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Alison S. Fell, Ingrid Sharp, eds. *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-19.* Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. xi + 272 pp. $74.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-230-01966-9.

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Women, Activism, and the Great War

The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-1919 is a collection of fourteen brief essays exploring various responses of women and women's movements to the Great War and "the impact of war on early feminist thought and activism" (p. 1). Editors Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp (who each contributed one essay to this collection and co-authored an introductory chapter) conceived their project as an interdisciplinary and loosely comparative collection representing the "major belligerent nations" involved in World War I (p. 1).

A number of essays in this volume focus on individuals. Joanna Shearer uses the trial of Hélène Brion, "a schoolteacher arrested for distributing so-called 'defeatist' propaganda" to explore the importance of the "women's press" as a space for feminist pacifists in France (a distinct minority group) to express their views (pp. 88-89). June Purvis looks at the Pankhursts, suffrage leaders in Great Britain, and the personal and political tensions between Emmeline Pankhurst, founder in 1903 of the Women's Social and Political Union and the "most notorious of the suffrage leaders" (p. 141) before the outbreak of war, and her three daughters, Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela. These tensions, Purvis concludes, "reflected more generally divisions within the women's movement as feminists responded to the unprecedented events of the conflict" (p. 142). Angela K. Smith explores the humanitarian and political work of Major Mabel St. Clair Stobart, who established wartime hospitals, staffed entirely by women, in Belgium, France, and Serbia. Kimberly Jensen explores the work of American physician Esther Pohl Lovejoy, whose wartime experiences resulted in "a strong and public critical stance against the effects of wartime violence on women" (p. 190). Matthew Stibbe introduces Elisabeth Rotten, who founded the Information and Assistance Bureau for Germans Abroad and for Foreigners in Germany in 1914 to "provide practical and financial assistance to impoverished German civilians arriving home after being expelled from enemy countries, and to enemy civilians trapped in Germany" (p. 195). Stibbe outlines the aims, funding, and motivations of Rotten and her organization and analyzes her impact on the women's movement in Germany.

Several other chapters shift the focus to specific women's organizations. Alison Fell shows how the members of the National Council of French Women (CNFF) concluded in April 1915 that "a pacifist stance was not possible given France's involvement in what they consider to be a purely defensive war against a 'barbarous' German aggressor" (p. 53). The stance of this mainstream feminist organization reveals how and why the vast majority of French feminists embraced nationalism during wartime. Peter Davies considers the impact of the war on the League for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform, founded in Germany in 1905 to provide support for unmarried mothers and other women, to campaign for a "new sexual ethics," and to address the need for legal and civil reforms to benefit women. Already marginal in relation to most other pre-war women's organizations, the experience of war further challenged the "utopian impetus of the League's pre-war theory" (p. 224). Erika Kuhlman writes about the efforts of women activists to shape postwar international politics despite being excluded from the 1919 Paris Peace negotiations. Women worked for reconciliation indirectly, most notably through the organizational structure of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,

which established a permanent international section in addition to separate national sections in 1919.

The international breadth of the collection falls a bit short, with ten out of fourteen essays focusing on western Europe (Germany, France, and Great Britain). In addition to those chapters already described above, Claudia Siebrecht explores the "inner process of national mobilization" (p. 39) of bourgeois German women in support of the war while Ingrid Sharp explores popular ideas about women's responsibility for the war in Germany. Catherine O'Brien analyzes the theme of sacrifice through the uses of Christian symbolism in French and German responses to the war. During the war, were women "handing over their husbands and sons to be sacrificed, making them active participants in a bloody ritual … [or were women] victims themselves, whose particular ordeal was to survive despite their sacrificial wounds" (p. 244)? Only one essay, "The 'Women's International League for Peace and Freedom' and Reconciliation after the Great War," is transnational in perspective. Kimberly Jensen's essay on Esther Lovejoy provides the sole U.S. perspective, and the three remaining chapters move to other areas of the world. Santanu Das writes about the reactions of Indian women to wartime and to the participation of one and a quarter million Indian men in fighting in Europe, Africa, and China. Judit Acsády presents the varied responses of feminists in Hungary, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to the First World War while Olga Shnyrova explores the opportunities created by war and revolution in Russia for feminists to "meet the new needs of the nation" while also they also proved that "women could play an important role during a time of national crisis" (p. 128). Linking these disparate essays together is the conclusion that "that there was no clear consensus about what constituted the proper 'womanly' response to the war" (p. 13). Taken as a whole, this volume is a valuable and wide-ranging contribution to the growing body of literature on women and the Great War.

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