Arthur Phillips, Oxford, 1953; new edition by Phillips and Morris, Marriage Laws in Africa). On page xiv, footnote 1:

For the present purpose it seems unnecessary to distinguish between the two possible forms of polygamy--vix polygyny and polyandry--since the latter is almost, though perhaps not quite unknown in Africa.

This footnote refers to p. xiii, xiv:

If we seek to identify the main distinguishing features of African customary marriage, as compared with European marriage, there will no doubt be general agreement that the most obvious



Reyher: This second book was The Fon and His Hundred Wives, which was published by Doubleday and was republished in England by Gollancz. Zulu Woman was published in France, and in England by the Oxford Press, and extracts of both books were published in different parts of the world.

The reason I went to the Cameroons to write the book on the Fon and his hundred wives was that an obscure English nun working there became incensed at the fact that her students--sometimes thirteen years old--were forced into polygamy by the laws of the country. They would flee to the nuns for protection. They had none in their own homes. Indignation boiling over in her, this nun wrote an article, "Just Cargo," for the official organ of her order. It was picked up and quoted by the world press and various world-wide women's organizations, particularly the St. Joan's Feminist Alliance of England, which was in the forefront of feminism with their magazine.

The St. Joan's Feminist Alliance of England petitioned the United Nations, claiming that the Cameroons and some other African countries were under United Nations jurisdiction as trustee colonies and that they were, according to the human rights charter, obligated to live under human rights, and that polygamy, and forced marriage, were contrary to human rights, and that they wanted an immediate investigation. These women's organizations forced the United Nations to at least discuss it. When this story and polygamy came up on the floor of the United Nations, I listened to some of the discussion. The men under whose jurisdiction it came, couldn't think of a bigger joke. They just all guffawed.

I couldn't get those Cameroon women out of my mind. I felt that I had to go, and do another study on polygamy to prove to the United Nations that the young women were not acquiescent, that girls and women were running away. Since the UN had agreed to go to the Cameroons to make an investigation, I wanted to make one, too.

It was agreed at the United Nations that a UN Trusteeship Council commission would fly to West Africa and the Cameroons for an investigation. The trip to the Fon was on a grand scale. A cavalcade of horsemen and stragglers escorted the UN party twelve miles up the

---

of such features is the toleration, and even approval, accorded to polygamy.

Throughout the book polygamy is used because it is the known and accepted term in Africa, and I have so used it, too. Because of common acceptance of the term, I use polyandry for the status of a woman having several husbands, in one household."



Reyher: mountain. All together there were about two hundred men including top officials, such as the Commissioner of the Cameroons, the Acting President, and the District Officer. They came at about ten in the morning and left at three in the afternoon.

Sandwiched between the entertainment, speeches, and dances presented for them, the commission had a private session with the Fon and his elders. They asked that no government people be present.

The Fon's son, Sama Ndi, fluent in English, acted as interpreter. He had recently been acquitted, for lack of formal evidence, of kidnapping a girl of twelve for his own or his father's pleasure.

Indignantly the men of Laakom refuted the calumnies that had been heaped upon them. They declared their determination to live according to their traditions with as many wives as suited them.

A petition signed by thirty-nine of the Fon's wives, complete with thumbprints, was presented. This stated they were happily living in peace and contentment and wished no change in their lives. Obviously the commission could not reach women who differed.

The commission bowed out. Home again at Lake Success, they announced the Fon's private life was out of their jurisdiction. The visit to the Fon was a story always calculated to get a laugh.

Even the arithmetic was on my side. I had discovered that fifty-three of the Fon's wives had run away. My book didn't make a stir but I managed to present my case.

Fry: Who was the Fon?

Reyher: He was an African hereditary chief of a section of the Cameroons.

Fry: Can you mention any of the problems of his wives and similarities between these and the problems of women in the United States? Anything different from what you had already observed in Zululand?

Reyher: What always strikes me as most absurd about the argument that African women are accustomed to polygamy, and therefore accept it, is that it is accepted that men in Africa murder out of jealousy, yet their wives and daughters are supposed to be free of it. In both Zululand and in Bikom--or Laakom, they are used interchangeably--in the Cameroons, the wives ganged up on each other, formed cliques, and frequently resented their living conditions.

The land in Zululand is barren. Men went away to earn cash incomes; women stayed at home and eked out a subsistence crop. The Cameroons is high, lush grasslands. Wives were supposedly an economic



Reyher: asset, expected to produce surplus crops. Zululand was small, by comparison. In the Zulu king's household there were a few notorious cases of run-away wives; in the Fon's household more than fifty-three known wives had run away out of a total of about four hundred, despite the fact that they knew they were subject to severe punishment.

Perhaps the polygamous wives had one thing in common with unhappy or disgruntled American wives. They had a deep both conscious and subconscious awareness that there was something wrong with their sex lives, that they had only a teasing attention from their husband, that he approached them from his desire for intercourse, and left them unsatisfied and unfulfilled.

In the polygamous relations I saw, only the favorite wife seemed content and happy, and she was singled out for a period of constant attention. There was always a favorite.

Also though women were supposed to be faithful to their one husband, left alone and lonely, they, too, began to stray and find lovers.

I saw the Fon's wives some years after the Zulu ones. By that time even the Fon's men had gone to World War II--some served in Italy. There were more busses, cars, and transportation to and from towns--many wives had been in motor cars, and so running away was less of a problem. The world outside seemed less remote even on a mountain top.

When I asked the Fon's niece, "What is the best thing the European has brought you?" ("European" means "white" in Africa), she replied, "Oh, motor cars. They are so easy on the feet."

The Fon's household taught me that the long hand of Western Civilization had penetrated even the remotest part of Africa. The old ladies who never left the mountain top were aware of airplanes. They looked up and called them "motor cars in the sky."

Earlier Difficulty of Writing: Commercial Jobs Necessary

Reyher: I want to digress here a little bit to say that I was always doing commercial jobs and, in between, going to Africa. That was a luxury. I would get the opportunity to go, I would get a little money, I would figure, "Well, now, it will cost us so much to live here, we can live there, and I can get orders for this or that." But I could never, while Faith was growing up and going to school and college, get off and concentrate on either my research or writing.



Reyher: So that it was only after World War II, after Faith was graduated from college and married, that I could risk writing full time.

When Faith and I got back from Zululand, I needed a well-paying job to pay for her schooling. For several years I took my Zulu notes with me wherever I was and worked on my book. I worked for the government in the Works Project Administration as a Regional Director for New York and New England [1935-1937] and later in the Information Service helping make motion pictures [1937-1939] about the program. I stopped working for the WPA when the Works Program was coming to an end, in '39.

In '39, it was obvious that the U. S. was going to go to war. Hitler had already started working against all the dissidents, but most of all he had started annihilating the Jews. I then went to work for the Dominican Republic Settlement Association, which I will tell you about later.\* The resettlement of refugees was very satisfying to me, but when that began to peter off, I felt that perhaps I could do what I had always wanted to do.

#### Concentration on Writing

It was then 1943, and I thought, "Well, if I am going to try to get back to Africa, if I am going to try to get Zulu Woman published, if I am going to try to do any of the writing that my shelves and drawers are filled with, this is the time to do it. This is the time that I must concentrate. Faith is married. Faith doesn't need my money. It is up to me to do it."

And it was only then that I began to concentrate on trying to earn a living entirely and wholly by my writing, trying to get material together about women, or about Africa. I was able to go on several lecture tours professionally. They were lectures arranged by Colston Leigh, a top agent, and very successful. That made it possible for me to continue trying to go on with writing.

But I've never been as successful as I would like to have been, never had as much time as I would like to have had, and never have done what I could have done had I started twenty years earlier, because I was still building when I was no longer at the age where people would open their arms and say, "You are just the person we would like to have. Come to us, we will train you and we will work together on this."

---

\*See Section IX.



Reyher: I am not complaining because I have been very lucky in what I have been able to do. Only I know all the things that I have been unable to do, and among the things I've been unable to do was publish a book on polyandry. I got all the material I needed and I had gotten very good advances from the Reader's Digest, which bought at least four very well-paid articles from me and published none of them, and from Life, which had carried a summary of Zulu Woman. Life only carried a summary of the Churchill book and two or three others. They were so taken with Zulu Woman and the subject of polygamy that they carried a summary of it in October, 1948.\* I got substantial advances to go to Africa for two and a half years, when I got the material for The Fon and His Hundred Wives. I was able to support myself during the lean period when my various advances were spent because I settled down in South Africa for a year or maybe a year and a half in between trips to other parts of Africa and there I wrote for all the South African newspapers, and some of their magazines, dozens of articles. It paid very little, but life was not at all expensive.

In 1950, after I had gotten the material for The Fon and His Hundred Wives, I flew from Nigeria to South Africa, primarily to see Dr. Jeffreus, who had been the District Manager for the British government in Bamenda, which included the Fon's region of Bikom. Dr. Jeffreus was then a professor of anthropology at the Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg. I discussed my Fon material with him and he gave me access to his files and clarified many problems and situations for me. He was the most scientific authority on the region on which I based my book. My manuscript was still notes. Probably one reason I remained in South Africa was that I wanted to write at least the skeleton of my book there to get the benefit of Dr. Jeffreus's criticism, which I did on the major portion. Conditions had changed markedly in South Africa since my last trip there, and I wanted, for future lectures, to familiarize myself with current conditions.

To support myself, as I've said, I sold articles on general subjects to South African newspapers and magazines, to some West African magazines on West Africa where I'd just been, and many photographs to a black magazine which was then being published in Johannesburg. I was able to live very reasonably with a friend, Joan du Toit, to whom I had a letter of introduction from Genevieve Fuller, my Woman's Party friend from Boston. Her home was across the street from that of Prime Minister Malan outside of Capetown in Stellenbosch, the center of Afrikaner culture and the site of Stellenbosch University. Her husband taught at Stellenbosch University. They have since been divorced.

---

\*"Christina and the King of the Zulus." Life, 25 October 1948, pp. 116-136.



Reyher: As I had done before when I was in Capetown, I tried to evaluate the role of the missionary in the lives of the blacks in the community as a whole, and I went to Durban and its environs and had many visits with Dr. Alan and Mary Taylor. Dr. Taylor was at the head of the American hospital in Durban, which had trained several hundred African nurses and was the only hospital with an interracial staff.

From there I went to Marian Hill, one of the oldest and most successful Catholic missionary stations, where I lived in the guest house for many weeks observing their work in the area. I also went back to Nongoma--headquarters of the Zulu kingdom--to see Christina's children. I stayed at the Benedictine mission and observed the work of the Benedictine hospital and renewed my friendship with Father Ignatius. When I first came to South Africa in the twenties, Father Ignatius would emerge suddenly on the scene on foot. As far as I know he had no other means of travel. When I came back in the thirties, Father Ignatius had a motorcycle, and this time when I was there in the early fifties, Father Ignatius had, in connection with his hospital, two mobile trucks that traveled the countryside for those people who could not reach the hospital.

Before I left Durban Dr. Taylor, a man of deep wisdom and understanding, who as a Protestant missionary had always maintained the friendliest relations with the Catholics, said to me, "You're going to be surprised with what you find Father Ignatius has done in Nongoma. I wish that we could have a hospital and a traveling medical service half as good."

What the world never knew and has never been substantiated was that Father Ignatius, a remarkable photographer, used to take photographs of Zulus at every festival in every state of dress and undress, which he sold to the distributors of souvenir postcards in Johannesburg. From these sales he earned a very large part of the money which supported the medical services of the Benedictine mission and hospital.

But to go back to the articles I wrote as a result of that period in Africa in 1950-1951, Think magazine, now-extinct house organ of IBM [International Business Machines], printed some of them.

While in South Africa, I wanted to interview Mrs. Alan Paton as I had heard she had made it possible for her husband to write his famous book, Cry the Beloved Country.

Before her marriage, Mrs. Paton had been a sheltered daughter of a prosperous family who had dabbled in amateur theatricals. The family home was stately and imposing, and was borrowed to use in films.



Reyher: Alan Paton had spent years directing a reform school for African boys. He had his book very much on his mind but did not have the time or peace to write it. The National Conference of Christians and Jews had invited him, all expenses paid, to come to the States. That would have been a two-month interlude. If only he could make it a year, his dream of writing his book might be realized, he believed.

Mrs. Paton suggested that he take the year. Their eldest son would continue at boarding school where they could make a postponed tuition arrangement. She and the ten-year-old son would share a room with kitchen privileges in their own home, which they would rent out. Besides, she who had never earned her living would get a clerical job for eating money.

Mrs. Paton's plan was adopted, and for two years she stuck to it until the book was finished, published, and an instant success.

She was a remarkable, sensitive, lovely woman. The cottage I stayed in with her was at the shore in Natal, one of the more tropical areas close to Durban. Late in the afternoon we walked along the beach and picked colored seaweed and talked of race relations. Mr. Paton was away lecturing.

The Patons' cook had her baby with her in quarters back of the house, most unusual for South Africa. I asked if the baby would not disturb Mr. Paton in his writing, as the quarters were close by.

"Alan will just have to cope," said Mrs. Paton, prepared to make all sorts of personal sacrifices for her husband but not to separate a mother and infant, even though black. When we sat and talked indoors, Mrs. Paton was knitting a blanket for the cook's baby.

I wrote a profile of Mrs. Paton for English Good Housekeeping. Mrs. Paton died a few years later and Alan Paton remarried.

Still another article for English Good Housekeeping was about Sita Gandhi, the then twenty-three-year-old daughter of Manilal Gandhi, whom Gandhi had left behind in South Africa to carry on his work helping the Indians to achieve Civil Rights.

Sita had wanted to be a doctor, to study medicine, but she told me simply, "When my father goes to jail, I have to carry on his work. I do not forget that my grandmother died in an Indian jail."

On this trip I wrote another article featuring young South African women of every race and color for Mademoiselle magazine. Among them was the Zulu girl who had translated Cry the Beloved Country in Zulu.



Sent by Doubleday to Do Book on Polyandry, 1957

Reyher: After the Fon was published, as after Zulu Woman was, I lectured in the New York area, probably twenty times to New York University alone. I wanted to get back to an idea I had had some years earlier--doing a book on the other side of the coin, polyandry. I got Doubleday to send me to do it. I also wanted to review what was happening to women in Africa, so in '57 I went back to Africa, to a few of the countries that I had not been in--as the Congo--from where I planned to go to India, or Ceylon, to get my material for the book on polyandry.

As soon as Zulu Woman was published [1945], I talked to Prince Peter of Greece, who came to this country to lecture at the Museum of Natural History, and other places. I told him I wanted to work on polyandry. Prince Peter is one of the world authorities on polyandry, has lived in India and also gone to Ceylon to get his material, and has since published a book.\* He was the son of Marie Bonaparte, a noted practicing psychoanalyst in Paris, married to a member of the Greek royal family, a very advanced woman. It was she who organized the ransom of \$250,000 in American dollars, though she was resident in Paris, that was asked by Hitler to ransom Freud out of Austria; she was the moving spirit behind that. So that Prince Peter in doing his polyandry studies and in his anthropology research, had the background of a feminist mother, a woman who was strong-minded, and believed in full opportunities for women.

After I went to hear Prince Peter talk about polyandry at the museum, I sent him a note and a copy of my book, Zulu Woman. It had just come out. He replied he had read the book, thought it was splendid, would be delighted to help me in any way.

Subsequently I had a long correspondence with him and he wanted me to come to India. India originally arranged for me to enter the country when Sir Rama Rau was their ambassador to our country. I went to see Lady Rama Rau, who directed the birth control movement in India. In fact, Mabel [Vernon] went with me on some of those interviews. When I went to talk to them both, they were very eager for me to go, but something interfered with my plans and I wasn't able to go just then.

#### Difficulties Getting to India

When I was ready to go to India, the conditions in India had apparently changed, and I got a magnificent run-around. In this country they told me, "Your visa for India will be waiting for you in London." In London they said it would be "waiting for you in Paris."

---

\*A Study of Polyandry. The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1963.



Reyher: I had seen innumerable people at the United Nations, our own diplomats in Washington and theirs, and people whom I knew well who would help me. Among them was the Honorable Robert McGregor whom I had known first as Consul General in Durban, South Africa, then as Ambassador to the Congo, and at this time attached to the U. S. United Nations Delegation.

By that time--and it was in the fifties--the whole situation in Indochina and India had changed. The United States government was involved in all sorts of sub rosa activity. One Indian that I went to see in New York said, "You say to us that you want to go to the Himalayas, and you want to go up into Tibet to study polyandry. That is what they all say, and India is crawling with people who come there ostensibly to get a story. And they are definitely not there for that purpose."

I realized that whereas in the twenties, if you wanted to go settle down and do a story, and you had the documentation and credentials, you were able to do it; but by the middle fifties there were so many people with a genuine purpose to study, that some governments sincerely didn't want them around because they were a nuisance. On the other hand, there were people who claimed that they wanted to get a story, but were spies sent out for one purpose or another using their research as a cover. I realized that a free-lance writer was now a suspect person. That they, like prostitutes, had no known source of income, and therefore were suspect, and that I was going to have trouble.

I didn't realize that Prince Peter who had been in India for a long time had British citizenship as well as Danish; he had both. And apparently he was suspect by the Indian government that was moving closer, and closer to independence. And that my chief sponsor in the scientific field, Prince Peter, was no longer persona grata in India. I don't think that he ever went back there.

Anyway, Prince Peter told me that he would help me in every way. When I was in London, ready to go to Ceylon--I had given up in Paris trying to get an Indian visa--I had just arrived in London when I got a telephone call from Prince Peter. I hadn't seen him for several years.

Prince Peter urged me to change my travel connections so that I could see him, and we could talk. But by this time I was so afraid that if I changed my connections all along the way, which would mean not only leaving for Paris at a later date, but I was scheduled to go to Rome, and from Rome I would get hopelessly tangled. Originally I was going to India, and back to Africa. I couldn't see how I could cancel so many plans and arrangements, so to my everlasting regret I didn't see Prince Peter in London or Paris.



No Publisher for Finished Book on Polyandry: Successful Struggle for Publication of *Zulu Woman* Recalled

Reyher: Instead of India I went to Ceylon with four names Prince Peter gave me on the telephone. All my letters were for India.\*

Despite many difficulties I was able to get my story on polyandry. I wrote my book, I came back home and Doubleday, that had given me my credentials and advance money and planned to publish it, said on reading the manuscript they were totally uninterested.

I have since rewritten that book three or four times for different publishers who said they might be interested. And I have still not had it published.

I feel I must have it published before my days are over. I have notebooks full on it. But I just literally don't get the time--one single block of time--when I could sit down and work at it in the proper concentrated fashion. So each time I work it over--fragmentarily--I think, "Well, maybe this will be it."

A very fine young woman, who is working on women's studies and who is writing her thesis at the University of Buffalo, came and talked to me several times. She told the University of Illinois about this book and suggested to them that they should write to me about it. I was very hopeful, and I prepared another version for them. It cost me over one hundred dollars just to mail and Xerox the different revised parts. I sent it to them with high hopes.

They didn't want it, which I can understand. But I was a little miffed that they didn't even write me why they didn't want it. They didn't even give me the kind of critique that might have helped me place it somewhere else. It left me very discouraged.

I haven't given up hope on it, but I am not sure I will live long enough to do it because what happened on Zulu Woman was that every weekend for years, while I had many jobs, I would work on that book, polish it here, and rewrite it there. I always had a special little weekend bag with my manuscript that I clutched to me so that people thought it was jewelry, because I didn't want to lose my only manuscript. Lewis Gannett, who was the daily literary critic on the

---

\*RHR later added that, since she didn't want to miss India and Pakistan, she was able to get to these two countries in the course of her 1957 trip, though for a shorter period than she had originally planned. [Ed.]



Reyher: Herald Tribune at that time, said to me once, "Just remember that All Quiet on the Western Front went to over forty publishers before it was published, and keep sending Zulu Woman around because I am sure there is going to be a publisher that will take it." I have the file of rejections in Maine; after forty-two, I stopped counting.

Before Ruth Benedict wrote the foreword to it, I went up to Columbia and took Martha Foley's course in short-story writing because the prospectus for the course said, "If you have a short story, or one or two chapters of a book that you want a critique on, you can bring it and that will be part of the preparation for the course." I had so much respect for what Martha Foley was doing that I registered for the course and took Zulu Woman to her.

Martha Foley said to me, "Let me have the other chapters. I am very much interested in what you are doing." And when she read the book, she said, "I don't understand why people haven't taken that book. I find it extremely interesting. I think that you ought to be able to get it published."

I sent Columbia University a note telling them about the book, along with Ruth Benedict's foreword. I got them to publish it.\*

#### Change in Focus of Women's Studies and in Concern for African Women

The point is that the interest in women, and women's studies today does focus to a large extent on what women are doing and what they're interested in, but not on something like Zulu Woman. Zulu Woman was published in paperback, 1970, by New American Library, years after it was originally published by Columbia University Press in 1945. It did not sell--I sold 131,000 copies--because the women are interested in Women's Lib studies and are not interested even in the title of a book that's called Zulu Woman.

Oh, occasionally, you know, somebody will say something about it, but it is out of the stream of what women's consciousness in this country and Women's Lib is about. And anybody who is working in the field with regard to women is usually limited and restricted to their own particular area of interest. We all are. We can't help the way people operate.

---

\*In the early 1950s, Zulu Woman was on the required reading list at Harvard, according to a friend of Melvin Jackson, Mrs. Reyher's son-in-law. [Ed.]



Reyher: When I first was interested in writing about polygamy, every time I would go to the United Nations and talk to some of the women there on the Commission on Status of Women, and I would ask them why this question of polygamy, under which African women were really suffering, was not being taken up, they would indicate it would offend countries where polygamy was practiced. I went to Africa for the first time in the twenties, and when the United Nations was organized in '45, there were still many problems that existed in Africa that were not on the agenda. And the members of the Commission on the Status of Women (even the women who were active in their own countries) would always say to me, "But don't you understand that we are dealing with governments where they are living under those conditions? We have to bide our time."

It was only this year, when an African woman was chairman of the Commission that she said, "We are taking up the question of polygamy, and we are going to see to it that there will be action." Most of the African women whom I talked to over the years, with very few exceptions, said, "This is our way of life and our women are quite happy living under this," and they resented somebody coming there to try to disprove it.

Yet, although in its early years the Commission on the Status of Women moved carefully and gingerly in passing any resolution of condemnation regarding the status of women and polygamy, Madame Marie-Helene LeFauchaux of France, who was a member of the Commission from 1947-1963 when she was killed in an airplane accident in the United States, was most helpful to me. She was chairman of the Commission from 1948-1952. I went to see her before leaving for the Cameroons. Later, on my way to get material for a book on polyandry, she suggested I stop to see Sister Marie-André du Sacre Coeur in Paris. She drove me out to see her in her own little car, and it was through her that I met one of the most interesting and extraordinary women I ever met in my life, a French nun who completely changed the status of African women.

Sister Marie-André du Sacre Coeur had been a young woman studying law in France, but she wanted to be a nun. She told her family she wanted to take orders. Her brother had died. She was the only child and her family was prosperous, and they urged her to first complete her university career. If after graduation she still wanted to be a nun, though they would prefer she didn't, they would nevertheless understand and not oppose her. She faithfully finished law school as she pledged to them. While in law school she did a study of the French family and the circumstances under which women had to live, and some of the French legislators and educators were very impressed by it.

When Sister Marie-André became a nun she went to Africa as one of the White Sisters. She thought that her order would have her do ordinary mission work, but knowing what her background of education



Reyher: was, they put her to work studying the status of African women. She codified the laws pertaining to African women, and wrote, in French, a book, La Femme Noire en Afrique Occidentale [The Black Woman in West Africa] on the status of African women, which electrified France because she portrayed such heart-breaking situations, and discriminations against them. Incidentally, I wasn't able to get a translator or money for the translation of that book as an historical record. There are no English records of the material in her book which is part of the whole feminist history of the world, and there it sits in French with only a limited audience.

Sister Marie-André was the first woman to appear before the French Chamber of Deputies, not only the first nun, to urge the change of laws pertaining to the status of African women. Her recommended legislation was passed. I have to have it before me to give it to you in proper English and proper sequence.

The first legislation was passed in September, '39. France went to war that year and the changes were postponed. But thanks to that decree, and the one that followed afterwards, each of which has a name, and to the book that she wrote before, the whole status of African women changed, and all French colonial law was changed pertaining to African women so that it would conform to this law. And when the French began to change and protect the status of African women, the British colonies had to consider their laws pertaining to African women too; and the practices of forced marriages and women having no right to their own earnings, were changed. Things began to open up in the forties for African women in the colonies, even though the United Nations and other groups were not yet prepared to consider women's status under polygamy. However, it must be realized that rural Africans were generally unaware of the rights granted to them.

When I went to France in the summer of 1957, and I knew that I wanted to study more about African women more deeply, I went to see Madame LeFauchoux who helped me arrange with Sister Marie-André du Sacre Coeur to let me come see her at her convent--because she was then on leave in Paris--to talk with me through an interpreter for three weeks. Every day, we talked about what the statuses of African women were, and what she had done. I have notebooks full. Also I wrote a story about her for the leading French magazine, Elle, and for English Good Housekeeping, which was doing a series about women all over the world. And she was one of the people whom I was able to incorporate into that series.

By that time I began to feel that I had lots of material about African women, and I wrote various articles about them. I have notebooks full of my interviews with various African women, material which is not of great significance to a wide audience, but which should be codified and placed somewhere where people will have access to it as historical material. The Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe has asked for it.



Fry: It looks like now it would have a double use, both as black history and as women's history.

Reyher: [Hands book to A. Fry] That is the book, the first book that she wrote, that created such a stir. And you will see that her name and the title--

Fry: Marie-André du Sacre Coeur. The title is La Femme Noire en Afrique Occidentale, with a preface by George Hardy.

Reyher: The preface doesn't matter but it is that book that created a sensation in Europe, and it is in French.

Fry: Who published it?

Reyher: It is published by a French publisher.

Fry: [Taking the book from Mrs. Reyher] Payot, Paris, 1939.

Reyher: Now, the second book that Sister Marie-André published in France, I don't remember which of these was the second. One was Civilisation-- and my French is terrible--en Marche, which means Civilization on the March. And that publisher was Grasset. Grasset published her other book, too, and the subject of that book was not restricted just to women, but it was about women, and that was called La Condition Humaine en Afrique Noire. And that means The Human Condition in Black Africa.

Fry: What are the dates on those two books?

Reyher: I think you had better look them up while I get this one in. And the last book that she did which was published in English over here, was largely a book on family life in West Africa for missions to read. It was called The House Stands Firm--written and published in English--and since she was about to go on a trip for the Catholic church to Africa, to prepare for a book on the early church martyrs in Uganda, and was a very well-known member of the White Sisters which was one of the most important orders in the mission movement in the Catholic church based in Africa, this book was intended for world-wide use and is not nearly as bold or revolutionary as the others. In fact, now that there are independent governments in all of Africa, and the Catholic church needs to be on friendly terms to work closely with them, the tone of her later books is not nearly as strong as her first one written before African independence. They accept the customs rather than criticize them, whereas the first book was very critical, particularly about polygamy.

Fry: This La Condition Humaine is 1939 and Civilisation en Marche is also 19--

Reyher: It must be before that. [Fragmented conversation while looking for date]



Reyher: No, it doesn't seem to give the year here.

Fry: Well, it looks as though it was the one published after these others that are mentioned. [First there was] The Abandonment of the Family which was her doctoral thesis.

Reyher: Yes.

Fry: Then La Femme Noire en Afrique Occidentale and one that we have not mentioned which is the history of the missionaries, and then La Condition Humaine en Afrique Noire, which is 1943, by Grasset, and then Civilisation en Marche must have been after that.

Reyher: What I was trying to indicate was that there is a very strong movement, or was, to recognize that African women were living under severely restricted conditions. Sister Marie-André came to the United States, and I have had many talks with her about the status of women abroad and in Africa.

I am talking about this now because it would be my hope that some university would give a grant to her, and to some woman who is capable of translation, and that it would all be regarded as important for oral history, so that her books would be translated as they are, pertaining to women as part of general studies of women. Also so that Sister Marie-André could contribute something to it.

Sister Marie-André turned sixty-five and apparently women at the age of sixty-five can no longer be active missionaries; and it nearly broke her heart. The church kept sending her around to other countries, and sent her here to the U. S. to sit, and write, and live in a convent. But she was most unhappy. She had a few lecture engagements in the States and Canada, but her English was too accented for her to get many engagements. Finally she was able to get an assignment to work at the Vatican on research. I don't know exactly what research she is doing, because I am in limited correspondence with her. I don't know how many more years she has left. But if someone who knows French could do a few chapters, or spend a few days with her for oral history, it would be of inestimable value. And I am giving it to you as a suggestion.

Fry: Great. I wish I knew French and had a grant to go to Italy. Well, it does seem that that is a very worthwhile thing to make available to the English-speaking world, now that everybody is interested in black history and women's--

Reyher: I think so. But anyway that is all part of what I was interested in and what has helped me in creating books and articles and has contributed to my conscious and subconscious thinking; it is all part of my background. And I have very full notes of talking with her, which of course are in English. What time is it?



Fry: It is five till nine.

[The following day]

The Bender Brothers: San Francisco and Capetown

Fry: When were you out visiting San Francisco?

Reyher: You remind me how far flung the tentacles of my South African experience reached out in the most surprising places. In the spring of '34 I was in San Francisco on my way home to New York, just immediately after I got my divorce in Reno. I was planning to go to South Africa shortly thereafter. I had a note of introduction to Albert Bender. I had then never seen San Francisco. Gratefully I saw it several times later.

Since I was going to be in Capetown soon, and had seen their harbor, and had seen many photographs of San Francisco, I wanted this time to tell the people in Capetown that we had a harbor as beautiful as theirs, and to be able to describe it to them because they are very much interested in their comparison to San Francisco. In fact, they have such a feeling about San Francisco that when the director of their Capetown orchestra whom they'd had for many years, Jorda, was asked to come to San Francisco, they felt actually as if they had sent a gift to San Francisco. That was one reason I went there.

Since I had a note to Albert Bender, and had written to him ahead of time, I thought I would probably have lunch with him, then maybe take a little sight-seeing trip around the town, and go home. When I told this to Albert Bender at lunch, he thought it so ridiculous he laughed out loud, "You must have at least three or four days here and you just let me plan it." He was a little, short, pot-bellied man with a wonderful sense of humor, and a marvelous belly laugh.

When he discovered that I knew his brother in Capetown, he wanted to hear all about him, whom he hadn't seen since he was thirteen years old. And then he said, "We will have to have several sessions. We can't let you go with just one lunch."

The result of that was that I spent about four or five days there. I'd leave the hotel in the morning, and I would get back at night. I would do something that Albert suggested, and then come back to him, or his office, and I took all my meals with him, either at a restaurant, or he gave a couple of lunch and dinner parties for me at his home.



Reyher: His brother was at that time--he has since died as has Albert--the chief rabbi of South Africa. In South Africa, which at that time was still a member of the Commonwealth and had at one time been a colonial possession of Britain's, they had state religions. Each religion, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish, had a recognized head, even though the Jewish religion as I understand it does not usually have a Director for a whole country, or nation. They nevertheless designated as head the rabbi in Capetown who happened then to be Albert Bender's brother--I don't remember Dr. Bender's first name.

When I first went to South Africa, Dr. Bender called on me at my hotel, and asked me if I wouldn't come to see him. And every time I went to see him when in South Africa, he would return the call and leave his card at my hotel. I would always pay my respects and call on him and we would have a little visit together, and I always made a point of seeing him before I left the country. And he would always send something, a book or some farewell gift to the ship.

Albert Bender said to me, "You know, my brother and I had some sort of quarrel. I won't go into it. But I would love to open relations with him and enter into correspondence with him. I would like to send him a little gift, some little memento, and if you will present it to him, and write me how he receives it, and bring me back something from my brother--I don't want to burden you, but I would like some little gift from him--I would be so grateful."

Of course I said, "I would just love to bring something back. I promise you that as soon as my daughter and I arrive"--this was when I went in the thirties with Faith--"I will immediately call your brother, and tell him that I want to be sure that he is there when I come, that I don't want to just pay a little state call, leaving my card"--which is what you do in the case of these formal calls in a formal country. "I will tell him I would like to call on him personally because I have a gift from you."

Albert was just delighted, and I put it all out of my mind.

At one of the parties that Albert had, I noticed that there was a little silver tray, in the dining room, up against the wall, and it said, "To our father," or "To our padre," "From his parish" or "From his church"; and when there weren't other guests around, I said, "Albert, I am a little confused because you told me that your father was the chief rabbi of Dublin and this is obviously a presentation to your father, but it says 'To our father' or 'To our padre from' and then 'parish'."

And then I had another opportunity of hearing his belly laugh that came thundering up.



Reyher: "I explained to you that my father's parish was a very poor one, that I grew up in extreme poverty when I was a boy, and in Ireland there are so few Jews that they don't have these presentation plates engraved and all ready to give to the rabbi--chief rabbi or any other. It is a Catholic country, and parishes are always making presentations to their priests, and they have them all ready, all engraved. Someone came to my father and said that his community wanted to give him a gift, and would he mind very much if there were just that little difference where they would fill in his name. Of course, my father did not mind." [Laughter] And so there was this presentation plate that sort of startled you at first because it was obviously meant to be given by a Catholic parish.

Albert Bender also sent me to various museums, and always told people that everyone should be kind to me. Gumps at that time had a great big building of about five floors with oriental rugs, and all kinds of unusual things, or if it wasn't Gumps, it was somebody who was affiliated with them. But it was the best, it was the most luxurious store in San Francisco, and Albert said, "They have all kinds of treasures there, you must go see them." And I said, "I love to go around looking at things, but I have no money to buy anything, Albert, and I don't feel it is fair for people to show things to someone when they can't buy them." And he said, "Oh, I buy so many things there, and I am an importer and I do business with them. Don't for one minute worry about their showing you things. Just go there, and enjoy yourself, and see some of the most beautiful things that you would not even see in a museum."

So I went there, and a couple of men began showing me fabulous-priced rugs, the kind I had never seen before, and all kinds of similar rarities.

I was truly embarrassed. I felt if there were only one little crack in the wall that I could sneak into, I would crawl in. I apologized, and tried to leave. Then one of the proprietors said to me, "But, you know, Mr. Bender said that before you left you were to pick out something as a little memento, as a little gift." I was even more embarrassed. "That is very kind of you and Mr. Bender but"--we were then in the rug department--"there is really nothing here that I would be able to get"--I didn't say "accept." "But you must have thought of getting something before you left here." I was almost angry. "Now what would you like? Would you like a little bowl, would you like a little statuary?"

And I, who was brought up in New York, when my eye fastened on some brasses in the distance, figured that of all the things they might have there a little brass item would probably be the least expensive. "But of course you understand," I added, "that this is something that I would like to buy myself to remember San Francisco by."



Reyher: "Oh, we would be happy to find something for you in your price level," or something of that kind was said.

Well, they went and got four, two pair each, of old candlesticks that the Russians must have used in their early California churches. Russians carry their candles, and hold them throughout their orthodox services. These were squatty, where your hand could go around them, and then the candleholder would be narrower. They were almost like inverted goblets with just a little cup for the candle. Four of them alike, two that really had the most beautiful lines you could imagine.

"Well, I think I would love to buy those if I could have them." One of the men went aside to the other one to confer and came back saying, "I think we can let you have those for five dollars a pair."

I bought those candlesticks, the four of them, for ten dollars. Although it is true it was some years ago, even then they were worth far more than that. They were most unusual antique brass candlesticks. I have them in my home in Maine.

I am sure that Albert Bender told them that he would pay for anything that I bought, or he would pay the difference. By that time I felt like a beaten woman. I could offer no further opposition. [Laughter] It was a very interesting experience.

But I must tell you about Albert Bender's brother and what happened when I presented his gift. And then I will come back to the gift I sent Albert before I left San Francisco.

When I got to Capetown, I presented the gift immediately to Dr. Bender and he had an absolutely stoney, expressionless face. He asked me specifically whether his brother had sent it to him and then made no inquiries about his brother, wanted to hear nothing further about him. I said I had seen him, and then I kept up a running commentary about him, "You know he is a very distinguished man, I didn't realize he was your brother, when I first met you. You know, thirty-two people have dedicated their books to him. You know, he is one of the most distinguished patrons of the arts that we have on the West Coast."

None of those things registered. Either he brushed them aside, and made very clear that the visit was over, or he obviously didn't want to talk about his brother any more. "You know, Dr. Bender," I finally firmly said, "I would love to take something, a little gift of yours, from you to your brother. I promised your brother that I would carry to him any little keepsake you sent." Grim and non-committal, he didn't indicate whether he would, or would not, send something, and since this was the beginning of my trip, and I knew I would be there in the country for many months, I didn't press it.



Reyher: I wrote him a couple of times, to remind him. "I know that you go to England on your vacation, and I don't want to be here, and have you leave the country without my getting a little gift from you to take back to your brother." And in each case, I was as polite as I could be, but I was obviously pressing.

When we got to Capetown on our return journey, he was in Capetown, and he sent word to my hotel that he was very sorry that he would not be able to see me.

I was just absolutely at my wit's end. I said to Faith, "I can't go and buy Albert anything myself and say his brother sent it because he will write to his brother, but what I can do is I can send Albert whatever his brother sends me to the ship, and whether it is appropriate or not, I can say that this was a gift from his brother and then if there is any misunderstanding about it, I will say that in my stateroom the things got mixed up, and this was from Dr. Bender, and I didn't realize it was for me. I thought under the circumstances it was for his brother."

I thought I had a beautiful plan all worked out. When we got to the stateroom of our homeward ship--it was small, two of us occupied it--there was something overpowering in it, the likes of which I had never seen. All wrapped up, it was an edifice, a floral demonstration, the kind that perhaps you send to funerals, made of intricately plaited straw, decorated with all kinds of colored straw flowers. It was true that the ship would take about thirty days for the trip, and if you were going to have flowers, maybe a floral decoration that would last the trip would be appropriate. But it was a monstrosity. It was very much in the way in a small stateroom. How could I possibly under any circumstances send that floral piece across the United States, and claim that it was meant for Albert?

I had to write to Albert in San Francisco that I was unable to remind his brother Dr. Bender in time to have a little gift waiting for me to take to him. I never saw Albert Bender again, and he never explained to me what the difference between them was, and I never knew how he felt about the rebuff, but Dr. Bender obviously did not want to communicate with him.

And of the two men, the one who was Bohemian and the one who was a man of God, certainly Albert Bender was much the more kindly, and much the more Godly of the two. And I thought that the rabbi was hard and cruel in his determination to have nothing to do with his far-distant brother.

While I was still in San Francisco, I realized that Albert Bender was a man who truly had everything material that he wanted or needed. By this time, having met various people at lunch, and dinner at his



Reyher: home, I knew that he had been extremely kind to many, and helped writers, and artists, and poor people in general, and there was nothing one could give him that he wouldn't have. And yet, I wanted to give him something. I wanted him to have a gift that he enjoyed, that gave him some pleasure and fun, and I knew he loved fun with all his friends.

I went to the best men's clothing store in San Francisco, and I asked them whether they had a pair--in his size because he was short and small--of very gay underpants. They had the most beautiful pair of turquoise silk ones. I don't know what kind of men wore them, but they were very handsome in the hand and they were certainly gay. I sent them to Albert with a note saying that I knew that the day was not too far distant when he was going to strip himself of absolutely everything he had, and when that day came I wanted him to have something nice left on him. [Laughter] And he just loved it! He telephoned me at the hotel. They had sent it to him just about an hour before I left, and it was something that pleased him enormously and I was happy it did.

He gave me something to take away. He had a big roll-top desk, crammed, when he opened it, with remnants of brocades, small statuettes, and little snuff bottles. He sent my daughter three or four of those beautiful little Chinese snuff bottles. Those bottles were just everywhere. And he told me, "Now you choose one thing from this desk collection to take home as a keepsake."

"I hardly know what to choose," I said. "Just take your time," he said. "Just look around, and if there is anything there that you like, a piece of fabric for a dress, or for a dressing gown, or some little ornament, you just choose it."

Sitting in front of a jumbled mound of all these things was a tiny little squatting bird, yellowed with age, that was about two inches long. It was not a sitting duck, but almost like one, obviously a Chinese little bird. "Well, if I could have that," I said, "I would just love it." Again he laughed and said, "You shall certainly have it, but you know that is the most beautiful and valuable thing in that entire desk. When I open the desk, that is why it is there in front. I usually sit and hold that in my hand and caress it. You see, it is yellowed with age. And it has marks as if it has been rubbed."

"I can't take it," I protested, "it is something that you use all the time. I just was impressed with its loveliness, and beauty."

"No, you must have it."



Reyher: So I took it, and I had it always with me after that. I always had it on the mantel in my living room. An artist here in New York, who was a very good friend--his wife was a very good friend, too--but was a thoroughly unprincipled man, asked me if he could borrow it because it had such beautiful lines, and he would like to study it. I said of course he could. Time went by and he still didn't return it, still kept it. One day I saw that my brother had a bird in clay or in stone that was maybe ten inches long, and some inches high, that was an exact replica of this. So the next time I saw this artist, I said, without thinking, "Bill, you copied Albert Bender's bird for Sasha."

"Why, no artist ever copies anything," he replied indignantly. "How can you say that? That bird that I sold Sasha was my own creation. My own inspiration."

I never got that bird back. I was convinced he destroyed the bird that he borrowed from me, because he realized I recognized he had copied it. Neither he nor his wife were ever able to find that bird. "Sorry it was lost," they would reiterate. "We'll try to find it." But they never did. And I was truly devastated because I would have loved to have kept it.

Meeting Albert Bender was one of the loveliest experiences that I have had in all my life. A wonderful man.

Fry: I wish you could tell us something about what kind of dinner parties he gave.

Reyher: He gave very informal parties. I think at one party there were about twelve, maybe three or four more. And the food was delicious. I wrote it down, but I can't remember offhand. It was all very tasty and very handsome.

I naturally remember those things which were different from any other dinner parties I've ever gone to. The first thing that I remember was that in one of his rooms--I don't remember if it was his library, or a room that went from his large living room to his dining room--there was a long refectory table, and that several of us were standing there and he was showing us all some of his beautiful first editions. The thing that struck me was that there were so many beautiful books, rare books, and that in order to keep them rare, and to keep them valuable, none of their pages were or could be cut.

I remarked on it, and said that as a budding, hopeful writer I felt that certainly one of the values of a book written by whoever wrote it was to have the book read, and what would these people who had written these books long ago think if they knew the day would come when it would be a crime to cut the pages of their books, or to read them. There were several people there who were obviously



Reyher: bibliophiles as he was, and they argued with me. I wasn't impressed by who they were because I don't know anything about the rare book field. I was just a complete outsider. They tried to explain to me that these books had to be kept intact, or have their value destroyed.

And the other thing that I remember was that at a given point Albert either called us all together, or rang a little bell, or clapped his hands and cried, "I want you all to come together now. I am going to have one of my raffles." And then, very informally, he passed around numbered tickets and said, "I have a few things here. As those of you know who come here, we raffle these off, and we have a consolation prize. We have two or three tonight."

I don't remember what the others won, but I won one of the raffles. There were very few people, and several things given. My prize was a most beautiful Chinese cotton brocade that had, instead of the traditional silk thread woven through it, a nylon thread which made it particularly bright. In the thirties nylon silk was just beginning to be used in upholstery and other fabrics. Albert explained to me that nylon strengthened it: if you had just the cotton, or just a silk brocade, it wouldn't have had the power and strength.

The effect was that of a cotton surface in between the leaves of the pattern which were silky. The pattern was chrysanthemums, orange and white. The material was upholstery width, fifty-seven inches or sixty-some inches wide, and there were about two and a half yards. There was just enough to put on an old-fashioned sofa that stood against the wall so that all of this bright color came flooding into the room. I gave it to my mother, and she thought it very beautiful, and upholstered a small sofa with it. I almost cried years later when it finally wore out.

It was very lovely to receive, but I remembered it all primarily as a very charming idea, something that I had never seen done or heard of before at an adult dinner party, but it was so like Albert.



## VIII CAREER STEPPING STONES

Advertisement writer, editor, J. Walter Thompson and Company, 1927-1929

Personal escort for tour of North Africa, Europe, Russia, Near East, 1929

Public relations assistant, Joseph McKee (President of Board of Aldermen, later Mayor), New York, 1930-1931

Consultant, adviser, Sears, Roebuck and Company, 1931-1933

Need for Professional Career and Home Base: Volunteer Work for Woman's Party

Reyher: When I decided that I would be a professional woman with my daughter living at home with me, and after I had been to Africa the first time, which I have explained to you, I went directly from Africa to Maine, spending a year there, together with my husband, as well as my daughter. I spent that winter organizing my notes and writing about Africa for popular magazines. I have told and will tell more about this elsewhere. I finally firmly decided that I would return to New York, my home base, and maintain a home and work base where I would be constantly with Faith. This practically ruled out working for the Woman's Party where I would be at their beck and call to go wherever they needed me.

That winter in Maine [1925-1926] we lived in a village of thirty-seven people. I've mentioned that winter in connection with the articles I wrote for Equal Rights that were inspired by Faith's questions about the roles of men and women. We had no phone of our own, there was only one phone in the village, and that in the general store. Telegrams came across that phone and were delivered when and if the storekeeper could get someone going our way. Any telegram was an event and repeated for all to hear.



Reyher: Miss Paul thought telegrams urging action, coming from a remote village in Maine, would gain attention, possibly have influence. I would receive a telegram from her, "Wire the President"--or some Senator, and those most impressed were my neighbors. They were convinced I was a woman of great influence urged to use it with people of high estate.\*

I went to J. Walter Thompson in New York between '27 and '29, as my first effort at a full-time, regular, professional job. I think that I worked for the Woman's Party for a while the summer before that while Faith went to a children's camp in Maryland.

Colorado Springs Meeting; Cavalcade to Coolidge, 1927

Fry: Do you remember the Colorado Springs meeting in 1927?

Reyher: I think that by that time I was working almost wholly with Mabel Vernon.\*\* Mabel asked if I wouldn't go first to Colorado Springs to

---

\*An article appearing in the Back When column of the Portland Evening Express, 6 November 1976, indicates the strength of the impression RHR, as writer and Woman's Party organizer, had made in Maine fifty years ago:

"Within the past year and a half Maine has acquired an interesting new summer resident, a distinct addition to the literary colony of the State, with whom Portland people will be privileged to become acquainted at a meeting at the home of Mrs. Robert Treat Whitehouse on Vaughan Street on Wednesday afternoon, November 10. She is Miss Rebecca Hourwich, since 1917 a speaker and organizer for the National Woman's Party, who with her husband, Ferdinand Reyher, also a writer of note, bought a farm at Robinhood, nine miles below Bath, about eight months ago and is spending the greater part of each year in Maine."

\*\*Mabel Vernon was Executive Director of the Woman's Party at this time. [Ed.]



Reyher: help arrange a meeting there with noted speakers,\* to make some of our active Colorado Springs members aware of what was being done throughout the country and in Washington. Then I went to lead what she called a "cavalcade" to Rapid City, by car, to present a petition to President Coolidge.\*\*

I would like to qualify when I say, "present a petition." Whenever the National Woman's Party presented a petition to a President, they didn't present a demand, but they presented it in such a way that the President had to commit himself, to promise what he was going to do. Invariably he was asked what he would do about the Equal Rights Amendment. I can't remember the exact wording; I only know that we were ostensibly to present a petition for women from all over the Middle West and West, to Coolidge, who was summering in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Vaguely I identify one of the important Senators with Colorado Springs. I do remember that we had a few very prominent young women members who were very active. I can see their faces. I can't remember their names. One of them came East later and ran a book shop in New York. One of them later married a direct descendant of one of our Presidents. They were a very strong group of young professionals. I can't remember how big a meeting we had, or what we did. I only know we felt we had accomplished something by going

---

\*According to Equal Rights, Rebecca Hourwich was herself a featured speaker at the Colorado Springs meeting held July 7-11, 1927. In "Dinner Speakers Represent Varied Fields," Equal Rights, 23 July 1927, there are extensive quotes from a speech made by RHR, vice-chairman of the Maine branch of the NWP, to NWP delegates at the Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs. The speech was entitled, "What Can the Woman's Party Do for Women in the Home?" and emphasized the importance of independence to the woman who does not work outside the home and the Woman's Party's "strenuous effort to have the services of the wife in the home recognized." [Ed.]

\*\*Equal Rights, 30 July, 1927 features on its cover a picture captioned: "Envoys to President Coolidge were met by women of Rapid City, South Dakota, who formed a Branch of the Woman's Party following the interviews with the President."



Reyher: there. Primarily we were gathering our forces to go further West. I know too that we operated from Colorado Springs to influence the Denver papers, particularly the Denver Post. Mabel [Vernon] kept warning me that Frances Belford, whose family owned the Post and who was the leading woman's feature writer on the paper, was gunning for us. She was hoping that there would be some little incident that she could pick up to take away the headlines from us, that would nullify the strength and power of what we were trying to do. We were all convinced that there was nothing that could be done about her except to be extra cautious not to make the slightest false move, one that could be misconstrued.

### Philosophy of Cranks

I think it was in Colorado Springs that we picked up the woman who was lending her car--an open-seated roadster--and her son to drive it--to lead the cavalcade. We had a special send-off meeting to start from those incomparably beautiful mountains to reach the President.

The young man was not at all interested in us, or the trip, but his mother persuaded or compelled him. He slumped in his seat boorishly and I ignored him. En route to Rapid City we stopped in Wyoming one night, and had a locally arranged meeting there, so we could garner some local publicity, and additions to our traveling group.

The Woman's Party attracted many women of diverse talents and temperaments. Miss Paul's policy, as I have often reiterated, was to use any one who offered interest and services. The woman who lent her car and son-chauffeur, with whom I drove, was a numerologist. Behind our lead car was a bus full of women, followed by two or three other individual cars, possibly more cars--we really were strung out. This woman held everybody up, as they disembarked and came to the desk to register. She wanted to be sure that the numbers of people's rooms would correspond to what would be the best aura for them.

I mention small incidents like this because I realized early in the equal rights movement that though the rest of the world called people like this "cranks" if they did not wholly conform to the rules or beliefs set down for them, and if there was a crack in their facade and they might have veered to the side in one way or another, sometimes they were more easily persuaded to at least listen to us than people who were certain that everything with the world was fine as it was.



Reyher: I never realized that as strongly as when I went down to Alabama for the Woman's Party. I had been seeing so many conventional people who were brushing us off and asking irritably why we were disturbing the status quo, after all women had enjoyed so many privileges, why were we asking for equal rights.

Over a weekend on my own at Fairhope, I went to a single-tax colony opposite Mobile. It was the only single-tax colony in the south, then very well-known. As I walked up to each person and told them that I was in the area working for the Equal Rights Amendment, every one of them replied in terms of their own pet cause. "You don't need the Equal Rights Amendment. What you ought to have is a good vegetarian diet and the sound health and body that would produce. From a sound physique comes a healthy community."

Or the next person would say, "What you ought to have is single tax." Or, "You ought to concentrate on freeing the world of alcohol."

I realized then that the rest of the world would call these people cranks, but they were really idealists, and we had to have a few of them in the world if we wanted to have justice for anyone, or equal rights for women. I have never again had contempt for "cranks" or "lunatics." In fact, I felt that they were as important in our society as a little bit of salt or pepper is in food.

So that though this Colorado woman held us up, and no question about it, she was a kook and a crank, I felt that if that was her little quirk, let her have it. But it did delay us and cause other problems.

Apparently her son was fed up with us, and as we approached Rapid City, he had had nearly forty-eight hours of this cavalcade, and his patience was coming to an end. I had been sitting in the middle and I had been trying to divert him and keep him happy.

But just as he got to Rapid City, he put on the speed as hard as he could and two motorcycle policemen cut in front of the car, and stopped it. One of them demanded, "What are you trying to do? Kill the President of the United States?" We had not noticed the President's car and Secret Service escort as we passed. "You are under arrest."

Remembering that the dreaded newswoman, Frances Belden, was on the bus in back of that cavalcade, and remembering what Mabel had warned, I really was sunk. The policemen took us to the police station. The magistrate, or whoever it was at the desk, was very angry. I used every plea and excuse that I could. "Look, if you are going to arrest us, or book us, we are going to be in grave trouble. We have come here with a serious purpose. The speeding was incidental and we are terribly sorry. There are fifty dedicated women with us in this



Reyher: cavalcade from all over the country. It isn't we in this car who will be held responsible, but all of those women, and all of our officers in Washington. You are just going to break the hearts of a lot of women who have come here to see the President."

He listened carefully, and let us off without arresting us, and with a little reprimand.

But our Denver Post friend had come right in behind us, smelling a story. The Denver Post carried her story in banner headlines, "Woman's Party approaches the President of the United States by trying to run him over." That was the tenor of the story if not the actual wording.

It did not dampen our spirits completely because the next day she had to follow up her banner headline with another story, and in a way it really helped us. We did have our appointment with the President, he did receive us, and it was reported all over the country.

Again, I don't remember what words he used for promising consideration of the amendment. He never did or said anything significant. But at least he received us, at least we got national attention for it.

ry: Could you clear up a point for me? As you entered Rapid City, where was the President?

eyher: Calvin Coolidge had gone to Rapid City in South Dakota, a beautiful area, right near the Needles Highway, a spectacular region of sharply-peaked narrow mountains, for his summer vacation. Obviously he also went there because as a man who came from Massachusetts, he felt he owed it to another part of the country to come and stay amongst them.

ry: But I mean in this speeding incident, there were allusions made that you were endangering the President.

eyher: The President had just passed us in his car, driving along the road. I am sorry, I didn't make that clear. The President had gone for a drive, and his car was surrounded by his Secret Service escort. They had been driving at a normal rate.

We wouldn't have endangered his life or car. But we happened to be driving by and speeding at a time when the President, once he emerged on the road, was supposed to have normal or slowed traffic to contend with.



Change in a Woman: Mary Caroline Taylor

Reyher: One of the people whom I persuaded to work as a volunteer with Mabel Vernon on that Colorado trip, and on the trip to Rapid City, was one of my classmates at the University of Chicago when I lived in the dormitory there--Mary Caroline Taylor. I am going to tell you about her because I think she points up the change in girls and women. Mabel liked her very much. Mary Caroline was a high school physics teacher--she later married--and continued her school job until she retired. She couldn't do odd jobs as she was able to do the winter following the Colorado Springs trip or continue to give her time as she did that summer when she was on vacation.

Mary Caroline was very much interested in "suffrage" when we were in Beecher Hall, the dormitory. I had come [January, 1916] fresh from my state experiences in New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, and was full of the excitement of them.

We were both sophomores. Mary Caroline told me that she had marched in a suffrage parade in Chicago, and when she got back to her home at Springfield, Illinois, the state capital, her grandfather told her that if she ever did that again, he would take her out of school. (Her father was dead, and he was helping to pay for her education.) He was not going to have any granddaughter of his marching in a suffrage parade.

Her family lived in southern Illinois, the whole Lincoln area. They were the Hay family that was so important in Lincoln's life, since one of the Hays was a member of Lincoln's cabinet. Of course, you would think that in that kind of a pioneering political family they would expect that a young woman going to a university would become interested in suffrage.

Mary Caroline wrote to her grandfather, or to one of her relatives, that she had met me, and she got back a tart reply, "Under no circumstances let her drag you into any other suffrage parades."

So that a few years later, when we had been in Colorado and were coming back on the train, I reminded her that by now she was a school teacher, with her own independent income, and if she wanted to do something for equal rights and suffrage, she could. But once she had been threatened with being removed from college for just marching in a parade.

Some years after this I was in Chicago on a lecture tour and Mary Caroline and I had dinner together. The nuclear bomb had exploded and Chicago was known as having helped produce it.



Reyher: "Mary Caroline," I asked, "how on earth do you keep up with all the changes in physics? How do you teach them?"

"Don't be silly," she replied. "I can't possibly keep up with them. There is always a bright boy in the class who takes over."

Member of NWP New York Board While Working for J. Walter Thompson

Fry: Your Who's Who says that you were a copywriter and editor for J. Walter Thompson from 1927 to 1929. Can you tell me something more about this job and how you were able to find time to be on the New York Board of the Woman's Party at the same time?

Reyher: Once I went to work for J. Walter Thompson as a copywriter, and as someone who evaluated and secured people for testimonial advertising, and later as editor of their house organ, I was working in what in those days was called communications; that is, I was working with people. That began my professional life. But it was a strictly nine-to-five job, and I could not leave for a meeting easily. But while I worked for J. Walter Thompson I was on the Board of the National Woman's Party in New York. Since I knew the state and membership so well, I could help make knowledgeable decisions pertaining to them.

We worked full time in offices in those days, five and a half days a week, only Saturday afternoon off, until five or five-thirty. All groceries closed at six o'clock, there were no evening hours in department stores, no evening shopping hours of any kind. If you maintained a home, you needed a housekeeper which somebody starting a career, having a child going to private school, having an apartment in a good, safe neighborhood could hardly afford. You were hard put for time.

Nevertheless, I was on the state Board of the National Woman's Party here in New York. The NWP had a New York office. I had been very much interested in the New York work. I knew the New York state discriminations. I wanted to be on the Board, to be useful. But I cannot tell you how difficult it was for me, working in an office that required presence there at a rigid schedule where there never even was time to whip out on a long lunch hour to do a basic piece of shopping for Faith, or go to a parent-teachers meeting or do any of the things that had to be done, to try to fit in a board meeting of the Woman's Party that was always held in the middle of the afternoon so it would be convenient for the leisure-class women who were the prevailing members of the Board. They simply could not understand that a woman's economic time--daytime--had capital value.



Reyher: And it is that upper-class attitude to woman's productive time which the Women's Lib movement has helped change in the past few years, plus the fifty years of women in jobs and achievement. But that is also why so many of us earlier career women find that the young women today do not understand that there was a great deal of pioneering to be done in the early days of just establishing yourself as a working woman.

But contact with upper-class women had advantages, too. Commercially I did a certain amount of what is known as testimonial advertising. They don't do it very much now, but in those days they would get somebody with a famous name to endorse a product. For instance, through Al Smith's political adviser, Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, and her son, Joe Israels, I got Al Smith to do an endorsement of Simmons beds. The endorsers talked about sleep, not the mattress! I got Julius Rosenwald, the head of Sears Roebuck, to talk about sleep, too. Each time I got an endorsement I got \$1000.

In fact, Julius Rosenwald, who saw me because he knew my father, asked me point blank, "What do you get out of this?"

I said, "A thousand dollars." He leaned back in his chair and bellowed to one of his associates, "Come and see a young woman for whom I have just made a thousand dollars."

Later I heard that he was severely criticized by his colleagues for favoring a particular product, but I never heard an adverse word from him.

Since I had worked in the Woman's Party in various states, knowing that women often wanted to give their money to the Woman's Party, or another cause, I would call on them to help me find endorsers that I needed, and we would split the fee. It was very helpful to me. And the women just loved it. But all of this was done on a free-lance basis when I was no longer a regular salaried employee at J. Walter Thompson.

Woman Considered "Important" Because of Husband: Wider Focus Encouraged

It was interesting to me that the advertising agencies practically never took a woman who was well-known in her own right unless she was an actress. She had to be Mrs. So-and-so, invariably the wife of a well-known man. When we originally talked in the testimonial department at Walter Thompson's agency and rated women as to how important they were, who would be interested in them, and how much public appeal they would have, everybody agreed that certain



Reyher: actresses had built up a reputation, but how did a woman build up a reputation who was not a professional? Was she a Mrs. bank president, or was she a Mrs. head of a large organization, and how did their husbands rate? I told J. Walter Thompson that there were a couple of men--

Fry: You were right in the middle of making a very interesting evaluation of how, in these testimonials, they--

Reyher: --they rated women, but they rated them as wives of men. Usually in most testimonial advertising, advertisers wanted women who had great social prominence, which still meant they were the wives of certain men. Usually we went to the society editor of the New York Times or the Tribune who gave us an exact rating.

Once in a while, there would be a beautiful young girl, or a beautiful young woman whom I or someone else would suggest, and the answer would be, "Oh, no, her grandfather is Jewish," or "Oh, no, that family would not be acceptable." And that was more or less the attitude when I first began to do this work.

At that time in New York we were beginning to have the kind of society that later was known as Café society. It was more or less centered around a very well-known woman decorator called Elsie deWolfe, and later there was an extremely well-known publicity woman, Elsa Maxwell, who organized a great many parties, all designed to attract attention, often to help her clients. Anyway, these people began to break down certain nebulous barriers that you couldn't quite put your finger on.

Some of the society editors on the other newspapers and society editors on the Times and the Tribune seemed to me to have a very narrow outlook of what were well-known women, or what might captivate the interest of women, or what kind of people might captivate attention in general.

I thought since they were using these women in general advertising, trying to attract and gauge public opinion, using all kinds of techniques, that more accuracy was needed.

There were a couple of young men in town who were starting a new magazine, very obscure and not well-known, but I had been hearing a lot about them. They had done one or two things to indicate what they were up to. I thought they were emphasizing reality--news value. They wanted people to think in terms of news, and they thought a weekly news magazine was what people would be interested in, and that specific people had news value. Those two young men were Briton Hadden and Henry Luce. They were just planning their Time magazine in the twenties, then issued only as a few experimental sheets.



Reyher: I went to see one of them, Briton Hadden, and told him what our problem was, that we were constantly doing ads of prominent women and that I had the feeling that a woman, aside from a professional actress, in a community, could have news value, a general feature story news value. He agreed with me, he had a great many ideas about life in general, as the magazine showed.

And so I came back to J. Walter Thompson and reported on him; and some of the moguls in the agency were anxious to meet him. After that we had a few luncheons in the executive dining room with Briton Hadden, who advised us on the values placed on some of our women in our testimonial advertising. This will give you a general idea of how I personally, and a lot of other people, were trying to break down the restricted image that women were being presented in, even if it were only something like advertising of cosmetics.

Fry: Did this make any difference in your ads?

Reyher: It made a difference in some of the women who were chosen. That is what I am talking about. That is what our problem was, and it also meant that in some of the ads we showed not just a beautiful woman-- if it wasn't just cosmetics--but we showed action, we showed people walking, doing something. For instance, we did a series of ads on shoes, and the ads showed people walking and talking as they would be if they were elsewhere, natural, not dummies. And we used women officials, heads of political groups, the head of the Democratic Women.

I then was also editor of the J. W. T. house organ, which gave me a very good background idea of advertising in general.

#### Judging a Radio Personality

One of the things I had to do at J. Walter Thompson at one point was to arrange for different, well-known people to broadcast. Radio was in its infancy, TV had not been heard of. We would choose some little nightclub, or a little supper club, and put our broadcast on there. A personality would be heard over the air and presumably that would help the advertised product. It would also give the entertainer and the agency newspaper publicity.

This was in the twenties. One of the personalities I got to feature at the suggestion of Joe Israels, who'd helped me with Al Smith and was very knowledgeable about New York, was a man who Israels told me was desperate to get on the air, and I would have no difficulty getting him without a fee. "I have two other men whom I must put on first, because I have obligations to them, and I've



Reyher: promised them," I replied. One of them was Nicholas Muray, a well-known photographer whom J. W. T. was using for a lot of advertisements and who had won the U. S. Olympics in fencing, a man riding the crest of his popularity. He was originally a Hungarian. He was a good friend, and excelled at everything he did, so I put him on first.

I knew so little about radio. Next day there were comments such as, "Why don't you put somebody on who can speak English?" After all, he did speak English with a marked accent. So that was one legitimate strike against me.

The other man was someone else whose name I really can't remember, but he, too, was a disaster.

I talked this over with Joe Israels, an experienced publicity man, and he said, "Never mind, I've got just the man for you. I've told you about him before. Put him on, he's desperately anxious to be heard, he's funny, witty, and he's been talking at nightclubs everywhere!" So I put him on. The next day I got memos not from one or two people, but an avalanche of them. "What are you trying to do? Lose your job, work yourself out of a job? Of all the horrible people, of all the people who really put your back up, that pipsqueak is the one you finally chose."

I had the distinction, and presumably the imagination, though they didn't think so, and I didn't either, then or later, to put Walter Winchell on for his first program on the air! And I almost lost my job because of it. I cite this because I was always prepared to try anything, and to pit my views against established judgment. The agency would of course have wanted--and they well might have been right--some well-known comedian, or well-known actor.

#### Trip to Egypt, Near East, Europe, and Russia, 1929

Fry: Didn't you go on a rather extensive trip at about this time?

Reyher: I worked for J. Walter Thompson for about two years. About then a man who was connected with tours going to Russia, Griffin Barry, called me up on the telephone. He later went to England and married a former wife of Bertrand Russell.

"Becky," Griffin Barry said, "I've got a banker's widow here who wants to go to Russia. She wants somebody who knows Russian, and somebody who would make that trip interesting for her, and she wants to know whether I have somebody in mind. And I told her I had, but I would have to see. I think you would be ideal. And it isn't only just



Reyher: a trip to Russia. She is a widow in her early fifties, and she's been accustomed to traveling with her children. Her children are married, and don't want to go with her. She plans to go down the Nile, to go to Egypt, the Near East, and Italy, Austria, and Germany. She is a charming woman and I think it would be a wonderful trip for you."

"Griffin, say no more," I replied. "I have a daughter that I support, and look after, I have a job, and I can't just pick up my job and go sailing off to Europe."

"This is ridiculous," he answered. "This is a wonderful opportunity. She is paying \$4500 to Cooks for her trip, and she will pay \$4500 for your part of the trip. You will travel in great comfort and luxury and you ought to do it."

She was a Mrs. Simon Kuhn [Setty] whose family had established the Kuhn-Loeb banking firm. The next day I thought to myself, "Never in my life have I turned down an opportunity without at least finding out what it is all about." So I went to tea with Mrs. Kuhn at her son's home here in New York. She was indeed a charming and interesting woman, and I said to her, "You know, I can't say yes and I can't say no, until I find out about certain things. But," I said, "I know this is a magnificent trip, and I do know Russian and I will be able to get letters of introduction all along the trip, wherever we are, and I will be happy to try to make it an interesting trip for you because that would be an interesting trip for me; but I support my daughter. I have expenses here in New York that go on whether I am here or not."

"Well, what are your expenses here?" she asked.

"I pay \$125 a month for rent," I explained, "and I would have to have somebody come in and live there, and take my place. Besides, there is food, and there are other expenses. There is my daughter's tuition at her day school, which I could put off. But there are certain fixed expenses that I just would have to pay. I probably could get some credentials from magazines or newspapers so I could get a little pocket money, but I would have to have some money to leave behind."

Mrs. Kuhn was determined that I would go with her. I went back to J. Walter Thompson, and I saw James Young, who was one of the vice-presidents, and discussed the trip with him. Mr. Young had never had a college education, but he was a very well-traveled, sophisticated man, and he knew a great deal about the world. When he resigned from advertising, he went to the University of Chicago to advise the President on all matters and to be one of the directors of the Encyclopedia Britannica. He was a man of great breadth. I asked him what he thought I should do. "I think you should definitely resign," was his prompt reply. "We will try to take you back, but resign your job here, and go on a trip like this. A chance of a lifetime. I will see if we can't take you back when you return," he reiterated.



Reyher: I did go on that trip. I spent two weeks all day long in the museum at Cairo and saw the Tutankhamen collection. I went down the Nile and I spent ten days in Luxor, and all of this gave me a background on ancient Africa. I went to Russia and saw life there as I, who had worked in sociology at the University of Chicago, would have liked. I was able to understand the Russian, and give asides, in addition to the interpreter, to Mrs. Kuhn in notes of what they had said or did not say. In several places, I would ask if we could dispense with an interpreter, but the Russians always insisted on our having the interpreter.

"Well now, if you insist, you come along with us, but there are certain questions that I want to be sure and ask," I would say.

Fry: Is this 1929? I am trying to place what year in Russia.

Reyher: Yes, we left in August of 1929. While we were on that luxurious, magnificent trip the Wall Street crash came, all of which had an effect on what happened to my job when I came back. But while we were abroad I thought of nothing except my trip.

My sister had moved into my apartment, she had just finished college that summer, and was happy to have a New York apartment for her start.

In addition to the trip, Mrs. Kuhn gave me \$250 a month for four months, \$1000 cash that I could leave with my sister toward her expenses with Faith. And then I had other money.

#### Contacts with Women: Problems of Russian Women

It was a wonderful trip. Mabel Vernon, about whom I want to have a few special remarks before we leave each other, gave me letters to women leaders in many countries, particularly in Turkey, where they were extremely valuable, and in Austria.

Mrs. Kuhn, who had never been interested in women as such--she was interested in the Foreign Policy Association and international affairs, was very happy to see these women. I had known John Dewey's daughter Evelyn, who was one of my friends at Thompson's. An old friend, Agnes Burke Hale, a writer who married Robert Hale, a Congressman from Maine, had sent me to Evelyn Dewey, who got me my job at J. Walter Thompson. Evelyn Dewey's sister was living in Austria and we saw her several times--

Fry: John Dewey's daughter's sister?



Reyher: John Dewey's daughter, his other daughter, was living there and we had an opportunity of seeing how dreadfully poor intellectuals had become in Austria.

But it was in Russia we had a wonderful opportunity of seeing what they were doing about their family life. At that time women were just beginning to be part of the medical profession, at every level. There were various things I saw that surprised me. When we went to some of the small hospitals, some of the women already in labor were waiting in a common room, before they would go into the actual labor room. I said to one of the women doctors, in Russian--and incidentally over the years now, because I am no longer using Russian daily, which is what I talked to my mother in all the time, I couldn't be as fluent--I asked them why they didn't put a screen or a curtain around these women so that the women wouldn't see each other suffer. There was not much space between the beds, and they were in advanced labor, and in pain. "It is good for them to suffer in labor," the woman doctor replied.

The doctor was hostile, though she was looking after these women; she was hostile not only to them but to the whole proceeding of childbirth, which left a horrible impression on me.

I went to see the Director of Women's Affairs because I wanted to find out about abortions and birth control, because at that time Russia was pioneering, was known to supply birth control to its women.

Russia was supposedly giving women abortions freely. I asked her if a woman could have an abortion on request.

"Yes, definitely, but with certain exceptions. We feel that the state needs children, and that every woman is responsible to give our state, if she is married, two children. Until she has had two children we will give her neither contraceptives nor an abortion, whether she wants it, or not."

"But suppose there were circumstances in her life where she felt that she wanted it."

"If you are talking about whimsy"--the word "whimsy" remained with me--"if you are talking about whimsy, we have circumstances where women could be whimsical in other respects. For instances, we don't let adults have an egg if a child under seven is without one, because we feel that the child of seven needs the egg more than the woman does. So that if a woman had a whimsy that she wanted an egg, and she was desperate for an egg, we would not let her have it. We would feel that her attitude toward not having a child when needed was similar to that whimsy." I remember that it was one of the highlights of my trying to understand the position of Russian women.



## A Papal Audience

Reyher: In Rome I used a note from Agnes Burke Hale, whose brother was a priest in the College of Cardinals. Through her, Mrs. Kuhn and I got invitations to have an audience with the Pope, not a private one, but one where several other people, or quite a few come--the invitation is delivered at the hotel, by a messenger, has a gold seal on it, and it all seems very important.

Mrs. Kuhn said that she had a lace mantilla that she'd use to cover her head, and she would wear her black-seal, long coat, but she would not change her stockings, which were pepper-and-salt, to all black ones, as prescribed. She would get absolutely nothing extra for this audience, she stated flatly. "But you're told that you have to dress completely in black," I insisted. "It may be that your pepper-and-salt stockings will show as you walk." "Well, then they will send me away. I will not change."

So I made all sorts of provisions for a mantilla, black stockings, and every detail of everything else prescribed. At the appointed time, we arrived at the Vatican. They passed Mrs. Kuhn, and they made motions to me--I didn't speak Italian--to follow two nuns. When I went where directed, there was an English-speaking nun. "Hasn't anybody told you that you cannot see the Pope with a dress that is up to your knees?" she inquired angrily. There I was, all in black, but with a dress to my knees, or half way to my knees. "It's a two-piece dress. If I lift my blouse, let's see if we can't drop my skirt and fasten it to my girdle," I suggested. And that's exactly what they did. We opened my skirt and dropped it. Two nuns sewed the skirt onto my girdle, dropping it so the hem came lower, so I could pass and go in and have my audience with the Pope.

### Former Job Unavailable: Study of *New York Times* and *Tribune* Articles on Women

After six months abroad I came back to New York City and discovered that we had had a terrible financial crash and we were at the beginning of a depression. When I went to see J. Walter Thompson, as had been prearranged, they said to me, "How can you ask us in all fairness to give you back your job when you have been touring Europe and Egypt and the Near East in such luxury?"--which of course they all knew--and, "We are firing people who need money to live on, so that we couldn't possibly give you your job back."



Reyher: So did I need money to live on. This had been an interlude, and I had fixed expenses at home. So then I did all kinds of things. Little odd jobs that whole winter, because it was then January. Also Faith immediately on my return got the mumps. I stayed at home and looked after her because she felt that she had been deprived of her mother so long and should have her when she was sick.

One of the things that I did then that I could do at home, entirely on my own with the help of my sister, was to buy six weeks of the New York Herald Tribune and six weeks of the New York Times, their magazine and their daily sections, and clip the papers, and show how much news about women each paper carried, and how many feature and news stories about them. Because I wanted to get a job on the Times, I wanted to show the Times that the Herald Tribune was beating them out on space on a percentage basis, on a lineage basis, and primarily on an interest basis. In every way, the Herald Tribune was the newspaper that a woman who wanted news about women would buy.

I then took that study to the Times, left it with an editor, and didn't hear from them. At the end of a few weeks they told me they weren't interested. In the meantime, a man that I knew on the Times, Silas Bent, told me that that study had been circulated by a staff member on the Times to all of them because he wanted them to read it. And the editor who was responsible for this did not give me a return of any kind on my work, just claimed they weren't interested. But I couldn't confront him because I had no proof. That was one of the ways that free lancers were unprotected in those days, even on the most reputable papers. I had many unhappy, unprofitable experiences.

So then I took that study to the Herald Tribune. I took it through friends to Mrs. Ogden Mills Reid, the owner and publisher of the paper, who saw me. "This is a very interesting study," she began, "and I would like to have you work for us in the promotion department." "Well, I would rather work in the writing department," I told her. "You might start here in promotion"--it was the department she was most interested in--"and then perhaps you would get into writing."

Then she inquired, "Do you have independent means of your own?" "I do not," I said, "I support myself and my daughter." "Well, you see, as a woman starting her first job on our paper--on any newspaper--we couldn't pay you more than \$50 a week." "But you see, I have been getting much more than \$100 a week at J. Walter Thompson, and have had the privilege of doing a certain amount of testimonial advertising and promotion on my own. I have been earning between \$150 and \$175 a week, minimum, and I need that amount of money for myself and my daughter." "We couldn't possibly pay you that. I am very sorry. That is why I asked you if you had your own money." Today there would be a scale for any job, for men or women, on a newspaper.



Fry: Was this just for women?

Reyher: This was for the paper.

Fry: Men or women on the paper.

Reyher: Well, I don't know their exact scale. No, this offer was probably a scale for women because all women were paid less money in those days than men were.

Public Relations Assistant for Joseph McKee: Refusal of Political Career

Fry: There is a note in your Who's Who that you worked with Joseph McKee, who was chairman of the Board of Aldermen and later ran for mayor of New York.

Reyher: In the summer of 1930 I began running around to everybody saying that I would just have to come back from Maine to New York and have a job. J. Walter Thompson thought I had done a good job for them and were sorry that they hadn't taken me back. Judge McKee, who was then the president of the Board of Aldermen, wanted to be mayor of New York, and he wanted somebody who had not been involved in politics to write his speeches for him and work from his office.

I went to work for him that fall of 1930. I worked for him less than a year because I didn't want to continue working in politics. During that time I initiated and wrote a column for him, under his signature, called, "Your City and Mine," which appeared in the New York World three times a week, and did a radio series for him, because radio was just starting, which he read on the air, "Father Knickerbocker and his Family," which simply told the history of New York and how it was administered.

I occupied an office right next to his in the old City Hall, a very old, historical stately mansion, a landmark. In one corner was my desk, and catty-cornered opposite me was the vice-chairman of the Board of Aldermen, the Honorable Kenneth Sutherland, known as the boss of Coney Island, Kenny Sutherland. Of all the people I met on that job, Kenny Sutherland, who was a known boss, and made no bones about it, was the man who, according to his lights, and if you accepted that you had to think of it from his angle, had more integrity and could be depended on more than anyone else that I came in contact with. I had several very interesting talks with him.

He told me that in Coney Island there had been a Russian Jew who was going back to Russia for a visit, and asked him to go with him.



Reyher: And Kenny went to Russia on his vacation. And he said to me very seriously, "They have organization there the likes of which we have never seen here. If I could get my people in line the way they do-- [laughter]." And I just loved it.

When I left, he urged me to come back. I had had differences with Judge McKee, and I just walked out and never came back. Kenny said, "You know everybody has differences and let me smooth them out. Why didn't you tell me? You occupy an office with me." Primarily I just thought that was not the place for me, and also--

Fry: You mean political differences?

Reyher: Not political, no, no. Just differences of technique. Something came up, I can't even remember. But the point was that Judge McKee was a politician. He would see people when he wanted to, he would tell the truth when he wanted to, he would shade it when he wanted to. In order to get to the men's room from his room, he would have to walk through our office. I can't begin to tell you how many times he retired to the men's room so that he would technically not be in when certain people came to see him. [Laughter] And that was just one facet of his character. I wished him well, but I didn't want to make a career of working for him.

Kenny Sutherland said, "You are just the kind of gal we would like in politics. We would like you to name the area, then we would put you in there, and we would run you for office. We would like you to go into politics. We like the kind of person you are."

Today I would consider it, but in those days I thought I would just be a front for some politicians, and I wouldn't know how to buck them. Also that wasn't the life I wanted. I didn't want to be a politician. I used to see rolls of bills come in, not to Judge McKee's office, but to some of those offices, that were several thousand dollars in small bills, and at the end of the day, those rolls were gone. I don't know what the money was used for because I was not part of the inner workings, but I just knew enough to know that the inner workings of the machine, from the top down, used cash money for something, and it was not the kind of politics that I wanted to go into. So I knew perfectly well that that was not for me.

In the meantime, somebody did an anthology about women connected with public office--I have got it in Maine--and they had me write about what a woman could do in a mayor's office or in a local office. If I could have continued just writing speeches and would not have been politically, personally involved, or if I had felt I would not be aware of certain undercover maneuvering, I would have been quite happy to learn more, and to move along. But it wouldn't have worked out that way. I knew then that it had been an interesting experience in



Reyher: writing, and in the presentation of material which is what I was interested in, but it shut the door of going into politics for me forever.

Fry: What interests me so much is that it was their idea to run you, a woman, for office.

Reyher: It wasn't their idea, it was Kenny Sutherland's idea. That was because I had shown him that I was able to grasp what the various local situations were. They were well aware of the fact that they were going to need operating money but that was on a different level apparently. I was able to work smoothly and cooperatively with them, and they were so accustomed to having a front for anything that they did--undoubtedly Judge McKee was a front--in fact, most people in high offices are fronts, that they must have had something in mind that they thought it would be nice to have me front for.

But I knew perfectly well, and I don't want to say anything on record that would seem to be scathing about Sutherland because his daughter who was then a little girl in a convent, became a woman physician, and he had a very fine family life, and one aspect of him was highly respectable, and respected. Officially he was not the boss of Coney Island, but the leader of Coney Island, as his father had been before him.

Fry: This was the nature of the entire political scene at that time.

Reyher: So it seemed to me.

Sutherland and a crony of his used to go down to the races in Maryland, and they would always say to me, "Why don't you give us a little money and we will put it on a horse for you?" Of course, they knew I didn't read the racing sheets, and I knew, perfectly well, that if I gave them some money they would come back and say, "Your horse won." That was the technique, you see. If I had asked what horse they were putting it on, obviously they would have told me. But it was the kind of life whereby men did certain things for people, men or women, and eventually the day of reckoning would come.

One day Kenny Sutherland said to me, "I can't make you out, what is it you want out of life? Do you want a nice apartment, do you want a boy friend?" (I think he said "a gentleman friend.") "Do you want beautiful clothes?" He couldn't understand a woman wanting to do an honest day's work getting paid for it, and learning to write well, and doing something with her writing, and having a comfortable, interesting life for herself and her child. That just wasn't in their ken, no question about it.



Reyher: But he was very nice about helping friends and relatives of mine when they wanted or needed certain endorsements for jobs, and he certainly was very kind about endorsing me for my government job, and I certainly enjoyed working in the office with him and I certainly thought he was one of the most brilliant men in that particular office, certainly one of the most brilliant men in City Hall. Yet he was not one of the higher echelon men who were out in front and whose names were mentioned all the time.

Consultant, Sears Roebuck and Company: Research on Women's Reactions

Fry: After that did you go right into the Sears Roebuck work?

Reyher: Let me see. I left in the spring. Always, in between, I did little odd jobs, until I would get a piece of hack writing to do.

I went to various people I knew in advertising agencies here in New York, because it was the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency that got me my job with McKee, and someone told me that Sears Roebuck was looking for somebody who could help them in their research related to their opening up local neighborhood department stores.

I went to work for them as sort of their woman's point of view, though I wasn't called that, and later they made it a much larger job. I started as an assistant to their research man, Edwin West, who reported directly to the Board of Directors. We studied the stores they were opening around the New York area.

One of the things I did for them was to go into nine different cities and establish how they could--by having a questionnaire which I developed, and using a woman that I found in each community who would go in a car with me to see sixty representative women leaders--get a sample, but a reliable reaction to the new, local stores that they were opening in those cities, and planned to open all over the country. Today they have many stores; they were just branching out then from being a mail-order house.

I would go into those specified communities and find the woman who would continue the study after two weeks, or three weeks, or a month, after I left there. Again it was my experience in organizing for suffrage and equal rights in various states that gave me that necessary experience of finding representative effective women, and knowing what to ask them.

I worked at the Sears job for several years. I'm trying to think of why I gave that up. I was ill, for one thing. I had to go to the hospital to be operated on. Whenever I had an illness in my





"Ganna Walska Enters the Political Arena: Wife of Harold F. McCormick Receiving Illinois Leaders in the Equal Rights Movement at her House in Chicago as Her Debut in the Campaign. Left to right: Dr. Josephine Pfeiffer; Miss Frances Dickinson, State Chairman of the Woman's Party; Miss Rebecca Hourwich; Mrs. Marion Bogart; Mrs. McCormick; Elizabeth M. Kohr; and Mrs. Bertha Moler." New York Times, Dec. 9, 1923

# Equal Rights

VOL. 2, No. 26  
FIVE CENTS

OCTOBER 1  
1928



Faith and Her Mother  
Sketches in Equal Rights are made with the help of the National Woman's Party through the generous donation of Faith Reyher's mother to her mother, Rebecca Hourwich, magazine writer and National Organizer of the National Woman's Party.

Cover of Equal Rights, Aug. 14, 1926  
Readers of Equal Rights were familiar with Reyher-Hourwich household through the engaging sketches of Faith Reyher, written by her mother, Rebecca Hourwich, magazine writer and National Organizer of the National Woman's Party. [articles in Appendix pages 269-274]



Members of the New York City Committee, National Woman's Party, who recently endorsed the action of the National Conference in supporting Hoover and Curtis, and are now active campaigning in New York City. Left to right, seated: Mrs. John Winston Brannan, Mr. Joseph W. Dixon, Mrs. Lloyd Williams. Standing: Miss Rebecca Hourwich, Mrs. John White, Mrs. John Rogers, Mrs. Dana Brannan.



Cover of Equal Rights,  
October 27, 1928

Members of the People's Mandate Committee who met with Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt before the special delegation left for South America. Miss Jacqueline Cochran, Mrs. Rebecca H. Reyher, Mrs. Ana del Pulgar de Burke, Dr. Mary E. Wooley President, Mrs. Burton W. Musser, and Mrs. Enoc W. Frost. Pres. Roosevelt autographed the picture belonging to Rebecca Reyher. The picture appeared in the New York Times, Oct. 31, 1937.



Reyher: early days, I would be ill not for just a week or two weeks, but for many weeks. I was ill for some weeks, and then I went to Reno to get my divorce.

Fry: You told me earlier that you went to Africa for the second time in the thirties. Was it at this period?

Reyher: It was the spring of 1934 after I got my Reno divorce.

Career Focus: Interpreting What People Say and Do

Reyher: Well, I would like to leave my experience at J. Walter Thompson and with Judge McKee and at Sears, and I would like to move on to the fact that all through my work life I was hoping to get back to Africa, hoping I could become a full-time writer. As I told you, I wasn't able to do that until my daughter graduated from college.

I was able at various times to go back to Columbia to take courses, or to go back to the University of Chicago and spend time studying there, but I regret that my life was broken up, that I didn't have a continuous academic life, or a continuous professional life in any particular place. But the one thread that I always clung to was that my life consisted of trying to reach people, trying to find out what they were thinking, what they wanted, trying to interpret or analyze whatever it was that I was interested in, whether in writing or speaking, or being on the radio, and then on the other hand, trying to interpret what it was that others had to say that I thought was interesting or valuable and finding ways of interpreting what they had to do. So that was really what the rest of my life became.



## IX SATISFACTIONS FROM CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN WELFARE

Regional Director, Federal Works Progress Administration, 1935-1937

Assistant to Director, Information Service and Motion Pictures, WPA, 1937-1939

Member flying caravan delegation of Peoples Mandate Committee for Inter-American Peace and Cooperation, 1937

Executive Secretary and member Board of Directors, Dominican Republic Settlement Association, Inc., 1939-1943

Regional Director, Works Progress Administration, New York and New England: Nursery School Project

Reyher: The work that I was really interested in and that all my experience in working with women and in the Woman's Party certainly helped, as did my feminist background, was when I went to work as a Regional Director for the Works Progress Administration. The WPA was in its infancy and planning its projects. Jacob Baker, who had brought me into the organization, who was one of Harry Hopkins's assistants, and who was the head of all the professional and service projects, all the white-collar and arts projects, called the entire staff in to suggest what projects the government might undertake that would be of value. No doubt you have read about the travel guides, state by state, that various people suggested which have made history, and which were wonderful.

The thing that I thought they should do, that I suggested, and they did do, was to establish nursery schools for working women all over the country. Jake immediately acknowledged that it was important. I urged that that was something pioneering, that women needed, and that there were experts who could plan and organize it. But then I was a Regional officer, not a Washington administrative officer. I didn't want to be a Washington officer. I wanted to be in New York and New England because I lived in New York, and my daughter was at college in



Reyher: New England, and I wanted to maintain a home for her. I didn't want to go to Washington, live there, and settle there, which was offered to me. So that, if I made a suggestion like that for a federal project, I could make the suggestion and then I would either work with it, or administer it. Instead I worked regionally with every kind of arts and professional project.

But to my honor and to my satisfaction, they did establish day nurseries all over the country for women as long as they had the money, and needed to put women to work instead of handing them relief checks. As long as there was a work program, there were day nurseries all over the country. That was one of the things that I had begun to think about way back as a young woman, and I was happy to see that it could be done through the government. I don't know where the reports of those nursery schools are, but they are in the archives of the government, and it would be extremely important for women who are interested in establishing nursery schools--day nurseries--conducted by government, which is what I am talking about--

Fry: Child care centers.

Reyher: Child care centers were what they were. It would be of great interest to go to the archives in Washington and get some of those reports, and have them available to women who are interested in women's studies.

Fry: It is interesting that we had a young man come to our office about nine months ago hunting up information like this on what had been done in California, because he was in the legislative analyst's office and was working on legislation ideas at that time for day care centers.

Peoples Mandate Committee: Work with Mabel Vernon

Wasn't it while you were working for the WPA that you took some of your leave to go with the flying caravan delegation of the Peoples Mandate Committee for Inter-American Peace and Cooperation--the organization that Mabel Vernon believed in so deeply?

Reyher: Yes. So much of the time when I've been talking about what I did in the Woman's Party I've talked about Alice Paul because I worked for her and with her. But later, when Mabel was in direct charge of the NWP, she would call upon me; and when I went out West, I went for her and I think I told you about that. But when Mabel became interested in the peace movement, and when she was going to work for the Peoples Mandate, she asked me if she couldn't come to see me and talk to me a little bit about it. And I think that was in the thirties, I mean, this particular time when she came to see me, just after I'd come back from Africa.



Reyher:

The winter I'd come back from Africa my daughter had gone back to school and I had rented a furnished apartment on Fifty-seventh Street that had a skylight. Mabel sat in the center of the room, as the light was turning late in the afternoon, very much as you and I are doing. We started talking early and the afternoon light began to fade. There was a shaft of light that came in through this skylight window. Mabel had very blonde curls in those days, and they were like a halo around her face. Her face was always alive, and her blue eyes were gleaming.

"You know, Becky, we've just got to do this. We've just got to do this." And it was so like Mabel.

Mabel always assumed that no matter how large an undertaking it was, if one person got under the great big globe and started pushing it, and if she could dragoon at least one other person to help her push that enormous globe, it might not go very far, but it would certainly tremble or move. That was the way I always felt about her.

Nothing daunted her. I had had enough experience by that time to realize that if you didn't have a headquarters, and if you didn't have money, and if you just had the name of an organization, and just the beginning of an organization, you were up against a stupendous undertaking. But she wasn't daunted. And of course, she did create a stupendous organization, and she did get a million signatures to a petition that urged the ratification of the Buenos Aires treaties, and she did manage to create a tremendous feeling of inter-American solidarity among women.

Now, of course, you have one of the cards there about the Inter-American Commission of Women, and Doris [Stevens] had been the chairman on that Inter-American Commission that went down to Buenos Aires and worked with the Latin American governments. Anne Carter, a friend of mine who first went to work for the Woman's Party, went down with Doris on one trip because she spoke Spanish and would be so helpful.

But I think Mabel felt that there was more to the potential of women in the Americas than just being in touch with each other on an official basis. She felt that there should be an organization that would harness all of their power toward working for what she believed in most of all--peace. It should be a formal organization--the Peoples Mandate Committee for Inter-American Peace and Cooperation. She wanted a peace program, which was what she was so interested in at the time. This was the thirties. She wanted the power of women in groups and as individuals, to work towards peace, and not toward just removing the discriminations against women. Nor did she want the effort to be limited to just an Inter-American Commission of Women.



Reyher: She was able to do a tremendous piece of work, something to boggle the imagination. I was very pleased and proud that though I was then working for the government, she asked me if I couldn't get away for a few weeks and be one of the women to go on the trip being planned to fly throughout South America.

Difficulty Securing Released Time: Help from the Woman's Party  
"Sisterhood"

Mabel knew that in the government you could occasionally get time off; but this was going to be a trip for six weeks, and there was a certain amount of politics that had entered into the Works Progress Administration as it was now tapering off, that was not there in the beginning. Jake Baker, who had brought me into the organization, had left it. I was then working, not as I had been, as a Regional Director, but in the Information Service, helping make motion pictures of the program.

We made about twenty short documentaries with Pathé News, and I was working on that. But the Director--I was working in New York and reporting to Washington occasionally--the Director of that project, who was also the Director of the Information Service of the WPA, Roscoe Wright, was a Texan who was both rough and crude, and neither he nor any of his assistants particularly cared about having women in high positions in the Works Progress Administration, and some of us were considered to be in responsible positions. Roscoe Wright was one of the rudest men I ever worked with. If he wanted to see me in New York, he would send me a telegram, "Meet me in New York"--no "please" or "if convenient."

So that I knew that if I asked Roscoe Wright to give me six weeks to go to Latin America, he would refuse. And I wanted to go, and I knew Mabel wanted to have me go; and I knew that I could do a good job.

There was a Congresswoman from New York at that time, Mrs. Caroline O'Day, who was on the Mandate Board and who was a good friend of Mabel's--

Fry: She was on the Board of the Peoples Mandate?

Reyher: On the Peoples Mandate Board, and she was also a good friend of Harry Hopkins, and she was a Congresswoman. I knew that if she asked Harry Hopkins to release me because I was an active member of the Mandate to go and do this good job, he would say, "Certainly."



Reyher: Harry Hopkins, the Director of the Works Progress Administration, a close friend of Franklin Roosevelt's, wrote to Roscoe Wright, or telephoned him, and told him to release me.

Roscoe Wright telephoned me from Washington and said, "Why did you go to Mr. Hopkins for permission to go to Latin America, why didn't you come to me?" "Roscoe, it was not up to me to ask. It was the Board that wanted me to go. Mrs. O'Day, who was a friend of Mr. Hopkins, wanted me to go, and so she naturally asked Mr. Hopkins." But I didn't fool Roscoe Wright and he knew exactly why I went over his head to Hopkins.

When I got back to the office in New York after the weekend, the secretary whom I had had there for months, and who was a friend of Roscoe Wright's, said to me, "I've been given a much better job and I am leaving this office. I am giving you two weeks' notice." "How can you do this to me?" I said. "You know that I am due to go to South America, that we have a very little office here, and you've been running it, and I'm due to go in six weeks. You know it isn't only a question of getting somebody else, but it has to be somebody who will be passed by the government. And the chances of my doing all this on such notice are very slight. Couldn't you possibly hold your present job for the next three months?"

"You wouldn't do a thing like that to me, would you?" she replied. "I have a chance for advancement. I am leaving you in two weeks." "Well, isn't the Washington office going to send somebody to take your place, because after all, we have to have a secretary here," I asked hopefully. "Well, I'm not at all sure that there can be somebody here right away. It'll be a question of interviewing them and making sure they'll do."

I thought, "There it goes, this is my dear friend Roscoe Wright just deciding that if I could go over his head, he'd show me I couldn't get to Latin America anyway."

I told Mary Dubrow, a friend of mine whom I had worked with in the Woman's Party, about this. You see, no matter how much top-echelon quarreling there was about power in the Woman's Party in later days among a handful of women, those of us who worked together--like girls who had belonged to the same sorority, or gone to the same school and were long-standing close friends--developed a relationship never later matched in love and friendship. We really had sisterhood; we really turned to each other in time of trouble for advice, or help. So I turned to Mary and asked, "What am I going to do?"

Mary, by this time, had been running in Mount Vernon [New York] an employment department in their public schools to get jobs for pre-adolescents and adolescents. She had done it for so many years, that



Reyher: she just knew people in employment agencies everywhere. And also, going out to Mount Vernon--you see, she commuted from New York to the suburbs because she wanted to live in New York though she had a job in the suburbs--going out every day on the train with her was somebody I didn't know, but a Texan who taught somewhere in the suburbs, and got off somewhere along the line that Mary traveled on.

"Wait a minute," cried Mary, all agog to help me. "The woman I commute with has got a friend that she was telling me about. The only reason I suddenly remember her is that she said to me that this friend had worked for the WPA out in Texas, that she's come East, she's left her husband, she's very anxious to get a job until she knows what she's going to do. She lives at a hotel here in town. Let me talk to my friend tomorrow on the train."

The girl had worked in either Lyndon Johnson's office or some office as important as that in Texas, and Roscoe Wright came from Texas and, like all bullies, toadied to power where it was manifest. Perhaps she had worked for one of the WPA offices. She had all the clearance, the security, that was needed. She could walk into any government office and within twenty-four hours they would have the papers on her as we did.

She walked into my office, by appointment of course, and said, "I understand that you're looking for a secretary, and that you're desperate for one, and I'm desperate to have a job." I promptly hired that girl, knowing that Roscoe Wright would not dare to block her employment. She came to work immediately and made it possible for me to go. She was very friendly, and it was wonderful. A miracle, I felt.

It was one of those cases where true sisterhood prevailed, where a man really didn't want a woman to have an opportunity for an interesting experience, or he didn't want to recognize the importance of a woman's organization where a Congresswoman had asked for a woman to be released which would have been of benefit to that organization. All those issues entered. And his pique at a woman employee might have spoiled the whole plan.

Purpose: Ratification of Buenos Aires Treaties

One of the people Mabel Vernon asked me to see on the trip was Spruille Braden--have I told you that on tape?

Fry: No.



## ROOSEVELT EXTOLS PACTS OF AMERICAS

Tells People's Mandate Fliers  
of Their Great Effect Upon  
Belligerent Nations Afar

### PROVISIONS TO BE HEEDED

President Counsels Stressing  
This Point on Ratification  
Tour of Latin Republics

From a Staff Correspondent.

HYDE PARK, N. Y., Oct. 30.—The treaties made between the nations of Americas are not regarded as scraps of paper, and that attitude has had great effect on the rest of the world, President Roosevelt said today in talking with the flying squadron of the People's Mandate for Peace.

The four women of the squadron, starting an airplane tour of 17,000 miles to persuade upon nineteen Latin-American republics a speedy ratification of the treaties signed at the Buenos Aires conference last Winter, were accompanied by about sixty persons on their visit to the President.

Mr. Roosevelt told the group that private reports to him revealed that the effect of the establishment of effective machinery for peace in the Western Hemisphere had been very great on other parts of the world, greater than might be realized from the belligerent attitude of some other countries.

Mr. Roosevelt did not specify the warlike nations, but it seemed clear that he was thinking of Japan, Germany and Italy, which he criticized by inference in his Chicago speech calling for concerted action by the peace-loving nations to "quarantine" aggressors and treaty breakers.

#### Living Up to Treaties

He pictured people in other parts of the world regarding with admiration the relationships between the three Americas and noting that machinery could be set up for the peaceable settlement of all disputes.

These people also had treaties, he said, but were not certain about their provisions being met, whereas in the Americas the nations would live up to their treaties.

Counseling the delegation to stress the latter point on the tour, the President declared that treaties were of no use if the whole world was ready to violate them on the spur of the moment for any immediate needs.

In the informal remarks, Mr. Roosevelt expressed his pleasure over the trip which he made to South America last year and indicated displeasure at the present deficiency in means of communication between the United States and its neighbors to the south.

Remarking that the trip of the mandate representatives should be followed up by many other visits, commercial, educational and scientific, Mr. Roosevelt said that he was now working with the Maritime Commission on a plan to start within a year a line of shipping down the east coast of South America which would take people there faster and with more comfort.

Pointing to the good service available to Chile on the west coast, he added that the service connecting the United States with other parts of the west coast was not too good.

The aim of the People's Mandate organization is to impress upon all governments its belief that the people of the world are against war. Specifically, it advocates cessation of armaments, use of existing machinery to prevent wars and promotion of international trade to remove economic barriers.

The delegates and other visitors were presented to Mr. Roosevelt by Dr. Mary E. Woolley, president emeritus of Mount Holyoke College and chairman of the Mandate.

"It is most important at this time to set up a workable peace system in the Western Hemisphere," she said.

"We recognize that the Buenos Aires treaties form the foundation for such a system and that they are

not complete until ratified by the various governments.

"Therefore, we undertake this work in support of ratification. We feel that this is the time above all others to emphasize treaties. The caravan has an opportunity to stress the importance of treaties in this part of the world."

Dr. Woolley, expressing regret that the United States had neglected opportunities to help world peace, such as participation in the League of Nations, voiced hope that improved South American relations would be one contribution to world peace.

#### Four Making the Flight

The members of the delegation which will make the trip to South America are Mrs. Burton W. Musser of Salt Lake City; Mrs. Ana del Pulgar de Burke of Washington, D. C.; Mrs. Enoch Wesley Frost of Texarkana, Ark., and Mrs. Rebecca Hourwich Rayher of New York.

The delegation, accompanied by ten women fliers piloting their own planes came here from Washington. They will leave the Newark Airport tonight for Miami, whence they will fly to Havana.



Reyher: Spruille Braden then had ambassadorial status with our State Department. He was in Argentina negotiating one of the boundary treaties. My particular job on that trip was to handle the publicity, to coordinate the liaison with local women, to coordinate anything and everything because I was the youngest member of the group, and I was Mabel's particular representative and fellow worker. The chairman of our delegation was Mrs. Burton Musser [Elise], a member of the Board, and also a good friend of Mabel's. The purpose of the trip was to urge the ratification of the Buenos Aires treaties.

Of course, the primary importance of our trip was that foreigners cannot see the President, and the Foreign Minister of a country, or any member of a government unless they are introduced by their own ambassador, or their own representative of equal status. That means that if a group of local women, and a group of foreign women say to him, "Mr. President, what are you going to do about that particular treaty?" whatever he answers goes on official diplomatic record. That is the particular value of that technique, as well as to get publicity. Officially the statesman has gone on record in his capacity as president or foreign minister and of necessity is bound to indicate what he plans to do, or what he thinks, or what he has done. This becomes an official record in both countries, for both governments represented.

By this time some of the Buenos Aires treaties which covered peace, inter-governmental cooperation, and cultural affairs--there was a whole series of them that were of great import for our organization and inter-American relations--had been ratified, but some had not. It varied in the different countries. Some of the treaties needed just a little pushing, some of them were about to fade away. So this was what we could tangibly accomplish, place the governments seen on record. It was a wonderful strategy on Mabel's part.

Mrs. Musser, as chairman of our delegation, was extremely valuable because she had been the official U. S. government representative on an inter-American commission, not a commission of women, but a general commission, to consider specific inter-American issues. Once she had been chairman of such a commission, once she had been a member of the commission.

Another member was Mrs. Enoc W. [Beatrice] Frost. She was a national president of some garden clubs in her part of the West; she came from Texarkana, Arkansas--a very sweet, pretty woman whom everybody liked. Everybody liked Mrs. Musser; she was a brilliant woman. Incidentally, she was married to Burton Musser of Salt Lake City, the thirty-second child of one of the leaders of the Mormon church. How many wonderful visits I had with both of them later!



Reyher: Ana Burke [Ana del Pulgar de Burke], whose husband, Tom Burke, was with the State Department, was the third member. Ana spoke Spanish, she was the interpreter and always made a statement in Spanish, greeted everybody in Spanish. Mrs. Musser was the chairman, who led the delegation, made the key statement, Mrs. Frost was decorative, and I handled all the public relations, and publicity. It was understood by Mabel and me that I was to get some contributions, if I could.

### Publicity and Fund Raising

The publicity was tricky. We would be met at each airport by officials, leading women, and an enormous press delegation, frequently unfriendly, determined to trap us into some embarrassing statement. I remember another one of the Latin American trips. It was definitely most successful. Once or twice the reporters, all men, tried as they rushed up to meet our plane, to get one of our women to say something that would divert the press from saying what we wanted them to say. By now I had had so much experience with large groups of reporters and greeters meeting one of our stars in the suffrage or equal rights campaign that there was no possibility of their reaching any one of my stars and getting her to say something that would be damaging to us.

We had wonderful headlines, and wonderful publicity, and wonderful cooperation from the press throughout that whole trip, but we had to be ever watchful to get our message, not theirs, across.

The highlight of the 1937 flying caravan trip--there were many--was when Spruille Braden gave a dinner party for us. Before the dinner party, when I went to see him at his office, we talked about arrangements. We were planning to issue a press release. I always made all statements in Mrs. Musser's name, which had been carefully discussed and determined beforehand. We were due to get one out on our present arrival. Mr. Braden questioned me on it. Then instead of sending for one of his staff, Mr. Braden, the Ambassador, sat down at the typewriter and said, "Here, dictate to me what you'd like to have said." The release distributed had been typed by the Ambassador.

Of course, we spoke on the radio all over the world. We had receptions and small meetings, and everywhere we did have wonderful things done for us, great help from people in high and less important places.

The night of the dinner party at Spruille Braden's--dinner in Latin America is always about ten o'clock--I had said to Mr. Braden, "You know, Miss Vernon has asked me to see you privately, and I'd like to see you, if I may, before the evening is over."



Reyher: He took me into his study, and I was watching the clock. "If you don't mind," I said, "I would like to leave here soon, because I promised Miss Vernon that I would telephone her when we got back." "I know exactly what you're here for," he laughed. "You want a contribution from me, and you want to telephone to Miss Vernon what it is. I don't think what I'm going to give you"--and he said it very pleasantly and laughingly--"is anything to telephone home about." He gave me fifty dollars!

#### Episodes Needing Equanimity

Reyher: When we got to Ecuador it was in one of their almost customary states of changing presidents. I think they'd changed presidents three times in just a matter of a few weeks.

One of my difficulties in Ecuador was that I went to have my hair done, even on a trip like this you occasionally have to have your hair done, and I like to have my hair done when I go to a foreign country because you get a certain amount of unscheduled, natural conversation from the woman in the beauty parlor. But there was no beauty parlor to send us to apparently, and we had our hair done in a private house. They poured water on me from a pitcher, and they poured the water down my back so that I was really drenched. We had a very tight schedule, and Mrs. Musser was waiting for me, all of the delegation were waiting; I was usually on deck. In the meantime, here was I with three or four people trying to dry my clothes out, partly on me, and partly off me, but that was just an episode. Nobody realized that I was walking around wet; it was a warm country.

When we came down from Quito we almost had a more serious escapade. We came down to Guayaquil on a little, one-track railroad. I noticed that Mrs. Musser was in a state of great stress. Normally she was one of the calmest women I ever saw. At every local station the driver would get off, and send a telegram, and pick up several.

When we got off--Mrs. Musser sat in the front seat, and I sat either next to her, or behind her, right behind the driver--it's like a little bus rather than a train--she almost could not walk.

She practically gasped, "You know that that driver was driving on a gone-gauge railroad and they were constantly exchanging signals about the fact that they were not able to get one train off of the track, and asking hysterically what track should the driver go on?" Poor Mrs. Musser was going through this harrowing experience, and she never told us a word about it until it was over.



Reyher: She also was very sweet, kind, and considerate on other occasions. When we were headed for Bogotá, there were very bad winds, and there was no public air transport. We had a very tight schedule. The president of Columbia sent a message that he would send his private plane with his personal pilot, but unfortunately in that bad weather only one person could go.

So Mrs. Musser said, "I hate to be selfish about this, but I'm particularly anxious"--and she gave her reasons--"to go to Bogotá and I'm afraid that I would like to exercise my prerogative of being chairman by saying I should be the one to go, even though it is a beautiful city and I'm sure every one of you would want to go."

I laughed, and said, "I really think I should tell you that certainly I am going to be worried about you, because when I started on this trip I went to my insurance man and took out some additional insurance for my daughter, and he kept coming back to me and reporting that it was fine that we were going to fly by Pan American because they had so much respect for them, and their record was so good. But there was one little piece that we were due to go on that went up to Bogotá, just a little sector of our trip, and for that little sector it would cost \$45 extra because it was such a dangerous trip, and their record of flying was so poor." Mrs. Musser laughed, said she would nevertheless go, and of course it was a safe trip.

#### Women Admitted to Monastery

Reyher: The other weird experience that we had was when we were in Quito. The president of the country, the Jefe Supremo--that's the chief, supreme head--asked Mrs. Musser what special thing he could do for us? What would we like to see or do in Quito, the capital, that would be a lasting memory? Mrs. Musser turned to me, because by that time I had suggested all sorts of extracurricular things because I'd been doing a lot of homework, and a lot of people had been making suggestions to me. "Becky," she said with an impish twinkle, "what would you think we ought to do?" I did not hesitate. "Some of the finest paintings in the world are in the monasteries here, and since the president has suggested we indicate something we might like to do, certainly those paintings would be a magnificent treat to see." No sooner said than done was the official attitude.

Of course, in my ignorance it didn't occur to me that no woman ever had set foot in these ancient monasteries in Quito, and certainly no woman should have asked to see the art in those monasteries, and certainly no president should have said, "No sooner asked than done." It never occurred to me that I had precipitated a crisis about women wanting to enter a monastery.



Reyher: Certainly through my ignorance, no other reason, because much as I believed that women should storm the doors when opportunity beckons, this was not an occasion when I would have made such a request.

It was just a matter of hours before we heard from the leading local women who were with us, and a matter of minutes for those who were actually on this particular trip with us to the president, that it obviously could not be done because it was a monastery, and women could not enter it. Then it was a matter of hours before we heard that the Nuncio, the representative of the Pope, had sent a cable to the Pope to ask whether women could be permitted to go to the monasteries and see those paintings. The Pope, for whatever reason, immediately sent back word that we should be permitted to enter, possibly because it was at the request of the president. Then the local women said that since no woman there had ever seen any of those paintings, that when those monasteries were open to us to see them, they would like to go, too. And so the selected group of Quito women saw the paintings with us that they had never seen before. Whether after that they continued to open the monasteries to women for special occasions, I don't know.

Most of the paintings, or at least many of them, were hanging on the walls of the patios. You have so many Spanish houses, and old monasteries, in California that you know that they usually have a courtyard, a passageway that is practically enclosed, but nevertheless many of these ancient, priceless paintings were suffering from outdoor exposure. But many of them were indoors.

At one of the monasteries we went to there was a priest who was recording the music of the mountains, who was also a musician, and he asked for the privilege of playing some of that music for us. Again, none of those local women had ever had an opportunity of hearing him play. So that it was not only a wonderful experience for us, but for those women. Rather than resenting that it took foreign women to open doors for them, they enjoyed it and they were very appreciative and nice to us.

#### A Hat for a Heroine

Reyher: Now I want to really go from the sublime--for that art and music were beautiful beyond description--to the ridiculous. I have always been concerned that when the till was short of money Mabel [Vernon] frequently worked for nothing for the organizations she believed in. And when she has taken any compensation, she's worked for literally a pittance, just enough to keep her alive. It really was disgraceful, the amount of money she worked for. Anyway, she'd have it no other way.



Reyher: Whenever some of us could, and in my case, very rarely, we would try to see that she would have something nice to wear. She always wore tailored clothes, her blue suits and her white blouses were practically a uniform, and she always looked very well. She had a certain dash about her. Especially when she spoke she would take a certain stance and she would be almost like a runner who would get ready to run. She would stand with her feet planted firmly and she wouldn't walk about. To make a point, she might sway with her body, and she might use her arms. But she always liked to wear hats that were a little cocked to the side; I always think of her, and I still see her, with her eyes flashing as she spoke with so much feeling, always from the heart, whether she talked to you personally or whether she talked to an audience.

I see her now as she was then, and you bringing a message to me that she's ninety! This is the first time, I who've known her for fifty-odd years, learned how old she was. She wouldn't tell me. I had some vague idea that she was ten years older, maybe twelve years older than I was, but I don't like to think how old I am, and add up the years for my friends, so it hadn't really come to me. Actually, when I've been with her, it's only in the past year or two that I've realized that when she walks with you she'd like to take your arm, that she's a little weak.

But in my mind's eye I see her as she was, a real firebrand for everything she believed in. Just aglow with what she felt. So that when she was to follow us to Latin America a year later, and I had seen the luxurious homes and the beautifully dressed people among our members there, I really wanted her to have something rather nice.

When she was working in the Woman's Party, she had had a friend in Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles, who as we said here before, and as you know through the history of the Woman's Party, was a woman of wealth. Mrs. Hilles had a very fine milliner. Twice a year, Christmas and Easter, or in the fall and in the spring, Florence Hilles used to send Mabel to her milliner. I think that milliner used to charge even in those days \$25 or \$50 for a hat. Those hats were beautiful, they were made to order, and they were just the thing that Mabel needed. I think once she had a sort of French-blue hat, or a gendarme-blue, an off-blue hat, and frequently the hats had a touch of, just a touch of midnight blue, or just a very small touch of turquoise. They were really lovely hats, distinctive, individual creations of art.

Florence Hilles died, and there was nobody to give Mabel the hats any more. I thought if she only had for her dark suits a little white hat because at that time they were wearing them, with just a little bit of fluff around the face, a little bit of softness--I knew exactly the kind of hat she should have. But I literally just could not find the money for it. It was at a time when I think I was free lancing or if I had a job, I was always paying for this or that, and



Reyher: I really have all my life tithed myself and done as much as I possibly could for causes I believed in.

In fact, our father used to laugh and say, "If we had had a family crest and a coat of arms, the legend would have said, 'Just at that time we were without funds'." Because there just never seemed to be a time, for most of my family as well as me, when any of us wanted to do something spectacular that we weren't reduced to saying, "Well, just about this time we're without funds." And so just about that time I was without funds. I couldn't have gotten Mabel that hat.

I lived in an apartment house where the owner of this very nice house maintained either a wife or a lady friend--there was gossip of her status--who dressed beautifully. She was tall and red-headed. She may have been his wife but what made me think she was his lady friend was that she bought, from my point of view, far more clothes than any human being needed. And when she would get tired of her clothes, or when the season was over--in those days the season was marked--she would pack up her clothes in very nice dress boxes, and put them on the landing of the tenth floor. I had a little penthouse on the eleventh floor, and because it was on the roof, and that was the top staircase, I had a way of overlooking the floor below at the incinerator--though it wasn't an incinerator, it was out in the hall where you'd put down your waste and trash baskets for the porter to collect. She would put down her nice dress boxes there; I would always pick up those things, and give them to friends of mine, because obviously I couldn't use them because we occupied the same building. They were uniformly lovely things. I always had a weather-eye out for them.

When Mabel came to New York, and was due to fly in twenty-four hours, or forty-eight, I noticed that there were a few little oddments on the tenth floor, and there was a hat box among them. My mind was on hats, so I quickly went down and grabbed the boxes and went back to my apartment.

There was a little Bonwit Teller box, practically brand new. Mabel was going in the fall, and this was the end of the spring-summer hat season. Mabel was going to have summer in Latin America.

It was a miracle. There was a little, white-straw hat with white fluff around it. I took it out of the box, and it didn't have any sign of wear, as none of her clothes did, except at the front, because she may have worn it one day when she was hot. Inside on the little white ribbon there was just a faint trace that would show that this had not just come out of the department store.

It was just a matter of minutes to take a little bit of the stuff I always have, cleaning fluid, to take spots out, and I have one that's



Reyher: particularly good, that works quickly and has no smell. I cleaned that hat up and fluffed it out and got some fresh tissue paper, and put it in the box. The box looked immaculate, and I rushed up town.

Mabel was staying with our mutual friend, Mrs. [Ray] Zilboorg, on Park Avenue in her beautiful apartment. "Mabel, I have a hat for you to wear," I burst out excitedly. "I hope you like it." Of course, there was the Bonwit Teller box. Mabel sat down at the mirror and put on the hat and it looked lovely. And she said with tears in her eyes, "Becky, you shouldn't have done this."

I just couldn't contain myself. [Laughter] I was doubled over with laughter. "Wait till you hear about this hat." And I told Mabel, and it really made her trip for her. She just loved the story.

She traveled all over and she would write and tell me how my hat was doing, or how our hat was doing. Mabel was the kind of person that enjoyed any experience. She was not, as Miss Paul was, a dedicated leader to whom you couldn't possibly sit down and tell a funny story, who wouldn't enjoy just something that had no relation to her work. Mabel was always interested in the babies of friends, always interested in their photographs, the little family stories, always wanted to know about the various lives of people.

Mabel had one fault. It was a virtue. She was a perfectionist. She still is. Perfectionist as to words, she would want the copy written over and over and over again, which could be done. But she was a perfectionist about a lot of things that wore her out.

And when we were both returning from the cavalcade to Coolidge in South Dakota and we got into the train and we sat down, I said, "Now Mabel, as I look through this car, I can see that three or four of the window shades are out of alignment. I beg of you, until you've relaxed, that you don't go down this car and get all the shades properly adjusted because they happen to be in your line of vision."

She loved that, and over the years she would come back to that over and over again. But sloppy copy, or not being fully responsible for what you undertook, or not coming up to the expectations of what the job might produce, or procrastination, or any of the things that a tired person might resort to, Mabel would not understand because she personally was not capable of any of them. And so at times, she too, when you were working with her, could be, if you wanted to call her that, a hard task mistress, which certainly Alice Paul was. But she had so much good feeling, so much kindness, so much friendship, that you forgave her for any or all of those things.



Executive Secretary and Member, Board of Directors, Dominican Republic Settlement Association

Fry: Those years of your work with the WPA--including the time you took off to go with the flying caravan delegation of the Peoples Mandate Commission--must have ended just about the time of Hitler's persecution of the Jews in Europe. How did your job with the Dominican Settlement Association fit into the whole international scene at that time?

Reyher: I am a pacifist. I was bitterly against Hitler, obviously, because of what he was doing to the Jews, to the political dissidents, and to the world. But despite that I could not participate in war work, traditional war work, even to fight against Hitler. I wanted desperately to find some thing that I could conscientiously do that would help Hitler's victims.

I was fortunate that various friends of mine were trying to resettle Jewish emigres, before this country went to war. For the two years that we were not at war, and for the two years after, while it was still possible to get some people out of Europe, I worked as Executive Secretary and a member of the Board of the Dominican Republic Settlement Association, and helped find ways of sending escapees from Hitler, from Germany, and Austria, into Latin America, and other countries. It was a great personal satisfaction, and it was very interesting work.

I worked very closely with the State Department, and various philanthropic organizations, and learned a lot about displaced people in a war, which of course has become one of the great world problems today.

Fry: Could you tell us anything more about the procedures that you used to get the people out of Germany and settled in countries? How did you find a place to put them?

Reyher: That was all done by affiliated organizations and with the help of the State Department. It was a tremendous network of organizations. One worked with groups in Europe, and other places. There were established experts in resettlement. They were sent to Europe to interview people as to what skills they had, and the idea was that they would help contribute to create an experimental center that might be a pilot project to serve as an example to other countries in Latin America that might absorb other refugees. But then the U. S. entered the war and interfered and so that plan just fell through.

Before the United States went to war, so that they had to come through the United States, the Dominican Republic offered asylum to



Reyher: up to five thousand people. And since they were a small country, the hope was that this would be a pilot experiment. Well, of course the war situation simply made that a very small experiment. Only a few hundred came. I forget the exact number. And then it gradually just became a little project where after the war some people remained and some people left.

Fry: What was your job in this?

Reyher: I was a member of the Board and I was called the Executive Secretary, which meant that I worked with the chairman and with the Board and I saw to it that reports were made, and I approved all the accounts which ran into several million dollars before they were presented to the accountants and to the Board, and again, I worked with people who were preparing reports and helped write some of the literature, and I was the chief administrative officer of a large staff of people to keep the thing going.

Fry: Did you have to raise money for it?

Reyher: No, I didn't raise any money. That was all raised by men who had thousands, millions available to them. I had nothing whatever to do with that.

But I went down to the Dominican Republic to the settlement and saw it, spent some time with the people there to see what their problems were. I spent time with some of the Dominican officials to see what their reactions were. It was suggested by some of the Board that I go down and live in the Dominican Republic and be a liaison between the project and the Dominican government, and be sort of a diplomat. I said that wasn't my interest in life. And I didn't want that kind of job, I wanted the kind of job I was doing, to help coordinate everything that was being done, to know how the thing was growing, to help it grow.

And as far as the work that we did, it was of course a work that was encountering tragedy, trying to find a place for displaced people. We had experts in every field, agricultural experts, and experts in resettling, and my job was, again, a job of coordination and learning about what responsibilities there were. And also being in contact very closely with the State Department because some of the people had to pass through the United States.

And also the United States was concerned that an American-based organization would not be settling people who would in any way perhaps be a danger to the United States, being so close to the United States. And of course, there were a few interesting incidents that happened in that connection, but they were cops and robbers sorts of things, so that I really don't think they are important.



Reyher: We did encounter an effort to bring people over as refugees who were really going to be spies against the settlement and work for the German government if they could once get there and would have been dangerous in the war effort. I had never thought that that kind of work would cross my path, and I found it amusing and exciting. But that is all in the past.

Fry: How did your Jewish background affect your feelings toward this resettlement job?

Reyher: I do want to make something clear, that no one in my family was religious, except one grandmother, on my mother's side. Her husband, my grandfather, became an agnostic after he had studied to be a rabbi. Everybody else had abandoned their religion several generations before I came along.

And the only Jewish consciousness that I have ever had has been a negative one. Particularly during the Hitler era, if Jews were insulted, then I would say or think, "Well, I must take my side where the yellow star is." That is just talking symbolically. I felt that when Jews were being persecuted it was certainly the obligation of anybody who was remotely connected with being a Jew, whether they were religious or not, to do something about it.

There was also the fact that when my father worked in this country as a leader among great masses of Jews, he came to the conclusion, as Jews were fleeing from one part of the world to the other, that though he was not a Zionist, and had no religious faith, he believed that eventually Jews would have to have their own national home, that something would have to be done about it as an international problem. And after Hitler, I who had felt that in Palestine the Jews should have had more of an international attitude and wrote such articles, felt that now the Jews had to have a national home because of this holocaust.

But when I worked in the Dominican Republic Settlement Association, because I felt that I had to do something against Hitler, but as a pacifist could not do war work, the whole emphasis in settling refugees, though most of them were Jewish, was to settle refugees on a non-denominational basis. And I have never done any work in my life on a basis of a religious affiliation. In my immediate family, everybody was an agnostic. I was the only one who began to think in terms of perhaps having a religion of any kind.

As I've told you, I studied philosophy and religion with various people, particularly with Dr. Edward Scribner Ames, a Protestant at the University of Chicago, and I took instruction from Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, now a Bishop. But I never was able to accept any specific faith with my whole heart, as one must in religion. I believe in God, but He is an undefined, nebulous entity.



Desire for a Faith

Reyher:

Now, there's one other thing that I want to be sure and cover, because it's always such a sensitive subject. Since Hitler so many people have become so much more identified with their Jewish faith, and the later Jewish immigration that came to this country was an immigration that was religious and came out of circumscribed pales, or what are called ghettos. So it's hard for people to understand that there was a group of Jews in Russia who identified, even though they were against the Czar and the Czar was against them, with the whole stream of Russian culture, and who also, because they were intellectuals, were part of the stream (small trickle though it was) of agnostics who followed Darwin and became very strong agnostics.

So that, for example, I was brought up in no faith at all. The agnostic feeling in my immediate household on the part of my father and mother was as strong as anybody's religion would be. They were determined that their children would not be blinded with any kind of faith, that if when they grew up they wished to choose a faith, it was for them to choose it. They would have to choose it themselves.

Now, I felt very strongly when I read philosophy that William James was right, that in order to have a faith, you had to have a faith that you were identified with as a child, you had to have a strong will to believe that developed. That will to believe James wasn't able to completely define. It was far more than just an intellectual desire to turn to a faith. And because throughout my life I have looked for some faith that I would really turn to with a full heart, and I've never been able to and simply believed in a nebulous God, I thought that when my daughter was growing up, she ought to at least also be exposed to seeing people who believed passionately as well as seeing people who were either indifferent or didn't believe at all passionately.\*

---

\*In a letter to Fern Ingersoll, 22 April 1977, RHR wrote: "I gave the impression [when recording the memoirs] that I could never really join any religion formally because I had the doubts born of an intellectual, and only late approaches to religion. However, it having just been Easter, I realize that each year at Easter time I feel it is a time of eternal rejuvenation, and I always go quietly alone to some cathedral or shrine to renew my faith. This year I went to see the stained-glass windows of the Canterbury Cathedral, on display in New York in a fund-raising effort--but beautifully and realistically presented--and I felt in Mr. Carter's [President Jimmy Carter] terms 'born again'."



Reyher: And I discussed this with my grandfather, my mother's father, who was an agnostic, and told him that I felt this so strongly, and he said, "No," that it wasn't necessary to instill morals or ethical beliefs because I had said, "How is my daughter going to have any? Most of the people we know are interested not in deep social questions the way my father was, but they're more interested in a hedonistic approach to life, in sports and enjoying life. And how's she ever going to feel identified with social issues to the point where she'll want to burn for them?" He said, "Nonsense. You can get that by reading Rousseau and by reading Voltaire and by reading various great people." And I said I just simply didn't see how that could happen.

And he finally got very angry with me because he was a bad-tempered man who could lose his temper. And he said, "How dare you discuss, and even contemplate sending your daughter back into the dark ages, when we who came before you worked so hard to throw off the shackles of orthodoxy and blind faith. And it is as if we worked for nothing." Now, I've never forgotten that because that is the other side of the coin.

But I've been so often embarrassed because people don't realize that I don't know what the Jewish holidays are unless I read them in the newspaper. I don't know what some of the Jewish ritual is, but I greatly respected my grandmother, because this particular grandfather's wife was the only person who clung to her faith. None of her children did and certainly her husband didn't. And they lived in that Jersey town, all Jews, for a while.

She came home--this is one of the stories in my family that everybody tells--from the synagogue on the Day of Atonement, which is one of the holiest, if not the holiest, Jewish holiday. And when she approached the house, she realized all the shades were down and it was dark. And when she came into the house it was dark. And she saw that her husband, my grandfather, was sitting in a dark room eating a meal. And she said, "Why are the shades down?" And he said, "Because I'm embarrassed and ashamed before my neighbors to be seen eating." And she rushed to the window and pulled up the shade. And she said, "If you're not ashamed before your God, you ought not to be ashamed before your neighbors."



X BROADCASTING, LECTURING, TEACHING, AND MORE TRAVEL

"City Fun With Children" (weekly broadcast), Station WNYC,  
New York, 1945-1949

"Behind the Scenes with the UN" (radio series), 1946

Lectures to anthropology classes, New York University, 1948-1949

Lecture circuits under Colston Leigh auspices, 1952-1961

Member of faculty, New School of Social Research, New York City,  
1963-1970

Travel to Nigeria, British Cameroons (up the West Coast of  
Africa), 1949-1950

South Africa, 1950-1951

Belgian Congo, Angola, Nigeria, Uganda, Ruanda Urundi and Kenya,  
Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Europe, 1957

Thirteen African countries: South Africa, Rhodesian Lambia,  
Malawi, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria,  
Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, 1965

Radio Programs

Fry: Some time ago you said that your professional life became one of interpreting what you thought was interesting about people to other people, and I believe you did this in any number of ways through the years. What about your radio programs?

Reyher: I think all that I'd like to say about my radio programs [City Fun with Children, and Behind the Scenes with the UN] is that I had done so much radio speaking at various times on behalf of equal



Reyher: rights and suffrage, and interviews about my books and my various trips, that I realized that radio was a good medium and easy for me. As usual I accidentally ran into somebody who was working as a consultant to the city station, WNYC, and I told him that I thought that I would like to do a program for them.

"Why don't you go down and see them?" he said, and I did. They liked my ideas. I am a great museum fan, and a lover of our city. I love sightseeing, not only in strange places but in my own backyard. I'm very interested in children, and I had been very much interested as a child being taken places by my mother. I had been very much captivated by trying to see New York anew, not only as somebody who'd grown up here, but through the eyes of my daughter. I felt that together we had some very satisfactory experiences.

I was quite prepared to do the program that I outlined which was "City Fun with Children," and which I presented for three-hundred-and-some-odd times. I was going to Africa when I stopped, and when I got back I never resumed that program, or any other program on the air, much as I would have loved to have one, because by that time, in order to try to have a new radio program, I would occasionally substitute for some of the women I knew when they would go on vacation, or needed a substitute, and I realized it was full-time work.

By this time I'd gone to Africa and got the material for The Fon and His Hundred Wives, and had had Zulu Woman published, and I was ready to go other places to get materials for books about women, as I've done. I didn't want to waste my energies trying to get a radio program. And so radio just remained a finished, very complete experience.

I wrote a little background booklet that Station WNYC distributed which talked about the values of what there was to show young people and also of course the value of different generations doing things together. And I quoted George Washington's admonition to the people of this country engraved over his pew in St. Paul's Church in downtown New York where he went to say his prayers and thanks to God just before he made his inaugural address. He was inaugurated here in New York. He admonished the people of New York of all faiths to love one another. It is a lovely engraving to have upon the wall there. And so in that program I was able to express some of the things I believed in. It was a wonderfully satisfying experience.

Fry: I wondered if you suggested that fathers take children to museums sometimes?

Reyher: I suggested that families take them. And after a while the city school system plugged in the programs in many classes, so that



Reyher: children heard it even there. I got some wonderful children's letters, many of which I kept; they were an indication that people listened. Years later I would meet people who had been the parents of young children who'd written to me and asked me for the booklet. We would always tell them that if they were interested, they could have it just for postage. Some of the faculty members at the New School for Social Research had written me as parents for my booklet. I didn't know them except by name, having received their request.

### Lecturing and Teaching: Women and Africa

The different parts of my life interwove, as time went on, and I had done a great deal of lecturing after my different trips. And I knew two things: That you can't go out on a lecture tour which is well-paid and be sent out by a well-known agency unless you have just written a spectacular book or unless you have just done something important. And when I had written The Fon and His Hundred Wives and I had been on a few trips, I did have a few very good lecture circuits in the early fifties. I went two or three times, all over the country, under the Colston Leigh auspices--and he is a very good lecture agent--to lecture in at least twenty universities with representative audiences, and to popular audiences, some of which were only small groups of 200 and 250, and some of which were well over 1000. Among the things I talked about were women the world over and African women as well as the political and economic situation in Africa in general.

Sometimes I visited old friends on those lecture trips. You remember perhaps that when I was telling you about the Peoples Mandate delegation I mentioned Mrs. Burton Musser who was the leader and the wonderful visits I had with her later. She'd have her husband present, too. He showed me the notebooks that he had, wonderful notebooks, that his father wrote on some of his Mormon missionary trips. Mr. Musser told me all sorts of stories about polygamy in Utah, including the fact that when I was there in the fifties, I digress, but I think this is important, they still constantly would report that men would come in to the tax offices and ask, "How do I arrange to get a deduction for one of my other wives?" Without realizing that polygamy had been legally banned in the state for so many years.

I also had a slant on the cover-up of continued polygamy in Utah that matched what they used in Africa in official life if they didn't want people to know that the president of a country, who was a practicing Catholic, had many other wives, as one of the men that I met had. It was explained he had an "official" wife.



Reyher: But then, having lectured here [New York] about some of my trips in Africa, at New York University,\* and in the area at various schools and colleges, and having been sent out by Colston Leigh to various preparatory schools and colleges, I decided I'd like to lecture more consistently on Africa so I'd have a base to keep in touch with African affairs. I was able to lecture at the New School for Social Research in the Human Relations Center.\*\* And I lectured there for several years, not only on Africa, but I had a course on "Your City and Mine" which was about New York City. It was an outgrowth of my earlier radio program.

And I also lectured at the New School on women around the world. I tried to convey what it was like to be a woman in India, Ceylon, and the Near East--not only in Africa--highlighting the various issues around the world that women all agreed were basic to their development and their needs. I spoke on the growing possibility for these women not to have to reach out for help from other countries, but to help themselves. I spoke on who were the emerging women in the emerging countries that I had come in contact with and what were some of the things they said, and what impressed me. Also on my last trip to Africa, I interviewed a whole series of women, some very well-known and some not, but the whole idea was that they were "first ladies" of Africa.

#### Interviewing "First Ladies" of Africa

Fry: I would like you to go into that a little bit more.

Reyher: I would rather not go into it too much because it is such a vast canvas. For lectures in general and for my courses at the New School, I felt I should know more about the emerging African woman

---

\*RHR later explained that soon after Zulu Woman was published in 1948, Dr. Ethel Alpenfels, an anthropologist in the Department of Education at New York University, had her give some lectures in her classes and occasionally substitute for her. RHR has a letter from the head of the Department of Education stating that her lecture on South Africa was the best presentation of that country's problems he had ever heard.

\*\*See appendix for descriptions of courses that RHR taught at the New School for Social Research, 1964-1970.



Reyher: and help publicize knowledge about them. I outlined my idea to people in the U. S. Department of Information and the State Department who helped me in every African country to make my appointments. By "first ladies," I meant I wanted to interview the wives of officials, presidents, and other dignitaries to see how women were managing their role as wives of important men, and I wanted to interview women who had become important in their own right and were holding responsible positions. In all I interviewed more than a hundred women in thirteen countries, in 1965, taking extensive notes. I did not carry a recording machine, because officials in this country and in Africa told me that most African women would refuse to have what they said recorded.

I had several notebooks full of interviews which I wrote up, and I wanted to do a book about them. Several publishers told me that African women were not of sufficient interest to American readers to do a book about them. The Beacon Press was interested and I entered into correspondence with them and sent them forty or more pages of manuscript and an outline. They wanted me to choose about five women and write in depth about them, but the material which I have is not in real depth about any of them, and writing in depth about even five would have meant trying to get such data by correspondence, which would be impossible. And so I felt that this would be background material which I would use at various times, but I would not try to write a book about it.

What I would really like to emphasize is that I have had an opportunity of seeing what a tremendous difference education has made for women in the years since I've been going to Africa, because I have been going back periodically. When I first went to Africa, there were very few women who had any schooling at all and very few women who had had any opportunity to travel beyond the limited area in which they had been born.

Ironically, in South Africa it was the little black girl who sometimes had an opportunity to study rather than the little boy in what we would call the primary years, because the little boy was needed as a shepherd for cattle and a little girl couldn't be sent out with them. So that she had the breaks at that particular time, whereas he didn't. But as time went on she certainly didn't have the advantage.

As I traveled in Africa, I found that regardless of what people said, it was the custom of the country for women not only to be subservient, but for women to be spanked, whipped, and beaten just the way children were, similar to the primitive conditions in our own country, or in other countries centuries ago covered by common law, when a man was permitted to beat his wife.



Fry: Which trip was that to Africa in which you interviewed the women?

Reyher: I interviewed women in many African countries both on my 1957 trip and on my 1965 trip. But it was in 1965 that I discovered that by then many women had been educated, many had gone overseas, and that the educated women in Africa had come alive, were active in organizations like the International Council of Women or the Association of University Women and various educational groups. And that there was beginning to be a hard core of professional women--lawyers, judges, and business women. Prior to that I had discovered in West Africa that where you have a matriarchal tradition, women have always been business women on their own, and conducted their own businesses. Some of the market women of West Africa were extremely wealthy women. Some of these women, who couldn't read or write, were able to carry their figures in their heads, and had a turnover of as much as \$10,000 a month. Women of vast wealth.

It interested me that where women were successful in business, and even when they weren't, they handed down their business, and willed their money to their daughters, whereas the men handed down their wealth and business to their sons. Invariably, wherever I talked to those women (and on a previous trip I talked to thirty-two specially selected women that one of the large companies that provided them with their merchandise named for me as the wealthiest) they told me that the greatest satisfaction in having their own money was to educate their children! They were dedicated to that. Some of the most illiterate women already had children studying in European universities.

Even those who were illiterate had enormous influence in the markets. Men candidates tried to win their support and they were a vital force in their communities. Among those who were reading there was awareness and sophistication. For instance, I met one woman who, when she went abroad, would only have her clothes made on American Vogue patterns rather than British Vogue, even though they wore some of their own West African style clothes, because she thought they had more snap to them.

#### Women Joining Men: Contrast with Past

Well, everywhere women were joining with men in meetings and in public. That was the other significant change. Some of the prejudices that the missionaries had been working to remove against women with a new wave of education, and new stress on independence, had created a sense of togetherness between men and women in the cities. You saw men and women in restaurants together, and visiting



Reyher: together. It was a beginning, not the pervading custom, and only in upper classes.

When I saw this in the sixties, all I could think of was that when I was at Makere College in Kampala, capital of Uganda in East Africa, in the fifties [1957], as I sat in a Human Relations seminar and talked to the young men, and women, the young women complained that men didn't take them anywhere. And when they got married, they stayed at home, while the men went off and enjoyed themselves without them. And the men replied, "Well, if we took them, they'd spoil our fun." And they obviously didn't want them to go along with them.

And also in the fifties I went to see women in a little club conducted by the YWCA who were constantly teaching women in small leadership groups. Women would come to the meetings as they did in little American women's clubs started years back.

I asked some of the women what happened--they all talked of being poor--what happened if they didn't have enough money for some of the food that they were studying about and being taught to cook. The women complained, "That's the trouble. We learn all these things, but our husbands won't give us the money to carry them out."

"Suppose one day you told your husbands that you couldn't give them a nice meal because they hadn't given you the money?" The women--we were talking, of course, through an interpreter--all spontaneously clapped their hands resoundingly, and you didn't need an interpreter to explain what would happen to them if they didn't give their husbands the food that they expected to get from them. They'd just get beaten. And this was in the midst of one of the leadership classes teaching women how to be women leaders, and how to assert themselves, and be part of the ongoing movements in their country.

There was no question in my mind that on one hand in every country there was a small group of very advanced women. On the other hand, I practically never went anywhere, or interviewed an important official's wife, and proudly discussed my interview later with other women saying how much I had admired her, that invariably they would not smirk and say, "Oh, that's his official wife."

#### Career Women Aided by Fathers and Husbands

I think one other thing I realized was that in most countries, historically, fathers or husbands who had been attached to women



Reyher: have helped those women toward having a career. We have an example of that in the Gandhi family. Indira Gandhi was either consciously helped by her father to achieve her present position or subconsciously because he didn't have a son and he always had her as a companion.

I was in Ceylon when Nehru arrived with Indira Gandhi on a state visit. As they came into the hotel for one of the receptions, I legitimately--for I was living there--sat in the lobby, right next to the little stairway up which they came. Oriental women always walk behind the men of their family; and of course, universally, in diplomatic and official circles, the wife or the daughter does walk behind the man who is there as the guest of honor. But even so, as they approached, and walked through the hotel lobby, she had her hands clasped together in the devout fashion that is the Indian greeting of sweetness and honor, sometimes with head bowed and sometimes not. Even though that was a customary greeting, it seemed the attitude of Indira Gandhi, the loving daughter a couple of steps behind her father, at least in public.

Certainly, Madame Pandit, the first woman chairman of the UN Assembly, who was Nehru's loving sister, was given every opportunity by him to advance in the world. In the same way, you had not quite as important evidence as that, or as between such important figures, but you saw in Africa that where there was an able woman, the man of the family, if he thought he could give her an opportunity of education or status, would do it. And so in emerging Africa, you began to have many more women whose families were proud of them and helped them [at the same time], as you had families where they refused to let their daughters become educated.

Among the women I met who were important in education and social work, there was one particular woman whose name would not mean anything here, but who said that she was the first girl in her town to even go away to a boarding school, which is usually the preparatory high school stage in Africa, because many villages do not have such educational facilities. Everybody was against her, and her family were really ashamed that she would do this. When I saw her in Nairobi, in Kenya, a woman in her forties, she was able to say, "Not only are my family happy and proud of me, but many more girls in the village have now gone to be educated because they have seen what a wonderful opportunity it's been, not only for me but for the whole family, because so many of the others have become educated."

And then, of course, you have known examples of the attachment of fathers to their children, you have the example of Margaret Kenyatta, daughter of Jomo Kenyatta, president and leader of Kenya, who trusts her, and who has given her his blessing and public approval. Everybody knows that she is close to him, and often



Reyher: expresses his opinion. She has been for years--I haven't been in touch with her for the past year or two, but certainly for years before that--she was on the city council. In Nairobi, in Kenya, you have a rotating mayor. The mayor is elected by the council members from their own body, and Margaret Kenyatta has been elected by them to be mayor. She is a newspaper woman, a radio broadcaster, and the head of the best-known women's organization in East Africa. It's called Maende Leo Wa Wanawake (Organization of Women's Unity).\*

Whenever they have needed a headquarters--and that organization is a cooperative which displays and sells the things that women make, or anything else for that organization--they knew that Margaret Kenyatta, even before she was their chairman, would somehow manage to wheedle it out of the administration.

The thing about Margaret Kenyatta that impressed me the very most was she had absolutely no "side" about her. She put on no airs of authority, or tried to be self-important, or impress upon me that she was the daughter of the president, the most important man not only in Kenya but in East Africa. Quite the contrary, she met you with a simple, unassuming grin. She was very much interested in what I was doing, and she was very much interested in presenting a clear-cut picture of herself and her activities. She was extremely helpful to me in any way that I wanted her to be.

One of the things that amused me was that in the exhibit of various kinds of hand crafts, similar to the women's exchanges that we have had in our country, in small towns where they sell mostly baked cakes and jellies and little aprons, and things that women have made, there in Kenya the handiwork would be things that the women had been taught to make, but in most African countries, some of the handiwork, particularly the handiwork that gets the tourist trade, is in the hands of the men. Carving is a man's work. All these little statues, and spoons, and figures that you see in American stores, are men-made. They're the objects that sell, they're the objects that get money. In this particular Nairobi hall, there was only one woman's chosen work that was carving. It was a statue, the only woman's carving among hundreds of other objects. When my first grandson married during the summer that I was in Africa, I thought, "What better gift to give a young American couple than a beautiful African carving." It was lovely, a statuette perhaps fifteen inches high of a mother and child, made by a rebellious village woman who insisted that she preferred to

---

\*In 1976, RHR wrote, "Today the President of the Organization of Women's Unity is Mrs. Jane Kiako, who is the wife of a Cabinet minister."



Reyher: carve, and would carve, instead of doing the traditional sewing or pottery, women's work. One of my particular regrets is that my grandson and that particular bride parted and she wanted to take that wedding gift as part of her share of the swag. I would have liked to have had it remain in the family so I could have at least occasionally seen it, and seen how it weathered.

Margaret Kenyatta is undoubtedly one of the strong personalities in Kenya, wears very plain clothes, little cheap, cotton washable dresses that obviously are hand-washed, and drives the worst little beat-up jalopy you can possibly imagine. And drives it herself, whereas most important people in Africa have all the dreadful traits that we have in our country. They buy the most expensive car they can, whether they can afford it or not in many cases, and they like to have a chauffeur and they like to drive up with a great swish of tires and to impress upon you that they have a good car, a big car and a big personality. There is nothing like that about Margaret Kenyatta. She has a magnificent smile and also an impressive head--she wears her hair closely cropped without any of the fancy enhancements or coverings that others do.

I wrote a profile of Margaret Kenyatta for the Villager in New York City when I came back, as the most impressive woman I met on that African trip in the sixties. In the fifties I wrote several articles about West African women traders for West African magazines published in England.

The other woman who impressed me a great deal, and who was not then an active woman politically, but had been until her husband became president of Zambia, was Mrs. Betty Kaunda. In their early years, Mrs. Kaunda worked together closely with her husband. He taught, and she taught, and throughout his years of revolutionary activity, even when they had several children, and had only a very small house, they always put up other revolutionary workers, and had them living in the same house with them. There was a law in Zambia, when it was still a colonial possession, that you could not bring any clothes across the border unless you paid a tax on them. One of the great ways of making money until quite recently in Africa, and still is in many areas, is to sell second-hand clothes. I was very much ashamed, really humiliated, when I saw some of the stores selling American clothes, and realized that a battered-up hat that nobody here would even pick up out of a garbage pail was selling for the equivalent of 75¢ and \$1 to some poor African. He could buy that, but a new hat would cost so much that he couldn't. Of course I am speaking about humble workmen and poor people.

Mr. and Mrs. Kaunda conducted a smuggling trade of second-hand clothes across the border with boys and girls on bicycles and on foot, not for profit but so that their poor students would have



Reyher: something to wear. She laughed, telling me about it, saying they went away skinny and came back fat because they had layers and layers of clothes upon them.

When I saw her, she was in Lusaka, the center of the copper industry, in the center of Zambia. She was in the house that had been built for Queen Elizabeth's royal tour. It was a handsome stone house, still staffed by the same servants that looked after the Queen. When I met Mrs. Kaunda there it was used as a state house, something like Blair House in Washington, a beautiful private residence for dignitaries, and for the president and his wife when they came to Lusaka.

Mrs. Kaunda had just had an operation for goiter. The newspapers said she was in weak condition and not seeing anybody, but when I wrote her a note and said that I very much wanted to get an interview with her so I could tell American women about her, and that I could only come while I was in Zambia, and I would be there only for a week--I might be able to change my tour and stay longer, but I doubted it--she arranged through our Embassy for me to come and see her.

Mrs. Kaunda speaks English because Zambia used to be a colonial country, administered by the British, so we had no difficulty talking with each other. She was still weak. We ate in the little, private sitting room, and since Britain always had a great deal of formality for people who had a high position in the hierarchy, the butler was in uniform of bright red and gold with white cotton gloves on, serving the meal throughout in those gloves. Everything was served beautifully and elegantly, and the food was delicious. It was the kind of food that you would have at any good international restaurant, because they have a highly trained housekeeper and a large staff.

But what impressed me most was that Mrs. Kaunda, in this luxurious setting, told me, "My husband's and my deepest regret is that our children will not have the benefit of having lived in poverty and struggled the way we did, because it is what we learned as poor people, about other poor people, that has given us an understanding of the problems of Africa. Our children are never going to have the benefit of that background." She couldn't have said it with greater sincerity, or greater meaning. And she asked me to go and see her children, who were at Government House in the nation's capital, where I was staying. I very much wanted to see them. When I left there I flew down from Lusaka back to the capital.

There, in a stately mansion, formerly the Government House, home of the British Chief Executive, were these little African children of the Kaundas. They have six or nine children. Most of



Reyher: them were at boarding school, but there were two or three small ones at home, attended by uniformed servants, by governesses, and I knew at once exactly what Mrs. Kaunda meant.

#### Male-Female Relationships

One of the trifling yet significant things that I learned about emerging Africa in the past years is that everywhere you have black mannequins in the shop windows, and in black Africa today, particularly East Africa, the wives of the diplomats and all the women tourists, if they want to buy a smart, little, fill-in frock, go to one of the little African boutiques. In Nairobi, for instance, where only black display mannequins are used, only black personnel serve the customers. And all the ads are like those that first appeared in our country in the Negro magazines, and the black magazines, using black people. Occasionally now blacks are featured here on a token basis of what the purchasing power of the black population is. But in Africa practically all ads for any kind of merchandise, costumes or anything else, are today addressed to the African.

And the African women, throughout Africa, long before we began to have the Afro head dress that is fashionable here, long before that many of them had gone back to traditional African style head dress of thin, tight little braids, covering the scalp. The designs that they create upon their heads are extraordinary. In West Africa, in Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, the way a woman ties her turban, and the many different turbans she has, are part of her way of being fashionable, and of indicating--because that may be a gift from the man who cares about her--how much support and affection she may command, even though she, as in many cases in this country, may not have the support, but only the appearance of it.

When I asked one of these women traders in West Africa, since she was a trader and her husband was a trader, whether she and he were in partnership together, she laughed and laughed, and could hardly contain herself. And then she said to me, "My mother taught me, when you eat with the devil you use a long spoon. I wouldn't share a trade together with my husband"--even though they were living in apparent amity.

Another time, when I saw one of the leading women traders in West Africa, she turned to me when her husband came in, dressed in beautiful West African pajamas of brocaded velvet and embroidery, and said, "This is my husband. If it weren't for him, I couldn't



Reyher: do any of the things I do. I depend on him for all the love and affection that carries me through." Her gestures, her voice, and the words she used had a familiar ring. They were identical in condescension to what an important white man in office, in our society, usually says about the little woman, when he turns to her, and throws her a bone because he's getting all the goodies of the particular event.

I was there to call on her, to hear about her life, and her accomplishments. He was overshadowed.

#### Admiration for African Women

It would be very difficult for me to cover African women whom I have seen over a period of fifty years in many different circumstances, except to say that I have many friends among them, and truly admire many of them very much. Many of them have had to do jobs that would be very hard for people to understand. I remember a woman in a nursery school in one of the compounds, the native compounds in South Africa where people are restricted to live within that area, who had a very good education. But women and blacks are paid on a very low scale. I think she was getting, perhaps, three and a half or six pounds a month. Just not enough for educated people to live on. And the way she talked about what they were trying to do for their children in school, and the dreams she had, and the programs she planned just would leave you speechless as it left me.

In Africa as everywhere else, women have had to live under such difficult circumstances that their determination to make the most of their lives, and to make the most of the lives of their children is phenomenal, unbelievable unless you saw it. What interested me tremendously was that I went to as many schools as I could. Children would walk for miles for good schooling. And I went to hospitals, where they had clinics, and ignorant women would walk miles, too, to a clinic so as to be sure that they would get the very best medical attention they could for themselves and their babies. And they would follow instructions, I was told. Once they learned, they would practice what they learned.

Scattered all over the different countries are leadership groups where women meet. I would ask the women how many miles had they walked in the heat of the day to get there, and how many miles would they walk back, and what would they have to do once they got home, which meant cook the food for their families, do everything they required. And they would all say--they had walked two and a half



Reyher: miles, four miles, or more. I would ask them, what brought them there? And invariably they would say, "To see people, to get new ideas. To talk to people."

And I thought to myself, what brings us anywhere? What was I doing there? And that is exactly what interested me, that basically they had, regardless of the limitations of their environment, a tremendous curiosity that was kindled, and could be kindled more. And a determination to work toward a program, a goal. I have tremendous admiration for them.

Fry: Do I understand you properly that as the nations emerged from their colonial period that women then had a chance in general to get more education and to--

Reyher: No, I wouldn't say quite that. I would say that men began to realize how short they were of leaders, and that they had many women who had had limited education, whom they could immediately draft into further education, and that would be to their mutual advantage. Because, certainly, most educated people in Africa of the past generation, and many of the present, owe their education, men or women, to missionaries under colonial governments. And it was the missions that kept arguing and pleading for the right for women to be educated because they recognized you would never raise the level of the society unless you raised the level of the women. But the women in many places would say to me, "They send our husbands away to meet engineers, and to meet other doctors. They don't send us." And then very often it would be the Y or some woman's organization that would try to find money to send that woman with her husband so that she too would have the benefit of all this new experience and he wouldn't leave her so far behind.

#### Contribution to *Tropical Africa*

Fry: You contributed to a rather important publication on Africa in the sixties, didn't you?

Reyher: I contributed the background paper entitled "The Role and Status of African Women" to the two-volume study Tropical Africa, edited by George H. T. Kimble and published by the Twentieth Century Fund in 1960. My paper was over three hundred pages long with a seventeen-page, single-spaced bibliography. In the book, besides being listed as a contributor, I had a three-line quote. I wanted to get the paper published, but I found no interest in the two or three queries I made, and I thought it would one day perhaps have some bibliographical value.

I would like to organize it in some way for use in African Studies, but I don't have time to revise and list the material I have.



## PART IV PERSPECTIVES

## XI THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT AND THE WOMAN'S PARTY

Other Personalities

## Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Reyher: The background history of women in the women's movement or actively writing about it, or thinking about it, or working as independent women, is actually well over a hundred years old in this country, and some of it longer. And one of the women who definitely was one of the pioneers of economic independence for women was Charlotte Perkins Gilman, one of the first women to write about the status of women.

When I first started reading about women, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's books were the books that I looked to. One of them--I can still see its scarlet cover--was in the family library I grew up with, and loved. I respected her and I admired her for what she had done. But she was a very good example, to me, of women who contributed to the women's movement because they were strong, independent women and then went off on a tangent and were nothing for women to be proud of.

I had to call on Inez Haynes Irwin just after she had written the book [The Story of the Woman's Party] because Miss Paul wanted me to get a statement from Mrs. Irwin and her husband, Will Irwin. I had known Inez Irwin's stories long before I knew her as a feminist. For a struggling young woman, the Irwins were an inspiration. Both successful writers, they lived in a house on Twelfth Street filled with priceless antiques, simple pine and maple pieces that only connoisseurs appreciated. The long, front living room we sat in remains clear in my memory after nearly fifty years.



Reyher: Inez Irwin explained she had thought the statement would be strengthened by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's name, and that she had asked her to join us.

From the moment she came in Mrs. Gilman made it clear there would be no help from her.

Instead she embarked on a tirade against the hordes of undesirable immigrants from Eastern Europe, particularly Jews, who were ruining the country, and declared that henceforth her cause was to see what she could do to rescue her homeland from their evil influence. Inez and Will Irwin were embarrassed. They thought she was particularly offensive to their other guest.

There was no stopping Mrs. Gilman. Once or twice I felt that Mr. Irwin thought I was not rising to the occasion, that my silence was a sort of triumph for her; but I was stunned. I could not say a word. A feminist idol had tumbled and crashed at my feet, and I sadly thought how could this be.

Very soon Will Irwin went upstairs and came down with a typed joint statement from them. I cannot remember the contents of it, or what the specific subject was. Miss Paul was constantly issuing statements garnered from distinguished and influential men and women, some of which I helped get.

I can only remember how painful it was for me to see a pioneer of freedom and justice for women turn into a frothing disseminator of bigotry. When I rose to go I managed to blurt out, "Mrs. Gilman, today I sadly learned that you no longer have anything to teach me."

Will Irwin took me to the door, the look of tension gone from his face. Patting my shoulder he grinned happily and mumbled so his words would not carry back to the living room, "Good girl!"

It was an illustration of people who had been strong in the women's movement or who were equally strong in some of the movements that we believed in and wanted to throw our hearts and strength in, and on the other hand devoted to some of the things we bitterly resented. But nevertheless, I recognized that strong-minded women were going to join the stream of powerful movements in this country hereafter.



Margaret Williams, Florence Treat Whitehouse, Gail Laughlin

Reyher: I would like very much to emphasize that often we got a woman working with us in the Woman's Party who came to us wholly because quite on her own, quite unaccustomed to working with women in organizations, she read about what we were doing, some event that took place, and wanted to find out more about us and in some way be identified with us.

Once Miss Paul either telephoned me, or wrote to me, that there was a woman in New York who signed herself Margaret C. Williams, Mrs. Lloyd Williams, who had written and said that she would like to know more about the Woman's Party.

I went to see her on Fifty-seventh Street. She was the daughter of a painter. She was either a Scotswoman or English, and she looked like a Scottish general, her hair pulled straight back, a determined face, a squatty figure, and brilliant blue eyes crinkling with humor and laughter, full of fun, but full of seriousness.

She wanted very much to hear all about the Woman's Party; she asked me to lunch with her grown son and her grown daughter, who weren't at all sympathetic. But she shot one question after another at me. She wanted to know all the details of what we were doing, how we got our money, what kind of work we did. And there and then she said she wanted to be a member and she sent her first check to Alice Paul of \$500. She may have even sent her first check without knowing intimately about us, and said she would like to know more. That was why I went to see her.

But thereafter she became one of our most devoted members, and one of our most steadfast contributors until she died, and that was many years later. She always let us have at least \$25 a month or \$50 a month, or a check for \$100, or a check for \$500. It varied, was spontaneous, unsolicited. She began being active by being on the New York state board, and then she was on the National Council, and on the national board.

I don't know anyone who didn't admire her and feel very happy about working with her. There were many women like that, unassuming, self-motivated, throughout the country who were part of our membership.

The other thing that I wanted to explain a little tiny bit about was the friendship the members felt for each other. For instance, in Main we had a board that I didn't work with in the sense of having a headquarters, but our chairman there, for many years, was Mrs. Florence Treat Whitehouse. She was beautiful, her husband was a very well-known lawyer, and her son presently is a very well-known



Reyher: lawyer. She was a painter, and a most steadfast member. When I came to Maine, not only for the Woman's Party, but later for the Works Progress Administration, and when I settled in Maine to live there, she treated me with so much kindness and consideration, especially once when I was ill and visited her, all of which grew out of having something in common. Later, Mrs. Whitehouse came to see me several times. She stayed with me and did two water colors of my house, one for me and one for my daughter. My daughter has hers, and now she's a grown-up grandmother.

There was another woman in Maine, one of the first state women legislators we had, a Republican--Gail Laughlin. And when I came back from one of my African trips, I sold an article to the Independent magazine, and I realized that a profile of Gail Laughlin, who was a most extraordinary woman of great determination, would be splendid for the Independent, which at that time was being published in Boston. Once I did a profile of her; though she was like a Scots burr with needles protruding from all over her, and though it took a great deal to get beyond that crust and close to her, we became friends. She realized that I appreciated her sturdy independence and what she stood for. She was an early believer in full independence for women and none of this protective legislation for her. She became a close friend and came to stay with me for a few days at my home in Maine. We almost severed our friendship because when we went driving, our car was such a bad one--my husband's and mine--and the roads were so bumpy.

But no two women could have been more different and active in Maine than Mrs. Whitehouse, who was the doyen of a beautiful house in town and in the country, very pretty and always beautifully dressed, and Gail Laughlin, very mannish, a busy legislator who also worked professionally (I forget whether it was at law or something else). That was the caliber of our NWP state members. There are so many of them that I haven't mentioned that were my lifelong friends, but I just can't. I'll just have to be forgiven.

#### Political-Economic Identity of Woman's Party Supporters

Fry: Another thing that we had talked about off the tape was the conservative women, some examples of that in the Woman's Party.

Reyher: What I think I said was that when the Woman's Party was organized at its very beginning, most of the women's husbands, particularly around New York State, were men who were important. The women were being supported as homemakers, many of them in a handsome way, so that they had both the time and the money to contribute to a cause. Practically



Reyher: every meeting we ever had was an afternoon meeting to which working women or professionals could not come. Every board meeting that we ever had was in the afternoon. So that, in answer to your earlier question of whether we had Negroes, for instance, there were very few women at that time who were black who had time and money. Not that one was prejudiced against them, one just didn't have them. They were working. They were not there with us. Now, was there any other question?

Fry: Well, along those lines, I wonder if you could comment on the fact that in the record you find supporters and workers in the Woman's Party like Crystal Eastman, and you find charges against the Woman's Party that amount to Red smears in the late twenties and then on the other hand you also find--you mentioned, I think, something about the Silver Shirts, which was a Fascist group, that had some sort of support of the Woman's Party.

Reyher: I want to make it very clear--the Woman's Party never supported the Silver Shirts. But the Woman's Party was really--

Fry: I mean that they enjoyed the support--

Reyher: No, no. What the Woman's Party was willing to do was to list them as one of their supporters for the Equal Rights Amendment. But there were some of us who felt that we would, under no circumstances, want to use even the support of people that we thought were a group that were so dangerous to our country, and we didn't want in any way to be associated with them, let alone seemingly to flaunt their support. But that doesn't mean by any means that the Woman's Party was willing to join with them in their work. You see what I mean: there is a great deal of difference.

Crystal Eastman, of course, was a radical. Crystal Eastman went to England in the early twenties and as far as I know, except on visits, never came back again to live here permanently, so that she belonged to a much earlier period of the Woman's Party, much before so much of the social thinking in this country began to crystallize along the lines of Red-baiters and non-Red-baiters, and who were radical or non-radical. But I think, as time went on, there is no question that the Woman's Party had a hard core of very conservative, very conventional women, and there is no doubt in my mind that Miss Paul was more comfortable with such women. On the other hand, the Woman's Party continued to have women of all kinds. Does that answer it in any way?

Fry: Yes, it does. But I want to pursue it--

Reyher: Well, let's pursue it.



Fry: --one more time, because I am trying to make sense out of the notes that I took.

Suffrage Won, Varied Concerns of Women: Mabel Vernon Compared to Alice Paul

Fry: Why did some of the women who had worked hardest with the Woman's Party for suffrage not continue with the party?

Reyher: One of the reasons I and others did not want to give full time to the Woman's Party was that we felt the times had reached certain peaks of social activism that required putting energies and efforts into something else, and not narrowing it just to equal rights.

Now, for instance, I have mentioned Mabel Vernon very little in connection with the Woman's Party because in the early years I was working with and for Alice Paul, but in the later years I worked for Mabel Vernon. Of all the people in the Woman's Party, I think Mabel Vernon represents the very finest that the Woman's Party ever produced. Possibly it was because she came out of a Quaker household, possibly it was because her father was a journalist, and she herself trained to be a teacher and worked in chautauqua lecturing.\* She had a more variegated background and life [than Miss Paul], and she traveled. Possibly it was because she had more breadth of family background and experience than Alice Paul did, even though Alice Paul had the special experience of working with the Pankhurst sisters.

But it was also, I think, a temperamental difference. Mabel Vernon is fundamentally not an egoist. Up to a certain point Mabel will concentrate on a goal in front of her, but she will never concentrate to get power and ego satisfaction from it and in so doing hurt people, or a particular person, along the way. She is too kindhearted.

Mabel Vernon is a highly disciplined person, of great humanity, whose humanity has broadened through the years as her experience has broadened. One of the reasons she wanted equal rights for women was that she loved humanity, and she loved women in the widest meaning of the word. She wanted them to have an opportunity of full expression.

---

\*The chautauquas, inaugurated at Chautauqua in 1874, were meetings lasting several days for educational and recreational purposes. Mabel Vernon supervised the Swarthmore chautauqua and lectured on feminism. See Mabel Vernon: Speaker for Suffrage, Petitioner for Peace.



Reyher: She did not want them to have extra power as the most important reason for achieving equal rights.

I feel that Miss Paul's strength was in her egotism; her goals being set in one direction were such that her work could never have been done if she didn't have that egotism. But I also feel that she had a certain sense of power and personal achievement and satisfaction in gaining that power, and that some of the difficulties that she had in the Woman's Party were because she brooked no differences, and no discussion once she set upon her goal, except in the most ephemeral way. However, I feel that there is no doubt that the Woman's Party went further because she was at the helm, despite the loss of certain people.

But I think there is a fundamental difference between the two people and so at a given point, like many people before her, Mabel Vernon did not continue working for the Equal Rights Amendment, as you know, and she began working for peace, which was dear to her heart.

There was a day in the thirties when Mabel wrote me from Washington that she wanted to come to talk to me in New York and she wanted me to know about the Peoples Mandate Committee for Inter-American Peace and Cooperation. What extra effort and energy I had, thereafter, over and beyond what I did to earn my living, and to care for chores immediately before me, and all my personal obligations, I gave to Mabel and for that peace organization.

I was always trying to help Mabel, raising money for her peace organization because I so definitely believed in it. Some of the meetings that I helped organize, and some that I spoke at, and some of the people I saw, all helped me in my own development, contributed to my experience, which I enjoyed. Nevertheless, it took strength and effort. I gave to peace and international cooperation rather than the Equal Rights Amendment, because I was following Mabel Vernon, a leader with whom I had worked on the Equal Rights Amendment when Miss Paul was head of the NWP.

Is there anything else that you might want to ask me?

Fry: I need to have more information on why Mabel left the Party. Because when I talked to Mabel about it, she said that it was a personality difference between her and Alice. She couldn't bring up any details of it, and she said maybe you would remember something about it.

Reyher: I would feel, with what I explained to you before, that Mabel and so many women in the Woman's Party were well aware of the other issues that their hearts were in and they would like to work for. They had started working in the Woman's Party and they would have liked to



Reyher: continue working for it because they always felt that maybe with their energy the amendment would be passed, would come to a crescendo of success. And I think that when it was difficult to work with Miss Paul--when Miss Paul was unwilling to accept that in the work they had all grown and that her lieutenants, her lieutenant-generals had developed ideas of their own, then I think they felt that, well, there was nobody that would give the devotion that she gave to the Party, and it had best be left to her. They could not work with her within the Party, and continue to function with their full strength and hearts; so they left.

I don't think that Mabel had any of the famous differences that occurred when Doris Stevens left the Party. I think that would be the way to view it. I think when Mabel suggested that I might tell you, it was because she and I have often talked about it. I will say frankly on tape what I have said for years, "I don't like Miss Paul." It isn't that I dislike her, I don't like her. If I have to work with anybody, I want to work with somebody that I love and admire. I admire her, but I don't love her. And there are many things about her I don't like. And I am willing, because of my admiration for her, my gratitude to her for what she has done, to say she should be the one to be trusted when she wants something done because her leadership has been such that it has proved that no one else would have seen the Woman's Party through some of the crises, that the world doesn't know about, which she did see it through. But beyond that I am not prepared to go, and I think many other people would articulate it another way.

Fry: She thought Anita Pollitzer would be able to tell me a great deal about it, but Anita can't.

Reyher: Anita, of course, was the person that Alice Paul, I think, personally liked and loved more than anybody in the Party, and Anita loved Alice Paul. Anita followed her to the end for anything that she wanted, anything that she asked for, so that Anita would have told you that in her own personal terms. So it isn't as if we who worked with Alice Paul abandoned the Equal Rights Amendment. It was that we felt that there were other causes and other people through whom and with whom we could work, that also required the attention of women who were useful, and effective, and we turned our efforts to those.

Mabel Vernon worked for peace and international cooperation.

Vivian Pierce, who had worked with the Woman's Party for several years, first remained in New York for a while, and then she went West and organized the League to Abolish Capital Punishment. Her organization was responsible for the abolition of capital punishment in California, and it was Vivian Pierce's efforts that made capital



Reyher: punishment a real issue in this country, and she got her experience and her strength in the Woman's Party. Many of us who had worked with Vivian in the NWP were on her board in the League to Abolish Capital Punishment.

#### Own Concern with Birth Control

So you see, it wasn't that we all stopped working for what we believed in. Many other women, I didn't because I was working with Mabel, but many others believed that the immediate issue--and if I hadn't worked for Mabel I think I would have worked for that--was to work for some form of birth control. After all, Margaret Sanger went to jail because she advocated birth control. And think of what has been accomplished since!

When I traveled for Sears Roebuck, invariably when I was alone with a woman, she would ask me if there were any way that I could put her in touch with someone that would sell or fit her for contraceptives, because she didn't know whom to go to. And these were women of every financial circumstance.

Fry: About when was that?

Reyher: That was in the thirties. Now, I don't say hundreds told me that, but I mean enough to impress me.

In 1927-1929, when I was working for J. Walter Thompson, I was living in New York, and by that time I had met a great many women around the country. I had worked for suffrage in thirty states; I had traveled. I had also been in Africa. I cannot tell you how many people--including men--would write, telephone, or wire to me and say, "Is there any way that you can find someone who will perform an abortion on me, or my daughter, or my friend?" To the point where I used to laugh and say, one of these days, people are going to think that I am running an agency for this because one person tells another that I know somebody who will get them to a doctor, and I would never have refused that kind of request. Because these women were desperate.

So that today when you have had such an open, strong birth control movement, such an open, strong demand for abortion, you cannot begin to realize what a broad-minded woman was up against if she had to think in terms, "What can I in my small way do to help other women who feel boxed in? Where is it they feel boxed in? What is it that makes them desperate, because some of them are desperate?"



Reyher: And so that is why so many of us didn't feel that the Equal Rights Amendment was the sole burning issue. We felt maybe some of the other women who wouldn't do some of our things would push it, walk through the halls of Congress, go to see their representatives over and over again. Some of us felt that we had to do some of our things because nobody else would do them. Does that answer some of your questions?

Fry: Yes, it does, and it exemplifies what a number of the writers of this period are saying, that the women's efforts after 1920 did become very diversified--

Reyher: I think that is true.

Fry: --and you did not have this single goal of woman's suffrage.

Reyher: Well, I think again it has to be modified to a certain extent. I don't believe that political education is the same as political change. The League of Women Voters steadfastly tried to make women politically aware and urged them to use their power politically. So women began in a small way to run for office and to try to use their political influence, though there were legal discriminations against them.

#### Feminism Outreached Woman's Party

The only thing I can say is that in the early twenties, when people would talk to me about the amendment or when Elsie Hill, who was a very strong advocate of it and remained so, right straight to the end, would say to me, "Why aren't you working for the amendment?" I would say, "Elsie, I am really sorry, but I have to explain to you that I think the feminist movement has moved ahead of the National Woman's Party. And I say that advisedly and I am not saying it in criticism." But I am saying that the feminist movement did move ahead of the Woman's Party, though the movement was diverse. The movement had to move ahead of the Party, otherwise it would have been bogged down in technicalities, and we had to have other outlets, and we did.

We had to work individually and in groups for women's economic independence, for the issues in the world that affected all people. Women could not depend on their husbands or fathers to support them in their demand for freedom. Women had to have fuller control over their immediate destiny through access to birth control.

Feminism had so many aspects. Sometimes a woman who never would have thought of working for the Woman's Party was a feminist in the truest sense of the word. I think of Rayna Raphaelson, later Rayna Prohme, about whom Vincent Sheean wrote his famous book, Personal History.



Reyher: When I was at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1921, I took a course with Dr. Edward Scribner Ames on "The Psychology of Religious Experience." Seated on one side of me was brilliant, curly redheaded Rayna, on the other a girl whose name I never knew.

As Dr. Ames mentioned that neither Moslems nor Jews were permitted to eat pork, this girl leaned over and whispered to Rayna and me, "I never could understand the Jewish antipathy to pork when they are the biggest pigs on earth!"

A few days later, Rayna and I, like other members of the class, had to read a paper on what our religious background had been, what we had started as, and where we were today. No one could have been more embarrassed than my neighbor to discover how gratuitously she had insulted me. My fountain pen leaked, and she brought me a new one. In every way she tried to atone for her rudeness, but I would have none of her. Little did she know that redheaded Rayna had been insulted, too, and with her wonderful sense of humor Rayna croaked to me, "That dame managed two strikes in one." This course began our deep friendship.

Sometime the next summer Rayna Raphaelson came to New York with her husband, Sampson Raphaelson, who had got a job as a reporter on the New York Times, had sold his play, The Jazz Singer, and was waiting for it to be produced. They took an apartment on Tenth Street a short walk from me.

Soon Rayna confided that she had no money, no job, but she wanted to leave Rayph, her husband. "You are sure you do, Rayna?" I asked, for I thought I could help her. Sidney Colestock, in whose house I had established the temporary New York Headquarters of the Woman's Party, needed a reliable weekend cashier. In exchange she was prepared to give full room and board.

Rayna jumped at the opportunity, and then completed her separation arrangements herself. She offered to keep Rayph's apartment clean and in order for \$10 a week. This would be spartan cash wages and not alimony, and it would give Rayna pocket money. It seemed a weird plan to me but clear and direct as Rayna was.

Rayph never forgave me for what he termed bringing a marital difference to a crisis.

From then on Rayna began her commitment to a study of basic philosophy and the roots of human yearning. Our house was across the street from a Jesuit seminary and Rayna went there each day for private sessions.



Reyher: Both of us were very busy and we did not have time to argue about our different goals. Rayna thought I was wasting time on a limited aspect of life and consciousness, living on a basically superficial level. I thought she had her head in the clouds and would eventually find herself with no means of support, lacking essential economic independence. Rayna had a wonderful sense of fun and humor and we became very attached to each other. Hot evenings we took the bus up to Forty-second Street and then for a dollar got a sightseeing bus to Coney Island and back. The trip was cool and refreshing and gave us a chance to occasionally peck at the endless argument of the comparative virtue of a life devoted to contemplative meditation or activist reform. Once in a while we treated ourselves to the cool and privacy of a Central Park carriage.

One evening two bored sightseers in the seat behind us on the Coney Island bus tried to "pick us up" as it was then called. We were not at all interested, but they continued to interrupt us and interfere with our own private conversation.

Suddenly I became enraged, and out of my rage was born a desire to try to pay back with their own medicine. I knew how to talk on street corners, or anywhere, fast, and with no possible chance of interruption.

I looked at the two of them. Rayna fixed a rapt expression on me and I started, "No doubt you will be interested in hearing about the discriminations against women in New York State. Did you know that....?" I kept going for what seemed an hour, but Rayna had clocked me; it had been just over ten minutes. When I turned around, and looked at the passing landscape, I heard two heaving sighs, and one man saying to the other, "She must be crazy." But they never said another word to us. It was a speech I used several other times.\* It always worked and gave me special delight.

Rayna left for Chicago to get a divorce. From there she proceeded to California, and then to China to study Chinese philosophy. Occasionally I had long letters from her such as "being broke in China is different from in New York. If you are white you have to have five servants!"

I learned she got a job on a Chinese English-language paper. She married William Prohme, and was in some way involved in Chinese politics. Newspaper friends who had been to China told me that the cover of Equal Rights, with the cover of Faith and me on it, that I had sent to her, was pasted above her office desk.

---

\*RHR wrote an article, "'She Must Be Crazy'," which appeared in Equal Rights, 13 February 1926, p. 8.



Reyher: In his first mention of Rayna, in Personal History, Vincent Sheean wrote:

She was the kind of girl I had known all my life, but she had, by the direction she had taken, acquired a purpose and point of view that did not seem to me to belong to her. From the first I was conscious of a great puzzle, the puzzle of why she was doing this particular thing at this particular point of the world's compass. The easiest suggestion for a solution was that she was a romantic idealist, to whom a "cause" was a necessity--any "cause." Nobody, after one glance at her, could have supposed her to be animated by ordinary selfish reasons. Her sincerity floated over her like a banner. The hunger for a "cause"--that was it! the kind of thing that made so many nice American girls go out and get themselves cracked over the head by policemen during the suffragist campaigns. Some of those same nice girls, now that they had the vote, were busy with other causes, getting prohibition either repealed or enforced, getting prisons reformed, or organizing the local ball for charity in their own home town. It must have taken a peculiarly insatiate cause-hunger to bring a girl like this into the exact middle of the Chinese Revolution, but except for the difference in degree, it was the same motive as that which caused ladies to spend a day or two in the suffrage jail in Washington and then come out and write books with titles like Jailed for Freedom. Perhaps Mrs. Prohme, too, would write a book about her work in China.

Later Sheean was to overcome his male condescension toward Rayna's commitment:

I began to have any uneasy feeling that my judgment of her choice had been ludicrously inaccurate....She had no enthusiasm for "causes" in general, had never been the kind of romantic busybody I had at first assumed her to be. She had had a sound education in economics and sociology; her interest in social revolution had been aroused at an age when I was still learning new steps in the fox trot. She had already acquired a remarkable revolutionary past in the service of the Kuomintang, and she enjoyed in the spring of 1927 the confidence of many Chinese Left leaders. She not only edited the official newspaper, but had a general consultative usefulness in the Hankow regime in matters of propaganda designed to appeal to foreigners. Borodin, Mme. Sun Yat-sen, Eugene Chen and Sun-Fo treated her opinions with respect.



Reyher: Sheean reported Rayna was part of the inner circle of the Chinese Revolution in Hankow. In its final days the leaders knew flight was inevitable. Borodin, Mme. Sun Yat-sen-chen, and the Prohmes "scattered in flight, escaping in various disguises and under various names from the vengeance of the war lords."

Mme. Sun Yat-sen, Rayna, and Bill Prohme escaped from Hankow to Shanghai. The Prohmes separated in Shanghai, Bill going to Manila. There was no safety in Shanghai for leaders against Chiang Kai-shek. Their every move was watched, but Rayna and Mme. Sun Yat-sen managed to be rowed down the river to a Soviet steamer that brought them safely to Vladivostok where the Soviet government had a train waiting to take them to Moscow. Mme. Sun Yat-sen defied the power and wealth of the Soong family, true to the principles of her husband. Rayna, in accompanying her in flight, was following a deeply-rooted chosen commitment to the Chinese Revolution--an emotional and ideological synthesis.

Borodin, their leader, had not yet joined them, and the Russian welcome was none too certain. Nevertheless, Sheean felt that for Rayna there was no immediate present except what the unfolding needs of the Chinese Revolution, even at a distance, would dictate.

"She was unified, integrated and burned with a pure white flame," he wrote later. "She was prepared for any sacrifice up to and including death itself; petty questions (among which she included her personal destiny) could not disturb her any more. It was a marvelously pure flame."

Rayna was preparing in Moscow to enter the Lenin Institute to train as a professional revolutionary when she died of what an autopsy proved was inflammation of the brain.

I was sitting at my desk at J. Walter Thompson's in November, 1927, when Jerry Carson, a copywriter and friend, later a well-known writer--a classmate of Rayna's at the University of Illinois--came up to me. With no preliminaries, because he was in shock, he told me, "Becky, I have just heard that the AP wire service reports that Rayna died in Moscow of a brain tumor." I put my head down and wept.

Rayna's father, a wealthy Chicago businessman, vice-president of the Board of Trade, had refused to help finance her "communist activity." Rayna could have done with a few square meals, her body was so fragile. On hearing Rayna had died he cabled all over the world to get red roses for her trip to the crematorium.

I realized later that Rayna had proved to me the inner meaning of feminism, that each woman must find and experience her own destiny and be true to it.



Reyher: Rayna did not need "consciousness sessions," she had lived and created her own. And no one could have been more amazed and amused than she to have been cited as a symbol of the finest and deepest significance of feminism.

### Social Attitudes

#### Women's Lib: Reaction to Feminine Mystique and Victorian Morals

Fry: A little while ago you mentioned how difficult it is, with the strong feminist movements we have now, to recognize how very boxed-in women felt in the past. What relationship do you see between the present Women's Lib movement and your work, especially in the 1920s?

Reyher: The one thing that the Women's Lib movement has done is that their very large numbers have created a feeling that if you are not with it, you are out of it, and I use those words advisedly, because being in is still a criteria of our modern society--you have to be with everything, you have to be on the ball, you have to be avant-garde, you have to be aware. So that what the Women's Libbers have done is to make people realize and feel, many who wouldn't have felt it otherwise, that being for Women's Lib, being for women's emancipation (using the old words), is something that all women should be for. At a given point, when women turned, and there was certainly a turn back in this country, when many women turned against independence for women, turned against the whole push that we had been working for, feminism had become a dirty word. I really and truly use that advisedly.

I can remember when we first started working for suffrage and equal rights, we were regarded as an exciting, dramatic group of women. The women who barnstormed around the country, organized suffrage parades and demonstrations, picketed, inspired talk and press coverage, and ran up and down the corridors of legislatures, were dramatic. We would come into a room, and people would want to hear about the latest thing that happened, that we had done. Men would be interested to meet the women who were in this work; if the women were sensible and earnest, to hear what was the latest thing being done.

Then there was a point when the excitement had worn thin, hit a low ebb, and the type of woman who was always looking for approval, and who really had no spine or individual principles began to feel, "Well, maybe being independent is not the way to achieve personal goals and attention. Maybe the traditional southern belle who had



Reyher: many children was the woman most admired after all." Certainly the vogue for the old-fashioned woman came back.

To a certain extent I feel that the very hard struggle that some of us had in having jobs and trying to make them meaningful, and the fact that many of us were divorced, when divorce was not yet popular, made some of our children--the generation which came next, and had a lot of children--feel that we had failed them, failed love and marriage and failed the family, and that they would concentrate on personal fulfillment, on love and marriage, and the family, and have big families. And that was the thing to do. I think it was--

Fry: That was the feminine mystique of the 1950s.

Reyher: Yes, that was the feminine mystique of the 1950s. But I think that next generation after ours became somewhat wiser. And make no mistake about it, in Betty Friedan's book [The Feminine Mystique], she attacks Margaret Mead for helping the feminine mystique along, which I felt she did. Certainly Freud gave it the greatest push. Margaret Mead has always been with any cause as the leader of it or the forerunner of it, even though she actually opposed it originally. She likes to be with a popular prevailing trend. There is no question about it if you read her books carefully, that she helped build up that feminine mystique--that you have to be a woman in the fullest sense, have to be a mother, and you had certain wonderful satisfactions from your baby. She helped build the feminine mystique when it was popular.

But the man who did the most to destroy the independence of women was Freud. There were many of us, but we had no influence, who just laughed and argued about Freud's influence. "We have heard all that, it doesn't mean anything," we argued. And of course there are so many ways of interpreting everything.

There is also the fact that nobody realizes that we, fifty years ago, were still under the influence of the Victorian moral and social values, and inhibitions. The words used today in the newspapers, and on the lecture platform, would have got you arrested if you had used them when I was a young woman. I use my words advisedly. If you stood up on a platform and used the common four-letter words, I think somebody would have taken you off the platform as being socially obscene. These were classified "obscenities."

Today, I personally still don't like them. I have been brought up in a different milieu and a different age. There are words that I simply can't use. It seems to me that these four-letter words are overused, and the language is so full of descriptive phrases that we could develop and not stick to a few bombshell words like that, but I think it is valuable to have had a breeze of fresh air break down all those Victorian barriers. And I think it had an electrifying effect on all of us.



### Equality Between Sexes: Pills, Abortions, Vasectomies

Fry: That wasn't the only thing from the Victorian age that must have affected you in the twenties; it must have been the whole attitude toward sex relationships, the position of women, many things, you were having to struggle against. It was like a strong wind; sometimes today we don't look back and see that you--

Reyher: Well, let's recognize that the Pill has changed the standing of American women and world-wide women more than anything else.

Fry: You are back with your birth control now.

Reyher: Birth control was fundamental to a freedom of choice that women should have pressed for it harder, and for freer abortions because if they would have had that they would have hastened their independence.

Today equality between the sexes is due to the fact that you don't have the fear that any sensible young woman had, "Well, if I sleep with that young man, what is going to happen to me if I have a baby?" Not only because she might have been afraid of offending the conventions, but suppose he abandoned her, what would she do, if she was a young girl and had a baby?

A young woman that I know, when I asked her about her son, told me he came to her and said, "Oh, I am going to have to marry this girl. She's pregnant." And his mother said, "In 1973 marry a girl because she is pregnant?! All you have to do is pay for the abortion." And that to me was significant of the change in what is happening today. A girl might sleep with a man because she wanted to, she might get pregnant, but she could always get an abortion and not unduly suffer because of it. And it isn't because I believe in loose values; I believe in facing facts as they are.

I think one of the courses that I took with W. I. Thomas, the sociologist at the University of Chicago, who left an indelible mark on sociology and continued to be known and respected by all sociologists for many years after he lived, was a course called "Social Attitudes."

Fifty years ago a social attitude was not considered important. Today we talk about social attitudes as part of life, as making up life. In those days, one of the things we were up against were these many social attitudes, and we were up against the fact that men were free sexually because there were no consequences, and women were not.

And we are arriving at a new view today. For instance, when I went to Washington to see Mabel, oh, about a year or two years ago, we had invited to cocktails and tea an old Woman's Party friend--a very



Reyher: good friend of Mabel's and a good friend of mine--Edith Goode. She was then eighty-six years old, and she died a year later. She was always interested in the Woman's Party and contributed a great deal of money to it. Her primary interest, though, was protection for animals.

In this her eighty-sixth year she had become interested in vasectomy, and she had decided that vasectomy was the thing that she wanted to give a good deal of her money to. This 86-year-old spinster went down to Congress to the committee that was having the hearings on it, though she could hardly walk because she was beginning to be so feeble, and had to have her old black maid, who had been with her for many years, help her.

It was she who said with a laugh to the men on the committee that she was no longer interested in this question personally. [Laughter] Her whole history and support, with what little money she had for causes that she had believed in, had finally brought her to thinking that it was this particular issue--vasectomy--that had to have more attention if we were going to think in terms of the rights of women.

And I agreed with her because I feel that all the emphasis on sexual control, even on the part of emancipated women--and again it is a subconsciously antifeminist emphasis--is that it is up to women to find ways of birth control rather than men, because they are the ones who have the baby. But the seed is planted there by the man, the woman carries that seed, and certainly for her independence it is frightfully important that she should be able to control when that seed should be planted and by whom. But it is also important that if she has a man with whom she has decided to have a long-term relationship, by whom in marriage she has two children, that she and he discuss seriously whether at that point he shouldn't have a vasectomy to protect her and to protect them from further children.

I have discussed this with a lot of women and a lot of men, again, not enough to call it a research study, but enough to satisfy me because there have been enough diverse people; and invariably the man has said, "But suppose I find another woman I want to have children by?" And I think the answer to that would be that if we are going to think not just as men or as women but as members of the society we are living in, we must recognize that we are rapidly coming to the point where nobody is going to be socially entitled to more than two children. So that if you have had your two children by Susie Jones, Mr. Jones, you are going to have to decide that that slot in life is closed for you and that you can't have any more children, because if you do you are going to be using up the vitality of the earth that you are not entitled to.

Now, if we come to the point where men will have vasectomies after they have lived with women and have two children, we may arrive



Reyher: at another era--you and I may not live to see it--where men will be the ones who will have vasectomies and women will not be taking the Pill, because there still are doctors who believe that the Pill is dangerous. The Pill is very useful in our present society because I have talked to various Catholics who tell me it is the only form of birth control that the church will permit to the extent that they are not against it, but it is not the universally accepted means of birth control, and it certainly makes many women uncomfortable, and there is a small percentage of women for whom it is dangerous. So that the feminist frontier is far from limited or closed. It is still ongoing and it certainly was the cleavage between us, who lived in the era before the Pill, and what came after.

There is a Freudian theory that a man needs children to assert his manhood. Black feminists are up against that theory in practice. I had a nurse's aide caring for my sister who frankly told me that she was on relief, that she had five children for whom she was getting Dependent Children Assistance and was about to have her sixth, that she was her husband's common law wife, that by his legal wife he had five children the same age as hers, and that his girl friend was pregnant, too. She was black. When I asked her why she didn't have an abortion or have her tubes tied, she said she did not believe in that.

Black feminists have to contend with the theory that for far too long black men have suffered because their wives had easy access to domestic jobs and were the more independent and left the men "emasculated." Also there is a group among the blacks that encourages women to be frequently pregnant to do their duty by increasing black population and thereby gaining greater influence.

Our welfare laws encourage women's dependence on large checks for family subsidy, and for women becoming brood mares.

### Women and Money

As a student at Columbia and the University of Chicago, I had limited pocket money.

I had a brother thirteen months older than I was, and we did many things together. And though he had a job that paid well--I have forgotten the salary--while he studied I felt it unfair that he and other young men should have to pick up a girl's tab for a casual soda or coffee. I felt girl students should pay their own way, not for a dance or a special party, but for day-by-day, on- and off-campus incidentals. Some of the young men laughed about it, some scoffed, some argued, grew angry, and none of them liked it.



Reyher: Dates for dinner, or the theater, with men already earning their living, were different, I thought. I enjoyed that; they had the money, I did not.

It was years later that it was accepted women should pay their own way. And on a college campus, I am told, it would be antediluvian any other way.

### Gigolos

Inevitably, when women begin to earn or control large sums of money, certain types of men try to sponge on them. That is one phase of being independent. Once only men bought the favors of women. Today the wealthy woman may buy her husband, lover, or dance partner. Never having had a lot of money, I have only been aware of this second hand, but I have had my brush with it, and realized it is part of the changing role of women, and that the gigolos among us--and there are a growing number of them--are the male adventurers of the past who preyed on weak or willing women, the male counterpart of the female adventuress who has always been with us, choosing her independent career with professional skill. (I think being an adventuress requires professional skill.)

I met my first gigolo when I was seven. Blonde Emory lived two houses away from me on a tree shaded street in Washington, and we walked to and from school together. Our families joked about our close friendship. I got diphtheria, dangerous in those days, and against her best pedagogical judgment my mother gave me pennies to take my medicine. The dolls' bureau, a good size, had its drawers lined with pennies stacked two and three high. Emory would wave to me, hang presents on my gate, and for Christmas his family bought a lovely little ring for him to give me.

During my many weeks' illness I noticed that between Emory's house and ours a new family had moved in, with a seven-year-old girl, Lilian, topped by a mass of blonde sausage curls, my childhood envy. I had straight, brown hair with only a ripple of curl, and my mother did not approve of tying up hair in rags at night to produce curls by day.

I had noticed from my sick-room window that Emory and Lilian came home together from school, but my first day back Emory hurried me home alone and said, "I heard my family talking about your having a whole bureau full of pennies. Show them to me."

Emory's eyes bulged at the wealth when he saw it. There were several hundred pennies.



Reyher: "Let's go get some candy," he urged. I argued that he knew I was not allowed to eat or buy penny candy. He argued, who would know, ignoring the principle of deceit. That was bothering me, but it did not bother me enough, and I succumbed.

Each day, thereafter, Emory hurried me home from school, and as soon as we had gone through the routine of washing up, we went out to play--except that Emory guided me straight to the candy store where we splurged as much as 10¢ worth at a time. Bare spots began to appear in the drawers, and the day came when we sadly realized that we were about to spend the last pennies.

Next day, and I can still feel the sharp pang of pain, when I came out of school, there was no Emory in sight. I waited, and waited, and the school yard began to empty. Finally I called to someone, "Have you seen Emory?"

"He left early," someone called. "He and Lilian Grey were in a great hurry to get somewhere."

I never thought of Emory, the gigolo, until years later when I was in Luxor, a little out of season. There was a sleek, blonde, professional tennis player at the hotel, there were few other guests, and we danced each evening. He told me of his consumptive wife in Switzerland, of his child or two. To me it was very casual; he was a good dancer. I was traveling with another woman. I gave him very little thought.

A boatload of tourists arrived, many more women than men among them, and the dancing was desultory. The tennis player continued to ask me to dance with him. One of the more aggressive women confronted me, "How much do you pay him? What are his fees?"

I had never sold or paid for my favors. I was deeply shocked and terribly upset. The woman was right. I, in my middle thirties, had never encountered a real gigolo except Emory. To this day I cannot remember just what I did about the tennis player, or how I handled it. We were due to leave about then anyway.

Today the paid gigolo comes in many packages. Escort services are available for women on whatever terms they specify; and that, too, is part of the feminist revolution. For those women who want it, and are able to pay for it, they can call the tune.



## Values

Reyher: In the twenties, most young women I knew outside the Woman's Party were not working for a living unless they were teachers or secretaries. They either wished they were or resented what they considered a threat to their way of life. I am speaking of the white, middle class.

At the Boston office, we had a lovely volunteer, Ruth Small, about three years older than I. It was the winter I was twenty. We became very good friends. She had a car, took me many places, and I spent some delightful weekends at her country home in Sudbury.

The family consisted of Ruth's father and mother--she was an only child--and "Aunty Max" Kendrick, a teacher and an active supporter of liberal causes. All of them felt that since Ruth had not gone to college and had no profession she should get married, and their obvious efforts on her behalf were embarrassing to her. In her thirties she did marry a man I barely met, and found congenial; and as the years passed we drifted apart.

When I first left Boston and was running the New York Headquarters, Ruth occasionally came to town en route somewhere else, and we would have lunch together and talk freely and naturally about everything, as we always had. One particular time I suggested where we should eat. It was understood from our frequent lunches in the past that we each paid our own way. Ruth protested it was too expensive for me. I insisted that I worked long hours under great pressure, had other responsibilities, and that I needed a relaxed meal, particularly with a friend.

Over lunch Ruth began to scold me. "You are always worried about money, and you know nothing about how to manage it, despite your experience as an independent woman. Now, I've been taught how to budget money and get the best value out of it. Remember Papa is vice-president of the Boston Savings Bank. On your salary, \$1.50 or \$2.00 for lunch is far too much for you to spend."

I got mad. I had had far too many lectures on budgeting by women who prided themselves that at least they excelled at that.

"Ruth," I retorted angrily. "Budgeting is just a compilation of priorities. People differ as to what is important to them. I am not careless about money. I work too hard to earn it, and I have Faith to support. But if you think I spend my money unwisely I think the same of you."

"What do you mean?" she asked in genuine amazement.



Reyher: "Ruth, your family is remodeling a lovely farmhouse in Sudbury. Your mother and father have a car, Auntie Max has one, and you have one. Three cars in the garage and no flush toilet in the house! I hate going out in the cold to a drafty outhouse. I would double up on one of the cars, and use buses, but I would consider a bathroom more important than a car."

Ruth was genuinely offended and I not only had to apologize but also had to explain that I was trying to demonstrate a point to show how great a divergence there was in how people spent their money, and that what seemed sound planning to the Smalls, with all their financial investment experience, seemed definitely unsound to me.

Of course I did not convince her. We remained friends, but I realized early in life that women were always being lectured about how to spend their money by people who failed to understand that money represented values, and that independent women were bound to have distinctly individual attitudes about money.

I also realized that in every society that I had been a part of, or studied, money and sex, in all their aspects, were the two greatest sources of difference.

Perhaps what bothered me most was the constant taunt, "It is too expensive for a young wife, particularly with a baby, to work--you spend more than you take in." Then and now I argued that those first years of working at a chosen career should be considered an apprenticeship, an internship. And those years will be costly just as a doctor's or lawyer's first years were and are costly. I argued that later the financial investment would pay off. It usually did, but most women were defeated on this count before they even started.

### Struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment

#### Attitude of Woman's Party Toward Established Parties

Fry: What about the Woman's Party's consideration of the established political parties and what women might do by working through them?

Reyher: There was a lot of discussion about that, constantly. And I think that Miss Paul felt very strongly, and I think justifiably, that we would remain nonpolitical, urging the support and passage of the amendment on a nonpartisan basis. That was the feeling certainly on the part of some of the older suffragists.



Reyher:

The League of Women Voters, which was the outgrowth of the National Woman's Suffrage Association, had not quite decided what they should do after the suffrage amendment was passed, except to educate women politically. And though today they are a highly organized group on behalf of political education for women, and are interested in every campaign, have data about the candidates, and are a nonpartisan organization, nevertheless, they started out with a bang telling women that they would now have to go into politics and affiliate themselves with parties.

The League urged women to join political parties, but they announced they would remain a nonpartisan political education group urging women to use their political power strategically. It would have been a duplication of what the League was doing for the Woman's Party to do that.

Miss Paul felt that one should use existing power, wherever it was, to get support for the Equal Rights Amendment. And that would be the be-all, the beginning and the end of what the Woman's Party would do politically.

The techniques might change, the campaigns might change, but the purpose of the National Woman's Party was to first pass the national suffrage amendment and have it ratified, and once that was done to have the Equal Rights Amendment passed.

Any political power that would be brought to bear upon that would be an indirect power that the members of the Woman's Party would get, either by lobbying or building up their state organizations, or getting some of their members who were already in political power, or who were going to be, to support the amendment and use their influence toward that end.

Fry: In partisan connections, what are your impressions about the parties that were more supportive--the party that was more supportive in the twenties--and then, did this change?

Reyher: It constantly changed, because, for example, [Herbert] Hoover was more strongly for the Equal Rights Amendment than Al Smith was. (Because New York Democrats, and Al Smith, were strongly for protective legislation for women.) I can remember that I voted for Hoover as against Al Smith here in New York, to my horror now as I look back on it and think that maybe I helped build the Republican strength even to that slight degree. We were urged to support the candidates that supported the amendment. And to that extent there was a division. Certainly never before or since have I voted for a Republican President. I voted for Hoover because I thought maybe if he were elected, it would help the amendment. And that if Al Smith were, it would hurt the amendment because he was tied up here in New York State with all the groups that were for protective legislation.



## Changing Stand on ERA by Established Parties

Fry: Later on--I don't know how close you were to all this in the forties--it looked as though maybe the Republicans were taking more leadership in this. In the 78th-79th Congress, which was the early and mid part of the forties, can you tell me whether my impression is right?

Reyher: I think your impression is right because it is my impression too, without being able to actually pinpoint it. But I think, again, that is due to the fact that Congressman Emanuel Celler of New York, succeeded by Elizabeth Holtzman, was a strong opponent of the amendment. I went to see him here in New York once.

Fry: You must tell me about Celler, because he has been the sustaining man and figure against it in the whole thing.

Reyher: Of course. Well now, the impression, naturally, would be that there was less support on the part of the Democrats, and one could start with Celler. I had only one meeting with Celler. Mary Dubrow and I went together. He was bland, curt, and determined in opposition, giving us very little time.

Mrs. Roosevelt, and all of the women that she worked with so closely, Frances Perkins, and Florence Kelley, and the Consumer's League, and the Women's Trade Union League, and Molly Dewhurst, all the well-known women Democrats were against the amendment because of their fear of its threat to protective legislation.

Fry: And the trade unions too, weren't they--

Reyher: I was coming to that. Practically all the trade unions were against the amendment. The Democratic party was much closer to the trade unions than the Republicans. So that there was a long period when it would have been legitimate to say our hope was with the Republicans. But latterly, when you realize that you have men like Eugene McCarthy, and others who were for the amendment, you couldn't say there were more Republicans than there are Democrats. I haven't seen the roster and I can't remember, but I think Martha Griffiths was a Democrat, wasn't she?

Fry: Yes.

Reyher: And I think that on the other hand, I am not sure, because as I say, I didn't do legislative lobbying, and I wasn't close to it, but I am not sure how Edith Rogers stood, and I am not sure--

Fry: Where was she?



Reyher: She was from Massachusetts. She was a very well-known Republican. And I don't know where Frances Bolton, of Ohio, who was a very well-known Republican, stood. (There was a woman Senator for just a few weeks from Texas, but she was an appointed one.) Margaret Chase Smith was long considered the woman Senator, for she was the only one who was duly elected and served many years. No, I think it is quite fair to say that that greater support from Republicans would have been certainly the general impression without even scanning the votes.

Fry: Well, just the little amount of work that I did with the amendment made me realize that it is awfully difficult to look back through the Equal Rights magazine and really tell which party is doing the most. Recently I think it has been more of a Democratic push than a Republican push, just in the last three years. I don't know what happened before then. And yet, you see, because of the effort to make it bipartisan, you always get as many Republicans and Democrats as you can to sponsor the bill--

Reyher: Certainly.

Fry: --each time, so that on the record, it looks like a very bipartisan matter, and yet, in my own experience I know it was a lot easier to get Democrats to go on record for it and to throw a bill in the hopper than Republicans, although the numbers might have looked the same.

Reyher: But that came after the Roosevelt administration, I believe. I don't know when Mrs. Roosevelt came out for the amendment. Along the way, some of the other well-known women Democrats came out in support, and that had a great deal of influence. Also, once Florence Kelley died, and once some of those key women in the Consumer's League and the Women's Trade Union League died, we began to have a break through that wall which they created and was absolutely immovable at one time.

Fry: The AAUW [American Association of University Women] stand was a pretty firm stand against it for a long, long time.

Reyher: I don't know when they came out for the amendment. I think of the different organizations, as far as I can remember, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women was one of the first women's organizations that came out for it [1937]. And I don't know when the General Federation of Women's Clubs took a stand on it. There was a period when you felt that the ten pins were falling down, that there was one group after another that was coming out of it.



## Desire to Speak Out Again: Old Arguments Neglected

Reyher: This sudden resurgence in the past two or three years of the need for protective legislation, and dragging protective legislation out as a red herring frankly surprised me. If my sister hadn't been so very ill, taking my time and strength to care for her, I was often terribly tempted to go out and campaign on behalf of the amendment because I was really horrified to think that here was my fiftieth anniversary of working for the amendment, coinciding with the amendment's fiftieth anniversary, and we still didn't have the amendment.

But the thing that really horrified me was that so many of the arguments that we had used in the states that had persuaded people had been lost in the scuffle of better arguments. For instance, I heard on TV, and I saw women getting up and saying, "Well, if you pass the amendment, women will not be entitled to support for their children, and in case of a divorce women will not be entitled to support."

I thought of all the cases that we had collected, that we used as examples of where women were not given support just because they were women. Basically the principle that was involved was that the state wanted to protect itself, that the state found that the father of a family who had undertaken to support that family was responsible for their support. And the state did not want to support them, if the father were capable of doing so. Therefore, that more than anything else would guarantee the right of a woman to have support if she needed it for her growing children.

On the other hand, we also used the fact that it was recognized that support was given on the basis of need, not just today, but for some time. So that there were any number of cases where women who had the larger means and who were married to men who were incapable of supporting themselves--again to protect the state, so that the state would not have to support individuals when it was their personal responsibility, having started a family or a family unit--the state stated that in this case the woman would have to pay support to her husband.

I haven't heard that brought up in one single newspaper, or one single argument anywhere, and yet we used it all over the states, everywhere, in the early part of our campaign. So that I found myself just burning with desire to go out and campaign in 1973.

As far as protective legislation is concerned, I don't think a strong enough campaign was made to show what kind of protective legislation certain jobs require for men or women, which is what we



Reyher: had argued from the beginning, and what kind of human legislation was required for a sound social base, which would automatically include men and women.

And then again, I have felt that we haven't begun to do enough to break down the prejudices against women with the example of women's prowess and accomplishments in sports.

Jackie Robinson broke down the prejudice against blacks by being the first important baseball player, but I think that the insistence of little girls in high schools all over the country that they be allowed to play on the school basketball team, or the hockey team, or to even try to get on the football team, was an indication that right from scratch you have girls who are as strong as boys and who want to be in heavy sports. Credit must be given to the press for having begun to feature this.

When it comes to women's endurance, as demonstrated in the Olympics, in tournament tennis, and in sailing, women have shown themselves to be such excellent athletes that this whole idea of our delicate little flower must be protected, is nonsense.

I don't feel that women's magnificent athletic prowess has ever been sufficiently exploited, and I don't think it has ever been properly emphasized to Congress. I think you could have made absolute nonsense of the physical need for women's protective legislation. But it will just have to be another campaign.\*

I really feel that time is at my heels; I am seventy-six years old, I've got several unfinished manuscripts, and a sick bedridden sister to care for, and my father's papers that I edited still unfinished. I must do that before somebody comes along and says, "I can't wade through all those papers," and throws them in the sea. I want to push the Equal Rights Amendment now more than ever, especially when I hear the same stupid arguments used fifty years later, and I am desperately anxious to say my say just once again, having done it before. It was the way I felt when I was on the street corner, when I first learned to speak, and I felt that the gentleman with the car and the Japanese chauffeur in Newark was perhaps not bringing out some of the points that we might get over--"Give me a chance." [Laughter]

---

\*During the editing process, in 1976, Mrs. Reyher wrote: "Since this was originally recorded, this situation has radically changed with the success and publicity of women jockeys and professional competitive tennis."



## XII PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS

Marriage and Birth of a Daughter

Fry: You said that when you were a young girl and decided to marry, you always thought you would continue your career. Did your husband, Ferdinand Reyher, object to this in any way when you were married or during the early years of your marriage?

Reyher: I think he was happy to meet a woman who did not want to "settle down," to have a home with him chained to it, keeping a regular job and regular hours. He wanted to roam the world as he had done as a free-lance war correspondent in World War I, before we entered the war in 1915-1916.

Ferdy did not want a settled bourgeois life such as his father and mother had--vegetable soup on Fridays every week, year in and year out--black suit on Sundays.

It is amazing how monotony of food seems to point up daily drabness in marriage. My grandmother--my mother's mother--after sixty-seven years of marriage told her doctor-son to notify her four other living children to come to a conference as to what would be done about their father and her husband, as she wanted a divorce, immediately.

Her chief comment was, "How would you like to cook barley soup every day of your life?"

She did not get a divorce, she got a lot of sympathy; and she kept on cooking barley soup every day for her husband who claimed it was essential for health.

Ferdy wanted to travel the world as a correspondent, to be free of all encumbrances. He was delighted that my life meant travel, too, that we would meet periodically and go our separate ways.



Fry: That's interesting because it surprised me that you left on a trip to the South for the Woman's Party four weeks after you were married.

Reyher: But you don't realize that it gave Ferdy a sense of vicarious adventure, a reassurance that ours would be an exciting, rather than a humdrum marriage.

Ferdy didn't want responsibility, he wanted adventure, opportunity to write, to follow his own bent and inclination. So did I, but I realized after Faith was born that she needed a home, stability. I didn't follow the moonbeams at her expense, even if he did. I determined that Faith would have a home, good schooling, a happy childhood. I realized after many efforts on both our sides that we could not agree on how to accomplish this. Over and over again the precarious free-lance existence would head for a bang-up disaster, and inevitably my well-laid plans for study, for writing of my own, for a secure place for Faith, would be washed overboard. Ferdy had taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He could have had any teaching job in English literature at any university he wanted, as he was one of the best and pet graduate students of Professor William Nielson, later president of Smith College; but Ferdy found teaching too confining.

Fry: You said your doctor was very much against your going out in the street when you were pregnant at the time of the demonstration for President Wilson [March, 1919]. Did you have a special problem with the pregnancy?

Reyher: I had no problems. But I am a bleeder, and the birth would involve bleeding. I had very serious hemorrhages and nearly died when the baby was born, and I was told that I could never have a child again. Since then I have had all sorts of problems because of bleeding. It is only recently that they discovered that vitamin K and vitamin C, taken separately, or in special products, can prevent a hemorrhage if taken beforehand, and if a transfusion is given during an operation or accident, and if followed up with a vitamin product afterwards.

I have had some very serious bleeding experiences since then, and I was frightened about the eventual bleeding, though I had made up my mind not to dwell on it.

The first time I had had a hemorrhage was when I was sixteen. A tooth was pulled and seemingly there were buckets of blood at my bed, but nobody paid too much attention to that because I was strong, and healthy, and I had been teaching basketball. However, at the time of the Woodrow Wilson demonstration my doctor, who knew my medical history, reiterated that under no circumstances was I to participate, and I wasn't going to if it would hurt the baby, so I didn't.



Reyher: I was very slender in those days, and I wore loose clothes, and nobody then knew I was going to have a baby. Two days before I went to the hospital to have the baby, an old friend of mine with her beau, who was a former student of my husband's at MIT, came to have drinks. We were gay and festive. I wore a Chinese mandarin coat, and a pair of trousers--trousers were seldom worn by women then. Another friend dropped in, too. When all of them heard that I had had a baby, they insisted, "It isn't possible. We have just seen her. She wasn't even pregnant."

I always wore a loose coat in the Headquarters office, and nobody there knew that I was pregnant, nor did I ever tell them. Nor did I ever have any morning sickness, or any of the things one hears about. I just was too busy to think about it, or maybe I had a healthy pregnancy, I just don't know.

Fry: You might explain the context of the attitudes toward pregnancy at that time.

Reyher: Then, of course, the attitude toward pregnancy was that a pregnant woman was not supposed to go out at night, not show herself in public, and that it was an embarrassment to everyone if she did. And yet the maternity clothes designed for pregnant women called attention to their middles. Great big bows on the center of the abdomen, or tightly shirred skirts. My loose mandarin coat over skinny trousers anticipated today's fashions by more than fifty years. I had the feeling that if I went places and was obviously pregnant, maybe they would notice the pregnancy, and it would divert from our program. I had all kinds of ideas such as do your job and don't let your personal idiosyncracies like pregnancy interfere.

There was then none of the whole natural attitude toward pregnancy--like taking out your breast and feeding your baby wherever you may be, the way my grandson's wife did (he is a bio-physicist teaching at Johns Hopkins). She is an art historian. Both of them have produced an enchanting great-grandson. My son-in-law, however, who is in his late fifties, seemed a little horrified at a woman who would expose herself to nurse a baby, though he never said so.

When my daughter was married in Maine, and I asked everyone in the village to the wedding because she had grown up with them, and there were about 150 guests who swarmed all over the place, one of the women there who had brought her baby casually opened her blouse and nursed it. I can't tell you how many of the guests were horrified, and talked about it for years afterwards, and that was in '39. So that there was undoubtedly an attitude that this was sort of a private thing that a woman keeps to herself, and I went along with it.



Fry: When we talked about the break in your work for the Woman's Party, between 1919 and 1921, you said that your baby was born in May. Could you tell a little bit about how that birth affected your life?

Reyher: I got sick after that Woodrow Wilson demonstration. I had a very bad cold, and it looked as if I were going to have pneumonia, maybe lose the baby.

My baby was born at the end of May and she weighed less than four pounds. According to the doctor, Dr. Gertrude Kelly (chosen because she was a woman), Faith was very healthy--long and lean. Though the doctor reassured me and repeated she was fine, I felt very conscience-stricken. I felt that perhaps if I hadn't worked quite so long before she was born, and under so much stress and strain, she would at least have been heavier, and that I owed her a good start.

Instead of going back to work right away a few weeks after she was born, which is what I had planned, I decided to look after her myself until she was seven pounds--plus seven pounds--plus seven pounds, which is what a normal average baby should be at the end of a year, according to the then-accepted formula. She made that schedule by her first birthday, and was radiantly healthy. I thought she was beautiful--sun tanned, her head topped by an aura of golden curls.

My husband and I had spent that year at a beach resort near the ocean. Most of the houses around us were boarded up. Our house had central heating and the rent was cheap. The housework and baby care were new to me and I found them hard and confining. Also I was not well. I found time for reading and a correspondence course, "The Modern Household," from the University of Chicago, and a lot of thinking about the role of a wife and mother. I wanted to do a study.

My husband had been thinking, too. He was not sure intimate domesticity was what he wanted. So he took off for Europe in the fall of 1920, ostensibly for a few weeks, and stayed two-and-a-half years.

Since my husband was abroad, I decided I had to find a way of being on my own. I suggested to Miss Paul I'd like to, and I was free to work for the National Woman's Party if I could work in the New York office. (That way Faith could be near or with me.) Miss Paul reminded me there was no New York office and said that I should come to Washington and familiarize myself with the new emphasis on equal rights, the literature, the discriminations--and then "maybe we" could discuss what could be done to open a New York office.



Desire to Resume Work: Difficulty Finding a Nurse

Reyher: In June, when Faith was one year old, I began to try to find a nurse to look after her. I discovered when I went to various nurses' agencies that there were very few working women who had nurses. The few who did were famous, wealthy women such as actresses or opera singers. When I went to leading employment agencies they told me that currently a white woman would earn \$125 a month, room and board, and be expected to "sleep in," and that a Negro woman would get \$75. I realized that I should try for \$75, both because of the smaller sum of money, and because of Mary Deal, the Negro woman who had looked after me as a child. There had always been Negro women in our homes as helpers: we had no prejudice; we liked them. I thought that they were wonderful with children. The ones I had known usually had kind hearts, and besides being kind, were trustworthy and responsible. I was hoping to find another Mary Deal.

Also I discovered that in those days if you had a white nurse for your child, secured through a reputable agency--and I tried several--they asked you, "Will the nurse have a private bath? Will she have the use of a car, and what 'perks' [perquisites] will she have with this job?" Here was I, a working woman, making \$125 a month myself. My husband had gone to Europe, and Faith and I were living with my mother, and a nurse would certainly not have her own bath, and she would certainly not have the use of the car, for the family did not own or drive one in town.

I decided to try the best Negro agency. I do not now remember whether I had seven nurses in five weeks, or five nurses in seven, before I called the Negro YWCA, on some respected friend's recommendation. I asked them whether they had a normal school graduate, and explained that this was going to be a job for several years, that I wanted an intelligent woman that I could talk with about the care of my baby, because she was going to be my baby's other mother. Primarily I wanted her to be kind and loving. Eliza Glover, who came to work for me then, and who was visiting me this Christmas, told me of the other side of that interview. Because the YWCA woman put her hand on the receiver of the telephone and turned to the young woman sitting at her side and said, "I think I have got just the job for you." But she said to me she would call me back, and she did, about Eliza Glover.

Eliza stayed with us for four years--during the time I studied, worked for the Woman's Party in Washington and New York, and then later when I was very ill.

The winter of 1922-1923 my entire family went abroad to take advantage of the high value of the dollar, to give my two younger sisters and brother, who joined them later, a chance to study and



Reyher: live in France and Germany. They urged me to come with them, but I wanted to get well and get on with my work. Faith, Eliza, and I remained in New Jersey in my family home. That spring my husband, who had been abroad for nearly two years, came home and joined us.

The family home was rented. I had had the use of it rent-free from February until the lease expired in June, on condition I packed up everything in it and sent it to storage. Eliza and my husband did the packing; but Eliza, Faith, and I left alone for Provincetown, where I rented a cottage. Later my husband joined us. He preferred to make his decisions about where he would be and go entirely on his own, and I was still too sick to discuss any fundamental issues of relationship. And so whether it was Mabel, or whether it was Alice Paul, who asked me to go to Seneca Falls, I had Eliza to look after Faith. And I went.

But I had been sick all fall, all winter, and all spring and summer, about a year, and I had very little money. Eliza had been saving her money towards her marriage in September. She had decided not to leave me in June, partly because Faith had whooping cough and she wouldn't leave a child who was sick not having the nurse she loved, and also because she knew I wanted to go to Seneca Falls. So she postponed her wedding until September.

Then she came to me, and she hemmed and hawed and she said haltingly, and most embarrassed, "Mrs. Reyher, you helped me choose my wedding dress, it is a grey silk travel dress. You and I are the same size, and you have no nice dress to wear for the different functions they will have at Seneca Falls. Will you borrow my wedding dress? And wear it at Seneca Falls?"

I still get teary-eyed about it. She also said, "I have these nice bags, and I have all these other nice clothes in my trousseau. Won't you christen them for me and take them up there?"

I would have loved to, I had no feeling about wearing her clothes, and I had helped her choose them, and they were in very good taste, and they were my taste, too, but I refused. "Eliza, I couldn't do that, because these are your wedding clothes. These are the clothes that you must wear first. I couldn't wear them."

Fry: She hadn't been married yet?

Reyher: No, she was going to be married in September. So I didn't wear them, but the important thing is she offered them to me. I had a wonderful relationship with her.

I did a book later when Faith was a grown-up woman, an anthology, Babies Keep Coming, and in there I did a small section on



Reyher: nurses, and there I said that one of the problems that women had--working women--when they had surrogate mothers for their children was being jealous of their nurses, and not realizing they have to share the love of their children with their nurses, if their nurses were going to look after their children for them.\* I felt that very strongly. I am very proud of my relationship with Eliza. It has continued all these years.

When my daughter, Faith, was married and had a little boy, during World War II, her husband was going into the navy. His father was an officer in the army. Faith's husband was going to have very little money and she and her baby were coming to New York to live. It would take much more money to live in New York than what he would have to send her to look after herself and her baby.

Faith was a Bennington graduate, a major in dance, a professional, so she went to Elizabeth Arden to be one of their dance instructors in their physical therapy rooms, and she had a very hard time because people could take private lessons or they could take class lessons, and Faith was so good that everybody elected to take private lessons from her. Faith was busy with private lessons all day long on a half-hour schedule, a very busy one. She was as thin as a rail, and claimed that it was she who was reducing. Faith needed a responsible nurse, and Eliza went to her sister-in-law, Agnes, who was much younger, but married, and said, "Agnes, you are doing war work. Leave your war work. It is much more important that you go and take care of Mrs. Reyher's grandson, and my Faith's son, so that she can work," and so Jeremy's nurse was Eliza's sister-in-law.

When Faith was married in Robinhood in Maine, the person who sat next to me in the pew was my trusted old friend, Eliza Glover Thomas, who came up to be a guest at the wedding and stayed with me and helped me. And when Jeremy was married for the first time, one of the honored guests at the wedding was Agnes Diggs, his old nurse.

Anyway, they all were very good friends of ours, and I am very proud of the kind of person that Eliza became. It too is a chapter in the development of women, and--as she saw it--in her experience with me. Her husband was a graduate of Howard University, in dentistry. They didn't have enough money to start a practice for

---

\*From an anthology edited by Becky Reyher, Babies Keep Coming, An Anthology, on page 409:

It seems to me that you cannot have it both ways. If you give your baby into a nurse's care for whatever reason you must yield a portion of your baby's love to her. A baby is like a puppy--it loves the creature who tends and feeds it.



Reyher: him, so he went to work in the Post Office, which in New York has been a place where a lot of well-educated Negroes got their economic start. With her savings Eliza bought a brownstone house in Brooklyn, New York, on the edge of the now notorious Bedford Stuyvesant district, then still a fine neighborhood, as is her block. At various times she brought all the members of her family from Virginia to be educated in New York. They rented rooms from her and helped pay for the house.

Eliza and Gordon, her husband, had only one daughter, Sarah. They educated that daughter, who has graduate degrees in education and is a counselor for the board of education. Today, Eliza's son-in-law, who was in World War II on his--what is it the army gave them that they were able to study on after they got out?

Fry: The G. I. Bill.

Reyher: On the G. I. Bill, he too studied dentistry. He is a very prominent, wealthy dentist in Brooklyn. He and Eliza's daughter have one son, whom Eliza looked after, and whom she brought with her at Christmas time when we all had a nice family visit. Her grandson Herbert is six-foot-six, wonderful looking, a crack tennis player, went to a very good private school in Brooklyn where they live, elected to go to college in Virginia because the family comes from Virginia, where they had a land grant after slavery where they are all well-established, has no sense of bitterness about racial discrimination but wants to be part of the general, not necessarily civil rights movement, but educational movement--

Fry: Advancement--

Reyher: Advancement, I would say, of the blacks. Has no self-consciousness about anything, blacks or other people--he threw his arms around me and kissed me. Eliza, who makes all her daughter's clothes and her own clothes and is today a prosperous woman, wore a beautiful mink coat and a beautiful mink hat when she came to see me the last time--the type of clothes that I have never yet been able to afford on my surplus, but then I haven't had a husband and a son-in-law who were prosperous and helped me.

And then she told me--well, I didn't need to be told because I've known of her community work right along. Everybody thinks of Bedford Stuyvesant, where they live, as the criminal district of New York, afraid to go into it. Eliza's block is all black and it is all private houses, and she is chairman of the block, the square block; and they have an improvement association, and all sorts of additions such as special lampposts with lights in front of each house. But the most important thing is that she has tried to broaden and improve herself, as we all do, and has taken courses of every kind. All



Reyher: these years she believed in adult education, and took advantage of it. She took courses at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, and when there was an eighty-year-old tree, or older, a magnolia tree, that should have been saved from wrecking crews on LaFayette Avenue in Brooklyn, and it happened to be in the Negro district, she was in the forefront of saving it. And she is today the secretary of the association--I think it has some title, World Earth Association. The group not only worked to save that tree, but they are raising money and have raised money for three houses for nature study, ecology, for preservation of all the values through respecting earth values.

Eliza is really a very fine person. She has enriched my life and doubtless I have enriched hers. It has been a wonderful association for both of us, more so in our earlier years; and women are going to have to do something about creating a relationship between themselves and the women who look after their children, professionalizing it, and recognizing its value if they want to have those associations develop into something further not only for the women who are concerned, but for the community and for the children.

We were, you see, many years behind present-day scales. So that, for example, Eliza when she worked for me had the usual time-offs. I had a full-time job all the time--except when I was ill--but her times were every other Sunday, every other Thursday afternoon. And that could be rearranged. But by the time my daughter's nurse, Agnes, worked for her, she would work only from 8:30 to 5:30 and not at all on Saturdays or Sundays, which meant that if I hadn't worked and helped my daughter she wouldn't have been able to go on and do the things she did. I had a job then myself, but I was able to help her and help her look after the child.

"Everybody Who Loves Me Leaves Me"

Fry: Did Eliza Glover work for you more than the four years?

Reyher: She worked for me just under four years. She didn't work for me beyond that and that was the only job she had of this kind. After that I managed between Ferdy and our mothers. But in the fall after Eliza left [1923], there finally was no money in the till. Miss Paul had offered me a spot job in Chicago, and I left Faith and Ferdy in Provincetown while I got some cash.

And then I was most unhappy; it affected my whole life, left an indelible hurt on it. I've told you about the boarding school in Connecticut that had a nursery school, and how my husband took Faith there while I was on the Woman's Party job in Chicago. When I went



Reyher: to see Faith there, she cried and said, "Everybody who loves me leaves me." I determined this would never happen again.

And it was at that time that I realized that my husband would never create--though I hadn't yet made up my mind about it--would never create the kind of home atmosphere that would make it possible for me to have both a career and Faith, and that I would have to do something about it myself. This was a crucial time. I couldn't stop because I had to go ahead. I may have been wrong.

My family had all gone to Europe: my mother, my sisters, and my brother had gone to meet my father who was already there on business. There was nobody except my husband to look after Faith while I had a spot job that took me away from home.

Fry: You mean, they were living in Europe?

Reyher: They went to Europe for a year and a half. I think I may have mentioned this before. My sister had graduated from college, the dollar was very high--the exchange was very favorable, my other brother was in college, my younger sister was fifteen or sixteen. Mother thought this was the time to give them a couple of years in Europe--to study French and German and to go to university classes there. She offered me the chance of coming to Europe with Faith, and living with them; I said no, that was no answer to my problems and I didn't need French or German, I needed a career. So I didn't go.

So Faith stayed at that school while I worked in the Chicago office of the Woman's Party--that was the fall after the Seneca Falls Conference. Then that winter my father came back to New York before the rest of my family, and he telephoned me in Chicago. "Becky, I have always stood by you," he said. "I have always taken up for what you were doing, but I think that you have abandoned your daughter. I love your little girl and I feel, both as a lawyer and as a grandfather, that somebody ought to defend her rights as a child who is entitled to love and protection. You had a loving mother, and a loving home, and if you don't do something about being the proper parent of your child and have your child with you, I will enter a court and ask that I be made the legal guardian of your child, and I will try to make some provision for a proper home for your child."

I doubt if I ever had a more painful telephone call. Well, I had several--I am telescoping--I had several very painful, unhappy conversations with my father. I loved and admired him, and he thought that I was doing a shameful, selfish thing, and it had an effect upon me.



Reyher: But also the thing that I later in life thought a great deal about was that often as my father and I argued the merits of certain feminist situations, he would say to me, "To think that the time would come when the eldest daughter of my second marriage would say exactly the things that my first wife, whom I divorced, would say to me in my first marriage." And I would remember that Father's first wife, whom I never met, was regarded in the few times that I ever heard any reference made to her, as being impossible because she did not understand that Father was an important man, and had the life of a revolutionary to lead. (That was in Russia, before he emigrated.)

I thought that here was a woman who had had six children in nine years when she was married to Father, and had married him because she was a revolutionary, and wanted to be a revolutionary, too. She was the daughter of the first pioneer Jewish physician in Russia who, years ago, was allowed to practice and go out of his particular pale--restricted area. She was brought up in a privileged group, as an educated woman. When Father was exiled to Siberia she followed him there, and elected to live there with him, but even though she had servants, she had a life of only breeding babies. I, who never met her and was the child of a second marriage, began to think that maybe there was a side to her life, too, though I had never had it expressed to me, or suggested to me by anybody. But I always remembered that Father had angrily said that to me on many an occasion. Certainly this particular time it bothered me a great deal when he said it to me.

Fry: But didn't you go to Africa about this time?

Reyher: I went to Africa in 1924. I left my daughter again, presumably for only six weeks. She had been at school, and she was spending the summer with her father in our house in Maine. When I stayed in Africa, she continued to stay with her father, and part of the time with my mother. I left her because I felt that when I did come back I would have a good base to work from to try to build a life around my work, and her.

My father-in-law had bought the house in Maine for us on condition that I would spend a full year there plus an additional summer with my husband. He believed in family life. He liked me, and he felt this would be one way of solidifying our budding family.

I arrived from South Africa in the first week of May [1925], and on the tenth of May I kept that agreement though I had collected a lot of marketable material and needed more time in New York. I remained in Maine with my husband from then, summer and winter, for a year and a half.



Reyher: During that Maine time I sold articles about every phase of African life to all the important magazines, to at least a dozen of them, Collier's Country Gentleman, the home decorating magazines such as Country Life, the newspaper syndicates, and many others. I really worked very hard. I realized I wanted to be a professional writer and, most important, I was at home with my daughter. I rebuilt the relationship with her that I felt I really had damaged by leaving her once again for a long period of time.

Separation from Husband: Effort to Preserve Father-Daughter Relationship

Fry: While you were working for J. Walter Thompson, and helping the Woman's Party, were you with your husband in Maine and in New York?

Reyher: Once I left my husband, once I left Maine, I realized that our marriage was over. I set up my own establishment in New York. I had all the problems which I read about, talked about and tried to examine with all the other women I knew who had growing children, particularly a growing daughter, in households without their fathers. My father's relation to me and mine to him had been one of the most important in my life. I didn't want my daughter growing up with any hostility towards her father.\* I made up my mind that I would concentrate on that and do some of the other things that I believed in.

One of the things that I don't want to go into--one of the things that I was afraid of, because I had done a lot of reading, was that I would slant my daughter toward being a lesbian.

I was a feminist, I believed in full opportunity for women, I wanted my daughter to go to a women's college because I felt in a coed college, girls were always "vices," they never had the top job. What I wanted was to have my daughter a strong, independent woman, but I also wanted her to have a fine, full, what to me seemed a normal sex life. I didn't want to slant her toward being a lesbian.

Fry: Did you ever consider a West Coast college for your daughter?

Reyher: Albert Bender, whom I told you I met in San Francisco before I went to Africa in 1934, was I think a member of the board of trustees of Mills

---

\*Some years after her own divorce, RHR wrote the article, "Who Gets the Child?" for Mademoiselle, July 1947. See appendix.



Reyher: College. He wanted me to send Faith to Mills. "We will all be very kind to her and very nice to her," he assured me. "That is pretty far across the country," was my reply. "I could hardly afford to pay for her transportation, let alone for the college, and I would want to see my young daughter frequently because she will be only sixteen when she enters college."

Albert arranged for me to have an afternoon's drive with him and the president of Mills. She was awfully nice, and when I left, she said, "Remember, we shall hope to hear from you that you want to have your daughter admitted to our college." Then Albert said to me, "Let me know because we really would like to have your daughter here. I have access to various scholarships."

I could have sent Faith there; I'm sure Albert would have arranged a scholarship for her—he was a contributor to Mills—and they would have been very kind and interested, but I felt I wanted my daughter at Bennington, in New England, where we had a house and where she could bring friends in spring and fall and where I would see her frequently. I didn't want her to go across the country and be so remote from me. But that was one of the nice things Albert Bender did, a most thoughtful person.

#### Continued Use of Maiden Name: Strain on Daughter

Fry: For a while you went with your own name and then you took your husband's name--

Reyher: I had always used my own name because I believed in it. I belonged to the Lucy Stone League in New York, which Ruth Hale had founded.

But then I realized that my daughter was actually physically sick when my husband and I separated. Faith and I had a very frank relationship and she would say to me when she was younger, "Mommy, isn't there something I can do? Can't you and Daddy live in the same house together again?"

When I came to New York, and later when my husband came to New York, I had an apartment with Faith and he had his own apartment. Because Faith was eight and too young to travel alone on the subway to Brooklyn Heights where he was living, he would arrange to have his secretary call for Faith and bring her there for Sunday breakfast. Faith didn't like it. It made her uncomfortable to go with a stranger who was a new secretary.



Reyher: "Mommy, couldn't you take me to Daddy's for breakfast?" she pleaded. I tried to get my husband to understand that this kind of squiring, this formal relation, would not be any good. I told him what Faith had said, and his answer was, "Why don't you bring her over, and both of you have Sunday breakfast here?"

It was the last thing on earth I wanted, but I nevertheless did it, hoping it would ease the break for Faith. But after two or three times, Faith complained, "Mommy, you and Daddy are so polite to each other." She was only eight years old! I realized that didn't work. We were separated for a long time. Finally I went to Reno and got a divorce. By then Faith was fourteen.

During all that time I still kept my own name. I kept it when I first went to work at J. Walter Thompson's, though some of the hierarchy told me I would be more successful as Mrs. Reyher; I continued to keep it when I went to work at Sears Roebuck, and when I worked for Judge McKee.

When Faith and I were preparing to go to a foreign country, I was getting a passport, and we were going to travel together alone, and I realized then that though I was registering in the hotel and everywhere as Rebecca Hourwich, it made it very uncomfortable for Faith because she felt completely left out, that she was a stranger in the household and life that her mother maintained.

She was Faith Reyher, though she was Faith Hourwich Reyher, and her mother was Rebecca Hourwich.

The thing that finally convinced me was that I was a very young-looking woman, particularly when I was eager and interested. Faith and I together looked like two young women—I perhaps ten or fifteen years older, not nearly as many years older as I actually was.

I discovered that at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg, when Faith and I were staying near there, people were saying that it really was scandalous that that American journalist had come to South Africa, and had brought that young girl, whom she was so interested in, along with her. That convinced me that in the atmosphere of other countries a woman who had a young daughter but was keeping her own name just wasn't understood.

Also my daughter was arriving at the age where she wanted a mother who had the same name that she had, who would give her a background such as a young girl sometimes wants. I decided that Faith would just have to have at least that one conventional aspect to her life, that her mother was Mrs. Reyher. It made all the difference in the world to Faith. Her last two years of high school her mother was Mrs. Reyher, and when she went to college her mother was Mrs. Reyher. And from that time on, of course, I had to keep it.



Fry: So you didn't take your husband's name until after you were divorced.

Reyher: I didn't take my husband's name—which was a great joke to him and everybody else—until after I divorced him in Reno, officially.

Fry: Did you have any problems—would you have had a problem with your passport if you had not taken your husband's name?

Reyher: I think that I had a passport in my own name. I am not sure. But I do know that it made a great deal of difficulty to be registered at the hotel. It made no difference, whatever my passport said, because I would always register "writer." If you are a writer—I would say "writer" not "journalist"—you would always, you know, be able to use parentheses and things like that. I don't remember what the technique of that was. But the facts were that it was the name you were using on the hotel register and in the community and the name that people called you by, and it really made a difference to Faith. And I had been all over South Africa as Rebecca Hourwich, and I came back and called people as Rebecca Reyher and some of them didn't know whom I was talking about.

#### Economic Terms of Divorce; Retrospective View of Husband

Fry: Now I want to pick up where we left off last night. You had gone to Reno and you had gotten your divorce and so forth, and we talked about you and your daughter, and one thing that we left out was the arrangements that you had made with your husband for responsibility for your daughter, and so forth.

Reyher: I told my husband I would support myself, when we separated—this was before I got the divorce—and that I was coming to reestablish a home in New York and I'd be very happy if he would do something, and what was he prepared to do? And the years just rolled on and he did nothing. He never contributed to Faith's support. He would send her lavish gifts occasionally, and sometimes he had money, and sometimes he was a poor writer. And then he went out to Hollywood and became what in Hollywood is called a grade B writer. He was making about \$750 a week and I was making many, many times less than that, and I was having great difficulty making ends meet.

When I went to get a divorce, I thought twice about whether I would have alimony written into my agreement. My lawyer, who was the son of a friend of Anne Martin's, whom Mabel Vernon had recommended, was awfully nice. He said to me, "You know, I have been looking over your divorce papers, and you want the house in Maine which your father-in-law deeded to you, and yet you don't realize that in the



Reyher: state of Maine, your husband, unless he specifically signs over rights to you, will have one-third rights in that house, and yet you have made no claim upon him and he will have one-third right in that house."  
"Of course, I want that right written off," I replied.

"You know, he continued, "I am terribly sorry to tell you that you are a woman of no private means, and no known occupation. That is, you are at the present time unemployed, and you may be planning to go on this trip to Africa with your daughter, and you may have certain commitments, but to all intents and purposes, you are a free lance. This court has to protect a minor child, and if you can't show what you are going to support this daughter with, either with a pack of bonds in a savings box, or with a job that you are coming back to, then your husband specifically must underwrite the support of your daughter. We will just have to ask him for it."

"Well, whatever arrangements you make, make it something very simple. I can tell you that it costs \$1000 a year just for her tuition, and she has to be supported, she uses space, food, and needs clothing, and she has to have a vacation."

My husband, whose father had money, but who had none himself if he didn't earn it, got some well-known divorce lawyer out on the [West] Coast who got pages and pages together of this, that, t'other, and they agreed that they would pay \$125 a month towards Faith's support, until she was twenty-one years old. It was peanuts; it didn't pay for anything.

The net result was that Faith married at twenty--the last years' money never came. I was never able to get that money when I needed it, and that was the only money ever agreed on--only some of which was ever collected--toward the support of my daughter by her father. I really supported her myself, and I made all plans accordingly.

But I maintained a friendly relation with my husband, entirely, as I think I told you.

Fry: Is Ferdinand Reyher alive?

Reyher: No, he died a few years ago. He remarried, a Chinese writer, Eileen Chiang, and through him she got American citizenship. She has written several books, and I think she is out on the West Coast now. I don't know whether she was of the famous Chiang family, but her grandfather was, I believe, the governor of Mongolia. They were one of the families that were able to get out of mainland China.

Ferdy discovered Bertolt Brecht, and worked with him when he came to this country. Ferdy's family were originally German; German literature and German language were specialties of his. He translated



Reyher: and helped produce Brecht's first work in the U. S. There is a man who was on the Harvard faculty, James Lyons, who is now on the faculty of Florida State University, doing a biography of Ferdy because of what he did for Brecht. He came here to see me several times, and I gave him a lot of background data, such as I have.

Ferdy was steadfast to his goals. He died too early, in his early sixties. He had cartons of unfinished research and manuscripts, interesting collector's items such as correspondence from Wallace Stevens and other greats. Ten more years of life free of paralysis and pain would have given him the opportunity he craved, and toward which he worked.

But his praiseworthy perseverance on his own behalf made him an egocentric and selfish husband and father.

Approaching eighty I can be objective and philosophic about this. As a young woman I felt he left me with far more than my share of responsibility, and made it impossible for me to depend on him for any help whatsoever.

But, in retrospect, he remained the best storyteller I ever encountered anywhere, a marvelous companion. Now that I no longer need him, the happy memories shine through. I learned a lot from him in many ways, and I no longer ever am without a small nutmeg grater hanging in my kitchen, as he taught me to use a pinch of nutmeg on all cooked food with a strong flavor of its own, and on all meat, fowl, and fish. He was a marvelous cook.

I think of him gratefully now for having shared our daughter, Faith, with me. He too loved her. She loved him dearly, and the cycle has come complete.

#### Continuity of Living: Responsibility for a Sister

Fry: In the course of our conversation, there have been so many things you mentioned that you still want to write, that you have all the material and background to complete. Yet so much of your time is devoted to your invalid sister [Olga Hourwich], isn't it?

Reyher: I'm afraid that you, like Faith and all my family and friends who love me and see the inroads on my health, happiness and fortunes, see only the negative side of what I am doing in caring for Dicky. I keep her at home instead of sending her to a nursing home because I feel that her home base, linked with her mother in the past and with me in the



Reyher: present, is her only connection with love and security, so essential to her well-being and to her continuity of living.\*

I was struck by the fact that Jessamyn West's mother looked after her when she was ill, gave life back to her, and then she in turn, years later, naturally tried to care for her sister and give life back to her, when she became ill.

How well I understand Jessamyn West's mother insisting on her having her own room at the sanitorium. Dicky was at the Burke Rehabilitation Center twice, the best one in the area except for Rusk. I had a private room for her--true, it cost only \$5 a day more--because I could see how depressing all the other old and decrepit people were to her. Her last stay was ninety days. I came almost every day, and the patients got me down.

I can practically feel, sense, and experience Jessamyn West's mother's efforts on her behalf--talking to her, telling her stories, willing her to live, giving of her own life to make it part of hers. I try to snatch at that elusive, fragile thread that holds us to life and give it to Dicky. Over and over again I try to give her hope, to make her feel she is still going on with her old life. Half the time I do it automatically, without thinking, for I so deeply believe in sharing life.

Dicky has got over her depression, is no longer--except when her circulation goes awry--mentally unbalanced. And for a while I was terrified she would have to be institutionalized for I could not cope with insanity.

Dicky reads a book a day, tries to exercise, eats normally. It is a desperately restricted life for us both, but it is at least not retrogression, and often definite progress.

I was interested, too, that after a while Jessamyn West's mother thought she had written the stories that she had told Jessamyn West. I could understand that, too. Dicky's identity has so blended with mine that I find myself amazed at what she tells the nurses. "Becky and I saw some people trimming the privet in the Washington Square garden and asked them if we could have what they were throwing

---

\*This section of the manuscript was written in May 1976 when Mrs. Reyher's sister needed even more care than at the time of the original interview. The review to which RHR goes on to refer was of Jessamyn West's Encounters with Life and Death, Memoirs. Written by Nancy Hale, it appeared in the New York Times, 2 May, 1976.



Reyher: away. We brought it home and planted it, and you see how beautiful it has grown." I do not begrudge her sharing my small adventure and pride. We did plant many things together but not the privet.

I was naturally interested, too, that apparently, according to Nancy Hale's review, when Jessamyn West's sister--who had not been close to her when they were sisters growing up, "who might have been helpless, unhelped to [meet] her fate," painful terminal cancer--was dying, Jessamyn West, because her mother's hands had been "laid on her," stepped in to give her sister relief from pain, and a tolerable existence.

It is an instinctive urge to give of one's own very existence, of one's strength, if one has been part of such a stream of life. It is as basic, and mystical, as the Gloria. I tried to convey it in my dedication of my book, Babies Keep Coming:

'As it was in the beginning, is now and  
ever shall be: world without end'

For

my mother, Lisa Hourwich,  
my daughter, Faith Reyher Cook,  
and her son, Jeremy Bradford Cook:

my world without end.

My family and my world is not nuclear, it is extended. I feel Dicky is part of my stream of life, with all that it encompasses of joy and sorrow, and I cannot ignore her, or shut her out of my consciousness. My concern for her, and care of her is deeply ingrained. I know I cannot act otherwise for it would be contrary to everything I feel and believe in.

And, as in Jessamyn West's case, my mother looked after me, and Faith, in every need, and I feel that she expected that if ever any of her other children needed help, and she was no longer able to give it to them, I would act on her behalf, I would be their surrogate mother. I do what I do out of an abiding love and gratitude to my mother, as well as my own need to help one of my own, to help Dicky.

Now, is there anything else, because I feel we've really covered just everything, practically.

Fry: We've got your early family background and education, your work in the different state offices of the Woman's Party, your trips to Africa and your writing and lecturing about African women and other subjects, your attempts throughout your career to interpret what people were thinking and doing, and your perspectives on the women's movement as it has developed through the years. You've given us an



Fry: intimate feeling for the problems a woman of your generation, who wanted to develop and go on with what she felt was important, faced and surmounted.

Reyher: All right. Of course, I've darted all over the place, but I've really tried not to make it God and me, but I've tried to talk about my own experiences and how a woman developed despite discriminations and difficulties, and how much more opportunity women are going to have hereafter.

Transcriber: Mary Millman  
Final Typist: Lee Steinback



REBECCA H. REYHER  
14 Washington Place East  
New York, N.Y. 10003

CORRECTIONS

- p. xiv: Jeffreys - spell with a Y
- p. 8: Mother's name is JOFFE
- p. 13: par. 3: first line: change "have" to "had to have"
- p. 28: par. 3: insert VOLUNTEER before SATURDAY
- p. 47: par. 1: line 3: drop the D from CONTINUED
- p. 73: par. 6: middle of page: ADVICE instead of CONSENT
- p. 98: middle of page: SISTER, not SITTER
- p. 118: last par: line 6: BROKAW, not BROKOW
- p. 124: par. 2: line 1: the name is MILHOLLAND
- p. 128: line 4: insert South Africa, in front of Zululand
- p. 135: par. 4: line 3: the name if JABAVU
- p. 143: par. 2: name again is JEFFREYS
- p. 166: last par: name is BELFORD
- p. 170: last par: insert J. in front of Walter Thompson
- p. 171: name is BRITON HADDEN
- p. 190: name is ENOCH
- p. 192: last par: insert ONE before guage RR - NOT "gone"
- p. 193: name is COLOMBIA
- p. 209: par. 2: MAKERERE college
- p. 219: last par: MAINE
- p. 222: par. 5: cap Chataqua
- p. 238: par. 3: add UNcongenial after word found
- p. 256: par. 1: sentence 3: comma after Colliers, important for meaning
- p. 258: par. 7: line 2: eliminate NEAR before there



APPENDIX



## APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mabel Vernon, chairman of the Peoples Mandate Committee, to Frederick A. Colwell, chief, American Specialists Branch, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State, regarding the character and qualifications of Rebecca Hourwich Reyher	267
"To the Unknown Women" by Rebecca Hourwich, <u>Equal Rights</u> , 19 December 1925	269
Articles by Rebecca Hourwich appearing in <u>Equal Rights</u> , 1925 and 1926, on her young daughter's questions and comments about feminism	270
"Who Gets the Child?" by Rebecca Reyher, <u>Mademoiselle</u> , July 1947	276
Bibliography of books by Rebecca Hourwich Reyher	279
Newspaper clippings on trip South to explain picketing (1917)	280
Newspaper clippings on organizing in Massachusetts for the Suffrage Amendment (1918)	284
Partial listing of articles by Rebecca Hourwich Reyher in <u>Equal Rights</u>	288
Partial listing of materials by and about Rebecca Hourwich Reyher while in Africa, in addition to published articles and books mentioned in memoirs	289
Listing of other items in Rebecca Hourwich Reyher's collection	290
Courses taught at the New School of Social Research	292
"Author Loses Suit Against 'Sesame St.'," <u>Law Journal</u> , 16 or 17 January 1975, p. 1	297
Brief of Amici Curiae - Writers Guild	298
List of topics discussed by Rebecca Reyher correlated with tapes	305



# PEOPLES MANDATE COMMITTEE

267

BOSTON HOUSE, APARTMENT 506  
1711 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N. W.  
WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

TELEPHONE ADAMS 2-3358

SRTA. MARINA NUÑEZ DEL PRADO  
*Chairman for Latin America*

SRTA. CONSUELO REYES CALDERON  
*Secretary for Latin America*

September 12, 1960

My dear Mr. Colwell:

In response to your recent request I am sending to you my opinion of the professional and personal qualifications of my friend, Rebecca Hourwich Reyher. I am indeed glad to know that the State Department wishes to add her name to its file of possible American Specialists for use in the Department's Educational and Cultural Exchange Program, for she seems to me eminently qualified to serve the purpose of the program as you describe it in your letter.

Mrs. Reyher and I have been intimate friends and have worked closely together for many years. She is a thoroughly fine and exceptionally able person. She has a brilliant mind and a generous heart. Her sense of responsibility is marked and she is resourceful and indefatigable in accomplishing any task she undertakes. To every piece of work she brings imagination and courage. She is genuinely interested in people, is kind, courteous and most considerate of others. With these qualities she naturally wins the liking and the admiration of people with whom she comes in contact.

Mrs. Reyher is particularly gifted as a speaker. I have heard her speak to all kinds of audiences and she always does a superb job, giving solid information in a vivid way that never fails to interest and impress. Her warm personality carries over to audiences and they like her. Her clear, pleasing voice and her good looks add to her effectiveness.

Appreciating Mrs. Reyher's unusual ability, the Peoples Mandate Committee selected her as a member of the delegation of four women sent by the Committee to Latin America in 1957 to urge ratification of the Buenos Aires Peace Treaties. The delegation was approved by the State Department and received by the American Ambassador in every country visited who arranged for interviews with the President and Foreign Minister of the country. The delegation made an excellent impression, got extraordinary



publicity and was given credit by the State Department for a number of the ratifications which followed the tour. Mrs. Reyher had an important part in these results. She spoke brilliantly at public meetings and on the radio, did excellent work with the press and made friends for the Committee and for the United States every place the delegation went.

In the past few years Mrs. Reyher has been lecturing professionally. The lectures I have heard her give telling the story of her years in Africa have been outstanding in content and presentation and I know that on the tours she has recently made lecturing on her African experiences her audiences have been enthusiastic.

Mrs. Reyher's qualifications as a writer can be judged by her books published by highly regarded presses including Columbia University Press and Doubleday. The human interest pieces she has written for magazines giving little pictures of people and incidents of her travels not only show her skill as a writer but her understanding and feeling for people. At the end of her charming little book for children, "My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World" - a Russian Folk Tale - the mother says to the child: "Some people, Varyanaka, see with their eyes alone. Others see with their hearts, too. I am grateful and lucky that you see with your heart as well as with your eyes." Mrs. Reyher is one of those who see with the heart as well as with the eyes.

Knowing her as I do I am sure Mrs. Reyher, if selected as a specialist, could make an outstanding contribution to the Department's Educational and Cultural Exchange Program and would be a representative of whom our country might well be proud.

Sincerely yours,

Mabel Vernon

Mr. Frederick A. Colwell  
Chief, American Specialists Branch  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Department of State



An article in the Christian Science Monitor, 27 March 1926, headlined "Unknown Woman" to be Memorialized for Unheralded Part in Feminist Cause," states that, as a result of Rebecca Hourwich's suggestion below, the "Unknown Woman" is to have a room dedicated to her in the building facing the Capitol, which Mrs. O.H.P. Belmont gave to the National Woman's Party."

## Equal Rights, 19 December 1925

# To the Unknown Women

THE National Headquarters of the Woman's Party dedicated to the permanent interests of women are now in the process of being furnished room by room in honor of friends, relatives and acknowledged leaders of women. I would like to propose a room done in honor of the unknown woman!

Perhaps the most moving and dramatic event of the entire war was the unanimous decision of all the nations to give honor where honor was due, to the unknown soldier. The simple grave at Washington where the unknown soldier lies, concentrates attention for all time on the valor and courage necessary to the unheralded deed. Just from day to day the very same way, the patient plodding,

By Rebecca Hourwich

unrelenting way, is often the hardest, and the governments of the world, not always human, were quick to recognize that human fact.

In the struggle for woman's freedom related recognition has come to a few brilliant personalities whose image has been indelibly stamped by the record of their own achievement. But for each of the pioneers who formulated and organized the public battle, there have been hundreds of thousands of women, who each in their small way, have contributed to the sum total of woman's advance and achievement.

It is the glowing, hopeful, wistful, un-

assuming, unknown women today who make up the Feminists cohorts; it is they who did in past generations; and it is they who will in the generations of the future. Let us as an organization draw attention to the significance and importance to the Feminist movement, and to the nation, of these unknown women.

Five hundred dollars is needed to furnish a room in honor of The Unknown Women. The room should be furnished for use in the present session of Congress, as this session promises to be a most critical one for the Equal Rights Amendment.

A report of those contributing and the progress of the fund will appear in a forthcoming issue of EQUAL RIGHTS.

Please send all checks to the Woman's Party, Capitol Hill, Washington.



August 1, 1925 Equal Rights

## The Embryo Feminist

By Rebecca Hourwich

**I**T is nearly seven years since I first began to explain to friends and relatives that I did not yearn for a son and heir, but for a little daughter who would grow up to be the perfect feminist, and take her mother's place in the Woman's

Party. At the age of four my daughter showed unmistakable signs. Not long after I realized I was scheduled to join the ranks of disappointed parents; my

last hope for Faith was perhaps a non active membership in the League of Women Voters.

Last year Faith spent the winter with her grandmother in an atmosphere of serene domesticity, special baking and

cleaning days, and well defined children's household duties. She observed and learned how to mix a cake, how to operate a vacuum cleaner, how to set and clear a table, and how to make a bed.

It is now summer. Faith has had an equivalent of a year of domestic science. Does she spend her time putting all that good knowledge to use and so free her mother for higher things? Far from it.

Faith, having passed the novelty stage of housework, seeks a wider field. It is true that her choice of a career is nothing to write about. She is apprentice to Dolly, the cleverest little seven-year-old snake and toad catcher, mouse trainer, and general live stock collector in Sagadahoc County. But just the fact of an outside interest, steady and attended to daily, not to mention contact with a different type of femininity, has created a great difference in my daughter. No longer does she coax for hair ribbons—they get lost in the pond, or hung on a tree. She still loves the beautiful and modish, but she is content to leave that and stockings and shoes for Sundays. Even Sundays may become overall days, for no one has told Faith that she is responsible for a future generation, and she pursues her chosen career twelve hours a day, including the appointed day of rest. Whether eventually she will swing back to her early conservatism and definitely limit herself to a prescribed woman's working week of forty-eight hours, it is a little early to determine.

A career in the wide open spaces, away from habitual authority and oversight, resting entirely on individual responsibility, also a career fraught with danger and requiring a certain degree of acquired professional skill, has had the to-be-expected broadening influence on Faith's female nature. She has gained in strength and agility, and independence of mind and manner. I will not deny that she has coarsened.

Today I have a glimmering that my daughter may yet be saved, that the eternal feminine bends as the wind of circumstance blows, and that many women have never passed the stage of household strangulation from which my six-year-old daughter has already graduated. And when graduation does take place, probably the reaction is very similar to Faith's.

Not a very dignified illustration, but it will serve. Just below my window a scuffle, shouting, my daughter addressing a ten-year-old boy. "Ugh.—Ugh.—You dumbell — I AM AS GOOD AS YOU ARE!—"

I am a proud mother; I think my daughter will be a feminist—is a feminist.



## Faith Bobs Her Hair

By Rebecca Hourwich

**F**AITH has never been beautiful. At an early age she learned that bitter experience of woman, to hear others of her sex admired, while she remained unnoticed. Her hair cut close to her head, according to her father's taste, the best that she could adorn was a comic strip. Unfortunately, like many women built and fashioned for a useful career, and the habiliments of such, Faith longed for the flighty type of finery. It caused me much anguish.

Faith's grandmother is a lady of the older school. She had never had a daughter, and to the undying, blazing memory of her son, she put him in curls, rather than have no curls around the house. It was quite natural that the winter Faith spent with her, she should have at last satisfied her life-long yearning for a house decorated with a childish curly head. Daily she oiled and rubbed her granddaughter's head, until, to give her full justice, she produced a flushed and worthy crop. She made a great change in my daughter's appearance, and gave her her first feminine triumph.

Now when Faith traveled the highways she distinctively heard, "What lovely curls that little girl has!" Faith walked on with a new air, head held high, and who will doubt that a strange and new sweetness had entered her funny-faced life. Once a lady said, "The little angel," and Faith promptly looked as she thought she became a little girl crowned with the impress of holiness.

When summer came Faith complained of being hot; once or twice she ran in and asked to have her curls pinned up. But part with her curls she would not. For a half hour each morning I struggled with a writhing, bobbing, tangled mop.

Throughout the process Faith and I told each other exactly what we thought of each other, for our relations are frank. Sometimes it took the remainder of the morning to re-establish cordiality. Each time I suggested Faith cut the beautiful, but distinctly bothersome, curls. Faith firmly refused and then reminded me it was her head under discussion, which settled the matter, for in our family full sovereignty is retained by each individual over his person.

Of late Faith had stood at the mirror and looked with even greater than usual pleasure at her curls. I might have known that Faith was yielding, that it was the beginning of the end. Yesterday we cut Faith's hair!

Faith decided she could put the beautiful curls in a paper napkin and save them in her drawer, along with the other cherished possessions. As I snipped, she explained the reasons for surrender.

"You know, Mummy, they were awfully pretty, but they were always getting in my way. And they were always tangled, and they were always so hard to comb."

Late the afternoon of the haircut Faith returned from a tour of the neighbors. Unanimously I had been called a vandal. Faith was in tears over the loss of her curls, but in between her tears she tossed her head, and said, "Anyway, I am more comfortable."

I am convinced that this is only the first of a long series of decisions that Faith will have to make throughout life, if she is to have an appearance that will satisfy her genuine craving for beauty and still make her chosen work possible. It cheers me that, now that she has tended towards the freer type, she understands this important point.



October 31, 1925

Equal Rights

## Why Can't Daddy Help?

By Rebecca Hourwich

FAITH, my six-year-old daughter, as behoves a woman of the freer type, meets life serenely and unafraid: Everything interests her, and much puzzles her. Of some things she frankly disapproves, and I, her mother of the older generation, am never sure when my matronly calm will be shamed or shattered. True to her creed, Faith challenges all that she regards as a discrimination, or disability, because of her age, or her sex.

Were I a parent first, and a Feminist second, I might regard this attitude of my daughter's as distinctly tiresome, and make an effort as an earnest pedagogue to divert her to better ways. At that I am doubtful of what my results would be, for this is an age of determined women, and it is almost impossible to maintain the older order in a single establishment. Fortunately I am spared that struggle for I am a Feminist first, and a parent only second, and when I see a young female of immature years showing signs of healthy rebellion, my parenthood is forgotten in my genuine rejoicing, "another recruit to the ranks." What difference that she shines not as a child, for her childhood should be given up to a preparation for life, and what better training can any woman give her daughter, than that which in later life indelibly stamps her as a Feminist?

This is not by way of apology, but as explanation to any stray male eyes that may meet with this. Though I run the risk of being indelicate, I must also explain the housekeeping relations of my husband and myself. We have peripatetic maids, laundresses, and all the domestic service our fluctuating and meagre income permits. In the absence of adequate assistance, there is an unwritten agreement that the head of the house and myself share equally in those tasks of home-making not usually regarded as of sufficient scope or dignity for men to partake in. I have done my best to create this as a cardinal principle in our home, and wherever I have failed, it is through no lack of good and had tempered insistence.

I did not realize how deep in our life this rule existed, until I called my small daughter to help dry the dishes. Reluc-

tantly she came, looked around the kitchen, where were already assembled a grandmother, an aunt, and a mother; noted those present, and those absent, and promptly inquired, "Why can't Daddy help?" While the grandmother was busy explaining the larger life led by the father, I turned my back to enjoy my giggle in private.

As usual Faith's question summed up the situation for me, and led my thoughts along the path she had suggested. Of more than twenty million homemakers in this country, less than ten per cent have any form of professional domestic assistance. The American wife of leisure, pampered and indulged by her husband, predominates in fiction, but not in statistics. More than half our population is still rural, and except for exceptional cases of expensively equipped farms, the farmwife is frequently a highly sensitized beast of burden. Women of the working class do not fare any better.

It is usually asserted that the husbands of women so situated work equally hard, but that is obviously untrue. At whatever hour the husband must begin his day, the wife must start a bit earlier in order to get his breakfast; through the day each keeps pace with the other, but at evening when the man's work is done, mother must still serve the dinner, do the dishes, clean up, and get the children to bed. If she is a good manager she may be able to fit in a couple of quiet hours' of mending or sewing by the lamplight before bedtime.

If there are children, and the American woman presumably has a quota of three and a third children, there are apt to be nights of toil as well as days. Only the wife and mother is supposed to be concerned with these purely feminine tasks. And ignorance of history prevents either the men or women from knowing that traditionally these were the tasks of slaves, and when men threw off slavery and the performance of menial tasks for others, democratic society divided itself into those men who pay for service, and

those men who, no longer forced to serve, unwilling to be stamped with the stigma of menials, could preserve their social status by taking unto themselves wives who were menials, but who, for the sake of preserving the new order, were fluttered into believing that they were nobly fulfilling the destined duties of woman.

We fail to realize that only the gentry, men or women, can afford to have others look after them, and that every human being requires a certain amount of feeding, laundering, and cleaning after, and that each person is responsible for that work that makes his continuance on this earth possible. Wherever men are not economically able to have the household duties of their establishment curtailed to a decent workingday for their wives, it seems that the only remedy is a fair division of overtime between the husband and wife.

It is here that women most often fail to stand by women. Invariably I hear a Feminist say, "It is too late to change my husband, he was brought up in another generation, and he simply cannot understand my asking him to help. Oh, he helps with the dishes, but I never ask him, I wait for him to offer to do them, and I never argue with him if he does not; at first, when we were just married I did, but I have stopped, because it is not worth quarreling about. I would far rather do it myself and have peace in the family. But I am certainly not going to have my son that way. I am teaching him to do everything, and help in every way, and some woman, someday will thank me for a good husband."

The pity of it is that little boys pattern themselves after their fathers and no amount of mother's training is eventually successful, if father is a person free of household responsibility. The boy merely marks time until he can take his place as father, and escape the dreary tasks of the past. There are exceptions, but this is generally the rule.

I prefer Faith's reaction and method, and I think it holds more promise for women. A constant and unceasing household motto: "Why can't Daddy help?"



## Mother Must Not Be Disturbed

By Rebecca Hourwich

"I KNPLAINED to her and she was so ebtonished, and I just said it over and over, and then I yelled it at her, 'Mother must not be disturbed.'" So my six year-old daughter reported her conversation with Ruth, her eight-year-old neighbor. According to Faith, Ruth simply could not understand a mother who was not on tap whenever fancy warranted.

I well remember my own childhood, when we walked by my father's study door with chastened tread, and hushed voices: The family motto was, "Father must not be disturbed." But as for mother, short of illness, we came in on her at all times, and it was her great pride that she was always there to meet any childish emergency. As I think back, oura was a typical instance, a father never disturbed, a mother conatantly pestered. Some there may be who resent the implication of pestering. Children are neither angels nor devils, but somewhere in between as members of the genus homo, and to the human animal self is atill all important, children are as yet not schooled in the wiles and artifices of life

that makes for clever concealment of this primary fact.

In family life the struggle for full ego expression commences, and through the years becomes adjusted, or a drawn battle with no peace ensues. In our high pressured civilization, we increasingly feel the need of mental quiet, relaxation, time for gently forgetting the many things crowding in about us. For our work we require calm freedom from outside interference to set to the task at hand. For years it has been the custom for women of the finer type to create such a peaceful atmosphere for their husbands when in the confines of their influence. And some kind husbands have made an effort to reciprocate in kind. But the average family picture is one to rouse the attention of alienists.

From early morn until late at night, and often at night, the little helions needlessly demand this, that and the other, giving full vent to unrestrained self. Following in their train is a vast horde of people so little occupied that privacy has no meaning for them. And always mother

is at the mercy of them all. If she repairs to another room, or to another floor, there she is sure to be discovered.

In my little town I was the first of the non-disturbable mothers. All children love drama, and my little six year old has taken particular delight in maintaining the sanctity of her mother's withdrawal, because to maintain it has spelled drama. There is not another child who understands that dashing up whenever they are so inclined is presuming on my rights; and as for disturbing their mothers, it has never even occurred to other mothers or children how often interruption brutally destroys any opportunity for clear thought, or harmonious action.

But two things have I noticed. Faith's espousing my cause has been the subject of thought in our little community, and there is talk of other mothers wanting stated withdrawals, and there is the sad fact that Faith and I alone against the custom and tradition of those about us are very weak, and of late Faith forgets that Mother must not be disturbed. If only mothers made a more concentrated effort to stand on their rights!



Equal Rights, 31 July 1926

## "That's What Mothers Are For"

By Rebecca Hourwich

"MOTHERS," said my six-year-old daughter, in a tone of finality which bore no contradiction, "mothers should do the housework and fathers should go to offices, or maybe hay, or go iclng, or something like that. But mothers should do the housework."

"That's silly," snapped back Faith's mother. "People should do that for which they are best fitted, that which they can do best, and not all women can do house-keeping best."

"All the same women ought to do housework," continued my daughter. "You ought to do the housework and nothing elae." Argument was futile. My child nursed the grievance of "different parents," an agony not to be minimized in a normal community. I forgot the discussion until yesterday.

Yesterday I sat by my fire and faced that realization which at some time must come to all mothers: that they are mothers

first, that that relation transcends all others. And as a mother I was bitter and angry, and full of incoherent longing to fight for my class, to fight for all mothers.

Perhaps I, as a peripatetic and amateur mother, am unduly sensitive. Perhaps it really was only a very small matter.

Faith came in from a hard afternoon's sledding. She was flushed and sparkling, and conscious of her importance as "the best steerer, not counting my age." Athletic prowess is unfamiliar to me, and I, too, showed a little pride. As a conquering hero, quick to sense her advantage, Faith leaned back in an ecstasy of weariness, thrust forth her legs with their boots, and commanded, "Take them off!" The manner and tone warned me, and I promptly answered that mature creatures,

clever at steering, were certainly old enough, and strong enough, to pull off their own boots.

Faith did not like the allusion to her status; she preferred to attack mine. In hurt, but equally condescending tones, she announced, "You ought to help me. Mothers should help their children. That's what mothers are for."

Instantly I was indignant. I forgot that all psychologists give my daughter three more months of infancy: that six years should also be allowed its quota of lapses. I only saw those sprawled feet, and the recumbent position, waiting for mother to perform a handy service, and in my head rang the words, "That's what mothers are for." To my daughter, mothers were divinely created to serve their daughters—that was their whole purpose in life.

Upon the uncomprehending head of infancy I spilled all the once learned

philosophy of individual rights. I do not think it altered my opponent's convictions one iota: she is firmly entrenched in the belief of mother-subordination. She does not depend for her standards on me. She watches keenly the doings and relationships of the people about her, and already she realizes I am "different," and not to be depended on as is the safe majority.

There are mothers who would welcome

the appreciation that they live only for their children. It is such women who chain the progress of their sex. They live in the hope and achievement of others. Though their sacrifice has been prompted by love, they have yielded to a pleasurable weakness, and they have moulded the role of motherhood to inanity, and de-personalized it.

My daughter is a Feminist in all her own reactions to life because she is strong-

willed, and fate has willed her a girl, and it serves her own ends to be independent. But where her person is not directly affected, she limits the roles of women, especially the roles of mothers, to that prescribed by custom and tradition.

"That's what mothers are for," uttered in the solemn tones of six, solemnly brings home to me, that we mothers have the struggle to prove not only the rights of women, but the rights of mothers.



## Signs of the Times

By Rebecca Hourwich

**B**LEARY EYED, I jumped from bed to answer my neighbor's early morning hoo-hoo. "Get up, get up," she called. "I forgot to tell you that this is the morning the Governor is making his whirlwind speaking tour throughout the county. He will be at Arrowsie at half-past eight." I woke my family, hurriedly fed them, and announced to them that shortly we were all going to hear the Governor speak at the next town.

"Oh, no," chorused father and grandfather, "not we. Give the Governor our regards and our regrets, but say we were otherwise engaged. The Governor will surely understand." Grandmother, mother, and Faith, aged seven, were the sole representatives of our household to show any interest in a Governor's pre-election pledges.

Grouped round a white meeting house were three men, that many dozen women, and boys and girls of all ages. There was Mrs. Baker, seventy-three, who had trudged through snow, winter after winter, trying to convert the county to suffrage, the only person from our town beside our party of three; and also, bustling about as chairman of the rally, was Mrs. Macfarland, staunch Republican, a staunch anti-Suffragist until the vote was thrust upon her. We took our places in the semi-circle of standing people.

**T**HE Governor had not yet arrived, but in the interim Mr. White, candidate for Congress, was movingly discoursing on patriotism, economy, and the great State

of Maine. Standing opposite him were several loyal members of the Republican sisterhood, tightly hugging large cardboard posters on which the name and features of the speaker were in clear evidence. They could not clap at the proper moments, but the other women, unencumbered with posters, could and did, often and loud. So did the boys and girls. And my daughter, possibly through what is usually referred to as feminine intuition, gathered that the role of woman new to politics is to clap, and look pleasant, and conscientiously she performed her duty. Nevertheless, neither she nor the women around her appeared to be really wholeheartedly enjoying themselves.

**T**HEN the Governor arrived in a party of five men, which, with Mr. White's group, made a solid male contingent of eight or nine speakers. The Governor apologized for the delay, greeted his constituency, and smilingly announced that in his whirlwind tour he was emphasizing "whirl" rather than "wind." In a quick, decisive, well-planned five-minute speech he promised his audience of women, children, and three men a surplus in the State Treasury, lower taxes, severe penalty and hard labor for the criminal, an advance in prosperity for the great State of Maine with its twenty-five million acres of woodland cut by streams and waterfalls, and the guaranteed continuance of the great

est American institution, the home and family. Loud and long was the applause.

In the midst of the applause I felt a tugging at my skirt. I looked down at the flushed and eager face of my daughter. It was her first taste of politics and naturally she was excited. But so was she troubled. She wanted my instant attention.

"Mother," Faith whisperingly demanded, "must Governors always be men? Aren't there any women Governors, mother?"

Suddenly the meeting seemed bright and alive to me. It was alive, for a little girl, used to plays and pageants, where boys and girls divided stellar roles, had a glimpse of other worlds to conquer, and there, too, she wanted the stellar roles divided. Subconsciously a little girl wanted to be Governor, and the time had come when that little girl charged bulwarks of ancient prejudice with the normal, uninhibited, clear-visioned standards of childhood.

**M**Y happiness and pride were short-lived. I realized that only too soon the naive assumption of female seven, that to her beckoned a fair and hopeful world, would be shattered. Suddenly I knew the ferocity of the maternal urge. I wanted desperately to make the sex hurdle for my daughter, to wipe away her sex handicaps. I determined to help her, and other little girls. I started by giving her hope. I told her there were women Governors, and we expected to have more and more of them each year. It quite cheered Faith.



When a marriage collapses, parents  
must try to save  
children from desperate uncertainties

By Berky Reyher

## WHO GETS THE CHILD?

The war zoomed our divorce rate up from one in six marriages to one in three, and the armistice of 1945 focused attention on the problem of displaced persons right here in our own country: the children involved in the half-million divorces secured annually.

There is heartbreak in divorce for everyone, but particularly for the children. How can you avoid it, how can you give children a sense of security within a situation that is so perilous? Who can advise parents with young children, to whom can they turn? How prevent the warm sympathy children have from turning inward and becoming warped, from corroding the child who feels injured or abandoned? How tell the child of the coming separation, how conduct the future visits, how plan that ugly and cold word, custody, so that it becomes a natural process of being with Daddy or Mum-my? And how can bruised or defeated parents, average and imperfect, be made to realize that they have had their chance and muffed it and that now the children's opportunity for normal growth in abnormal circumstances is of paramount importance?

Skilled professionals, unprejudiced, with wide experience in dealing with the issues and scars of divorce, talked with me. They insisted each case is different and were wary about generalizing or giving formulae, neatly packaged and ready for use. Nevertheless, I managed to get together a few principles and procedures they regarded as basic.

Divorces are surcharged with emotion, and often the husband or wife is unable to talk or think coherently about them. Where there has been difficulty that could not be weathered, deeper and more recurrent trouble than the passing stormy period common to all marriages, there is bound to be underlying confusion. Bewildered people cannot be depended on for consistent, intelligent behavior, no matter how sincere their intentions.

The psychiatrists say that one of the chief reasons for divorce is that people don't know themselves, that they need to go to a qualified person to talk things over, first to see what they themselves are like, to get an objective slant on their own behavior. In a divorce it is essential that each person knows the real and underlying reasons why he is doing what he does, so that he *stops fooling himself*, stops rationalizing; for rationalization only supports resentments, does not clarify or eliminate them.

Everyone I saw agreed that if you are planning a divorce you need expert advice. Dr. Marion E. Kenworthy, leading psychiatrist specializing in children and professor of psychiatry at [Continued on page 132]



## Who Gets the Child?

[Continued from page 85]

the New York School of Social Work, believed competent advice could frequently be given by established social agencies, clergymen, teachers or experienced lawyers. Both Shad Polier, a lawyer himself, married to Justice Justine Wise Polier of the Domestic Relations Court in New York, and Mrs. Grace Bement, founder and director of the Bement School at Deerfield, Massachusetts, to whom Rockefeller, McCormicks and less illustrious people entrust their children, plugged hard for psychoanalysis or psychiatric consultation.

A divorce usually starts with the husband or wife seeking the counsel of a lawyer. Mr. Polier emphasized that there are many situations where a lawyer "cannot do all the job," must call in specialists. He likened it to a family physician attempting to treat a patient where surgery was indicated, or where the case was pretty clearly psychosomatic. Lawyers are apt to be even more blind to psychiatric problems than doctors. Another danger, he felt, is that legal tradition is largely to do for your client what he wants you to do so long as it is not unlawful. The client engages the lawyer to accomplish a specific result, or else he gets another lawyer. The lawyer feels that if he represents the wife, the more custody and money he gets for her the better job he has done; and if representing the husband, he measures his success by getting his client off as lightly as possible. Lawyers too often reflect the morality of their clients, and that is not sufficiently disinterested to rely on for what is best for the children. Since psychiatrists are costly, Mr. Polier wished that more people used the available tools for family adjustment: psychiatric case workers and counseling agencies.

Most people shudder from any suggestion of psychiatry applied to themselves, or from using a social agency. Earl N. Parker, Assistant General Director of the Family Service Association of America, whose experience has been chiefly in the Midwest and Far West, called attention to the development of their nation-wide fee service, comparable to the hospitalization plan as distinct from free clinic care, and reported that nice people, like you and me, take advantage of it.

Special facilities for counseling parents contemplating a divorce are offered by the Merrill Palmer School of Detroit, the Institute of Psychoanalysis in Chicago and by the child guidance groups working in conjunction with the New York schools. Most of the large cities have reputable child guidance or mental hygiene clinics, with competence and understanding of what the child is up against in divorce. Family Service is available in moderate-sized as well as large cities, and if you would like to know whom to consult in your own community, the Family Service Association, 122 East 22 Street, New York 10, will try to direct you. Their whole attitude, as exemplified by Mr. Parker, is wholesome and friendly, emphasizing the importance of putting the divorce behind you, avoid-

ing remorse and regret, and readjusting your life for the greatest possible happiness and usefulness for all concerned.

The primary danger in divorce is the threat to the child's sense of security. The child will feel he is losing something. A baby is given a substitute whenever something is taken away, and so in divorce, Mrs. Bement feels, it is up to the parents to cancel out the sense of loss by a sense of gain. Through wide experience she knows it can be done, if the parents really want to do it.

Unstinting love, manifested through spontaneous caresses and considerate treatment, is the root of a child's security. A child can take a lot if he has that and, conversely, can sense rejection, knows when he is not wanted, considered a burden or a nuisance, often before the parents have admitted this attitude to themselves.

The first threat to the child's emotional equilibrium may come with how the child is told about the divorce. According to Mrs. Bement, if the child is very young, tell him nothing, treat the matter as you would sex, wait for the child to ask questions, then answer them simply and factually, with no emotion or partisanship. "Where has Daddy gone?" asks the child. "Daddy is going to live on Washington Square," answers the mother. The same questions will be asked over and over, because a child cannot grasp facts emotionally except through repetition.

As soon as the child is old enough to refuse to accept, "Mummy and Daddy are not going to live in the same house any more," without asking. "Why?" he is ready to be told in various careful ways that marriage is a grown-up business about which he will learn in time and that his parents were not able to make a go of it. The implication of failure will hurt the child, but that cannot be avoided. One of the very few comforting things about divorce today, said Mrs. Bement, is that children can look about them and see others in the same predicament and resolve, "If they can take it, so can I."

Dr. Kenworthy would add that the mother and father should make clear that whatever difficulty exists does not include the child, and that they both continue to be equally interested in him. Parents should present a united front, unless irreparable damage has already been done by the child's having heard quarreling, and work out a mutual statement of reasons for parting. Whether they tell it singly or together is not important, nor will one conversation be enough. The first bad news touches off anxiety, which raises questions that must be answered by as many assurances as possible. The child gains assurance from knowing the full program for continuing contacts with both parents. This is terribly necessary for the younger child, while for the older one, it is imperative that nothing ever be allowed to interfere with his dates with his parents.

With younger children, custody—associated

unpleasantly for most of us with the definition in Webster's dictionary: "a state of being guarded and watched to prevent escape"—is usually given to the mother because of her emotional accessibility. The father gets "rights of visitation," another fancy legal term. Children need continuity at home, and in giving the child to the mother, the attempt is made to keep circumstances at least outwardly normal. Decisions about school, health, religion should be mutual, but according to the authorities divided custody, that of the child living physically first with one parent, then the other, should definitely be avoided. Dr. Kenworthy is "agin it," and so were the others. Mrs. Bement qualified this by adding there were cases of children being better off with their fathers or neutrals such as foster homes or in boarding schools.

Unfortunately most children are confronted not only with their parents' divorce but with their remarriage, requiring adjustment to strangers precipitated into an intimate relation with them at a time when they are already disturbed. Mrs. Bement advises against calling the new person by any name signifying a parental relation, and insists the concept that each child has but one mother and one father must be kept clear, if only for reasons of grasping biology.

Seven-year-old Marty, the daughter of friends of mine, hung about her mother and her mother's new husband until, not being used to children, he became annoyed and wanting her out of the way, sent her to her room to play. Marty's mother tried to explain to her that husbands and wives often had to be alone to talk over things of special concern to them. "But Mother, what shall I do?" protested Marty. "I have no husband!"

Mrs. Bement was categorical about this: "A remarriage where there are young children must include them; they must feel part of it." Everybody else warned, "Don't let the child feel left out!" Young children go to bed at seven, reminded Mrs. Bement, and that leaves the grown-ups a good long evening. If the children hang about unduly, then depend on it, they feel excluded, for happy children are busy about their own affairs. If a woman plans to remarry someone who doesn't like children or isn't prepared to help bolster the child's sense of security, she must face the fact that she is deserting her child, deliberately planning to bring up a warped personality, a neurotic.

Dr. Kenworthy was sorry that so many parents, having secured a divorce, feel a compulsion to remarry immediately, and are not prepared to give their children an interim chance to get to know and like the new person. Where there has been a remarriage, if the child is to spend weekends or vacation with the father, Dr. Kenworthy advised that the child's nurse, or some woman to whom he is accustomed, should go along.

When I asked twenty-three-year-old, recently married Ruth Gannett Kahn, Vassar



It, whether her parents' divorce had injured her in any way, she answered that, in divorce as in anything else, it was not *what* you did but *how* you did it, and that the divorce of her father and mother had been handled very intelligently, but, "a great beneficial factor was the third person involved, Lucille." Lucille Leonard came to the Gannetts when Ruth was two and her brother Michael was six, remaining until Ruth went to boarding school at thirteen. She became the central authority for all such matters as, "May I go out swimming?" or, "What shall I wear?" The Gannetts separated when Ruth was five, the children remaining with their mother, and thereafter, when they went on long visits to their father, Lucille Leonard always went along.

Ruth was not bothered about the divorce until she was fourteen or fifteen, when she began to wonder if she ought to "take a side." She then began to compare her parents, realizing that at her mother's, home life was more carefully planned, more serene, while at her father's everything was more sporadic and gayer. Once she remembered feeling tearful and sad but unable to say anything when Michael burst out to his father and second wife, "I wish there had never been a divorce!" Christmases and holidays were something to be dreaded—everybody got together and somebody's feelings were apt to be hurt—but now, looking back at it, she thinks those family gatherings were on the "plus side." Other pluses were that she has grown up with an objective relation to her family, an ability to be happy with and without them. Even so, Ruth, married to Peter Kahn, twenty-five-year-old refugee artist whose father has twice been divorced and remarried, says, "We're determined never to let it happen to us!"

Stevenson dedicated his *Child's Garden of Verses* to his nurse and wished that all children might have a nurse "so dear." Sensitive and pain-racked, he appreciated a child's need of warm reassurance, memories of which he had treasured throughout his life. Lucille Leonard had apparently given the Gannett children a similar, "comfortable hand, that led me through the uneven land..." Now director of a play center at Jamaica, Long Island, Miss Leonard spoke of there always being someone in a child's life who is like "The tree that is planted, around which everything revolves."

From her observation of many children involved in divorce, Miss Leonard concluded that their parents were too preoccupied with their own, and too little with the children's, emotional disturbances, and the children were badly in need of a reliable third-person standing. Were she a mother, she would want to look after her own child. Were she involved in a divorce, she would never permit her children, while they were very young, to spend much night away from her. She believes that as bedtime approaches, all children want to be drawn to their mother's heart.

It is up to the mother, or whoever has the custody of the child, to create a friendly atmosphere for the visiting parent, protecting the child from having it a disturbing experience, as it so often is. The visiting parent can

ease the situation by including the children's playmates on treats and excursions. All too often Father is the bearer of gifts, Mother the dispenser of discipline and medicine. In marriage there are fathers who take the cream of their children for one half hour a day until they are bored, leaving the mother to grapple with small chores and twenty-four-hour duty. Mrs. Bement thinks it would be healthier if the visiting parent could shoulder some of the routine: such as, Father takes over a Sunday morning shift while Mother catches up on her sleep.

Sooner or later in every divorce the child will discover the possibilities in playing one parent against the other. Ignore it, accept it as common to all children as they reach adolescence, said Dr. Kenworthy, or deal with it as a phase of adolescent ego, but don't use it for your own selfish ends.

As I came in, Mr. Polier had just asked one of his women clients seeking a divorce to place her problems before the Community Service Society, about to celebrate their hundredth anniversary of family service in New York. What impressed me most about their Family Service Director, Miss Anna Kempshall, was that, surrounded with all the paraphernalia of executive importance, she dwelt on the simple tragedy of the "unloved child, in or out of divorce," and of the psychic need of the child to have two parents to love and be loved by. That is why she and all the others plead, "Never, never, break down into recrimination of each other, however veiled or subtle, for it tears the child apart."

Miss Kempshall's case files, in secret code, are full of children who, distressed by an atmosphere of indifference or tension, begin to play truant from school, destroy property, have physical upsets. "People think little children don't realize things," she said, "but they are so intuitive, so much more sensitive than adults to what is going on around them."

I thought of my favorite three-year-old boy, playing with me on the terrace while his parents discussed the terms of their divorce in the living-room. It had been a tough session for the father, and he looked drained after it. The small boy and I took the father to the elevator and, while waiting, made polite conversation. The boy looked studiously at both of us, then grabbed my hand and almost in tears, cried frantically, "Kiss him! Kiss him!" It was the only remedy he knew for pain, which had hit him full force, despite every effort that had been made to shield him from it.

When a divorce must be, good could be salvaged from it—if only parents, with all the wisdom and experience at their command, had their children's quick awareness of pain and suffering and their heartfelt desire to banish it.



Bibliography of Books by Rebecca Reyher

The Stork Run: A Collection of Baby Cartoons. New York: Hastings House, 1944.

Babies and Puppies are Fun. New York: Barrows and Company, 1944.

My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World. William Soskin, 1945.  
Later editions by Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard.

Zulu Woman, with Foreword by Ruth Benedict. New York: Columbia Press, 1945,  
and London: Oxford Press, 1948. Paperback edition published by the New  
American Library, 1970. French edition: Chronique maritale d'une reine  
zoulou. Paris: Les presses Denoel, 1952.

Babies Keep Coming: An Anthology, edited by Becky Reyher. New York:  
Whittlesey House, a division of the McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947.

The Fon and His Hundred Wives. New York: Doubleday, 1952. British and  
continental edition published in London by Victor Gollancz, 1953.

"The Role and Status of African Women" in Tropical Africa, vol. 2: Society  
and Polity, edited by George H. T. Kimble. New York, 1960.



## NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS ON TRIP SOUTH TO EXPLAIN PICKETING (1917)\*

\* "Suffrage Advance Agent in Roanoke," World News (Roanoke, Va.), 14 (?) September 1917.

"In the Interests of Miss Younger," World News, 29 September 1917.

B \* "Representative of Slacker Party Here," World News, 29 September 1917. "Slacker" refers to position on war effort.

\* "Prominent Suffragists; Miss Younger and Miss Hourwich Made Addresses at Fair," Fredericksburg (Va.) Free Lance-Star, 3 October 1917.

\* "Suffrage League in New Home; Woman's Party Speakers Here. Richmond Organization Makes Clear Its Lack of Connection with 'Wilful Women' Picketers. Flying Squadron Orators Allege Deep Injustices Done to Picketers in Workhouse at Occoquan." The Richmond Virginian, Thursday, 4 October 1917.

\* "Mrs. Valentine Denounces Band of Wilful Women; Says White House Pickets Are Harming Suffrage Cause -- House Warming Held." Richmond Times-Dispatch, 5 October, 1917.

\* "Local Suffragists State Their Position; Disclaim Any Connection with Speakers -- Denounce National Woman's Party." Roanoke (Va.) Times, 5 October 1917.

"Woman's Party Sends Speakers to City; Mrs. Gould and Miss Younger Coming." Birmingham Ledger, 10 October 1917.

"Pickets Will Visit Gadsden." Birmingham (Ala.) News, 13 October 1917.

"Woman's Party to Invade City; Miss Rebecca Hourwich, of New York, Is Here Making Arrangements." Birmingham News, 15 October 1917.

---

\*The articles in the following listings are in the collection of RHR and have been promised to the Schlesinger Library. B indicates articles which are also in The Bancroft Library. \* indicates especially important items.



- \* "Militants Coming to Birmingham for Open Air Speaking; Miss Younger and Mrs. Gould to Defend White House Picketing; Advance Agent Is Perfecting Plans; Miss Hourwich, Who Has Served as Picket, Tells Why They Are Continuing These Tactics." Birmingham Age-Herald, 16 October 1917.
- "Pretty Suffs to Invade City on November 2." Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News, 16 October 1917. (Page 1 story)
- "Miss Hourwich Speaks to Suffrage Association at University Tonight." Tuscaloosa News, 17 October 1917. (Page 1 story)  
(Ala)
- "Mrs. Howard Gould to Visit Druid City." Montgomery Advertiser, 18 October 1917. "Druid City" is Tuscaloosa, Ala.
- \* "National Woman's Party Leaders Are Making Dixie Tour." Montgomery Journal, 20 October 1917.
- "Advance Agent for Suffragists Arrives," Montgomery Advertiser, 20 October 1917.
- \* "Suff Pickets Make Address Here, Nov. 2." Montgomery Times, 20 October 1917. In the face of "considerable opposition among local suffragists" Miss Hourwich urged everyone to come to the meeting in Gadsden, Ala., -- "even those who don't agree with us."
- \* "Woman's Party Hold Open Meet to Selma People November Third; 'One Thousand Women in the Work House by June' Is Slogan." Selma (Ala.) Journal, 22 October 1917.
- "Dixie Tour Car Is Coming, Bringing Women Speakers." Pensacola (Fla.) Journal, 25 October 1917.
- [sic.]  
"Suffrage Party Speakers Come Here on November 7; Miss Hourwich Reaches Mobile to Complete Arrangements for Event-- Miss Younger and Mrs. Gould to Speak." Mobile (Ala.) News, 27 October 1917.
- "Militant Women to Speak in Mobile; Representative of Woman's Party Arranging for Visit." Mobile Register, 27 October 1917.
- "Mrs. Howard Gould to Speak in Square; Other Woman's Party Members to Be Here with Her." Mobile Register, 28 October 1917.
- "Two Noted Women Suffrage Speakers Are to Visit Mobile." Mobile Tribune, 28 October 1917.



## Clippings on Trip South (cont.)

"Militants Given Civil Hearing by Small Street Crowd." Birmingham Ledger, 1 November 1917.

"Cool Reception of Women Pickets; Small Crowd Heard Members of Woman's Party Talk of Picket Methods." Birmingham Age-Herald, 1 November, 1917.

- \* "Miss Younger and Mrs. Gould Talk; Aims of Picket Suffragists Is Presented on Streets of Birmingham." Birmingham News, 1 November, 1917.

"Women Suffrage Pickets Refuse to Keep Away from White House and Arrests are Continued." The News Scimitar (Memphis, Tenn.), 1 November 1917. (Page 1 photo of suffragette pickets in front of the White House photographed just before their arrest.)

- \* "Suffragettes Hold Slim Meeting in Exchange Hotel; Militants Fail to Arouse Wild Enthusiasm by Addresses Here." Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, 3 November 1917.

- \* "Woman's Party Speakers Will Hold Meeting." The Pensacola (Fla.) News, 5 November, 1917.

- B** \* "Visiting Suffragists Heard by Small Crowd." Pensacola Journal, 6 November 1917.

- \* "Two Suffrage Speakers Here for Meeting; Will Address Public Tonight at Bienville Square." Mobile (Ala.) Tribune, 6 November 1917.

"Woman's Party Has Rally in Mobile; Miss Younger and Mrs. Gould Plead for Amendment." Mobile Register, 7 November 1917.

- \* "Women to Again Do Picket Duty, Say Suffragists; Call for Mobile Women to Volunteer with Expenses to Washington Paid but No Responses Received." Mobile News, 7 November 1917.

- \* "Women Will Tell Why They Picket; Party Representative Receives Telegram Regarding Treatment of Arrested Pickets." Nashville (Tenn.) Banner, 18 November 1917.

- \* "Indignities Suffered by 'Pickets,' Suffragists Told; Miss Rebecca Hourwich Quotes Editorial in the Macon, Ga., Telegraph -- Noted Speakers Here This Week." Nashville newspaper, 18 November 1917.

- \* "Says Pickets Make Issue a Live One." Nashville (Banner), 19 November 1917. Joy Young's description of picketing.

- \* "Mayor Won't Permit Women to Speak Here." Memphis Press, 21 November 1917. (Page 1 story --from this or some other Memphis paper there is the banner headline "Mayor Litty Gives Militants Frigid Reception.")



## Clippings on Trip South (cont.)

- \* "The Mayor Is Right." News Scimitar (Memphis), 21 November 1917. Editorial praising the mayor for not allowing the suffragists to speak.  
  
Article from Memphis newspaper, November 1917, concerning rejection of Woman's Party speakers in Memphis.
- \* "Suffs Denied Permit for Open Air Meeting." News Scimitar, 20 November 1917.  
  
"She Decides She Won't Talk Here." Memphis Press, 21 November 1917. (Photo of Miss Maude Younger)
- "Suffs Rebuked, Prepared to Give Memphis 'Go-By'." News Scimitar, 21 November 1917.
- \* "Pickets Won't Attack Wilson in Memphis!" Memphis Press, 21 November, 1917.
- \* "State Suffragists in Resolution Condemn White House Pickets; 'President Wilson in Nine Months Has Done More for Cause Than All Other Presidents,' Declares Anna Howard Shaw." Public Ledger (city unknown) shortly after 22 November 1917. Special telegram from Pittsburgh, Penn. where Dr. Anna Howard Shaw had addressed the Pennsylvania Suffrage Association.
- R** \* "White House Pickets Coming Here; Tomorrow! Will Speak at Large Out Door Meeting, or at Court House." Examiner-Tennessean (Gallatin), 23 November 1917.



"Miss Hourwich Says Suffrage Will Pass Senate." Worcester Telegram, 5 February 1918.

"Miss Hourwich Press Agent for Equal Suffragists," Worcester Gazette, 5 February, 1918.

"Woman's Party Members Have Written Song." Unkown Worcester paper, February 1918.

"National Woman's Party Leader Fraternizes," Worcester Telegram, 7 February 1918. Mrs. Frederick Sykes' explanation of why the Connecticut state suffrage association went solidly as an organization over into the ranks of the Women's Party.

\*"Woman's Party Branch Organized in Worcester." Worcester Daily Telegram, 8 February 1918. At a meeting organized by Rebecca Hourwich, she, Katherine Ware Smith, and Ruth Sykes spoke on the importance of the National Woman's Party and their picketing effort.

"Says Victories Followed Insult," / Unnamed newspaper / February, 1918. Described as "a real 'woman-voter' from New York," Rebecca Hourwich's organizing activities and description of the Woman's Party's growth are set forth.

\*"Speaker Today for National Woman's Party Interests," <sup>8 February</sup> 1918 (Photo)

"Speaks on Work of the National Woman's Party." Evening News (Framingham, Mass.), 11 February 1918. Fund-raising and crowd-gathering techniques are elaborated after a summary of Rebecca Hourwich's speech.

"Celebrate Birthday of Susan B. Anthony." Boston Post, 16 February 1918. Rebecca Hourwich talked on the suffrage amendment and outlined plans for the \$25,000 fund to be devoted to suffrage work.

R  
"Boston Fixes Attention of Suffragists; Interest Centres in Dudley Field Malone Meeting Here Sunday." Boston American, 16 February 1918. (Photos of Rebecca Hourwich; Mary Constance McSweeney, chairman of street committee; Ruth J. Small, headquarters manager; and Mrs. Donald B. Armstrong, press chairman.)



R "'Suff' Leader Arrives Here; Miss Hourwich to Help Arrange Mass Meeting March 24." Boston Traveler, 1 March 1918. Rebecca Hourwich spoke pointing out that a photo of the liberty bell, waiting to ring when justice was done the women of this country, had been presented to every Senator by Pennsylvania suffragists.

"To Plan Mass Meeting for National Woman's Party." Boston Evening Globe, 2 March, 1918. Rebecca ~~Hourwich~~ Hourwich arranged the meeting with Dudley Field Malone as the principle speaker.

\* "Malone to Open Suffrage Battle; Former Collector of New York Speaker Here on March 24." Boston American, March 3, 1918. (Photo)

\* "National Woman's Party Holds Strategic Position." Boston Sunday Globe, 31 March 1918. (Photo)

"Miss Hourwich to Speak At Open Air Meeting in Holyoke Tomorrow Night -- Is National Organizer of Woman's Party." 1918.

E \* "Want Public to Use Influence; Suffragists Will Have Federal Amendment Rally Here Tuesday." Springfield (Mass.) Union, 6 June 1918. (Photo)

\* ~~"Want Public to Use Influence; Suffragists Will Have Federal Amendment Rally Here Tuesday." Springfield Union (evening ed.), 6 June 1918. (Photo)~~

\* "Suffrage Rally on Court Square; Speakers to Urge the Support of Federal Amendment Tonight." Springfield newspaper, 10 June, 1918.

\* "Woman Suffrage Rally; Hot Shots at Senators Lodge and Weeks Are Made at Open-Air Meeting." Springfield newspaper, 11 June 1918.

\* "An Interview with Miss Hourwich." Hampshire Gazette. (Northampton, Mass.), 11 June 1918. (Photo)



\* "History of Suffrage Reviewed by Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles at Nonquitt." New Bedford Standard, 10 August 1918.

E \* "Suffrage Girls are Pleased: Miss Hourwich and Miss Small Able to Stimulate Interest of Women Here in Their Cause." New Bedford Standard, 10 Aug. 1918.

\* "Big Suffrage Rally at Marion Friday: Miss Milholland to Sing as One Feature of Program Which Has Been Arranged," (photos of Rebecca Hourwich and Vida Milholland). New Bedford (Mass.) Times, 11 August 1918

B \* "Noted New York Singer Here: Miss Vida Milholland Will Sing at Suffrage Meetings." New Bedford Sunday Standard, 11 August 1918. (Photo of Miss Vida Hilholland)

B "Blazing Suffrage Trail on Cape; Here to Boon Equal Suffrage; Miss Small of Boston and Miss Dominick of Washington Ride About Town in Gaily Decorated Car." New Bedford Standard, August 1918. *The headline should read "Mrs Hourwich of Washington," not Mrs Dominick.*  
 "Suffrage Meetings on the Cape; Miss Vida Miholland, Mrs. Florence B. Hilles and Will Irwin Take Part." Boston Transcript, 13 August 1918.

B "Invited to Speak Here!" New Bedford Times, 14 August 1918. (Photo of Mrs. Thomas W. Hepburn, member of the executive committee of the National Woman's Party, with four children including Katherine)

B \* "Charges Root with Deceit: Miss Hourwich Says He Told Russians That American Women Were Free-- Explains Picketing." New Bedford Standard, 14 August 1918.



\* "Suffrage Meetings on Cape and in This City: Mrs. John C. Edwards, Mrs. Florence Hayward Fillee and Will Irwin Speakers." Mercury (New Bedford, Mass.), 14 August 1918.

\* "In Behalf of Woman Suffrage: Well-Attended Meeting at Home of Mrs. George D. Hammond, Fairhaven," Mercury (New Bedford, Mass.), 14 August 1918.

R "Meeting on Suffrage Held at Fairhaven," New Bedford Times, 14 August 1918.

\* "Mrs. Hillis at Nonquitt: Speaks at Meeting in Interest of National Woman's Party." Morning Mercury (~~city~~ New Bedford, Mass.), 15 August 1918.

\* "Miss Milholland to Aid 'Cause': Will Appear at Woman's Party Meetings." (Unknown Massachusetts newspaper) 17 Aug. 1918;

\* "Speaks Tonight - Mrs. Florence B. Fillee," (photo) New Bedford Times, 17 August, 1918.



"The Embryo Feminist." 1 August 1925, p. 199.

"Sex Antagonism" 29 August 1925, p. 231.

"The Eternal Male." 5 September 1925, p. 235.

"Faith Bobs Her Hair." 12 September 1925, p. 248.

"Something to Pass the Time Away." 10 October<sup>1925</sup>, p. 279.

"A Man's Town." 7 November 1925, p. 311.

"Mother Must Not Be Disturbed." 28 November 1925, p. 334.

"The Ends of Justice." 5 December 1925, p. 339.

"To the Unknown Women." 19 December 1925, p. 299.  
~~RHR's collection also contains ~~various~~ a clipping,  
probably from the Christian Science Monitor, 27 March  
1926, headlined "Unknown Woman to Be Memorialized  
for Unheralded Part in Feminist Cause." It states that  
as a result of Rebecca Hourwich's suggestion the  
"Unknown Woman" is to have a room dedicated to her  
in the building facing the Capitol, which Mrs. O.H.P.  
Belmont gave to the National Woman's Party."~~

"The Great National Calamity." 2 January 1926, p. 371.

"They Call It Justice." 9 January 1926, p. 383.

"A Matter of Perspective." 30 January 1926, p. 407.

"'She Must Be Crazy'." 13 February, 1926, p. 8.

"Why Do Boys Get Everything?" 20 February 1926, p. 16.

"Money, Money Everywhere and Not a Cent to Spend." 27 March 1926,  
p.51.

"I Think I Shall Get Married." 24 July 1926, p. 191.

"That's What Mothers Are For." 31 July 1926, p. 199.

"Men Rule the Kitchen." 14 August<sup>1926</sup>, p. 216.

"Man's Work." 28 August, p. 232.

"Signs of the Times." 25 September 1926, p. 259.

"In the Image of Father." 9 October 1926, p. 279.



Partial Listing of Materials by and about Rebecca Hourwich Reyher while in Africa, in Addition to Published Articles and Books Mentioned in Memoirs

- \* "'A Significant Artist'; Miss Stern's Exhibit - American Woman's Appreciation. Cape Argus or Cape Times (Cape Town, S. A.), 1925.
- \* "Miss Rebecca Hourwich: American Journalist Departs," Cape Argus, 30 March 1925. (Photo)
- \* Rebecca Hourwich, "I Keep My Own Name in South Africa." (Typed manuscript written in Robinwood, Maine probably 1925 or 1926.)
- \* Rebecca Reyher, "Women among the World's Workers: How They Earn 4,000 Pounds a Year in America. Cape Argus, 8 December 1934. (Photo of RHR and her daughter.)
- \* Map of the Countries and Islands of Africa. (Marked map showing route of RHR's 1965 trip.)

Note: RHR has a scrapbook of other articles written while in Africa



## Other Items in Rebecca Hourwich Reyher's Collection

- \* "Third Ward Suffrage Week: Suffrage Street Meetings in Charge of the Women's Political Union of Newark." (A handbill announcing meetings August 23-8, 1915.)
 

"Some Suffrage Cookery." Christian Science Monitor, 20 March 1917. Contains recipes from cook books put out by suffrage organizations, including "enfranchised macaroni." In the cook books, the suffragists "offer the plea that those who eat the dishes and like them will remember that good cooks not only want, but need and deserve, good votes."

"Suffrage a 'War Measure' President [Wilson] Insists to Senate; Need Women's Help to Win, He Says, and 'Without Their Counsellings We Shall Be Only Half Wise,' His Declaration in Last Effort to Force Through Amendment." New York World, 1 October 1918.
- \* Winifred Mallon, "Millitant Suffragists Who Have Fallen before Cupid." Public Ledger--Philadelphia, 2 April 1922.
- \* Rebecca Hourwich, "Mr. Lloyd George Accused of Not Keeping the Faith; Lady Rhondda Says Pre-Election Promises of Equality for Women Were Ignored by British Government." Christian Science Monitor, 29 August 1922. (Photo of Lady Rhondda).
- "Ganna Walska Enters the Political Arena: Wife of Harold McCormick; Receiving Illinois Leaders in the Equal Rights Movement at Her House in Chicago as Her Debut in the Campaign (Photo of group, including RHR) New York Times, Sunday, 9 December 1923.
- \* "'Unknown Woman' to Be Memorialized for Unheralded Part in Feminist Cause," Christian Science Monitor, probably 27 March 1926. Concerns Rebecca Hourwich's suggestinn, later carried out, that a room in the Alva Belmont House be dedicated to the "Unknown Woman," just as the allied nations decided to honor the Unknown Soldier after World War I.
- \* Alma Lutz to Rebecca Hourwich, 28 June 1930. Letter asks her to "organize preparatory to the Regional Conference which is to be held in Boston in November. RHR penned a note on the back of this letter, "This was long after I worked for the NWP regularly and I had already worked for the J. W. Thompson Agency. But Miss Paul always tried to get me for spot jobs."



"Should These Women Be Handicapped by Special Laws or Shall They Have Equal Opportunity with Men to Make Their Way in the Business World?" (Handbill reprinted from Boston Evening Transcript, 15 February 1930.)

\* Mabel Vernon, Chairman of Peoples Mandate Committee, to Frederick A. Colwell, Chief of American Specialists Branch, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State, 12 September 1960. (Letter of recommendation)



## COURSES TAUGHT AT THE NEW SCHOOL OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Spring 1964**✓ Polygamy, polyandry, monogamy: marriage forms and traditions**

Wednesdays, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M., beginning February 5. \$50 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

This course will consider the various kinds of marriage arrangements found in different parts of the world: polygamy, which is common in Africa and other areas; polyandry, which is rare, though it still exists; and monogamy. Beyond the factual exploration, such general questions as the following will be discussed: Which type of marriage do men or women prefer? Do they have a choice? How do children fare? Is romantic love a worthy consideration or a fantasy? Is free choice and equal partnership in marriage essential for the development of personal initiative and responsibility, and a guarantee of a free society?

Fall 1964**Other lands and cultures**

Wednesdays, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M., beginning September 23. \$55

REBECCA REYHER

Invariably the American traveller is asked to tell of "your country", and expected to show an equal interest in "my country." With this comes an exchange of ideas and impressions, which, at best, are subjective. It is increasingly urgent today that we examine our basic attitudes toward human

relations within the family and community in which we live, and compare them with those of other contemporary and ancient societies in order to assess our patterns of living, goals and directions, as well as theirs. Travel reports, books by writers of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the United States, as well as commentary about them will be featured. Folk tales, current news, proverbs, cartoons, jokes, food, music, dance, folk and fine art will be stressed as keys to culture. Additional guest lecturers from every continent will participate in many of the scheduled sessions.

Fall 1965**Windows on Africa:****four months around South, East, Central and West Africa**

Wednesdays, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M., beginning September 22. \$60.

REBECCA REYHER

Each country is different, each has its own problems, but all countries share a universal passion, to get more education, to learn more. What are they studying, what are they taught, how and where do they meet? What especially is being done for women? Dewey's basic idea that *education is primarily a preparation for life* is a common goal. This course aims to give a background of what daily life is like in a rapidly changing society that is trying to open doors to a great number of people quickly and simultaneously. Discussion is encouraged; books and papers from South Africa, Rhodesia, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal, etc. are used.

Spring 1966

As above - Fall 1965 listing



Fall 1966**Windows on Africa: keys to understanding the continent I**

Wednesdays, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M., beginning September 21. \$60 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

Each country is different, each has its own problems, but all countries share a passion to get more education, widen basic opportunities, improve the standard of living, develop their own culture, establish national unity, purpose and pride. What is the role of women in furthering these goals? This course aims to present the primary problems and issues of men and women, and their effort to solve them, and to give a background of what daily life is like in a rapidly changing society that is trying to open doors to a great number of people quickly and simultaneously in Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Cameroun, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal, the Portuguese Colonies and others. Special attention is given to Rhodesia and South Africa. African guests, field trips, folk tales, proverbs, cartoons, newspapers, art and literature are featured.

**Windows on the world:  
an experiment in meaningful travel I**

Thursdays, 2:00-4:00 P.M., beginning September 22. \$60 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

This course is designed for those travellers, in fact or fantasy, who seek to know and understand people of other lands through getting to know them better. Except for the first one, an introduction, and the last one, a summary, each session has two or three guest lecturers familiar with their country. By means of varying techniques, descriptive narrative, films or slides, and specific highlights of national characteristics, family relationships, customs, costumes, historic facts, shrines or places, folk-tales, proverbs, crafts, food specialities, books and literature are presented. Through these and recommended star attractions to visit here and abroad, each area will be a complete and separate experience.

Spring 1967

As above - Fall 1966 listing



**The world we live in—ours, and theirs:  
a survey of our cultural heritage**

Thursdays, 2:00-4:00 P.M., beginning September 28. \$70 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

Who are we and how did we get that way? What is all mankind's history and background. This course explores our social origins, racial definitions, historic family groupings, historic marriage arrangements of polygamy, polyandry and monogamy, the work and play roles of men and women, the significance of language, food, clothing, other environmental forces, and compares ancient and traditional behavior patterns and attitudes with current ones, and departures from them. Area similarities and differences are noted, their prejudices and preferences examined, and universals emphasized. Besides factual exploration, and texts, cartoons, folklore, legends, literature, art, music and films all over the world will be used, and guest speakers and field trips introduced.

**Africa below the Zambesi: keys to understanding  
Southern Africa's world-wide significance**

Wednesdays, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M., beginning September 27. \$70 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

The Zambesi River is popularly known as Africa's Mason-Dixon line. Above it Africans are in control of their governments, below it are South Africa a highly industrialized state, where white men came more than three hundred years ago, and Rhodesia, a prosperous tobacco country where white minorities are determined to perpetuate their domination. Adjacent are the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, with revolutionary ferment and valuable outlets to the sea. Here, too, are South West Africa demanding freedom from South African administration, and the former British High Commission territories, the newly independent states of Lesotho and Botswana, almost entirely dependent on their neighbors for employment. Will these prove Bantu homelands or Pan-African outposts? Will the Transkei, first of South Africa's *Bantustans* prove apartheid workable? What is the future of all races here? What is their historical background? What of the Asians among them? What are the delineations, relations, privileges, opportunities, discriminations, daily life and opportunities of the various racial groups? How does this part of Africa affect world stability, and the United States? Who are the leaders? This course will try to consider these problems and circumstances, and each week to also note and analyze the current news and trends of other vital African areas.

**Spring 1968**

**Africa North of the Zambesi and South of the Sahara—  
Keys to understanding their world-wide significance.**

Wednesdays, 11:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M., beginning February 7. \$70 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

The central belt of the continent, popularly called Black Africa, is where Africans are in control of their recently independent countries. What are their history, present circumstances, and foreseeable future? How do they affect world stability, the United States and each other? Is the Organization of African Unity a vital force? What are the major problems, conflicts and declared goals, the significant political, economic and social directions? Are new voices and new groups demanding to be heard? Will the military remain in power, one party states become the rule, political opposition be recognized? Are educational facilities expanding rapidly enough to satisfy individual yearning and community needs? Are there enough jobs? How are women reconciling their traditional and new roles? How strong are family and tribal ties? These questions, and some of the internal conflicts, border disputes, coups, development and progress of Ethiopia, the Sudan, Nigeria, Biafra, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, other former French colonies, the Congo, and Uganda will be studied, the conflicting attitudes toward Asians and Africanization in Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia, the growing respect for Negritude, African history, literature and arts will be explored. Biographies, speeches and published work of Senghor, Kaunda, Nyerere, Kenyatta, Mboya, Azikwe and other leaders will be included. Each week current African news will also be noted and discussed.



Spring 1968 (Second course listing)

**Your city and mine—New York City's cultural heritage**  
 Thursdays, 2:00-4:00 P.M., beginning February 8. \$70 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

Who and what is a New Yorker? From where did they come, why did they leave their home base, what customs, values and traditions did they bring with them? What has been the consistent pattern of demand and development? From 1626, when Peter Minuit made a deal with the Indians, Manhattan Island and its environs have had a successive wave of dynamic newcomers with roots in other parts of the world. The Flushing Remonstrance is often called the first American Declaration of Independence. Battles for religious liberty inaugurated by the Quakers, Peter Zenger's victory for a free press and the zeal of the Sons of Liberty established New York as a focal point of resistance to authority. Samuel Fraunces, a West Indian Creole, who bought the tavern that still bears his name, and Haym Solomon, a Polish Jew who arrived in 1772, and helped finance the Revolution, were early symbols of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants of every nationality, color and creed that were to leave their mark upon the city. What were each group's struggles for recognition and survival? Their changing neighborhoods, descendants, activities, associations, and physical and cultural landmarks will be studied and explored. Guest lecturers, field trips, films, and folklore will be included.

Fall 1968

**Your City and Mine: New York City's Cultural Heritage**  
 As listed Spring 1968

Spring 1969

**Black Africa in world focus**

Wednesdays, 11:30 A.M.-1:10 P.M., beginning February 5. \$70 (Reg. fee: p. 6).

REBECCA REYHER

The central belt of the continent, north of the Zambesi River, and south of the Sahara is generally called Black Africa, where Africans are in control of recently independent countries. This course aims to provide a wider knowledge and understanding of Africa's peoples and policies by analyzing some current questions raised by popular media about this area. How strong are the ties with Europe, Asia, the United States? How do they affect world stability? What are the major problems, conflicts and declared goals, the significant political, economic and social trends and directions? Are new voices demanding to be heard? What of the Colonial heritage? Will the military remain in power, one-party states prevail, political opposition be recognized? Is the Organization of African Unity a vital force? Is education expanding rapidly enough? Are there enough jobs? How strong are tribal and family ties? How are women reconciling their traditional and new roles and responsibilities? What is the foreseeable future? Countries studied are Nigeria, Biafra, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, possibly Liberia, Ethiopia, others. Africanization; treatment of Asians, Negritude, African history, culture, arts and literature are explored. Biographies, speeches and published works of Senghor, Kaunda, Nyerere, Kenyatta and others are included. Current African news is noted and discussed.



Fall 1969**White control: Southern Africa's challenge to the future**

Tuesdays, 11:20 A.M.-1:00 P.M., beginning September 30. \$70

REBECCA REYHER

Below the Zambesi River are the bastions of white supremacy on a black continent. South Africa, a highly industrialized state, and Rhodesia, a prosperous tobacco country, bolster *apartheid* with the claim that American *black power* seeks *separate development*, too. The Portuguese Colonies of Angola and Mozambique, and South West Africa, demanding freedom from South African administration, report increasing guerilla warfare and revolutionary ferment. Within this cross-fire are the white controlled Transkei, first of the experimental Bantustans, and the new independent black states of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, landlocked and dependent on their neighbors for employment. What are the historic background, daily life and opportunities of all the races here? What of the Asians among them? How does this area with ancient sea lanes to the East relate to world stability and to the United States? The course aims to give background understanding to questions raised by popular news media. Current news of all of Africa will also be noted and discussed.

Spring 1970**Black control: Africa's challenge to the world**

Tuesdays, 11:20 A.M.-1:00 P.M., beginning February 3. \$70

REBECCA REYHER

North of the Zambesi; and south of the Sahara, in the central belt of the continent, Africans are politically in control of their countries. Militarily they depend on outside assistance for training and material. Economically their banks and resources are linked to overseas capital. Once again world powers are competing for areas of influence here. How does this affect world stability, the United States? What are the major problems, conflicts, goals, and significant political, economic and social trends here? The course aims to provide a wider knowledge of Africa's policies and peoples by analyzing questions increasingly raised in popular media. Who are the leaders? Are new voices demanding to be heard? Are there enough jobs? What about education? Will the military remain in power, stage more coups, or yield to civilian rule? Will political opposition be recognized or considered treason? How widespread is the support given the guerillas fighting white supremacy in Southern Africa? How strong are tribal and family ties? What is the role of women? Is population growth outstripping economic development? Are Asians and other minorities secure? Countries discussed will be Nigeria, Biafra, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Senegal, Guinea and others. African history, cultural background, arts and literature, Negritude, and Africanization will be explored. Films, guest speakers and field trips included.

Fall 1970**White Supremacy: Southern Africa's Challenge to a Black Continent**

As described Fall 1969

**Rebecca Reyher**

B.A., University of Chicago. Special studies, Columbia University, New York School of Social Work. Six trips to Africa, covering more than five years residence there. Visited 13 English-speaking countries on latest trip (Spring 1965) including Rhodesia, interviewing many prominent women on the changes taking place in African women's social and family roles. Research also in Ceylon (five months); India, Pakistan, Latin America, other countries. Author: *Zulu Woman*, with foreword by Ruth Benedict; *The Fan and His Hundred Wives*; *My Mother is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World* (a universal folk-tale); other works and articles.



## Author Loses Suit Against 'Sesame St.'

### Court Blocks Copyright Action Over Program on Public Television

A copyright suit by the author and illustrator of a children's book against Children's Television Workshop, producer of "Sesame Street" for public television, was **dismissed** this week in federal court.

Judge John M. Cannella ruled that a "Sesame Street" program, "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World," was nothing more than its own variation of a story told to author Mrs. Rebecca Reyher by her mother as a child.

#### Further Ruling

He also held that an illustration by Ruth Gannett for Mrs. Reyher's book, "My Mother Is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World," and one used in a Sesame Street magazine were different enough to **eliminate** any substantial similarity of protected expressions.

His rulings were contained in an opinion Tuesday in *Reyher v. Children's Television Workshop*, 72-627, a suit filed in 1972 in the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Mrs. Reyher's book, according to the judge, **told the tale** of a small Russian peasant girl who became separated from her mother and who **made her way** to a village looking for her mother, describing her as the **most beautiful woman** in the world.

The villagers **saw her** and brought **her** the local **beautiful woman** for the child.

*Continued on page 2, column 3*

## Copyright Suit

(Continued)

to ~~see~~ but none was her mother. Finally, the mother was discovered and to the villagers' surprise she was a "rather homely looking woman."

The girl told the villagers "this is my mother, the most beautiful woman in the world," **the moral being** that "we do not love people because they are beautiful but they seem beautiful to us because we love them."

Judge Cannella, after viewing the television segment and three articles that appeared in a Sesame Street magazine, said it was clear that there was a "substantial similarity" between Mrs. Reyher's book, the television program and the magazine articles.

#### Author's Admission

However, he noted that Mrs. Reyher had admitted that the story was **told to her** by her Russian mother and that she did not testify that she "had added anything to the story or changed it in any significant way."

"It is thus clear to the court," he continued, "that plaintiffs' book is a 'derivative' work. That is, it has been 'substantially copied from a prior work' in the public domain. . . ."

"The accepted rule . . . is

that the copyright in a derivative work extends only to the material contributed by the author of such work, as distinguished from the pre-existing material employed in the work."

Given this, he said, Mrs. Reyher could prevail only if the workshop had copied material that was her "original intellectual product," as opposed "to the old public domain element of which the author has made use."

#### Finding Not Supported

He found there was no allegation nor would the facts support a finding that her work was either copied verbatim or paraphrased. The most that could be said was that Mrs. Reyher's book had been read and then retold in the workshop's own words, a finding that would not support a cause of action for copyright infringement.

Judge Cannella also said he had compared the two drawings, both of which depict a reunion scene at the end of the story, and found that while there was "more than a passing similarity," the differences were "so substantial" that the average lay person would detect numerous differences that "tend to eliminate any substantial similarity of protected expression."

The plaintiffs were represented by Stoll & Stoll; the defendants, by Coudert Brothers.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

----- -x

REBECCA REYHER and RUTH GANNETT, : 72 Civ. 627  
 : (J.M.C.)  
 Plaintiffs, :

- - against - :

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP :  
and TUESDAY PUBLICATIONS, INC., :  
 :  
 Defendants. :

----- -x

BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE  
WRITERS GUILD

Amici curiae, Writers Guild of America, East, Inc. and Writers Guild of America, West, Inc. (both hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Guild"), respectfully submit this brief in the above-entitled action in support of plaintiff Rebecca Reyher's application for reconsideration of the Court's judgment of dismissal. This brief is confined in its discussion solely to that part of the decision of Mr. Justice Cannella which dismissed that part of the complaint



dealing with the written, as distinguished from the graphic, material contained in the book "My Mother Is the Most Beautiful Woman in the World".

The Guild is the collective bargaining representative for some 5,000 writers throughout the United States engaged to write literary material for motion pictures, television and radio. It has collective bargaining agreements with all of the networks and virtually all major and independent motion picture and television producers, which such agreements cover the minimum terms and conditions under which writers may supply literary material in the aforementioned media, including, of course, those minimum rights which writers reserve in connection with any such engagements. Because the membership of the Guild is composed of professional writers, the interests of those members are not necessarily confined to the television, motion picture and radio media; many of the Guild's members, in addition to writing for those media, also write books, stage plays, magazine articles and the like.



The Guild's interest in the Court's decision dismissing the complaint with respect to the literary material involved arises out of the possible far reaching effect of the Court's conclusion that the plaintiff's book was a derivative work.

As the Guild reads the Court's decision, there appears to be an implication that, were it not for the conclusion that the plaintiff's work is a derivative one, the defendants might well have infringed on the plaintiff's book because of the existence of marked similarities in the material. The Guild further understands the Court's decision to mean that because the plaintiff had testified that she originally had heard the story upon which her book was based from her mother and because there was an unproven possibility that the story itself might have been a folk tale, the plaintiff's book becomes merely a derivative work and "the defendants have the same right to make use of it [the basic story] as does Mrs. Reyher, herself." There was apparently no evidence presented that the story came anywhere other



than from the plaintiff's mother in oral form nor, apparently, was there any proof that the work was a folk tale or otherwise in public domain.

Thus, as the Guild understands the Court's conclusion, the mere telling of the story by the plaintiff's mother to the plaintiff and the uncorroborated surmise that it might have been a folk tale, renders the plaintiff's work a derivative work not entitled to full copyright protection as to story itself.

Such a conclusion, if it were to become a precedent, would create complete and utter chaos in the writing field not only with respect to books but also insofar as television, motion pictures, radio and all other writing media are concerned--and this not only with respect to writers, but with respect to producers as well.

The practice in the writing profession has long been that a purchaser of literary material, whether he be a producer or a book publisher, seeks the maximum



guarantee of originality in accepting the work. In varying degrees, virtually every agreement a writer enters into contains such representations of originality and indemnification provisions against suits brought for infringement. If the decision as read by the Guild were to stand as precedent, there would be few instances where a writer could in good conscience execute any such warranties of originality. Creativity does not exist in a vacuum. A writer in most instances usually has little to rely upon for his or her creativity other than his or her own intellect and experience. This experience consists of memories, observations, bits and pieces of remembered dialogue and family reminiscences. Without these, a writer could not be expected to produce a literary work to which complete strangers could relate. In the instant case, apparently the experience factor forming the basis for the plaintiff's literary work was a story told to her by her mother. If that telling renders the creative work of the plaintiff a derivative work, then a myriad of well known



literary works of art would similarly fall within that same category. Indeed, an unconscionable burden of proof would then be placed upon the writer to prove that any story written by him was completely and totally unique and never before heard.

At the very least, it is respectfully submitted that the plaintiff's mother was entitled to a common law copyright in the story which, by her actions and by her relationship to the plaintiff, she ceded to the plaintiff, giving the plaintiff the exclusive rights thereto. Similarly, the plaintiff should not be put to the test of proving that the story itself was not in the public domain. Certainly, that is the clearcut burden of the defendants, if such is the defendants' defense. In all cases where the defense to actions of this sort is that prior art exists, the defendant clearly has the burden of proving that prior art. In this instance, if the Guild correctly reads the Court's recitation of the facts, no such proof was adduced.



If the conclusion reached by the Court were to become precedental, works such as "The Old Man and the Sea", "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Remembrance of Things Past" would be fair game for all.

For those reasons, the Guild respectfully prays that the Court reconsider its decision, and upon reconsideration find that an infringement with respect to the literary material here involved took place.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD B. JABLOW

PAUL P. SELVIN

Attorneys for Writers Guild of  
America, East, Inc. and  
Writers Guild of America,  
West, Inc.

400 Madison Avenue

New York, New York 10017

(212) 755-2040



## List of Topics Discussed by Rebecca Reyher Correlated with the Tapes

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Tape</u>
PARENTS BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCE	1
Learning of "Heerly toe bed" ditty	8
EDUCATION - from a number of tapes, but mostly	1
EARLY SUFFRAGE WORK	1 and 2
WASHINGTON, THE SOUTH, AND MASSACHUSETTS	2
HEADING THE NEW YORK OFFICE	2 and 3
Mrs. Belmont's Dilemma	4
Soliciting Support in New York (article of Silas Bent)	4
Suspensions of Activists in Early Twenties	6
HEADING THE CHICAGO OFFICE	4
Articles for <u>Hearst's International</u>	3
CAREER STEPPING STONES	6 and 7
Colorado Springs Meeting; Cavalcade to Coolidge	4
SATISFACTIONS FROM CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN WELFARE	7 and 8
BROADCASTING, LECTURING, TEACHING AND MORE TRAVEL	7 and 8
THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT AND THE WOMAN'S PARTY	Many tapes
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	5
Williams, Whitehouse, Laughlin	8
Political-Economic Identity of NWP Supporters	4 and 5
Suffrage Won, Varied Concerns of Women	" "
Social Attitudes	" "
Struggle for ERA	5
PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS	From all tapes

The memoir itself contains a considerable amount of material not on the tapes because so much was added during the editing process. The tapes have been deposited in the Microforms Division of The Bancroft Library.



## INDEX - Rebecca Hourwich Reyher

- Abramowitz, Bessie (Mrs. Sidney Hillman), 25  
 academic freedom, 5  
 Amalgamated Clothing Workers, 25
- Belmont, Mrs. O.H.P., 75, 84-86, 91  
 Bement, Grace, 65  
 Bender, Albert, 154-161, 256-257  
 Bent, Silas, 95-96, 178  
 Bingham, Senator Hiram, 93  
 birth control, 72-74, 121, 176, 225-226, 233-235  
 Blackwell, Alice Stone, 46  
 Brannan, Mrs. John Winters, 55, 77, 101, 112  
 Breckinridge, Sophonisba, 25-28  
 Bryant, Louise, 90-91  
 Burklin, Lydia, 29
- child care centers, 184-185  
 Colestock, Sidney, 102-108, 227  
 Columbia University, 21  
 Congressional Committee. See National Woman's Party  
 Congressional Union. See National Woman's Party
- Deal, Mary, 13, 18-19  
 DuBois, W.E.B., 62  
 Dubrow, Mary, 37-39, 188-189  
 Ducey, Helena, 15-17
- Edwards, Mrs. John Couper, 74  
 Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), 93, 100, 114-128, 163-166, 221, 224, 226, 239-243
- Fearon, George R., 78-79  
 Feminist Alliance, 33-35  
Fon and His Hundred Wives, The, 138-139, 143  
 Friendship House (Washington, D.C.), 29
- Gandhi, Manilal, 133, 145  
 Gandhi, Sita, 145  
 Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, 217-218



Glover, Eliza, 118, 249-253  
 Gould, Mrs. Frank, 52-55  
 Gregory, Alyse, 33, 35-36, 41

Hapgood, Norman, 125-130  
 Havemeyer, Mrs. H.O., 77-84  
 Hearst, Mrs. William Randolph, 84-85  
 Henderson, Jessica, 67-68  
 Henderson, Mrs. John, 94-95  
 Hilles, Florence Bayard, 74, 195  
 Hopkins, Alice Turnbull, 38  
 Hopkins, J.A.H., 38-40  
 Hourwich, Isaac A. See Rebecca Hourwich Reyher, family  
 Hull House, 25-26, 73

Irwin, Inez Haynes, 217-218

Jabova, Tanga, 135

Jews:

    from Russia to U.S., 1-13, 201-202

    from Germany to Dominican Republic, 198-199

Johnson, Adelaide, 14

Kuhn, Mrs. Simon, 174-177

·Lady Rhondda, 106-111

LaGuardia, Fiorella, 4, 92

Laughlin, Gail, 219-220

Lavis, Sidney Warren, 133-135

Lewis, James Hamilton, 50-51

Liberal Club (New York), 33, 35

Loram, Charles, 130-131

Malone, Dudley Field, 66

Marquard, Leo, 3

McKee, Joseph, 179-182

media:

    magazines, 2, 49-51, 100, 106, 108, 110, 124-126, 132-135, 143-145,  
     151, 162

    newspapers, 3-4, 64, 95, 105, 108, 111, 119, 121, 126, 132, 135, 163,  
     165-167, 171, 178, 220

    radio, 172-173

Movius, Alice, 63, 93

Musser, Elise, 190-194, 205



National American Woman Suffrage Association, 38, 46  
 National Woman's Party, 29-32, 36-38, 46, 63, 92, 99-100, 105, 117,  
 122, 163-169, 188, 219-226, 239-240. See also Reyher, Rebecca  
 Hourwich, work for suffrage  
 Negroes, 56, 61, 63, 221, 249-253  
 New School for Social Research, 21, 206  
 New York School of Social Work, 21-22

Otey, Mrs. Dexter, 53-54

Pam, Judge Hugo, 121  
 Paton, Alan, 144-145  
 Paul, Alice, 14-15, 45-50, 55, 69-73, 82, 86-87, 92-100, 106, 119,  
 124, 165, 197, 221-224, 239  
 Peoples Mandate Committee, 185-197  
 Pierce, Vivian, 105-106, 224-225  
 Pollitzer, Anita, 90, 92, 224  
 prostitution, 103-105

race relations. See Negroes

Rankin, Jeannette, 61  
 Raphaelson, Rayna, 227-231  
 Reyher, Ferdinand, 89, 95-96, 118, 130, 163, 245-261  
 Reyher, Rebecca Hourwich:  
 family: father, 1-12, 25, 46, 62, 111, 130, 196, 200-202, 254-255;  
 mother, 7-20, 111, 130, 201; uncle, 124-125; brother, 6, 12-13,  
 18; sister, 261-264; half brothers and sister, 7, 9, 41-42  
 education: early, 8-9, 12-13; Columbia University, 20-21, 28, 34,  
 47, 235; University of Chicago, 20-28, 34, 72-73, 227, 233, 235;  
 New York School of Social Work, 21-22, 35, 96  
 employment: Woman's City Club (Chicago), 25-26; Friendship House  
 (Washington, D.C.), 29-30; Works Progress Administration, 142,  
 184-188; J. Walter Thompson, 163, 169-174, 178; Joseph McKee, 179-  
 180; Sears Roebuck, 182-183, 225; Dominican Republic Settlement  
 Association, 198-200; WNYC radio, 203-205; lecturing, 205-206  
 work for suffrage:  
 Women's Political Union, 35-40, 46; Feminist Alliance, 33-35;  
 National Woman's Suffrage Association (Massachusetts), 41-47  
 National Woman's Party, 14-15, 21, 23, 29-32, 48-56, 163-167,  
 188, 247  
 Boston Office, 65-74  
 Chicago Office, 104, 114-128, 254  
 New York Office, 75-96, 101-112, 169  
 Washington Office, 97-99  
 work for ERA, 7, 21, 60, 63, 93, 114-128, 224, 243  
 work in the peace movement, 27, 185-197, 223



- Reyher, Rebecca Hourwich (continued)  
 as a mother, 96, 113, 118, 123, 127, 129, 136, 141-142, 162, 169,  
 174, 178, 184-185, 201-204, 246-249, 253-260  
 as a writer, 108, 123-135, 138, 141-143, 147-149, 178-179, 204, 207,  
 256, 260  
 religion and philosophy, 200-202  
 travel: Africa, 129-158, 206-217, 258; Austria, 176; Egypt, 174,  
 Latin America, 191-200; Rome, 177; Russia, 173-176; San Francisco,  
 154-160  
 self-evaluation, 7, 12-13, 18-19, 27-28, 35, 39, 112, 183, 263-264
- Reynolds, Minnie J., 36-39
- Rodman, Henrietta, 33-35
- Roosevelt, Eleanor, 116-117, 241-24
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 70-71
- Russia:  
 Jews in, 1-13, 201, 255  
 women in, 176
- Spence, Matilda, 35-36
- Stern, Irma, 132
- Stevens, Doris, 72, 105, 120, 186
- suffrage movement:  
 attitudes toward, 4, 49, 52-53, 55, 60-61, 137, 231-233. See also  
 Rebecca Hourwich Reyher, work for suffrage; National Woman's Party
- Sutherland, Kenneth, 179-182
- Taylor, Eleanor, 97-98
- Taylor, Mary Caroline, 168-169
- Thompson, J. Walter, 169-174, 177-178
- Thomas, W.I., 20-21, 233
- United Nations:  
 Commission on the Status of Women, 150
- University of Chicago, 5, 20-25
- Vernon, Mabel, 121, 146, 163, 165, 175, 185-186, 190, 194-197, 222-225
- Whitehouse, Florence Treat, 219-220
- Williams, Margaret, 219-220
- Wilson, Woodrow, 57, 70, 76-79, 87-88



## women:

- as housewives and mothers, 7, 22-23, 66, 84, 125, 135, 141, 248-249, 251-253
  - in advertising, 170-172
  - in the peace movement (1930s), 186
  - in the work force, 25, 34-35, 47, 115-117, 184-185, 239, 249-253
  - in Africa, 131, 135-141, 150-153, 207, 216
  - in Latin America, 193-194
  - in Russia, 176
- Works Progress Administration (WPA), 184-189
- Yiddish Scientific Institute (Yivo), 5
- Younger, Maud, 52-59, 78-79



Amelia R. Fry

Graduated from the University of Oklahoma, B.A. in psychology and English, M.A. in educational psychology and English, University of Illinois; additional work, University of Chicago, California State University at Hayward.

Instructor, freshman English at University of Illinois and at Hiram College. Reporter, suburban daily newspaper, 1966-67.

Interviewer, Regional Oral History Office, 1959--; conducted interview series on University history, woman suffrage, the history of conservation and forestry, public administration and politics. Director, Earl Warren Era Oral History Project, documenting governmental/political history of California 1925-1953; director, Goodwin Knight-Edmund G. Brown Era Project.

Author of articles in professional and popular journals; instructor, summer Oral History Institute, University of Vermont, 1975, 1976, and oral history workshops for Oral History Association and historical agencies; consultant to other oral history projects; oral history editor, Journal of Library History, 1969-1974; secretary, the Oral History Association, 1970-1973.



Fern Schoonmaker Ingersoll

Graduated from Wellesley College, 1949,  
B.A. in English.

Librarian in Boston Public Library, 1949-1951.  
Traveled in Europe, did occasional teaching of  
English, 1951-1953. Librarian for UNECO, organ-  
izing library for fundamental education center in  
Thailand, 1954-1956. High School teacher, Ithaca,  
New York, 1957-1960, 1961. Did anthropological  
research in Thailand, 1960-1961, 1967. Lectured  
to Peace Corps Trainees going to Thailand, 1962-  
1965. Worked as administrative assistant for  
anthropological research team and studied Thai  
literature at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok,  
1967-1969. Published Sang Thong: A Dance-Drama  
from Thailand, 1973. Awarded M.A. in comparative  
literature, 1973. Has lectured at Foreign Service  
Institute since 1972.

Became interviewer for Regional Oral History Office  
on forestry and conservation subjects, Washington,  
D.C., 1965-1967; editor of suffragists and forestry  
interviews, 1973 to present.



