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World Citizens: Women's Broadcasting and Internationalism

Miss Beegling has travelled considerably, and it was her travel chats and talks on her experiences in Hollywood which first made her popular 'on the air'.¹

In the late 1920s, Helen Beegling became well known as the compere of 2GB's women's session, and gave many talks on her extensive travels in the United States, the Pacific Islands and Asia during the interwar years.² Her experiences were exciting—she fell into a crocodile-infested river in Papua New Guinea, stayed with a Batak community in Sumatra and took part in the Thaipusam festival in India.³ In October 1930, Rockhampton's *Evening News* reported that few 'women have experienced more unusual adventures than Miss Helen Beegling, radio announcer'.⁴ As her broadcasts show, by the 1930s radio had become a medium through which women could share their experiences of the world. During a decade when the Great Depression limited the ability of many to travel, and the rise of fascism and the descent into World War II (WWII) brought foreign affairs to the forefront of public debate, radio provided an opportunity for internationalist women to contribute to public debate on major world issues and encourage women at home to become engaged global citizens.

1 'Miss Helen Jean Beegling', *Brisbane Courier*, 5 June 1930, 20.

2 Ibid.

3 'Adventures in the South Seas', *Evening News*, 25 October 1930, 2; 'Adventures on Her Travels', *Sun*, 20 May 1938, 11.

4 'Adventures in the South Seas'.

Australian women broadcasters used radio to claim their own voices as experts on international affairs and to encourage other women to become active world citizens in the 1930s. World citizenship refers to beliefs and practices that can be used to transform political communities and the global order so that they conform to universalistic moral commitments. Advocates for world citizenship seek to persuade members of national communities that they have moral responsibilities to outsiders that are not overridden by national interests.⁵ During a period when feminist internationalism experienced a high point of activity, internationalist women broadcasters sought to promote Australians' responsibility to world affairs by giving talks about their experiences abroad and knowledge of various foreign countries, and about international feminism and peace activism. Broadcasting was a key tool that internationalist women used to educate their female listeners about the world beyond Australia's shores, promote their causes and encourage others to become actively involved in shaping the global order.

Connecting the World via Wireless

From its introduction in 1923, radio was promoted as a medium that could connect Australia to the rest of the world. In January 1925, for example, the *Listener In* reported that Australian listeners would soon be able to hear broadcasts from New Zealand and America, and that Californian audiences were tuning in to Australian radio plays.⁶ Due to its ability to traverse borders, radio was an ideal medium through which women could enact and promote international citizenship, and many women broadcasters saw the medium as a key to the development of a new era of international cooperation.⁷ Feminist leader Jessie Street, for instance, believed that technology had 'made the world a neighbourhood' where isolationism was no longer possible.⁸ This ethos was captured by travel

5 Andrew Linklater, 'Cosmopolitan Citizenship', in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 2002), 331.

6 'In the Air!', *Listener In*, 17 January 1925, 18; 'Listening-In to America', *Listener In*, 17 January 1925, 20.

7 Yves Rees, 'Making Waves Across the Pacific: Women, Radio Broadcasting and Australian-US Relations', *Feminist Media Histories* 5, no. 3 (2019): 85–113; Justine Lloyd, "A Girdle of Thought Thrown around the World": International Aspirations of in Women's Programming in Australia and Canada', *Feminist Media Histories* 5, no. 3 (2019): 168–94.

8 Lenore Coltheart, 'Citizens of the World: Jessie Street and International Feminism', *Hecate* 31, no. 1 (2005): 187.

talks, a type of broadcast that featured descriptions of journeys to far off places, the cultural experiences of the traveller while there, and sometimes even information about the culture and history of the particular country. They capitalised on a desire by middle-class women to experience the world, even if it were not feasible for them to undertake the long journeys from Australia's shores.

Women at home in Australia experienced different countries and cultures, as well as international movements, through listening to the radio and reading newspapers and magazines. *Walkabout*, published from 1934 until 1974, was a popular magazine that carried accounts of travels across Australia and the world. Travel writing in accessible, middlebrow forums such as *Walkabout* provided an easy way for the public to experience other cultures.⁹ Popular travel writing held particular significance for women writers, as they often positioned their experiences in relation to the societal expectation of feminine domesticity. As Robyn Greaves has observed, writer Patsy Adam-Smith 'sought to break free from the restrictive feminised space of the home' and used travel writing 'to legitimate her presence in masculine space and as a reason to keep on the move outside the domestic realm'.¹⁰ Travel articles were also published in women's magazines, such as the *Australian Women's Weekly*, thereby demonstrating both their popularity among the readers of these publications and the enthusiasm of the women who wrote them.¹¹ Radio travel talks were another manifestation of this genre that imbued the tales with the intimate and sensory experience of oral storytelling.

Europe was a popular topic for travel talks. Actress and playwright Catherine Duncan, for example, gave a series of talks on 3LO in 1935 in which she used her skills in French and German to read foreign newspapers and present the latest news from Berlin, Vienna, Paris and various other European cities.¹² The focus on European countries in the 1930s often spoke to increasing anxieties over the heightened geopolitical tensions of the period, and Duncan's language skills gave her the ability to uncover insights directly from the countries involved.

9 Anna Johnston, 'Becoming "Pacific-Minded": Australian Middlebrow Writers in the 1940s and the Mobility of Texts', *Transfers* 7, no. 1 (2017): 91.

10 Robyn Greaves, 'Footloose in Tasmania: Patsy Adam-Smith and Middlebrow Travel Writing, 1950–1973', *Studies in Travel Writing* 20, no. 1 (2016): 69.

11 Bruce Elder, 'Travel Reporting', in *A Companion to the Australian Media*, ed. Bridget Griffen-Foley (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing Ltd, 2014), 476–77.

12 Georgia Rivers, 'Women and the Microphone', *Listener In*, 6 July 1935, 23.

Australian women also spoke about destinations beyond Europe; indeed, their travel talks were particularly notable for their engagement with Asia at a time when most Australians were suspicious or ignorant of their near neighbours. Travel and tourism to Asia was a crucial aspect of developing Australian impressions of the region and its inhabitants.¹³ Women who had travelled to Asia were an anomaly in the 1930s, thus the act of women broadcasters telling their stories and impressions of the region over the airwaves was powerful in promoting both the region as a hospitable neighbour and women as engaged Pacific citizens.

Miss Punshon gave a talk on her experiences in Japan during cherry blossom season in January 1930, and had 'lots of interesting information regarding Japanese customs'.¹⁴ Later that month, she gave a talk on Korea, where the 'Japanese annexation has rapidly brought better conditions'.¹⁵ Miss V. Robertson, who arrived back in Melbourne in 1930 after 14 years in India, gave talks on life in India in the same month. The *Listener In* reported that 'to meet and converse with her is to be transported to the land of adventure'.¹⁶ Doreen Berry similarly spoke on her experiences in Malaya in January 1930, 'a subject which in the hands of this much travelled young lady, should be of great interest'.¹⁷ Margery Pulsford gave a series of talks on Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) national stations in 1936 about her experiences in Asia, which included:

A motor tour of 1,000 miles in Java, a trip in Malaya on a newspaper delivery car, a visit to Siam during the revolution, and a stay of two months in China.¹⁸

Although evidence of listener reactions to these talks is limited, there are some letters that demonstrate listeners' opinions. Travel talks were mentioned as one of the key attractions of women's sessions in a series of letters published in the *ABC Weekly* in March 1940. Listeners described hearing talks about life in Belgium and Holland, being carried to other distant lands and being provided with a 'window on the world'; the letter was especially important for women in country areas.¹⁹ These letters

13 Agnieszka Sobocinska, *Visiting the Neighbours: Australians in Asia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2014), 4.

14 'What's on the Air for Us Women', *Listener In*, 1 January 1930, 34.

15 'People in the Programs', *Listener In*, 29 January 1930, 20–21.

16 'People in the Programs', *Listener In*, 8 January 1930, 16–17.

17 *Ibid.*

18 'Margery Pulsford', *Radio Pictorial of Australia*, 1 February 1936, 19.

19 'Women's Sessions Turn Me Sour', *ABC Weekly*, 2 March 1940, 63; 'Women's Sessions Turn Me Sour', *ABC Weekly*, 9 March 1940, 63.

indicate that women appreciated not only learning about the world but also virtually travelling to other countries by listening to the broadcasts. Not all listeners loved travel talks, however. In December 1935, the *Weekly* reported that a listener had written to a Sydney B-Class station to register that they ‘hate[d] travel talks the most’ as they were ‘just second-hand impressions of places I probably shall never visit’.²⁰ Nevertheless, the continued programming of these talks and the number of different women who gave them indicates that there was a substantial audience for them. The number of women’s travel talks broadcast in this period demonstrates how radio enabled women to expand their horizons, become world citizens and, notably, engage with the Asia-Pacific region.

Radio and the League of Nations Union

Constance Duncan was a leading radio voice who engaged with international affairs in the 1930s. She was appointed Australian secretary of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) after graduating with a master of arts from the University of Melbourne in 1922. The missionary movement, of which the YWCA was a leading organisation, was another incarnation of globally focused women’s citizenship activity in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Duncan worked for the YWCA in Japan as a foreign secretary (a type of missionary) from 1922 until 1933, taught English at a girls’ high school in Kyoto, became fluent in Japanese and travelled the country extensively. Her experience in Japan led her to become an expert in Japanese affairs and a key figure in Australia–Japan relations in these years. She was one of a very small number of Australians with an in-depth knowledge of Japan and Japanese language skills. She researched the country and communicated this information to the public, and, through her connections to policymakers, had unofficial input into their decisions.²¹

As David Walker has argued, in the interwar years ‘it had become a common complaint that Australian interest in international affairs was slight’, but, as he also observes, there was a notable group of internationalists who understood the importance of the Asia-Pacific region and worked to promote this to the public. Chief among these were a group of

20 ‘Personalities behind the Dials’, *Australian Women’s Weekly*, 14 December 1935, 28.

21 Hilary Summy, ‘From Missionary to Ministerial Advisor: Constance Duncan and Australia–Japan Relations 1922–1947’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 54, no. 1 (2008): 28–29.

intellectuals associated with the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) who became ‘missionaries’ for the cause of promoting the Asia-Pacific region to Australians.²² The IPR, originally established in Honolulu, was one of a number of international organisations that established Australian branches in the interwar years, and that ‘demonstrated a growing concern about Australia’s evolving status towards independence and its position in the Pacific’.²³ Other notable bodies included the Australian Institute of International Affairs, the local branch of the London-based Royal Institute of International Affairs and the League of Nations Union (LNU), which also originated in Britain. Glenda Sluga has shown that, throughout the interwar period, the LNU spread to numerous countries and boasted large membership bases, which ‘reflected a popular, mainstream fascination with international sociability and international minds, often alongside expressions of national patriotism and/or imperial efforts’.²⁴ The Australian branches of these organisations attracted many high-profile and influential members who were often involved with several groups.²⁵ Broadcasting was a key method that the members of these international associations used to increase Australian awareness of the region in the interwar years. Nora Collisson, secretary of the Bureau of Social and International Affairs, an organisation that coordinated research on international affairs for other organisations including the LNU, gave regular radio talks on 3AR in 1930. She discussed varied topics, including English women peacemakers, the importance of a united world, and the relationship between Egypt and the League of Nations.²⁶ Jean Stevenson, general secretary of the Melbourne branch of the YWCA, spoke on the organisation’s activities in Czechoslovakia and Poland to demonstrate its wide international reach.²⁷

Following her return to Australia, Duncan compered the *League of Nations Union Radio Club*, which was broadcast at 10.45am on Tuesdays on Melbourne ABC station 3LO from May 1934.²⁸ Established in

22 David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850–1939* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1999), 226.

23 Summy, ‘From Missionary to Ministerial Advisor’, 31.

24 Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 71.

25 Summy, ‘From Missionary to Ministerial Advisor’, 32.

26 ‘Broadcasting Programs of the Australian Stations’, *Listener In*, 5 March 1930, 52; ‘Broadcasting Programs of the Australian Stations’, *Listener In*, 5 July 1930, 23; ‘Broadcasting Programs of the Australian Stations’, *Listener In*, 26 July 1930, 28.

27 ‘Broadcasting Programs of the Australian Stations’, *Listener In*, 5 March 1930, 23.

28 ‘League of Nations Union,’ *Argus*, 24 May 1934, 7.

Britain towards the end of World War I, the LNU was an international organisation that promoted the aims and work of the League of Nations and pressured governments to uphold the principles of its covenant.²⁹ The LNU was initially seen as a respectable organisation in Australia and was led by prominent establishment figures, although this changed in the 1930s as it became associated with communist sympathisers.³⁰ The radio club was a key part of the LNU's outreach activities. Georgia Rivers, in her weekly column on women's programming in the *Listener In*, wrote in July 1935 that the purpose of the *League of Nations Union Radio Club* was to 'foster international understanding by providing listeners with information regarding international problems and the aims and work of the League'.³¹ Duncan invited guests who could speak about women in other countries and international affairs more generally, and she also spoke about her own areas of expertise:

Miss Duncan herself speaks as a rule on current international events or special features of the League's work, and it is difficult to imagine anyone better suited to the control of this session.³²

Rather than present their unique perspectives on international relations theory, the speakers were asked to lend their knowledge and voices to promote the goals of the LNU. Even so, the club was popular, with a 'steadily lengthening membership list', and was especially attractive to listeners from country areas who wished to hear about world affairs.³³ The countries that featured on the program in 1935 included Germany, Japan, Belgium, Turkey and Greece. The *League of Nations Union Radio Club* was a 'fine opportunity' for time-poor listeners to glance 'across at other countries', as it brought women together to learn about international affairs and discuss their viewpoints on a range of issues.³⁴ Duncan created a space on the airwaves for women to build their knowledge and conceptualise their roles as global citizens, so that they could support and contribute to the world peace movement through the League of Nations.

29 Hilary Summy, 'Countering War: The Role of the League of Nations Union', *Social Alternatives* 33, no. 4 (2014): 15.

30 Ibid.

31 Georgia Rivers, 'Women at the Microphone', *Listener In*, 27 July 1935, 19.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

Duncan's role in promoting radio as a medium for international understanding went beyond her radio club. In 1936, she was an Australian delegate to the IPR conference in California, and, while there, participated in an on-air discussion on the National Broadcasting Company about the value of language in promoting international understanding.³⁵ Following the conference, the ABC sponsored her to tour China and Japan to assess the reception of Victorian ABC short-wave station 3LR in those countries and give a series of broadcast talks on the region upon her return.³⁶ Her experiences of broadcasting in Asia demonstrated the medium's capacity for enhancing mutual engagement and understanding, as reported in the *Age* in December 1936:

To hear a broadcast from one's own country when in a foreign land must be very thrilling to a traveller, and Miss Constance Duncan, who returned to Melbourne yesterday after her journeyings in the United States, China, Japan and Manchuria, confessed that she was frightfully thrilled when, in China, she heard Australia broadcasting through 3LR (Lyndhurst). In turn, her own family enjoyed hearing her broadcast from ZBW station in Hong Kong, when she spoke on Broadcasting in the Far East.³⁷

The *Age* noted that 'she made a survey of broadcasting, making contacts with broadcasting authorities, and obtaining as much information as possible on the broadcasting situation'.³⁸ It was, apparently, the 'first time Australia had sent anyone to the East for such a purpose'.³⁹ Duncan reported that, while the current reception was relatively poor, there was significant potential for Australia to develop a regular program of short-wave broadcasting to Asia, as English-speaking expatriates and 'educated Chinese' were eager to listen to Australian broadcasts.⁴⁰ The time difference between Australia and China—only two hours—made Australia ideally placed to break into this huge market, especially in comparison to European and American stations. Duncan argued that Australia should take advantage of this opportunity to 'exert our influence' over Chinese society and culture to help develop an export market for Australian goods.⁴¹

35 Summy, 'From Missionary to Ministerial Advisor', 36.

36 'Publicity for Australia: Broadcasting in the East', *Sun*, 2 December 1936, 21.

37 'Broadcasting in the East: "Undreamt of Possibilities"', *Age*, 5 December 1936, 9.

38 *Ibid.*

39 *Ibid.*

40 'China Likes Australian Broadcast Programs: Travellers from the East', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 December 1936, 20.

41 'Broadcasting in the East'.

Duncan actively tried to establish broadcasting as a medium to enhance international understanding, but her influence would not last beyond the 1930s. Hilary Summy has argued that her association with the IPR and LNU, both of which were associated with various socialist organisations, tainted her as a communist sympathiser from the late 1930s.⁴² According to Walker, the IPR in particular has been ‘virtually excised from public memory, leaving behind an impression of its supporters as a suspect fraternity of naïve idealists and dangerous leftists’.⁴³ The ABC discontinued Duncan’s session in 1938, ostensibly because international affairs were covered by other programs, although a report later revealed objections to Duncan’s association with communist organisations and her own political views, labelled as ‘Christian communism’ and ‘anti-British’ by ABC broadcast monitors.⁴⁴ Her listeners, the LNU and other left-wing activists protested the decision. For example, the Communist Party of Australia’s newspaper, the *Worker’s Weekly*, reported on the discontinuation of Duncan’s talks in 1938 and opined that the ‘Broadcasting Commission has followed up its reactionary actions of the immediate past against anyone likely to give out progressive thoughts over the air’, and argued that her silencing was part of what they saw as a larger pattern of left-wing censure.⁴⁵

The ABC was embroiled in other censorship debates in this period, most notably those surrounding the ‘The Watchman’, the pseudonym of E. A. Mann. He was the most dominant and popular political commentator in Australia at the time, airing up to 11 times a week in 1938.⁴⁶ ‘The Watchman’ put forward strong viewpoints that were often very critical of the government of the day, and the ABC received increasing numbers of complaints from politicians and others about him.⁴⁷ There was significant argument within the ABC about whether an anonymous broadcaster was given too much airtime, and whether alternative viewpoints were being crowded out. ‘The Watchman’ himself refused to air both sides of

42 Summy, ‘From Missionary to Ministerial Advisor’, 40.

43 Walker, *Anxious Nation*, 232.

44 Ellen Warne, ‘Constance Duncan: Translating Women’s Leadership in Australia, 1922–1958’, in *Founders, Firsts and Feminists: Women Leaders in Twentieth-Century Australia*, ed. Fiona Davis, Nell Musgrove and Judith Smart (Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne, 2011), 295–96.

45 ‘Radio Censorship’, *Workers’ Weekly*, 30 September 1938, 2.

46 Neville Petersen, ‘The Decline and Fall of “The Watchman”—the Logic behind the Actions of the ABC’, *Politics* 15, no. 1 (1980): 98.

47 Lesley Johnson, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural History of Australian Radio* (London: Routledge, 1988), 181–83.

controversial issues and to seek appropriate confirmation from sources, and became increasingly difficult for the ABC to manage.⁴⁸ From 1939, ‘The Watchman’ was subject to censorship on the orders of the Menzies government, and Mann’s identity was outed in parliament later that year.⁴⁹ In 1940, the ABC transferred news commentaries to the Talks Department, in part to reduce Mann’s influence—he resigned soon after.⁵⁰

Duncan’s talks were reinstated on a less frequent basis until the beginning of WWII, after which she worked as a welfare officer for war workers, unsuccessfully ran for parliament and served as a United Nations liaison officer in Korea.⁵¹ Although Duncan’s position as an on-air advocate for the LNU was short-lived, her radio program provided an important space for women to discuss and receive information about international affairs during the mid to late 1930s.

During its time on the air, the *League of Nations Union Radio Club* hosted numerous notable women guests. Bessie Rischbieth, for instance, gave a talk on the program in 1936 about women’s influence at Geneva. Rischbieth’s regular contributions to both print and broadcast media ‘typically displayed a sense of drama and emphatic significance’, a nod to her involvement with the Theosophist movement and its characteristic ‘flowery pronouncements about universal brotherhood, justice and a special kind of moralistic spirituality’.⁵² She provided a detailed summary of the different organisations women were involved in and their work for creating a ‘happy world family’ by influencing global public opinion and supporting the League of Nations:

You realise, don’t you, that public opinion is one of the few weapons left to the people of the world and you realise how valuable it is that we must so organise essential decency and commonsense of humanity as a solid wall of world-wide opposition to war while there is yet time.⁵³

48 Petersen, ‘The Decline and Fall of “The Watchman”’, 98.

49 E. M. Andrews, ‘Mann, Edward Alexander (1874–1951)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University), published first in hardcopy 1986, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mann-edward-alexander-7472, accessed 26 February 2018.

50 Johnson, *The Unseen Voice*, 181–83; Andrews, ‘Mann, Edward Alexander (1874–1951)’.

51 Warne, ‘Constance Duncan’, 300–01; Summy, ‘From Missionary to Ministerial Advisor’, 40; ‘Broadcasting—National Stations’, *Argus*, 8 August 1940, 2.

52 Zora Simic, ‘A Hall of Selective Mirrors: Feminism, History and Identity, 1919–1969’ (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2003), 37.

53 Bessie Rischbieth, ‘Women’s Influence at Geneva’, Script, MS 2004, Papers of Bessie Rischbieth, Series 2, Box 2, National Library of Australia, Canberra (hereafter NLA).

Her radio broadcasts were one important aspect of influencing public opinion in Australia. Rischbieth argued that Australian women's organisations were a vital 'bridge' to the League of Nations and, thus, through their membership of national organisations, women were participating in international relations and working for peace. In 1935, Rischbieth was the Australian delegate to the League of Nations assembly in Geneva, an experience that she described in this talk as 'the landmark of my life'.⁵⁴ She noted that there were over 1,000 women who 'came to secure better opportunities for women inside the machinery of the League of Nations as promised in the Covenant'.⁵⁵ Rischbieth provided insight into some of the leading figures and issues that were discussed at the assembly, and especially emphasised the centrality of women to the League of Nations decision-making and peace work. She argued that women 'have a position of influence, respect and power in Geneva and contributed largely to the formation of public opinion on universal problems like disarmament', and she encouraged listeners to become involved.⁵⁶

Rischbieth gave another talk on 3DB at 7.50pm on Saturday evening about Australian women at Geneva—a prime-time timeslot. She described the delegates of other nations and the spirit of unity she found there: 'You can imagine of course that it is an inspiring experience to look round and see people of all races, all creeds and colours, struggling for closer world co-operation'.⁵⁷ She then described her work on the league's Child Welfare Committee, including her addressing the committee about Australian childhood standards and submitting a resolution on behalf of the Australian Government, which was carried. She emphasised how well the 'collective action' of this committee worked and argued that this same community spirit was required to tackle 'world economic problems that are the root cause of war'.⁵⁸ Rischbieth argued that a fairer distribution of resources was a key step in securing world peace, and that tariffs and nationalism were separating the world 'like never before'.⁵⁹ In this broadcast, Rischbieth thus provided insight into international conferences, which enabled listeners to experience the spirit of international cooperation that she found so exhilarating.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Bessie Rischbieth, 'Australian Women at Geneva', Script, 1936, MS 2004, Papers of Bessie Rischbieth, Series 2, Box 2, NLA.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

The LNU was a global organisation, and the broadcasts on the league's activities by women like Duncan and Rischbieth were also part of the broader international advocacy of the organisation. This international reach was further extended in 1938 when former British suffragist leader, peace campaigner and anti-fascist Kathleen Courtney broadcast on the ABC's morning women's session in Melbourne during her visit to Australia to speak at the National Women's Peace Conference.⁶⁰ Courtney was actively involved in the LNU in the 1920s and 1930s and used her organising skills and international networks to promote anti-fascism. She had an 'impeccable feminist internationalist pedigree, backed up by a lifetime of dedicated work for various key women's organisations' as well as an extensive international network.⁶¹ Like many other British feminists, she also broke with pacifism (particularly the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) in the mid-1930s, believing that such a position would only lead to the victory of fascism. Therefore, by this point, feminist internationalism was no longer synonymous with feminist pacifism and there were competing views on what should be done.⁶²

In her Australian broadcast, Courtney explained the precarious international situation in the months just prior to the outbreak of war. She examined the expansionism of Nazi Germany and its alliance with fascist Italy, the dire risk that Francoist Spain would pose to Europe's security (especially France's) and the 'crime' of Japan's invasion of China. She then explained two conflicting theories of international relations that were 'of vital importance to every citizen'.⁶³ The first was nationalism, the doctrine that caused the Great War and that fascist countries had revived 'in its crudest and most violent form'.⁶⁴ The second was internationalism, which 'recognizes the underlying unity which exists between nations' and 'maintains the doctrine of international rights' through the League of Nations.⁶⁵ She argued that the only way to avert war without capitulating to fascism was for nations to come together to maintain 'the principle of international right and collective security', and to assert their moral commitment to peace while productively engaging the fascist countries

60 'International Peace Worker: Miss Kathleen Courtney's Visit', *West Australian*, 4 April 1938, 9.

61 Julie V. Gottlieb, "'The Women's Movement Took the Wrong Turning': British Feminists, Pacifism and the Politics of Appeasement', *Women's History Review* 23, no. 3 (2014): 452.

62 Ibid.

63 Kathleen Courtney, 'The Present International Situation', Script, 1939, 7KDC, Papers of Kathleen D'Olier Courtney, Series D/5, Box FL455, The Women's Library at the London School of Economics, London.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

so that they did not feel cornered into a war.⁶⁶ She emphasised that upholding ‘the doctrine of international right and collective security’ needed the support of all citizens, ‘not only in Great Britain, but [also] in the Dominions’.⁶⁷ Courtney argued that Australia and the other dominions did not realise the influence that they could wield in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and that it was important to realise that the ‘policies of the Dominions’ and the ‘attitude of their citizens’ were also important in promoting peace.⁶⁸ Courtney, a leading and well-respected figure in the international peace movement, specifically addressed the role that Australian women could play at such a critical time for global security by voicing their opinions and lobbying the Australian Government, which could then influence decisions at Westminster.⁶⁹

Irene Greenwood: Women in the International News

Like Constance Duncan, Irene Greenwood also had to contend with ABC censorship of her talks on international affairs. Greenwood became active in the Perth women’s movement in the 1920s, following her mother into the Women’s Service Guilds (WSG) and developing her extensive network, which included feminist leader and WSG founder, Rischbieth. During her family’s few years in Sydney in the early 1930s, Greenwood joined the recently formed United Associations (UA) and became an officer, council member and secretary. She worked closely with Linda Littlejohn and Jessie Street in the UA’s debating team and on the broadcasting committee, giving radio talks in support of the organisation’s aims. In 1936, following her family’s return to Perth, she began a series of talks on the ABC called *Women in the International News*. Greenwood’s vast archive held at Murdoch University contains the scripts of this series, correspondence with the ABC, and numerous newspaper and magazine cuttings related to the talks. It is a treasure trove of information regarding Greenwood’s role in using radio to promote internationalism in mid-twentieth-century Western Australia.⁷⁰

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Catherine Horne Fisher, ‘Greenwood, Irene Adelaide (1898–1992)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, published online 2017), adb.anu.edu.au/biography/greenwood-irene-adelaide-25528/text33876, accessed 26 February 2018.

John Andrew Richardson, who has researched the unique body of texts that are Greenwood's broadcast scripts, has argued that she occupied a space of resistance within broadcasting and fought a 'guerrilla action' to turn radio into an apparatus of social reform. The significance of her broadcasts being heard in Western Australia is of note, as the 'social arrangements' of Australia's west in the mid-twentieth century were distinct from those in the country's east. Western Australians were more attached to the United Kingdom than to their compatriots on the other side of the country, and the incoming steamship traffic at Fremantle port meant that Perth often received international visitors and news well in advance of Sydney and Melbourne.⁷¹

Greenwood's weapon was her 'concerned, informed, warm, educated, and cultured voice'.⁷² During her time at the Perth Modern School she received formal voice training to improve her debating skills from Lionel Logue, most famous for training King George VI. This prepared her to speak effectively in public, and also provided her with skills that would prove useful when she began her radio career.⁷³ The UA chose her to be the secretary of their broadcasting committee on the basis of her deep knowledge of feminist history and her well-developed speaking skills—especially her professionally trained speaking voice. Greenwood used her radio speech to promote the aims of the women's and peace movements to thousands of listeners. Her collection of radio scripts is a testament to her role as a leading broadcaster who made use of radio to publicly engage in political debate and speak to other women.⁷⁴

Greenwood used her broadcasts to publicise women's equality, peace and socialism, all of which were presented as international issues. Her broadcasts on the ABC were primarily heard by educated, urban middle-class women—probably the same women (or at least the same type of women) that comprised the women's organisations with which she was heavily involved.⁷⁵ Yet, there is also substantial evidence that her ABC

71 John Andrew Richardson, 'The Limits of Authorship: The Radio Broadcasts of Irene Greenwood, 1936–1954' (Honours thesis, Murdoch University, 1988), 4.

72 Kaye Murray, *A Voice for Peace: The Spirit of Social Activist Irene Greenwood (1898–1992)* (Perth: Kaye Murray Productions, 2005), 69.

73 *Ibid.*, 19.

74 *Ibid.*, 69.

75 Richardson, 'The Limits of Authorship', 41.

broadcasts were heard by rural women, who appreciated the talks as a way to remain connected with world events and to mentally travel beyond their isolated properties.⁷⁶

Greenwood's talks were broadcast during Dorothy Graham's women's session, at 11am on Friday mornings. This session was primarily domestic in focus, although it should be noted that Graham did believe in the potential of radio to educate listeners and the placement of Greenwood's talks is one example of this. The ABC enforced a policy of impartiality to protect itself from political interference and, as Greenwood's talks were broadcast on an ABC session, her scripts had to be vetted prior to broadcast and then strictly followed. This posed a challenge for Greenwood, whose sympathies lay with left-wing internationalism and who wished to use radio to promote this cause to Western Australian women. She became adept at navigating ABC editorial policy to broadcast her material in forms that flew under the radar.⁷⁷ While broadcasting on a commercial station would not have required the same scrutiny, it would have required engaging with advertisers, which would have impacted both the seriousness and prestige of her talks. As discussed in Chapter 5, Greenwood would later navigate this tension on her commercial radio women's session *Woman to Woman* in the 1950s.

In one of the first talks in the series, Greenwood outlined her rationale for developing the series as a response to Rischbieth's description of Australian women as 'being behind British women in our attitude to International Affairs'.⁷⁸ Greenwood argued that it was 'vitaly necessary' for women to understand international affairs and 'take their part in shaping our Brave New World'.⁷⁹ She argued that technology had eradicated the distance between Australia and the rest of the world: 'cables and radio throw a girdle about our Earth and so the frontiers of human interest are widened with the shrinkage of the world's surface'.⁸⁰ Greenwood subscribed to a range of international newspapers and magazines that reported on 'the achievements of women, their status, civil and political, and the organisations by which they endeavour to better the conditions

76 See for example: E. Box, 'Talks for Women', *Broadcaster*, 9 November 1940, 39; 'Farmer's Wife of Berkshire Valley', 'Talks for Women', *Broadcaster*, 2 November 1940, 13.

77 Richardson, 'The Limits of Authorship', 47.

78 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 1936, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, Murdoch University Archives, Perth (hereafter MUA).

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

of life for women as a whole', and she planned to use these publications as sources to tell her listeners 'of women who are in the news, who are helping to write the pages of history in our day'.⁸¹ She wanted to give her listeners 'a living, breathing picture of women' who they only knew as 'names in cold print'.⁸² Here, Greenwood articulated her vision of the role of radio in improving both the status of women and the state of international relations. As a technology that had brought the world closer together and enabled a more intimate connection with the stories of leading women, radio could encourage Australian women to become more actively engaged with global challenges and inspire them to forge their own paths.

Greenwood's approach to ensuring that radio fulfilled this potential was to regularly broadcast interesting news items concerning women from around the globe. She often reported on international feminist and peace conferences, on notable women and their achievements, or on the status of women in various nations. One broadcast focused on the status of women in Latin American nations, whose progress Greenwood noted was 'generally considered to lag behind' that of European women.⁸³ She gave a detailed broadcast about Spain, which focused on the history of women's oppression there, its economic and political climate, and the conditions that gave rise to the Civil War.⁸⁴ She also discussed the Middle East, including reforms in Persia (Iran) to relax requirements for women to be veiled in public, and the changes in women's lives under Kemal Ataturk's leadership in Turkey.⁸⁵ She presented a broad range of countries and topics to her listeners that aimed to increase their knowledge of world issues and their affinity with other women across the globe.

Through her *Women in the International News* series, Greenwood sought to emphasise women's own agency in breaking free of their oppression by focusing on an array of accomplished women who had fought against the odds to achieve great things. Richardson has argued that Greenwood relied on these 'heroines' in her scripts to provide an example to her audiences

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 28 August 1936, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

84 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 30 October 1936, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

85 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 20 November 1936, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

of how women could attain 'utopia'.⁸⁶ For Greenwood, internationalism was a key component of this feminist utopia. By bringing her listeners news from across the world and constructing a sense of female solidarity across international boundaries, she positioned internationalism as key to women's emancipation. Greenwood often looked to the past for examples of these notable women. Some of the famous women in history she discussed included Nobel Prize-winning scientist Marie Curie, British nurse Edith Cavell, nineteenth-century English social reformer Elizabeth Fry and Irish nationalist revolutionary Constance de Markievicz.⁸⁷ The achievements of notable women from across the world were also a regular focus of her broadcasts, such as physical culture leader Prunella Stack, physician Edith Summerskill and aviator Jean Batten.⁸⁸ She similarly broadcast about women who had achieved positions in various occupations across the globe, such as in aviation and politics.⁸⁹ The impressive list of broadcasts provide a clear picture of Greenwood's vision of a world in which women were active contributors and worthy of public attention.

The role of engaging stories in promoting women's status internationally was a subject that Greenwood felt was important. In a talk in November 1937 she emphasised the role of travel tales in illustrating the changing status of women across the world, arguing that the only difference between travel tales and newspaper reports:

Was a difference of the impersonal and the personal, the difference between blue-books [almanacs] and novels. Facts and figures may seem dull things. Actually if one has imagination they take on form and colour and life.⁹⁰

86 Richardson, 'The Limits of Authorship', 72–88.

87 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 9 October 1936, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA; Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 2 September 1938, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA; Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 17 January 1937, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA; Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 19 February 1939, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

88 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 6 January 1939, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA; Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 10 June 1938, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA; Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 19 August 1938, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

89 See for example: Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 3 February 1939, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA; Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 28 October 1938, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

90 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', Script, 26 November 1937, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

Greenwood believed in the importance of women's contribution to foreign affairs, and argued that their continued exclusion from official positions had resulted in the loss of their abilities and perceptiveness to the world:

Diplomacy remains one closed door, and who will not say that a little of woman's wit and wisdom might not have been valuable in some of the political situations that have arisen lately in international affairs?⁹¹

Using her position to promote internationalism and publicise the work that women were doing across the globe during the 1930s, she worked to broaden the outlook of her listeners and integrate them into a feminist internationalist community through her broadcasts. There is evidence that some of her listeners were receptive to her message. As one rural listener wrote to the *Broadcaster* in 1940:

To my mind Irene Greenwood was doing wonderful work in this session and doing much to foster international friendship, without which the world is in a sorry mess today. She always managed to take us away from the daily round of common tasks and gave us much food for thought.⁹²

Greenwood would give more talks in this series, on and off, until 1946. However, the war altered what internationalist feminists like Greenwood could say on the air, leading her listeners, such as the one quoted above, to look back on the late 1930s as a golden era of women's international engagement.

Ruby Rich: Women in World Peace

Ruby Rich was another leading feminist and peace activist who made significant use of broadcasting to contribute to international affairs. Raised in a wealthy Sydney Jewish family, she became politically active in 1923 after meeting Millicent Preston-Stanley, then president of the Feminist Club of New South Wales. Rich became vice-president of the club and campaigned vigorously for feminist issues, which led to her developing excellent public speaking skills. In 1926, she co-founded the Racial Hygiene Association (RHA) of New South Wales with Marion

91 Irene Greenwood, 'Women in the International News', *Script*, 31 December 1937, QB 24, Irene Greenwood Collection, Box 104, MUA.

92 'Farmer's Wife of Berkshire Valley', 'Talks for Women', *Broadcaster*, 2 November 1940, 13.

Piddington and became its first president. The RHA was an organisation that incorporated and promoted eugenic thought; as Anne Rees has argued, Rich's perspective was representative of many feminists of the interwar era who fused their progressivism with eugenic thought.⁹³ From 1929, Rich lived abroad in London, becoming heavily involved in the international peace movement before returning to Australia in 1935. She continued to be involved in international peace activism and became involved in Jewish activism, including the Zionist movement.⁹⁴ She was the Australian president of the International Peace Campaign (IPC) co-founded by British politician Lord Robert Cecil, and through this position publicly promoted a range of solutions aimed at averting war (and later reducing the impact of the war) including opposing the private manufacture of armaments, and promoting the use of sanctions, boycotts and arbitration instead of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policies.⁹⁵ During this period, she regularly broadcast on these issues in daytime timeslots, promoting the positions of the IPC and the Zionist movement and encouraging other women to become active contributors.

Rich's papers contain over 20 broadcast scripts from the 1930s and 1940s that are some of the best examples of the evocative power of radio speech as a form of social activism. She underlined or capitalised words that needed to be stressed, included numerous exclamation points, noted where she should pause to breathe with a forward slash and, most importantly, wrote them in a conversational and engaging style that brought the scripts to life. Although there are no surviving recordings of Rich's broadcasts, the scripts she left behind are a useful substitute.

Rich believed in the power of talking to a female audience. In a broadcast describing the 1936 People's World Peace Congress in Brussels, she noted the importance that this event held for women, and that her female listeners had a duty to disseminate the information in her broadcast far and wide:

93 Yves Rees, "'The Quality and Not Only the Quantity of Australia's People': Ruby Rich and the Racial Hygiene Association of NSW", *Australian Feminist Studies* 27, no. 71 (2012): 71–72.

94 Audrey Tate, 'Rich, Ruby Sophia (1888–1988)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 2012), adb/biography/rich-ruby-sophia-14202/text25214, accessed 26 February 2018; Lysbeth Cohen, *Beginning with Esther: Jewish Women in New South Wales from 1788* (Sydney: Ayers & James Heritage Books in association with the Australian Jewish Times, 1987), 218–24.

95 Ruby S. Rich, 'International Peace Campaign', *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 6 January 1938, 5; 'Australia's Ruby Rich: Creates Stir in U.S.A. with Speech', *Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 27 January 1939, 4; Ruby Rich, Interviewed by Hazel de Berg, 4 June 1975, DeB 835-839, Hazel de Berg Collection, NLA.

Of course, at this hour of day my listeners are necessarily women—but that doesn't matter. I've always understood that if you want a thing to be quickly known—you must TELEphone TELagraph [*sic*] or TELL a woman. So I just hope that you'll live up to this reputation of our sex, and tell everyone you know what I am now going to tell you.⁹⁶

In another 1936 broadcast detailing the proceedings of a conference on women in world peace, Rich asked her listeners to give 'concentrated attention' to the talk so that she could get through a wealth of information in the 10 minutes allotted to her.⁹⁷ This instruction demonstrated that these talks were serious education, not light entertainment. Rich considered radio talks to be an opportunity for women to learn about international affairs, and she understood radio as a key medium of public engagement that had significant influence over public opinion. As such, she took exception when she heard broadcasts that criticised the issues she was so passionate about.

In March 1938, for example, she wrote to the director of commercial station 2GB to object to a talk by a news commentator in which he criticised the Women for Peace movement. Rich argued that the criticisms were not 'based on a knowledge of what is being done by organised women'.⁹⁸ She noted that 2GB had broadcast many talks on women and world peace, including her own, scripts of which she enclosed with the letter as 'proof that our movement is a serious one and that we are not asking for peace at any price'.⁹⁹ She requested that she be allowed a right of reply on the air, which was granted, and broadcast two days later. In this talk she excoriated the announcer for stating that there was 'too much prattling on peace, especially by women', which was distracting them from their primary duty of motherhood, and that peace was not something that could be studied. Rich highlighted the work of the Women for Peace movement, arguing that 'we must study intensely the causes of war' in order to establish peace.¹⁰⁰ This example clearly shows the value that Rich placed on broadcasting as a key method of public engagement, which women could use to publicly argue their position and agitate for change.

96 Ruby Rich, 'World Peace Rally', Script, 1937, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 3, NLA (original emphasis).

97 Ruby Rich, 'Miss Rich's Talk on 2.G.B. Broadcasting Station', Script, 5 March 1936, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 3, NLA.

98 Ruby Rich to Director, Station 2GB, 3 March 1938, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

99 Ibid.

100 Ruby Rich, Script, 5 March 1938, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

She demonstrated this viewpoint in 1938, when she gave a series of four weekly talks on 2GB on the subject of whether or not world peace could be influenced by women, broadcast at 11am on Thursday mornings. Her aim was to persuade those who believed that Australia was ‘too far away from other countries ... to have any interest’ in foreign affairs that Australian women could and should seek to influence world peace.¹⁰¹ Rich made good use of the medium to construct this series of talks as a discussion among women. To this end, she invited a guest named Jean McLagan, who ‘welcomed the opportunity for knowledge and for work directed to help the movement for Women and Peace’, to join her on the air to represent the thoughts held by the ‘average woman’.¹⁰² McLagan posed questions to Rich, who then explained the important role that women could play in preventing war and the practical activism that all women should undertake to this end. Rich clearly viewed broadcasting as an important part of women’s peace activism. In the first of these broadcasts, she exhorted her listeners to ‘listen often to the radio programs, on world affairs, and discuss them afterwards to your friends’.¹⁰³ When asked what women could do to prevent war, she nominated increasing women’s influence in broadcasting as one prerequisite, along with gaining positions within diplomacy and the League of Nations.¹⁰⁴

In the third broadcast, Rich explained the ways in which mothers could train their children’s minds for peace, rather than war. She highlighted the importance of removing all warlike toys and promoting sharing and compassion. Teachers could also assist by working against racial and religious prejudices, doing peace-centred activities in class, and educating children about the work of the League of Nations and peace activists. This, she argued, would challenge the dominance of war heroes by promoting peace heroes. Rich highlighted the central role that women could play in preventing war by moulding the minds of the next generation through their roles as mothers and teachers: ‘I believe that in training the child towards an international outlook women are making an important contribution to Peace.’¹⁰⁵

101 Ruby Rich, ‘Can Women Influence World Peace?’, Script, 3 February 1938, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Ruby Rich, ‘Child and Peace’, Script, 17 February 1938, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

In the final broadcast in the series, Rich and McLagan discussed the international manufacture of armaments, placing an emphasis on the behaviour of private firms profiting from manufacturing them. Rich referred to the Covenant of the League of Nations, which gravely objected to the private manufacture of armaments, and the report of the League of Nations committee on arms traffic, which reported that armament firms had 'adopted war-like policies', bribed officials, circulated false reports and attempted to influence public opinion through the media.¹⁰⁶ She sought to shake her listeners out of any complacency caused by their distance from the unfolding crisis in Europe by using evocative language: 'against modern weapons of warfare, both the brave and the coward, the combatant and the civilian, women and children, will all be equally vulnerable to extinction'.¹⁰⁷

At the end of this series of four talks, McLagan indicated that her discussions with Rich had influenced her opinions and those of her friends:

The thing that got the women's back up was the letter you showed me from a man saying 'women should keep to their washtubs', that 'we weren't able to understand affairs of the world, that we should only attend to our homes'. One woman said 'We'll have no homes if the bombs come'. Another said 'Men have always made wars in the past—so we women must make the peace of the future'.¹⁰⁸

McLagan also explained that her friends relished using their role as the main household shoppers to boycott Japanese goods in protest of Japanese expansionism, demonstrating the ways that women participated in internationalist activism at the local level. She highlighted the importance of radio talks for educating women about international affairs and encouraging them to take action by stating that she now believed 'that women can influence World Peace, and that these talks have helped us understand how'.¹⁰⁹ Broadcasting was, therefore, an important method by which women engaged with international affairs, as it expanded the purview of women's influence to incorporate the difficult problems facing the world. As McLagan noted, Rich's careful explanations of the factors

106 Ruby Rich, 'Private Manufacture of Arms', Script, 24 February 1938, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

influencing world peace and the role that women could play in ensuring that war was averted, or at least that its impact would be reduced, emphasised that women were the key to the world's future.

Rich's radio talks, broadcast during a time when Europe slid ever closer to war, were a critical way in which she contributed to international and national debate over the response to fascist expansionism. In a broadcast on Cairns station 4QY in 1936, Rich outlined why internationalism was not opposed to 'sane' nationalism—only the destructive nationalism of fascism. This sane nationalism was based 'in our British Traditions and heritage, and the courage of our pioneers, on the sound development of our nationhood, on our cultural and scientific achievements' and, most importantly, on contributing towards world citizenship and world peace.¹¹⁰ The future of internationalism, she argued, required the defeat of 'bigoted nationalism' such as that present in Nazi Germany.¹¹¹ Like Kathleen Courtney and many other feminist peace activists of the late 1930s, Rich understood that a pacifist position was not tenable in the current geopolitical climate as it risked a fascist victory.¹¹² Jewish persecution by the Nazis also led many Jewish feminist peace activists across the world to abandon pacifism, including Rich.¹¹³ Although she believed that averting war was the ideal outcome, it should not come at the cost of fascism and Jewish persecution: therefore, she was a peace activist, not a pacifist.

Rich was a leading figure in the Australian Jewish community in this period, and from the mid-1930s was an increasingly vocal advocate for the establishment of a Jewish state. She visited Mandatory Palestine on her way back to Australia from London in 1935, where she met Rebecca Shieff, the founder of the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) and was greatly impressed by its work. She became the founding president of the Australian branch of WIZO in 1937, a position she held for three years. Jewish women were at the forefront of Zionist activism in Australia in the interwar years, a period during which anti-Zionist sentiment 'strongly prevailed' in the Jewish community and the general

110 Ruby Rich, 'Is Internationalism Opposed to Nationalism?', Script, February 1936, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

111 Ibid.

112 Gottlieb, "The Women's Movement Took the Wrong Turning", 452.

113 Melissa R. Klapper, *Ballots, Babies and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890–1940* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 187.

public.¹¹⁴ Anti-Zionists tended to be prominent Anglo-Jewish figures in Australian society, such as Governor-General Sir Isaac Isaacs. Due to their established position, they set the terms of the debate, which generally centred on the impact of Zionism on Jewish loyalty to Australia and the British Empire, rather than on the merits of Zionism as a solution to continued persecution.¹¹⁵ Other Jewish feminists, including Dr Fanny Reading, founder of the National Council of Jewish Women, and Rieke Cohen, founder of Ivriah (which later became the Australian arm of WIZO), were ‘eloquent advocates’ for the Zionist cause.¹¹⁶ Analysis of Rich’s broadcast scripts on the issue show that she was also a leading public advocate, and that she especially worked to influence non-Jewish women who listened to daytime women’s sessions to gain wider public support for the Zionist cause.

During the 1930s, Rich gave detailed talks on Palestine, outlining its history, administration under the British mandate and the division of land ownership. She sought to emphasise to her listeners that Jewish settlement in Mandatory Palestine was a positive development for all its inhabitants. In one 1937 broadcast, for example, she exclaimed: ‘Has the immigration of Jews endangered the existence of the Arabs? Not a bit of it!’¹¹⁷ She argued that the Arab population had benefited enormously from Jewish immigration and the prosperity and development that had come with it.¹¹⁸ Rich also made use of the rhetorical devices common in the travel talk genre to impart her impressions of Mandatory Palestine on a morning women’s session on Melbourne national station 3LO in 1937. She described the wonder of its history and its melting pot of cultures, languages and religions. She emphasised the development that had supposedly occurred as a result of Jewish settlement, the growth of Tel Aviv into a city with an ‘Opera House, Theatres, Cinemas, Exhibition building, and numerous factories’, the significant growth in the building and manufacturing industries across the protectorate, and its attendant growth in exports and economic prosperity.¹¹⁹ Rich’s broadcasts on

114 Suzanne Rutland, ‘Perspectives from the Australian Jewish Community’, *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*, no. 11 (2002): 92.

115 Peter Y. Medding, ‘Zionism and the Australian Jewry Before 1948: The Battle for Ideological and Communal Supremacy’, *Jewish Political Studies Review* 18, no. 3–4 (2006): 99–118.

116 Rutland, ‘Perspectives from the Australian Jewish Community’, 92.

117 Ruby Rich, ‘Palestine: The Land Question’, Script, 14 February 1937, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

118 Ibid.

119 Ruby Rich, ‘New Palestine’, Script, 22 April 1937, MS 7493, Papers of Ruby Rich, Box 4, NLA.

Palestine represented the Zionist perspective to the audiences of women's sessions. These broadcasts provided very detailed overviews of the region's history, governance, and current political, social and economic state for listeners who would likely not have been particularly familiar with it. In doing so, Rich brought the issue of Zionism out into general public debate. The presence of this topic during morning women's session broadcasts refutes any contention that such programs were only being focused on domestic issues—in both senses of the word.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on Australian women broadcasters who contributed to public debate on foreign affairs and educated their female listeners about international affairs. Many of these women gave travel talks, evoking exoticism and romanticism through their descriptions of their experiences in foreign lands. Other women, involved with a range of internationalist organisations, gave broadcasts outlining current issues in foreign affairs and encouraging like-minded women to become involved. Several women stand out as leading advocates for internationalism on the airwaves, including Constance Duncan, Irene Greenwood and Ruby Rich. These women were dedicated public voices for issues as diverse as international feminism, peace activism, Asia-Pacific relations and Zionism. Although these women advocated for different issues, all believed in the importance of women contributing to international relations and the role of radio as a medium that could facilitate it. The ABC, in particular, provided airtime for women to discuss international issues; however, its strict impartiality protocols could prove difficult to navigate, eventually impacting Duncan's ability to broadcast. By contributing to public discourse and demonstrating their expertise in foreign affairs, these women showed themselves to be well-informed and engaged world citizens, and encouraged their listeners to be the same. As the next chapter shows, women broadcasters continued to use their public voice throughout WWII in support of the war effort.

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