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## INTRODUCTION

# The Gender of International Thought

IN 1929, a former classics don at Newnham College, Cambridge published the first book of a new and highly distinctive genre, an historical survey of international thought.<sup>1</sup> *The Growth of International Thought* was the first English-language book to coin the term. But this was not the book that Florence Melian Stawell had intended to write.<sup>2</sup> As Glenda Sluga has pointed out, Stawell had wanted instead to publish a popular history of the League of Nations. Asked by the publisher to review her proposal, Gilbert Murray, Oxford's Regius Professor of Greek, sent the project in another direction because he was going to write a book on the League. Stawell wrote a history of international thought instead. Within a year, that book was completed. The book she had wanted to write was not. Murray never published his book on the League.

At the very origin of twentieth-century Anglophone histories of international thought we find an intellectual contingency in a deeply gendered world. Entirely by chance, a sixty-year-old woman who shared her life with another woman and who left academia due to ill-health inaugurated a genre from which she and all other women, people of colour, and those living non-heteronormative lives would be erased.

'How often does History go wrong owing to this sort of thing? And what was the cause of such an omission?,'<sup>3</sup> Alice Maud Allen asked in her biography of 'international thinker' Sophy Sanger.<sup>4</sup> Like Stawell, Sanger studied at Newnham, Cambridge's oldest women's college, and became Britain's leading expert on international industrial law, one of the most significant and effective dimensions of the League of Nation's work.<sup>5</sup> 'The "queer foreigners" . . . must have thought her a queer representative of Great Britain', Allen wrote of her life

companion.<sup>6</sup> While Allen was ‘Chef de la Division Domestique’,<sup>7</sup> Sanger took a second law degree, founded her own journal, *The World’s Labour Laws*, and was a key architect of the creation and conception of the International Labour Organization (ILO). ‘We determined to make our friendship and alliance as near a marriage as we could’, Allen later recalled: ‘we would give . . . love and care for one another, companionship, faithfulness, security, each putting the other first. We would share our incomes and whatever we possessed; and create for one another a home . . . And we brought one another happiness.’<sup>8</sup> Much to Maud Allen’s feminist rage, Sophy Sanger was later marginalised from the ILO by less knowledgeable men who took credit for her work and ideas.<sup>9</sup> With *Sophy Sanger: A Pioneer in Internationalism* Allen determined to write Sanger—and herself—back into histories of international thought. Some international intellectual history is a labour of queer love.

This book is a history of international thought set in Britain during the twentieth century. It focuses on a cohort of women and their ideas on international relations, including international organisations, anticolonial organising and non-Western powers, colonial administration, the British Empire and its collapse, and the new science of international relations. Outside the academy, women of world-historical significance educated tens of thousands of Black and brown Britons on international relations and mobilised them to political action. In universities, think tanks, and summer schools, a new field of knowledge was built on the intellectual labours of women historians and classicists; scholars of international law, international institutions and colonial administration; information managers, educators, and intellectual entrepreneurs on the margins of academe. All these thinkers were drawn to the magnificent and destructive fact that there are multiple and different kinds of politics interacting in the world, to the fact of international relations.

This book is about a cohort of women intellectuals, but also how—like Stawell and Sanger—they were written out of histories of international thought. Like many other academic fields, International Relations (IR) presents its own history as almost entirely homosocial, a conversation between elite white men. This is an old story, of course, that feminist historians have exposed many times in philosophy, law, the sciences, and the arts. But IR’s is a more paradoxical story of gendered power, knowledge, and erasure. Women were there from the start. The new field relied on the intellectual labours of women, figures who were influential and well known in their own time, but were only later devalued, ignored, and erased.<sup>10</sup>

This is the feminist history that I set out to write, an alternative genealogy of women intellectuals in a male-dominated world operating in a less male-dominated field. However, it turns out that one cannot write this history, or at least I cannot write this history, without discerning something else with wider implications for understanding the gendered history of knowledge. During the 1950s, with Britain violently clinging onto empire, and when Maud Allen was writing about Sophy Sanger, a small number of university men attempted to redefine the academic field in opposition to the forms of international relations expertise, to the writings, genres, and research methods in which women international thinkers had excelled. The attempt to forge IR as a separate academic field in Britain in the middle decades of the twentieth century was a highly gendered but also racialised project with major implications for its long-term intellectual standing.

The academic field of IR has come a long way since the 1950s. Yet, its standing and legitimacy is still questioned. Some of its best-known practitioners lament that IR is ‘backward’, without the intellectual standing of philosophy or history.<sup>11</sup> Its ‘big names’ are almost entirely unknown outside the field.<sup>12</sup> As I researched the ideas and the lives of women international thinkers, and how they were erased, I realised that their story revealed the main sources of IR’s failure as an intellectual project. As scholars and publics still struggle to make sense of plurality on a worldwide scale, recovering the women against whom the academic field was defined is of enormous relevance. It not only reveals the gendered, racialised, and methodological roots of IR’s intellectual failures, but potential sources of its renewal as Britain continues to reckon—and not reckon—with the legacies of empire in public and intellectual life.

## The History of International Thought without Women

Almost a century after Florence Melian Stawell’s 1929 book, women and people of colour are still rarely at the centre of histories of international thought.<sup>13</sup> Even Stawell’s own cast of thinkers in *The Growth of International Thought* was entirely male and Eurocentric. The academic field tasked with writing intellectual and disciplinary histories of international relations offers a similarly patrilineal story about ‘white man’s IR’, of ‘fathers’ ‘master-debating’ the ‘seminal’ thinkers.<sup>14</sup> The works and ideas of men appear as if from nowhere or emerge only in conversation with other white men in a game of intellectual influence.<sup>15</sup> Even the few belated attempts to address the entrenched neglect

of women tokenise one or two. These women, in turn, are usually presented as precursors to feminist IR, as if women can only teach men about gender.

Generations of feminist historians and theorists have shown that when women and people of colour are absent from intellectual histories it is not because they were missing, but because they were erased. The patrilineal story is entirely inadequate for understanding the thinkers, genres, and intimate conditions of intellectual production.<sup>16</sup> The absence of women and people of colour in intellectual histories is never evidence of intellectual deficit, that they could not think very deeply.<sup>17</sup> Rather, overwhelmingly white male authors equivocated, deeply attached to a fantasy of the superiority of white men and to their own selective ignorance. Even as some identified IR as a failed intellectual project, others had little interest in undoing the racialised and disciplinary boundaries between women's intellectual history and histories of international thought, or interweaving interpersonal, institutional, and intellectual histories.<sup>18</sup>

This book examines a much wider variety of political, professional, intimate, and intellectual contexts and genres of international thinking. It does not centre the usual cast of white men or ignore the personal and the intimate contexts of intellectual production. It focuses on the women whom many of these men and later intellectual historians marginalised to produce an all-white male canon.<sup>19</sup> It examines the operations of gendered, racial and other hierarchies in the production of international thought in imperial Britain and in historical writing on this thought.<sup>20</sup> It draws on and extends the work of feminist intellectual historians and theorists to write a new kind of critical disciplinary history.

Historians have already shown that 'international relations' was a highly feminised field from its heyday in the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> Women were some of the most active agents of the new internationalism in anticolonial and feminist struggles, including at the League of Nations.<sup>22</sup> They thought about international relations in academia, journalism, philanthropy, political parties, summer schools, think tanks, or advocacy organisations such as the League of Nations Union and International League for Peace and Freedom. They wrote the first English-language book to coin the term 'international thought', as we have seen, but also some of the earliest textbooks and model international relations syllabi. Two wealthy sisters and a brother established the world's first IR professorship. Women pioneered the information services on which the new science was built and some of the methodological approaches to which it would turn.<sup>23</sup>

Because the early science initially had no single home in one university department or form of disciplinary training, international relations lacked some of the more entrenched patriarchal networks of the older disciplines of history, philosophy, and law.<sup>24</sup> It was thus an intellectual and practical field in which some women could get ahead. They founded the best-funded international relations institute in the interwar United States and were among the earliest cohorts of interdisciplinary scholars appointed to the first IR departments in Britain.<sup>25</sup> Oxford and Edinburgh's first women professors, Agnes Headlam-Morley and Elizabeth Wiskemann, and Oxford's first African-American graduate student, Merze Tate, were all scholars of international relations. IR's first spousal hire was the husband of Lilian Friedländer, the first woman appointed to an IR department, who was once in sole charge of its teaching.

This book returns to key moments and locations in the formation of IR as a separate university field in twentieth-century Britain to show the centrality of gender relations to this project. I return to some of the highest profile and influential women in the early field, including Oxford's Montague Burton Professor of IR for over thirty years, Agnes Headlam-Morley, and Margaret Cleeve, the head of the Information Department at Chatham House for twenty-five years. I show that women were the leading international thinkers of their generation across the four decades of the mid-twentieth century. These were Margery Perham, the most important white public intellectual on the British Empire; Claudia Jones, a British subject from Trinidad who theorised and educated ordinary people about class, gendered, and racialised oppression on a global scale; and Susan Strange, the dominant persona in the IR university profession in the 1970s and 1980s.

Intimate life is a fundamental part of the history of international thinking. I show how the early cross-disciplinary science relied on feminised labour, including assistant lectureships in support of male professors, the domestic and familial support of wives and social capital of their *salons*, and research assistance, sometimes carried out by wives and mistresses.<sup>26</sup> One wife and interwar IR's most vilified woman, Lucie Zimmern, shaped the course of IR history as protagonist in a major debate on the nature of international relations and how it should be taught. During the effort to create IR as a separate university subject after World War II, women scholars such as Lucy Philip Mair were marginalised from the largest university departments of IR in Britain and later erased from their histories. Some, like Lilian Friedländer, left academia entirely or, like Lucy Mair, moved to a different department as intellectual

fields were reorganised during decolonisation. Others such as Eileen Power and Merze Tate were writing on international relations in locations that are entirely missing or neglected in disciplinary histories.<sup>27</sup>

I show that the project for a 'separate IR' initiated in the 1950s by a few London-based men followed a masculine and imperial imperative to develop an abstract sociological 'theory' of international society, elevating forms of sociology that were already passé. One of these men, Charles Manning, quite literally imagined the new IR teacher as a 'Superman'.<sup>28</sup> This project for a separate IR was deeply ideological, defined against multiple feminised, racialised and methodological Others: against historical and political analyses of empire; against popular writing aimed at wider publics and children; against a 'middle-aged spinster'<sup>29</sup> diplomatic historian and disciplined historical method; against a wife of a canonical thinker; and against the 'voice of Portia', Shakespeare's capable cross-dressing heroine from *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>30</sup> By the 1980s, one woman, Susan Strange, variously seen as an honorary gentleman, superwoman and Queen Bee, fashioned herself as an iconoclastic outsider on a patricidal mission to reinvent IR again.

If we want to understand the history of international thinking during the twentieth century, and especially the formation of a separate university subject in Britain, then we must understand how it was gendered.<sup>31</sup> We have to look not just to the earliest university departments and think tanks, not just lecture halls, academia, tangible scholarly achievements and new degree programmes. We must look to women's colleges (including their hiring practices and heavy teaching burdens), summer schools, departments of music and history, professors' homes, hotel rooms, concert halls, *salons*, and independent journalism. We must examine the accidents and contingencies, including illness, ableism, the effects of mental-health crises, and several early deaths on the development of the field. We must examine the roads not taken, the course proposals that went nowhere and the book projects never completed. We must look at the minutiae of university operations and workings of power and the many disciplines, fields, and methodological approaches sidelined. We cannot fixate on the homosocial relations between professional men. We must examine the personal and the intimate, heterosexual power couples, marriages and affairs, trailing spouses and self-sacrificing 'spinsters'<sup>32</sup> devoted to an intellectual cause, heteronormative lives and intimate partnerships between women. Many wives and assistants were not amanuenses, secretaries transcribing the work of the so-called 'fathers of international thought' but international thinkers themselves. In contrast to the discourse of 'fathers' or

‘masters’, the history of international thinking was more marital and domestic than patrilineal, something carried on between husbands and wives, lovers and intimate partners, between siblings, and occasionally fathers and mothers.

## Women (and White Men)?

This project began as a feminist recovery of figures written out of the history of an intellectual field in which they were prominent. However, not all readers will sympathise with the focus on women. Why define a cohort of thinkers in gendered terms? Unless we assume that only white men wrote anything important on international relations, then on one level the question answers itself. As I was coming up as a young scholar in the early 2000s, I found it very difficult to respect or admire the men I was told formed the intellectual history of my field. In retrospect, this may be why I wrote my first book on Hannah Arendt’s international thought.<sup>33</sup> I do not respect or admire everything about the cohort of women in this book, nor strongly identify with all aspects of their work. Yet their recovery is necessary in the first instance to better understand the actual history of the field and to rectify an epistemic injustice.<sup>34</sup>

Except it is not that simple. Many queer and gender theorists argue that recovery history and genealogical approaches not only risk hagiography but also representing a continuous past of ‘women thinkers’ or ‘women’s experience’, which reinforces binaries of sex and gender that we ought to reject.<sup>35</sup> Certainly one risk in feminist recovery is that it simply recuperates (mostly) elite white women from the condescension of elite white men.<sup>36</sup> We might condemn the sexism and patriarchy that shaped women’s intellectual production, yet does it follow that we recover these figures primarily *as women*? During the research for this book, the political and intellectual stakes of the ‘woman question’ in Britain became even greater. In the name of defending biological and sex-based women’s rights, small gains in trans rights, trans recognition, and gender-affirming healthcare were rolled back. As violent assaults on trans, non-binary, and queer communities increased, feminist movements split, and feminist collaborations ended.

To write an intellectual history that centres figures who were defined as, read as, and marginalised as women, who defined themselves as women, does not conflate gender with biological sex. This book does not revolve around a stable ontological subject. Woman is a subject constructed through history, not biology.<sup>37</sup> All of the figures in my cohort understood themselves as women. At least one briefly experimented with their gender identity and, in

their own writing on feminist movements around the world, never used the term ‘women’ universally.<sup>38</sup> Many in my cohort lived queer lives, though none were trans, non-binary, or genderqueer as far as I know. The operative question is not whether my cohort are essentially part of a group defined in terms of sex. It is how the gender binary shaped the production and reception of international thought. All of them operated in professional and intellectual contexts that were fundamentally structured around gender difference and patriarchal and heterosexist norms. The challenge is to write a history that does not impose gender or other sexual conventions on figures who may not accept them nor reproduce the hierarchies that shaped the conditions and the reception of their work.

I acknowledge the limits of the category of historical women and the genealogical recovery that I have attempted. Though I am interested in how my cohort performed and expressed gender as a form of opposition to, resistance to, and complicity in patriarchal, racist and class structures, I do not subject their gender and/or sexual identities to radical questioning.<sup>39</sup> Such a book could certainly be written, as could a book on the male homosocial desire, bonding rituals and identity politics that produced IR’s all-white male canon.<sup>40</sup> However, we cannot do justice to these figures as historical subjects without also understanding how they were positioned and read *as women* and how this was fundamental to their work and the history of the wider intellectual field.

But not only as *women*. I do not argue that gender is the most important thing about my cohort. For obvious reasons in a study that encompasses the greatest expansion and contraction of the British Empire, their international thought and its reception were equally shaped by structures and ideologies of race, empire, and class, as well as heteronormativity, that is, intersecting and multiple positionalities.<sup>41</sup> Florence Melian Stawell’s *The Growth of International Thought* was a product of her class privilege and status as a white Australian settler abroad. Maud Allen’s intellectual biography of Sophy Sanger was a celebration of a middle-class social reformer just as concerned with countering proletarian revolution as international action on the wrongs of child labour and the dangers of white phosphorous.

Some figures were reluctant to define themselves in gendered terms and, like Susan Strange, were indifferent and sometimes hostile toward feminist movements. It would be equally anachronistic to describe others, like Stawell and Allen, as representing some timeless lesbian identity when female friendship was a bedrock of women’s intellectual life, or even label them queer as biographical subjects. Then as now, many women chose not to marry men

because, as Allen wrote, ‘the conditions of marriage at the time seemed to them intolerable.’<sup>42</sup> However, the near-total erasure of all women, queer, and non-binary people from international intellectual history invites the recovery of some not only as *women*, but as figures who were in intellectual and often intimate and sexual partnerships with other women. After Stawell resigned her Newnham College lectureship due to ill health she could keep writing on international relations because of the loving support of her partner Clare Reynolds. Maud Allen’s intellectual history of Sophy Sanger is a queer labour of love not because they were sexually intimate—that we cannot know—but because they lived non-heteronormative lives.

As a practice of intellectual and political resistance, still others defined themselves primarily in racial and class terms. Born in Trinidad, Claudia Jones did not receive formal education beyond high school, yet became an original theorist of the ‘triple oppression’ of Black working-class women and disseminator of Black Atlantic thought in the British metropole. She also died prematurely and penniless. Most other figures were relatively privileged, certainly compared to Jones, including African–American Merze Tate. A lighter-skinned Black woman who grew up on a family-owned farm in the American mid-West on land previously stolen from Native Americans, Tate was a member of the first African–American sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, that funded her first year at Oxford. Unlike IR’s intellectual and disciplinary historians, I do not conceive international thinking in Britain as ‘white’.

Many dozens of thinkers could have been included in this book. I limit the study to those I consider the eighteen most important for understanding the gendered and racialised history of international thinking in twentieth-century Britain. I examine twelve in most detail: Lucie Barbier Zimmern, Margery Perham, Eileen Power, Lucy Philip Mair, Lilian Friedländer Vránek, Merze Tate, Agnes Headlam-Morley, Claudia Jones, Margaret Cleeve, Coral Bell, Rachel Wall and Susan Strange.<sup>43</sup> I also discuss F. Melian Stawell, Elizabeth Wisemann, Gwladys Jones, Sibyl Crowe, Lilian Knowles, and Betty Behrens.

What makes these figures a cohort? They are all twentieth-century intellectuals born in imperial metropolises or colonies and were defined and read as women. They all thought deeply about international relations in the early to long mid-twentieth century and all spent a substantial portion of their intellectual lives in Britain. They worked in or around academe or related professional fields like think tanks, summer schools, and journalism. All but one, Claudia Jones, had connections to the new intellectual field-in-formation of international relations. I include Jones as the most effective originator and

disseminator of Black Atlantic thought in Britain after her deportation from the United States in 1958. The treatment and later reception or non-reception of every one of these thinkers shaped the development of the academic field of IR, yet with only one exception none have received the recognition they deserve. I suggest that recovery history can also illuminate seemingly ‘exceptional’ thinkers like Susan Strange that intellectual and disciplinary historians thought they knew well.

These figures are also a cohort because with only a few exceptions they were all deeply historical thinkers with a commitment to historical methods. More so than in the United States, international relations began in Britain as a cross-disciplinary field with its closest ties to history. Contrary to frequent claims that international relations in Britain was far more historical than American political science, a low bar given the dominance of rationalist approaches, historical methods were slowly sidelined in the post–World War II project to forge a ‘separate IR.’<sup>44</sup> By training or temperament, members of my cohort were highly skilled and creative historians, often seeking to pioneer new approaches to history including moving away from Eurocentrism. They practised international thinking as diplomatic and contemporary historians; social, economic, and world historians; classicists and historical comparativists; or as a form of political education. I show that their historical sensibilities partly account for their marginalisation from IR and their erasure from its intellectual history.

I do not seek the inclusion of my cohort in a new, presumably more ‘inclusive’ IR canon as if the current racial and gendered hierarchies of the field could be undone in this way.<sup>45</sup> Nor are they presented as figures to emulate, unsung heroines, saints, or victims, even as some faced a near-constant barrage of misogynist and racist abuse. They do not represent a women’s ‘tradition’ of international thought. There are obviously some common themes across their work—for example, Perham, Friedländer, Power, Strange, Jones and Wall all criticised political-science notions of state sovereignty. Yet there is little commonality in their politics, which extend from high Tory appeasement, anticolonial Black Marxism, conservative and liberal imperialism, socialist and feminist internationalism, conservative realism, and antiracist geopolitics.<sup>46</sup> Though many were historians, they were also anthropologists, classicists, an international lawyer, a political economist, a musician, a journalist and an information manager. Instead of looking for a woman’s tradition of international thought, or forebears of something now called ‘historical IR’, I recover my figures as living people, flawed and active agents in their own lives and the intellectual lives of others, and sometimes by interactions with leading ‘IR

men.’<sup>47</sup> I read them all in the context of a larger history of international thought, the intellectual project for a ‘separate IR’, and as offering different potentialities and missed opportunities for this field still in formation.

The book is both a recovery history and a critical history of a scholarly field. It turns out that much of the history of ‘British IR’ is a story of men who hated women, and the intellectual and institutional legacies of misogyny and racism in its earliest institutions, including Chatham House, the British Coordinating Committee for International Studies (BCCIS), founded in 1928, the Department of International Studies (later Relations) at the London School of Economics (LSE), founded in 1927, and the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics, founded in 1959. I confess that I would rather not attend to the men and their networks. Yet I could not write a gendered history without also addressing the men who used their power to create and defend personal fiefdoms, to marry or begin affairs with students or assistants, to commit intellectual amicide, to consolidate their scholarly identity by caricaturing, ignoring, erasing or gender-typecasting women. There was an emotionally abusive husband, a doctoral supervisor who threatened to throw his graduate student down the stairs and declined to pass her dissertation. There was a male professor who refused to appoint women to academic posts or acknowledge women’s scholarship, another who bullied a woman out of her job for having too many children, another who appropriated a woman’s idea for a book, and an outright plagiarist of women’s work.

Some readers may be impatient with the attention paid to some of these men. They are only discussed when necessary to hold them accountable for their actions and to uncover some of the lesser-known aspects of their intellectual milieux. I could not write the story of British IR without the men who were dependent on a racialised and heterosexual gender order that pushed out women and elevated white male mediocrities, or who vilified some women. Some men were good mentors and tried to support their intellectual partners, wives and/or women students. In a reversal of the usual gendered plagiarism, one husband, Alfred Zimmern, may have co-written a book that was published solely in his wife’s name. Others recognised some of the most exceptional women, like Eileen Power and Susan Strange, as their intellectual equals. Gilbert Murray claimed for himself Stawell’s idea for a book on the League but was a strong supporter of women’s suffrage and education, and a Council member of Somerville, one of Oxford’s first women’s colleges, and an early mentor to Lucy Philip Mair.<sup>48</sup>

Not all the men were mediocrities, misogynists, and racists. However, one figure stands out as all three. He also happened to do more than anyone to shape twentieth-century British IR.<sup>49</sup> Charles Manning (1894–1978) was a white supremacist South African legal scholar who held the most senior position in Britain's largest IR department for thirty-two years, the Montague Burton Professorship of IR at the LSE. He was also a leading figure at BCCIS, founded in 1928 by the League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation to advance IR teaching and research.<sup>50</sup> Manning was also singularly influential over the careers and thinking of leading men associated with the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics.

Manning published little but devoted himself to establishing international relations as a separate university subject. Under his influence, an interdisciplinary field that included disciplined and trained historians, lawyers, anthropologists, classicists, and others was transformed into a field with no specialist methodological training at all. He conceived the new IR specialist as a 'Superman', meaning an expert in no one scholarly method or discipline, rather an amateur in them all.<sup>51</sup> British IR's intellectual standing and even legitimacy never recovered, and its relation to its two closest disciplines, political science and history, never settled. Some of Manning's modes of thought are still present in the norms of the field today.

This book presents new evidence for IR's intellectual failures and its remedies. I return to key moments in the 1930s, 1950s and 1970s to show the marginalisation of women, people of colour, and historical method narrowed IR's intellectual resources and impoverished its work. It is no coincidence that Manning refused to hire a single woman to a permanent post, married one of his undergraduate students, and erased from his department's history the woman who did much of its IR teaching for almost two decades. Even some of IR's earliest leading men, including historians E. H. Carr and Martin Wight, became alienated from the field, abandoning IR to return to history.

Histories of thought matter because they draw intellectual and methodological boundaries around a scholarly field, shaping its present and future. Intellectual and disciplinary histories are legitimisation projects; they deplete or enhance a field's intellectual resources by introducing novel themes, temporalities, and geographies. Recent historiography has challenged the long-held view that IR's intellectual history is a series of 'great debates' beginning in the 1920s when so-called 'realists' and 'idealists' debated the merits, morality, and possibilities of the League of Nations. There has been much focus on the post-1945 American moment, including how realism's reimagining of empire was constituted in the exile of central European Jews.<sup>52</sup> Others have shown

how projects of imperial reform were central to early visions of the new intellectual field, demoting the significance of the world's first IR professorship, established in the small Welsh seaside town of Aberystwyth in 1919.<sup>53</sup>

My cohort poses further challenges to IR's intellectual histories and founding myths, including the singularity of IR's leading men and the exceptionalism of one woman; the subliminal feminisation of 'idealism'; the existence, location, content, and protagonists of any 'first great debate' in IR, nuancing what such a debate could be; the myth that British IR's leading men bequeathed a historical field; and the significance of powerful intellectual currents coming from across the Atlantic. Not American realism, but the exilic Black Atlantic tradition offered Britons a different vision of empire, Britishness, international relations, and the public audiences for international thought. None of this cohort were obsessed with defining themselves against American political science. To them, depending on class, nation, and racial position, the United States was variously a place of birth and early childhood, a nation steeped in white supremacy and expulsion, a source of students, a location of scholarships and career advancement, and an intellectual culture in need of tutoring or friendly critique.

In the specifically British imperial context, this cohort also challenge assumptions about the disciplines, locations and genres of international thinking. Oxford and Cambridge, including their independent self-governing and multidisciplinary women's colleges, become more significant; Aberystwyth and LSE become less so; and the most interesting international thinking at these institutions is found outside their IR departments. To some extent, this is a very English and, to a lesser extent, Welsh story. But the cohort also raises questions about Britain as a multiracial and imperial formation, the significance of decolonisation and the new territorial and racial definition of Britain as post-imperial and white to the relatively belated establishment of British IR's first professional organisation. Whether they identified as IR scholars or not, they offer a different genealogy of international thinking not as saviours of contemporary IR, but in revealing intellectual paths taken and not taken, profoundly shaping the professional development and historical self-understanding of a field still struggling with its identity.

## Methods and Outline

Much of the empirical record for this book was assembled from scratch using primary, predominantly archival sources. To begin to identify women teaching international relations in the academy, I combed through institutional records

and lecture lists of the major locations of IR teaching, including in Oxford, Cambridge, London, Aberystwyth, Edinburgh, and Manchester; identified over one hundred different sets of papers in over twenty locations ranging from personal papers, personnel files, correspondence, lecture notes and other teaching materials. Other primary sources include dozens of books, hundreds of academic journal and newspaper articles, book reviews, teaching materials, internal university memos, journalism, radio addresses, images, memoir and autobiographical writing, speeches, poetry, obituaries and oral histories, some newly created through the Leverhulme Project on Women and the History of International Thought.<sup>54</sup>

I deal with various sources in different ways. Oral histories are a valuable window into one person's memory of historical events, not objective fact; they augment rather than underpin my account of an historical moment or figure. Autobiographical writing is not only a source of information. It is also a writing of the self in ways that can shape the development of an intellectual field. I also combine archival and visual analysis of photographic images to show how some in my cohort crafted their own identity and persona, how they fashioned themselves through their choice of clothes, posture, body language, facial expression, how they looked at the camera, how they performed gender, race, class, and intellectual power.<sup>55</sup>

Some of my thinkers are well known outside IR and are subjects of full-length biographies. I draw on these and other secondary literature to supplement my reading of primary sources and my own arguments about, and contextualisation, of these thinkers.<sup>56</sup> I account for my cohort's intellectual production on international relations but also present them as biographical and historical subjects with intimate lives. However, my account of their intimate worlds is obviously incomplete, and I refrain from speculating about their inner lives.

I encountered the commonplace methodological hurdles of feminist recovery, including partial, incomplete, or non-existent papers, and other forms of gendered erasure, including research and writing by wives or mistresses who received little or no credit for their work. My findings are clearly shaped by the intersectional oppressions that produce different forms of inclusion and exclusion in archives and other primary sources. Some personal papers were never kept and will never be recovered. Some, like Agnes Headlam-Morley's, were held (until very recently) with their father's; or, like Lucie Zimmern's, subsumed and uncatalogued with their husbands; or, like Rachel Wall's, saved in the private family home of a loving niece hoping one day that an historian

would ask to see them. For some figures, the sources are abundant, and I could have written more. In one case, Zimmern's, they are so abundant that—given her proximity and influence on interwar IR's leading man—her erasure from IR's history continues to shock.

Most of my cohort worked in or were connected to elite British higher education, a setting both of new freedoms for some women and of colonial subjugation for others. In both Britain and the United States, women and Black people entered the academic profession through the historically Black and/or women's colleges created in the late nineteenth century. It is not surprising that Robert Vitalis's recovery of a counter-discourse to white supremacist IR in the United States centred on a cohort of African–American scholars at the historically Black Howard University and their links to the wider Black intellectual world.<sup>57</sup> This study similarly recovers historical women's colleges, among other locations, as sites of women's international thought, including one of Vitalis's lead protagonists, Merze Tate.

I do not assume that the academy is the only or best location of international thinking, on the contrary; only that recovery history must include women both in and outside of this setting. My focus on thinkers of the 'British world' does not indicate that other national–imperial contexts are less important, or that the intellectual field emerged in the imperial centre rather than in and with its peripheries.<sup>58</sup> Neither the British nor the American cases are universal models against which comparable histories in other locations should be understood to converge or diverge.<sup>59</sup> I neither wish to exaggerate or downplay the significance of Britain to the wider intellectual field. However, my reading of the distinctiveness of British IR's development is different to existing accounts. Some of the limitations of this study are imposed by the class and racial hierarchies of academe, in which only some exceptional women of colour could transgress with great difficulty and at great personal cost, and some by my own limitations as a scholar. There is much more scope to explore the international thinking of differently racialised and nationalised women in the British world, both inside and outside academe, and histories centring differently imperial, national, and postcolonial contexts.<sup>60</sup>

The book is structured broadly chronologically with chapters arranged thematically around one or more thinkers. Chapter 1 returns to a familiar moment and location in disciplinary histories, the Welsh town of Aberystwyth, where two wealthy sisters and a brother established the first professorship of International Politics. We begin here not to reinstate 'Aber 1919' as IR's founding moment. It was the founding moment and location not of an academic

discipline but of a love story, a marriage, and an intellectual partnership that upends numerous assumptions about the thinkers, locations, possibilities, and racial politics of interwar IR. We find the future wife of a canonical thinker, one half of IR's first celebrity power couple, practising her distinctive and original approach to international relations *before* the first IR department was established. Lucie Barbier Zimmern became the originator—and initial victor—of a debate with one of American IR's 'founding fathers', Nicholas Spykman, on how IR should be taught. In Aberystwyth, we also find IR's first spousal hire, the husband of Lilian Friedländer, the first woman appointed to an IR department, illuminating diverging professional trajectories from heterosexual marriage.

International thinking in Britain during the twentieth century is obviously bound up with imperial reform and the management of global decline. Easily the most important white British historian, commentator, and public intellectual on twentieth-century empire and decolonisation was Margery Perham. Yet while intellectual and disciplinary historians have paid much attention to empire, there has been little to no engagement in IR with this most important thinker on empire at its end.<sup>61</sup> Perham's marginalisation delayed by decades IR's reckoning with empire, including its legacies and critics. More than any other British thinker closely associated with the new IR field, Perham engaged extensively with Black interlocutors, including radical Black intellectual traditions, as will be seen in chapters 2 and 8. She also bridged the intellectual and institutional gap between the two generations of men on whom IR's intellectual and disciplinary historians have obsessed, the interwar imperial founders of British IR's earliest scientific institutions and the post-World War II men of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics.

Dismissed as unscientific propaganda, and almost entirely neglected in IR's intellectual and disciplinary histories, white women's popular writing on international and imperial affairs was responsible for the first English-language book to use the term 'international thought'. Chapter 3 discusses this genre through the early work of Eileen Power and F. Melian Stawell. It shows some of British IR's most important founding institutions and research methods were defined in gendered opposition to this popular form of writing. The science of international relations was consolidated not in universities, but through the painstaking work of documentation, collecting, arranging, reading clippings from the national and international press, and the organisation and maintenance of reliable facts in libraries of documents and statistics at Britain's most influential international relations 'think tank',

Chatham House, all overseen by Margaret Cleeve. No other figure is so closely associated with the success of a central institution of British international relations that was also major location of women's intellectual labour. Cleeve's case, and the army of backroom Chatham Houseworkers and researchers she oversaw, illuminates changing valuations of professional worth and gendered politics of memorialisation and non-memorialisation in early white women's IR.

A new science of international relations was forged at Chatham House under Margaret Cleeve. Yet the question of IR's standing as a separate university subject remained an open question in the 1930s. Mary Gwladys Jones was teaching International Law and Organisation at Cambridge, likely drawn into the subject through her intimate friendship with Eileen Power. The course was dropped in 1945 due to doubts among historians about the intellectual rigour and presentism of the new science. Chapter 4 further develops the themes of intimate relationships and conflicting visions of the new field through the first women appointed to IR's earliest departments. As a teacher of a considerable proportion of students in the largest IR department, Lucy Philip Mair had a clear vision of IR teaching, but it was very different to the senior male colleague who later erased her and her subject of colonial administration from IR's history. We examine the highly gendered reasoning of the London-based scholars *au fait* with fragments of sociology which they used to justify IR as a separate university subject.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the vanguard of international thinking at LSE was not in the then International Studies Department, and certainly not by its Montague Burton Professor. It was by Eileen Power, a social and economic historian in the Department of History. Chapter 5 discusses the most extraordinary and methodologically consequential marginalisation from the project for a separate IR. Power was no more peripheral to the interwar field than numerous of her male contemporaries who are repeatedly analysed in histories, having won the male game of intellectual influence. As an economic historian writing histories of the transition from a medieval pluriverse of empires to a world of national-imperial states, Power's scholarship at the intersection of world history and international relations anticipated the second generation of the *Annales* school, which influenced world systems theory, and calls into question the later attempt to justify a separate IR on a radical distinction between sociology and historical method. Power also belied the schism between Economics and Politics necessary for Susan Strange's later project for a new International Political Economy (IPE).

Both Eileen Power and the LSE men of the British Coordinating Committee for International Studies agreed on the limits of traditional approaches to diplomatic history that exclusively focused on the doings of diplomats and other ‘great men.’ Yet Power also understood the indispensability of the historian’s craft and the many ways to study diplomacy. Chapter 6 examines Merze Tate’s three hard years as the first African–American to earn a graduate degree at Oxford. Her training in diplomatic history was the grounding for her later antiracist approach to geopolitics. At Oxford, Tate faced the vicissitudes of graduate supervision, institutional blundering and the personal and intellectual risks of extreme financial precarity, racism and the burden of racial representation. She went on to become one of the most significant international thinkers of the twentieth century not because she studied at Oxford but despite it.

Chapter 7 turns to Tate’s uncredited supervisor at Oxford, and the second most vilified woman in British IR, Agnes Headlam-Morley, whom I read alongside her colleague, Sibyl Crowe. Given her standing as Oxford’s Montague Burton Professor of IR for three decades, Headlam-Morley became the caricature of the ‘diplomatic historian’ for the IR men trying to establish a separate subject, and the scapegoat for Oxford’s delay in developing an IR graduate degree. I challenge the presumption in existing histories that it was a lack of entrepreneurial ambition or supposed commitment to a narrow form of diplomatic history that explains Headlam-Morley’s alleged refusal to ‘develop’ IR. Rather she was the gendered foil and constitutive Other for the intellectual projects and insecurities of some of early IR’s leading men. If IR failed as an intellectual project, then how, we might ask, do their intellectual projects and legacies measure up today?

Under Headlam-Morley’s reign, imperialism remained a core international relations subject at Oxford, often taught by the university’s ‘sentinels of the British Empire.’<sup>62</sup> Chapter 8 returns to the twentieth century’s most important white British intellectual on decolonisation, the Establishment’s authoritative voice on empire. We focus on Margery Perham’s skill at acknowledging and deflecting Britain’s imperial crimes, her intellectual and emotional performance of white Britons’ moral anguish and effort to assuage Britain’s wounded dignity. We also examine Perham’s account of the political psychology of anticolonial critique and consciousness of her own and white Britain’s racial positionality. Ironically, Perham’s assimilation of empire’s loss, and influence on some of British IR’s leading men, lay the groundwork for her own erasure from the field and for Susan Strange’s project for a post-imperial IR.

In the post-war American academy, race and empire were expunged from IR by the marginalisation of African–American intellectuals.<sup>63</sup> With fewer Black and brown thinkers in the British academy, the white men of BCCIS and the British Committee need only ignore the ‘other special relationship’ between Britain and racialised thinkers of the Black Atlantic.<sup>64</sup> In refusing this political and intellectual gift of Black radical thought, the source of some of the most penetrating analyses of twentieth-century world politics, IR’s early men further impoverished the field.<sup>65</sup> If, for many of its early founders, the task of the new field was to shape public opinion, then without question Claudia Jones was the most impressive and consequential figure in this vein. Chapter 9 examines Jones’s international thought and pedagogy in the two institutions she founded after her deportation and exile to London.

By the 1950s and 1960s, a new generation of white women was making its way in the academy. Chapter 10 contrasts the stories of Rachel Wall and Coral Bell to illuminate different political and intellectual trajectories for the field at its elite locations and the benefits and risks of male patronage. Seeming stories of professional ‘failure’ and personal heartbreak are as revealing of the ableist and gendered history of a field and its criteria of failure and ‘success’ as cases of professional triumph and recognition. They also reveal intellectual paths not taken and the effects of accidents and contingencies, including the decision of whom to love.

The most conventionally successful figure in the history of British IR is the only woman to come close to receiving the recognition she deserves. However, Susan Strange’s intellectual labours alone do not explain her legacy and reception. Strange’s active fashioning of her own intellectual persona, including her deployment of sex and gender in autobiographical writing, was crucial to how she was read and received. Chapter 11 tells this story through what was most exceptional about Strange, not that she was a woman, but that she was a mother of six children who worked for pay. The most interesting aspects of Strange’s persona, her iconoclasm and irreverence toward IR’s male mediocrities and rational-choice theory, helped fashion a post-imperial British IR that also upheld some of its other more conservative norms.

The conclusion reflects on the three main sources of British IR’s failure—methodological, racist–imperial, and patriarchal—and what the intellectual traditions, genealogies, and resources recovered in this history contribute to conversations about IR’s futures.

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