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U.S. Foreign Policy Think Tanks and Women’s Intellectual Labor, 1920–1950*

What can the history of the U.S. foreign policy think tank tell us about women’s intellectual history? Historical scholarship has conventionally emphasized women’s marginalization in these locations, and not taken them seriously as potential pathways for women’s international thought. Peter Grose, the official historian of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the United States’ most venerable foreign policy think tank, has explained women’s exclusion from Council membership until the 1960s by pointing to the gender conventions of its founding years. Grose argues that “the prospect of a woman ‘qualified’ for the Council’s fellowship was simply too remote from the experience of the founding members even to be raised.” Robert Schulzinger, author of another authoritative study, has similarly described how opponents to women’s CFR membership invoked stereotypically feminine character traits such as indiscretion and intellectual unreliability, arguments that were also used to bar women from diplomatic posts.¹ However, such observations do not take into account that, first, the CFR was unusual in its ring-fencing of an exclusively male discursive space and, second, that women contributed in significant ways to foreign

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policy thinking even within the CFR. Recent research on other U.S. foreign policy think tanks provides a more nuanced analysis of the think tank as a location, while scholarship on women’s international thought in the academy and wider public culture reveals that women were thinking, speaking, and writing prolifically on international affairs throughout the interwar years. In 1929, seven out of nine staff of the Research Department of the Foreign Policy Association (FPA) were women. And in 1936, the FPA’s president could joke that he would “serve” as a mere “interlocutor” during a radio program in which four “lady authorities” held forth on international politics. The history of the foreign policy think tank can tell us much about women foreign policy intellectuals in a period marked by U.S. ascendancy.

More widely, though, the history of think tanks also prompts the question of who counts as a foreign policy intellectual. Putting the emphasis on women’s marginalization in foreign policy think tanks pre-empts understanding gender as a productive force in these locations. Women’s presence in think tanks, key institutions of the foreign policy public in the interwar years, was conditioned by reconfigurations of the gender binary, as it impacted women’s professionalization, higher education, and associational life in an era that structurally limited women’s access to intellectual production. During the interwar period, there was no question of equal access to academic qualifications, employment, political power, or equal representation in the U.S. diplomatic service for white women and even less so for women of color. In the era of World War II and the early Cold War, domestic anti-communism produced a masculinist


4. Raymond Leslie Buell to Sydnor H. Walker, May 22, 1936, folder 2, box 90, M 2011-044, Foreign Policy Association Records (hereafter FPA), Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI (hereafter WHS). The lady authorities were the journalists Anne McCormick and Dorothy Thompson, the European aristocrat Princess von Loewenstein, and Vera Michele Dean, who worked for the FPA.


6. The first two female chiefs of mission, both political appointments, gained their posts in the 1930s but remained anomalies, and until 1971 women had to leave the diplomatic service if they got married. See: Nash, “A Woman’s Place is in the Embassy.”
discursive climate, including a moral panic over male homosexuality and, more generally, male femininity in political and military leaders. These wider cultural currents impacted the conditions and consequences of women’s presence in think tanks. Historians that recover women’s international thought in these locations should examine the varied forms of women’s intellectual labor, concrete institutional settings, and women’s professional formation, as well as analyze the thought of both exceptional and unexceptional women.

In a classic article, the feminist historian Gerda Lerner proposed a model of recovery history that did not solely focus on exceptional women, as such a research focus would only analyze women’s contributions according to standards set by and designed for men, thus implicitly accepting that men are “the measure of significance.” Identifying a ‘female tradition’ in foreign policy thinking that focuses on “women worthies” risks both being unrepresentative as well as neglecting how women functioned in what Lerner described more generally as “that male-defined world, on their own terms.” Recent work on African American women’s intellectual history has further underlined the necessity of identifying specific forms of intellectual production open to women that were also marginalized by race and class, and of querying received assumptions of intellectual significance and influence. While the vast majority of women who worked in think tanks were white (if not always white Anglo-Saxon) and had access to higher education, they were engaged in specific forms of intellectual production due to their status in the U.S. gender order.

Women’s intellectual production in international affairs think tanks can be rendered visible by adopting the category of intellectual labor, a phrase that

originated in the context of the impoverishment of male professionals in post-World War I Europe. Rather than the more amorphous ‘foreign policy community,’ a focus on intellectual labor captures individuals producing what can be conventionally and unconventionally read as ‘thought,’ gendered processes of professionalization as well as gendered labor linked to performing appropriately in social situations, for which the sociologist Arlie Hochschild has coined the term ‘emotional labor.’ Indeed, one of Hochschild’s earliest accounts of how women’s work was erased focused on diplomats’ wives whose labor was an expected part of their husbands’ jobs. Moreover, the category of intellectual labor enables scholars to recognize the transnational context of professional practices. In the case of think tanks, the emergence of documentation as a key approach across Western imperial nation states became a force for institutional standardization but also provided a platform for women’s professional and intellectual claims. In my definition of women’s professional labor, I include both professional librarianship—a feminized profession requiring specialist training—and non-specialist but gendered labor, such as that performed in a press clippings department. Reading, cataloguing, and sorting news items in the non-Anglophone press required significant cognitive and foreign-language skills. Press clippings and research departments were the engine rooms of international relations think tanks, and they were staffed by women.

This essay proposes a typology of women’s intellectual labor in foreign policy think tanks, ranging from ‘engine room’ type work to emotional labor and the published writing and public speaking of female intellectuals, to demonstrate that women had more opportunities for participation and intellectual recognition than commonly assumed. Gender structured professional and intellectual choices in these institutions because, in the aftermath of World War I, it had shaped the peacemaking process out of which foreign policy think tanks emerged. They were not hostile to women per se, and some gender conventions of the early twentieth century provided women with opportunities to research and write on international politics. Yet, these opportunities changed as gender politics within think tanks, diplomacy, and U.S. society shifted across two world wars, reconfiguring the ways in which women could attain and project intellectual authority. White women who took up paid employment in think tanks in the 1920s adopted specific, gendered forms of knowledge production.


and the ‘wise men of foreign affairs’ that denied them recognition depended on
an information economy underpinned by female labor. The history of foreign policy think tanks and women’s intellectual labor, 1920–1950:

Some women public intellectuals began as information professionals who shaped practices of collecting, organizing, and disseminating international information. Their intellectual trajectories and those of think tank women not recognized as intellectuals can be pieced together by analyzing under-used think tank records as well as those of philanthropic funders and professional publications.

The essay begins by introducing two models of international relations think tanks, showing that these differed significantly in terms of women’s representation. I focus on the Foreign Policy Association, arguably the U.S. foreign policy think tank most welcoming to women and, at the other end of the spectrum, the more androcentric Council on Foreign Relations. The case of the main British foreign policy think tank of this period, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, provides a comparative but also transnational lens that is highly relevant for women’s intellectual production. Despite their almost opposite gender politics when it came to their public-facing events, both the more exclusionary Council on Foreign Relations and the women-friendly Foreign Policy Association depended on early modern and nineteenth-century models for women’s involvement in affairs of state. It was only via a modern route of intellectual credentials and professional formation, made possible by women’s increased access to higher education during the Progressive Era, that women achieved intellectual recognition as researchers within think tanks, and, in some cases, public profiles. The final section of the essay analyzes the intellectual trajectories and thought of two women public intellectuals, Vera Michele Dean and Ellen Hammer.

To turn around the introductory question, what can women’s history tell us about the intellectual history of U.S. foreign policy? As foreign policy think tanks are criticized for remaining male-dominated environments today, and as some have recently begun to recover the place of women in their history, the question of how women’s presence in these institutions should be mapped, and how its intellectual significance assessed, poses itself with new urgency. The history of foreign policy think tanks and the thought that they produced is

15. Other think tanks that would be relevant to this study are the Institute of Pacific Relations and the Chicago Council on World Affairs.
deeply gendered, but gendered in ways that did not automatically exclude women. It is only by holding in tension the intellectual formations of both exceptional and unexceptional women in these locations that this history is revealed, a history that puts in context ‘lady authorities’ such as Dean and what they contributed to U.S. foreign policy debates in the early and mid-twentieth century.

TWO MODELS OF THE GENDERED FOREIGN POLICY PUBLIC

Think tanks emerged in response to the perceived need to translate scientific research into practical policies. In the early twentieth century, private research institutions subscribing to such a mission were established, with the Brookings Institution in the United States often cited as the first. Thereafter, think tanks transformed themselves from outwardly strictly neutral organizations to partisan pressure groups by the 1980s, a process which continues today. The first think tanks specifically devoted to ‘international’ affairs (as opposed to imperial and colonial affairs) emerged in the aftermath of World War I. They provided a space for knowledge production that took place outside of government bureaucracies but was designed to serve a public purpose, the making of more responsible, well-informed foreign policy, according to a technocratic assumption that an unfiltered ‘will of the people’ would likely lead to harm.

There were two models. One was that of the international affairs institute, an elite organization dedicated to small-scale, secretive discussions with policy relevance. Its exemplars were the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), or ‘Chatham House,’ in Britain and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in the United States. Both trace their origins to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The British (from 1926: Royal) Institute of International Affairs was established in 1920; the CFR in 1921. From the late 1930s, the CFR began to significantly influence policy formation, especially during World War II. The second model, represented by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), had its origin in pro-League of Nations political activism and the woman suffrage movement.

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movement. The FPA embraced a civic and participatory internationalism that stressed the importance of public discussion of international affairs, based on facts, and relied on a national network of branches and a mass membership. Founded in 1918 as the League of Free Nations Association with its headquarters in New York City, the FPA focused on publishing and public events. By 1930, it had over 12,000 paying members (compared to the CFR’s 400 members in 1927). Like the CFR and the RIIA, the FPA attracted the financial support of the U.S. upper classes, including the philanthropic foundations created by the United States’ richest families.

The distinctions outlined above should not detract from commonalities. Both types of organization secured the support of social, political, and economic elites and excluded potential members on the basis of race. The FPA accepted racial segregation at events it organized in the U.S. South, and its meetings in the North were also functionally segregated. Occasionally, African American scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois spoke, but almost always to an entirely white audience. Isaiah Bowman, a leading figure in the CFR, was infamous for his virulent hostility toward African Americans and Jews, which was tolerated if not condoned in his circles. Both organizations oozed social exclusivity, even if the FPA was, in theory, committed to reaching the masses with its inexpensive publications and radio programs. Neither the FPA nor the CFR seriously questioned the existing socio-economic order of the United States. However, they diverged significantly when it came to the inclusion of white women.

The CFR did not allow female members until 1969. Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the long-time editor of the CFR’s journal Foreign Affairs feared that their presence would turn his institute into “more of a social organization” and was distraught when women were first admitted. The RIIA did have a minority of women members, some of whom were prominent campaigners for woman suffrage. A smaller minority still ascended to leadership positions. Inderjeet Parmar counts six women among a sample of 103 RIIA presidents and council

21. W.S. Richardson to James G. McDonald (FPA), April 30, 1925, folder 1, box 1, RG 2, Series Q, Rockefeller Family Archives (hereafter RFA), Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, NY (hereafter RAC); Advisory Committee Resolution “Foreign Policy Association,” June 16, 1932, folder 7, box 1, RG 2, Series Q, RFA, RAC. On the CFR see John W. Davis to Beardsley Ruml, September 23, 1927, folder 536, box 51, III.6, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Archive, RAC.
members between 1920 and 1950.\textsuperscript{24} However, highlighting the virtual absence of women in foreign affairs institutes as membership organizations obscures that women worked both for the CFR and the RIIA. The RIIA awarded multiple research contracts to British women scholars who often became leaders or at least respected in their fields.\textsuperscript{25} Women thus benefited from RIIA and CFR employment at a time when they were under-promoted and underpaid in the academy.

The membership of the FPA, on the other hand, was predominantly female, reaching two thirds of the total in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{26} Prominent figures in the international women’s movement such as Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt sat on FPA advisory boards. The League of Women Voters, the successor to the organized woman suffrage movement in the United States after 1920, supported the FPA. Leading League figures organized local FPA activities and sat on its Executive Committee.\textsuperscript{27} Women’s associational life, organized in civic organizations but also through professional and college networks, underpinned much of the FPA’s activity. Ideologically, this constituency was close to Progressive Era social feminism, which held that that (white) women owed particular, gendered duties to society, for the fulfillment of which they required professional training and status.\textsuperscript{28} Elite women’s professional and social networks also benefited the FPA in terms of philanthropic funding. Some FPA women were friendly with Sydnor Walker, a Vassar graduate who oversaw the Rockefeller Foundation’s international relations program, and thanked their “understanding friend” for her “wise counsel” when the Foundation awarded the FPA a large grant in 1935.\textsuperscript{29} Women’s organizations and the FPA shared the same goal: to empower what they regarded as hitherto marginalized citizens to participate in the public discussion of politics.

The CFR’s and also the RIIA’s founding rationale was grounded on the assumption that international relations revolved around a male elite, steering policy with its wise counsel, whereas the FPA’s promotional literature stressed that it was created when a group comprised of nineteen “men and women” banded

\textsuperscript{24} Parmar, Think Tanks, 35, 44.

\textsuperscript{25} Examples include the social scientist and federalist international thinker Barbara Wootton; the journalist, contemporary historian, and expert on fascism Elizabeth Wiskemann; Lucy Philip Mair, who taught colonial administration in the Departments of International Relations and then Anthropology at the London School of Economics; the Sovietologist and diplomat Violet Conolly; and the academic, government official, journalist, and Middle East specialist Elizabeth Monroe (see also footnote 51).

\textsuperscript{26} Allen, “Every Citizen,” 53.

\textsuperscript{27} Allen, “Every Citizen,” 38, 52–57.


\textsuperscript{29} Esther G. Ogden (FPA secretary) to Sydnor H. Walker, December 14, 1935, folder 2, box 99, M2011-044, FPA, WHS; Sydnor Walker personnel file, Rockefeller Foundation Archives (hereafter RF), RAC. The FPA researcher mentioned in Ogden’s letter was likely Mildred Wertheimer, a fellow Vassar graduate.
together.\textsuperscript{30} As Mary Ann Dzuback has argued, adding “and women” in the context of organizing social scientific knowledge production in the interwar years signaled an explicit commitment to female inclusion.\textsuperscript{31} This professed egalitarianism distinguished the FPA from the CFR and RIIA’s mythologizing of all-male founding moments such as the famous dinner at the Hotel Majestic on the fringes of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.\textsuperscript{32} Such myths set the tone for social conventions within international relations think tanks but social activities were gendered in different ways within the CFR and the FPA.

In the years after World War I, the CFR became the public face of an emerging U.S. foreign policy “establishment” and a producer of authoritative knowledge on international affairs at a time when international relations as an academic discipline was still in its infancy. Apart from its publication activities and secretive study groups, the CFR organized sumptuous, high-profile dinners, with experts and statesmen giving speeches on world affairs. Women were not only not allowed as members, they were also not given the opportunity to address these prestigious dinners, where speaking conferred authority, mirroring the public/private binary that is such a red thread in women’s and gender history. In the era of World War II, women were gradually invited to speak at lesser events, despite the membership’s opposition. An invitation extended to Vera Michele Dean to address a CFR gathering produced an “uproar” in 1946.\textsuperscript{33}

A year later, Brita Skottsberg, the woman who headed the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm, was only given the honor of an informal luncheon at the Council, despite having a doctorate and leading a sister institution in another country. The first woman speaker who gave a formal pre-dinner speech at the CFR was Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, in November 1952. Pandit was Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s sister, leader of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations, and Ambassador to the United States from 1949–1951—an elite, non-white, non-U.S. woman. Billed as “Her Excellency” and introduced by Nelson Rockefeller, she spoke on the topic of “The World and India.” Pandit offered her audience controversial interpretations of U.S. foreign policy, including a claim that the masses had come “to fear American imperialism,” and advised the recognition of the People’s Republic of China as well as the acknowledgment of the legitimate grievances of anti-colonial nationalists. The woman who followed in Pandit’s footsteps was similarly a high-status foreigner, Golda Meir, the Israeli foreign minister. She delivered an evening speech at the CFR in 1956. Meir had qualities that were perceived as masculine, certainly by Israel’s first prime minister,

\textsuperscript{30} FPA Pamphlet, 1930, folder 1, box 111, M2011–044, FPA, WHS.
\textsuperscript{32} On the Hotel Majestic meeting see Lavin, From Empire to International Commonwealth, 165.
\textsuperscript{33} Schulzinger, Wise Men, 82, 213. Schulzinger does not specify the nature of these gatherings but Dean is not included in the official record of meetings.
David Ben-Gurion, who once called her “the best man in the government.”\footnote{34}{The evidence for women dinner speakers between 1920 and 1960 comes from a survey of “Records of Meetings Index,” 1920–1973, Council on Foreign Relations Records (hereafter CFR), Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ (hereafter SGM). On Skottsberg see George S. Franklin, Jr. to Mrs Oscar Reubhausen, September 5, 1947, box 441, CFR, SGM. On Pandit see Digest of Meeting (confidential) and Invitation, box 444, CFR, SGM. Ben-Gurion cited in Bashevkin, Women as Foreign Policy Leaders, viii.} Maybe more importantly, both Pandit and Meir had diplomatic rank, and Pandit belonged to a political dynasty. Dating back to early modern European statecraft, elite women had always found ways to participate in diplomacy, whether as female sovereigns who were conceptualized as ‘kings’ or ‘princes,’ or as ladies-in-waiting.\footnote{35}{On Elizabeth I of England and Mary Tudor see Cynthia Herrup, “The King’s Two Genders,” Journal of British Studies 45, no. 3 (2006), 49–510; but see also A.N. McLaren, Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558–1585 (Cambridge, 2009); Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, eds., The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe (Leiden, 2014).} It was the cachet of diplomatic status that made it impossible for the CFR, which often mimicked the world of diplomacy, to refuse its highest honors to these two women.

At the FPA, elite white women’s social skills were utilized to create new public platforms for the discussion of international affairs. Public events were open to men and women, and the society women who ran the FPA’s Speakers Bureau and Public Education Committee took on labor-intensive tasks, involving reams of correspondence and judging which speakers would be suited to present two sides of any given international issue. Mrs. (Frances) Learned Hand, the wife of Judge Learned Hand, is a case in point. A Bryn Mawr graduate, Hand chaired the FPA’s Popular Education Committee, served on the FPA Board of Directors, proofed publications, and contributed to strategic decisions. Her intellectual labor was essential to the FPA’s functioning but can also be read in the context of Hochschild’s analysis of the two-person-job, where a wife takes on duties in support of her husband’s professional career.\footnote{36}{FPA to Mrs. Learned Hand, May 10, 1940, and October 22, 1940; Dorothy Leet to Mrs. Learned Hand, November 2, 1938; McCoy to Mrs. Learned Hand, April 26, 1940, all in folder 12, box 7, M201–044, FPA, WHS.} In the interwar years, Judge Hand belonged to New York’s genteel circle of foreign policy opinion leaders. Men such as Walter Lippmann, Hamilton Armstrong of the CFR, and Columbia University’s Nicholas Murray Butler met in single-sex private members clubs and had ties to both the FPA and the CFR. Although Frances and Judge Hand had an unconventional marriage—Frances shared most of her married life with another man—her role at the FPA complemented her husband’s in the U.S. foreign policy elite.\footnote{37}{Gerald Gunther, Learned Hand: The Man and the Judge (New York, 1994), 408, 484–500.} As intellectual historians have argued, gendered divisions of intellectual labor, broadly conceived, delineate conceptual boundaries in political culture.\footnote{38}{Jennifer Forestal and Menaka Philips, The Wives of Western Philosophy: Gender Politics in Intellectual Labor (New York, 2020).}
tanks, labor performed by wives of male intellectuals marked the boundary between a public culture of foreign policy debate and a private, secretive culture of foreign policy discussion and counsel.

The FPA actively recruited women for public-facing tasks. In 1928, when it was looking for a new head for its Speakers Bureau, the desired candidate was "a woman not under thirty who has, beside a knowledge of international affairs, a certain position in life which will give her weight and distinction in meeting and discussing the luncheon topics with scholars, diplomats, and the usual high grade individuals who make up our speakers lists." The successful candidate would receive a full-time salary of $3,500 per annum (an amount that exceeded that paid to women in the FPA Research Department—one researcher had started on $2,400 in the same year). In effect, the FPA was looking for a salonnière, a woman of charm and a certain pedigree, French language skills included, who would provide the social context for men to develop the masculine art of diplomacy. As Glenda Sluga has argued, women who socialized men into the world of political negotiation and statecraft confirm the importance of female elites in the transformation of diplomatic practices. Although the salon harkened back to a nineteenth-century model that seemed anachronistic after World War I, the FPA successfully updated it for a middle-brow and democratic U.S. present.

And yet, although overseeing the FPA’s Speakers Bureau meant being in a position of power, such roles did not necessarily confer intellectual authority. The FPA, and to some extent also the CFR, provided this through another route.

WOMEN’S PROFESSIONAL LABOR AS INTELLECTUAL LABOR: DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH

The insistence on separating facts from opinion was characteristic of think tanks in the 1920s, most famously at the RIIA which printed the customary disclaimer that it was forbidden by its charter to “express an opinion on any aspect of international affairs” in all its publications. Purveying objective facts represented the key to the reputational and commercial success of international affairs think tanks as information on international and current affairs was a highly prized commodity in a historical context that preceded the 1970s information revolution. Library and information work were a key aspect of interwar and mid-twentieth-century international thought because they represented one way of dealing with a theoretical and practical problem: how to make foreign policy in modern mass democracies that existed in a world in which international relations were becoming ever more functionally differentiated. Only an informed

39. Helen Howell Moorhead to Henry MacCracken, June 21, 1928, folder 82.10, MacCracken Papers, VCA. On salaries in the Research Department and on other female-coded roles in the FPA see Allen, “Every Citizen,” 81, 138 n. 120.

public, with ample access to information on international politics, could be expected to make sensible choices when it came to foreign policy. Therefore, producing bibliographies, document collections, chronologies, and press clippings was a practical way of dealing with a problem in international democratic theory that was underpinned by the sociological realities of an ever more complex international sphere.\footnote{41}

In the early twentieth century, documentation had emerged as a distinct approach. Recognizing its importance explains the emergence of a professional environment which denied recognition to women but at the same time depended on their labor. Documentation denotes the attempt to regulate how knowledge was gathered, stored, and distributed. It shaped new forms of international information management, in libraries, academic journals, and institutions that offered information services, promising to stabilize international politics by processing international information impartially, a familiar liberal internationalist argument.\footnote{42} Its best-known theorist and practitioner was the Belgian Paul Otlet who co-founded the International Institute of Bibliography in Brussels in 1895 as well as the Palais Mondial, an international museum and documentation center. The Palais Mondial pioneered new technologies such as databases and a universal classification system, and received over a thousand bibliographical queries per year. The laborious task of compiling card entries was carried out by women workers, who remained largely anonymous.\footnote{43} Some in the documentation movement understood the gendered limits of bibliographic universalism. The Belgian feminist, suffragist, and pacifist Léonie La Fontaine created a documentation center for women, the Office central de documentation féminine in 1910. Insisting on the benefits of bibliographic separatism, the Office central created a specialist library that remains an important repository for the history of the women’s movement in a country that only granted female suffrage in 1948.\footnote{44}

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During World War I, documentation received a new impetus. Libraries, archives, museums, and private collectors began to assemble war collections which contained official histories and propaganda but also ephemeral materials such as trench journals.\textsuperscript{45} The impact of the international documentary moment was felt across a profession that was dominated by women: librarianship.\textsuperscript{46} U.S. women librarians committed to the idea that a meticulous documentation of international events was essential to a stable world order included the League of Nations librarian Florence Wilson as well as M. Alice Matthews, who compiled the Chronicle of International Events for the \textit{American Journal of International Law}, one of the most important English-language publications in the international relations field.\textsuperscript{47}

But documentation was also entangled with the creation of international relations think tanks. Here, the RIIA in London played a pioneering role. Due to its origins in the world of statesmanship and diplomacy, the RIIA was able to benefit from the information-gathering capacities of the British wartime state. The think tank simply took over the War Office’s Foreign Press Review, a press clippings service which systematically gathered and catalogued news items.\textsuperscript{48} The press clippings service, given its own department within the RIIA, directly fed into the publications which consolidated the think tank’s reputation as the purveyor of reliable facts on international affairs. The \textit{Survey of International Affairs}, which was a quasi-official reference work, supplemented by document collections and tables, and which appeared under the historian Arnold Toynbee’s authorship, is a case in point. Toynbee produced these 500-page tomes, which appeared yearly from 1925, by relying on the work of the RIIA press clippings department and the contribution of Veronica Boulter. The women in the press clippings department not only selected news items from the national and international press but also arranged them by subject in cartons which greatly facilitated Toynbee’s and Boulter’s analysis.\textsuperscript{49} In a fast-moving field such as international relations which, in the interwar period was far less theoretical and much closer to ‘current affairs’ than after 1945, the swift and accurate retrieval of information was vital for serving think tank constituencies.


\textsuperscript{48} Lavin, \textit{From Empire to International Commonwealth}, 168.

The RIIA also ran an Information Department which produced memoranda and answered inquiries. It was enlarged in 1930 when it merged with a subscription-based Information Service for International Affairs and began to publish the *Bulletin of International News*. Both the clippings service and the Information Department were staffed largely by women and contributed significantly to the RIIA’s most successful outputs. Some women employed in these capacities rose to prominence within and outside of the organization; for instance, Margaret Cleeve, the head of the RIIA’s Library and Publications Department, and editor of its journal *International Affairs*, and Elizabeth Monroe, a member of the RIIA Information Department who went into academia. In terms of accuracy and reliability, the RIIA’s publications were


considered to be of the highest standard by funders, government officials, and the reading public alike.\textsuperscript{52} The CFR, which also produced *Surveys of International Affairs* and had a rivalrous, if cordial relationship with its sister institution, could not compete with the RIIA’s level of professionalism, a state of affairs that it sought to remedy in the early 1930s.

The need for specialist, feminized expertise underpinned the recruitment of Ruth Savord to the Council on Foreign Relations. Educated at the University of Illinois and the Western Reserve University Library School, Savord had worked in public, private, and university libraries before moving to the International Education Board, a philanthropic foundation. There, she wrote a first foray into international topics, a comparative report on Agricultural and Scientific Research in the Far East. Savord shared the conventional assumptions about race, U.S. empire, and civilizational hierarchy that suffused the academic research produced by most white U.S. scholars within the field of international relations.\textsuperscript{53} She downplayed the colonial status of the Philippines while at the same time valorizing the successes of the U.S. civilizing mission there which had allegedly resulted in Filipinos’ “knowledge of the correct principles of government” that was “superior to any of the Central or South American Republics.”\textsuperscript{54} Thus, Savord was conversant with mainstream academic terms and categories of analysis in the field of international relations and, despite her status as a librarian, contributed new empirical findings.

The CFR hired Savord in 1930. It had recently moved from its small two-room offices to a new building on East 65th Street in New York City, which finally enabled the organization to set up a professional library. Until then, most of the CFR’s study group meetings had been held in the Harvard Club in Manhattan.\textsuperscript{55} During her tenure, Savord reformed the CFR’s amateurish research practices. After establishing the CFR Library, she demanded the creation of a newspaper clippings service, an indispensable tool in days before electronic databases or reference works on international relations.\textsuperscript{56} She also took over some of the duties of the CFR Research Department, arguing that the Library

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\textsuperscript{53} Personnel file Ruth Savord; “Universities of the Far East with the Professors in Charge of the Agricultural and Scientific Departments Together With Some Information Regarding Developments in the Above Fields in these Countries,” 103, both in folder 64, box 4, series 1, International Education Board Records, RAC.

\textsuperscript{54} Smith, *American Empire*, 198.

\textsuperscript{55} Note to Mallory, n.d, folder 3, box 99, CFR, SGM.
was “where everything [research-related] should be concentrated.” By 1933, the CFR had centralized its information work in the Library and Savord and her colleagues fielded countless research requests.

Savord shaped the way in which the CFR communicated with its audiences and peers. She initiated journal and book exchanges with think tanks abroad, and wrote bibliographies for CFR publications. She also began to author content in the CFR’s flagship journal Foreign Affairs; for instance, the regular compilation of the “Source Material” section. Externally, she took on leadership positions in professional organizations, and she lent her expertise to high-profile projects, such as setting up the Library of the United Nations in New York. The recognition afforded to Savord as an authority in her field can be gleaned from her regular contributions to ‘state of the field’ publications, for example sections on libraries and documentation in Edith Ware’s foundational surveys on the teaching of international relations in the United States, or a directory of U.S. institutions dedicated to the study of international relations.

Savord also compiled a reading list for State Department officials, published by the journal World Affairs, a task that would usually accrue to an academic. Her list of essential books contained subsequently neglected women authors such as Margery Perham, Elizabeth Wiskemann, and Vera Micheles Dean, and some that have only recently been recognized as belonging to the field of international thought, such as Ruth Benedict.

Savord understood her own indispensability and made claims to intellectual ownership, especially when her contribution was not acknowledged. A letter, sent to the CFR’s “Director of Studies and more or less arbiter of publications,” admonished her male superior that “when acknowledgments are being handed out to every Secretary employed for four weeks, you might well see that some mention is made of the continued service given by the Library + the Library staff... I don’t think the Ellis book could have been written without access to the material we had so painstakingly gathered.” Savord’s note could be read as a form of gatekeeping as she may have rejected being classified on the same rung of esteem as a mere secretary, another feminized occupation. But her note also reminded CFR leaders that international relations research depended on

57. Memo “Library Development,” July 1, 1930, folder 3, box 99, CFR, SGM.
60. Council on Foreign Relations Library, Annual Report, 1953/54, folder 3, box 98, CFR, SGM. The 1949 reading list is preserved in pamphlet form in folder 880, box 97, series 100, RG 1.1, RF, RAC.
61. Savord to Percy Bidwell, August 1, 1950, folder 2, box 98, CFR, SGM.
information-gathering that had to be conducted according to professional principles. It was Savord’s professional, not her personal pride, that had been hurt by the omission.

Quite how much was at stake for Savord here is explained by her published writings on librarianship as a distinct women’s profession. In the interwar years, employment opportunities successively narrowed for women, especially during the Great Depression. Marriage bars banned women from most jobs in banking, insurance, public utilities, and also classic women’s professions such as teaching.\(^{62}\) Savord was, as far as the archival record reveals, neither married nor had dependents, but in the 1930s and early 1940s she must have been aware of the difficult position women faced on the labor market. In a pamphlet written in 1942 for the Institute of Women’s Professional Relations, she praised special librarianship in businesses, law firms, or think tanks as “a real job for any woman” with the right qualities, namely “a broad cultural, literary and factual background as well as specialized training in a chosen field of action.” Savord highlighted cognitive, not social skills, when demanding that “She [the librarian] should develop the ability to analyze all the factors involved in the problem in hand, to separate the essential from the non-essential, and to condense and present all pertinent facts.” Savord’s use of female pronouns and her claim that the special library was “one of the few places in the business world where a woman is free to build and earn her place on her own merits practically secure from direct competition with men” indicates that she envisioned hers as a women’s profession providing both financial independence and respect, while being sheltered by the gender conventions that closed these opportunities to men.\(^{63}\)

This exclusivity was not to last. Thirteen years later, Savord re-published her pamphlet in which she characterized the special library as “one of the few places in the business world which is open to women as well as men and where competition is on an equal basis.” Referencing the equality between men and women while using ‘he’ pronouns throughout to indicate as much, Savord signaled that the special library was no longer an exclusive space for women’s professional advancement.\(^{64}\) Savord was correct in stating that white collar workplaces had become more egalitarian. Bars to especially married women’s employment fell significantly from the late 1940s, due to demographic factors which led to a shortage of workers.\(^{65}\) But the increased status of special librarianship and international relations as a field of intellectual inquiry also meant that it no longer functioned as a niche for women, which undermined Savord’s politics of separate institution building, the strategy that she had quite openly advocated in the


\(^{63}\) Ruth Savord, *Special Librarianship as a Career* (New London, CT, 1942), 6, 12.


early 1940s.\textsuperscript{66} After Savord retired in 1960, the Council replaced her with a male librarian, Donald Wasson.

Despite the very different gender politics of the FPA, women’s intellectual authority at the Association was also bolstered by the specific information economy of the interwar international relations field. The FPA’s Research Department emerged as a space in which women not only performed conventional gendered labor as information professionals but also produced original analyses and specialist expertise, grounded in multi-lingual research, extensive travel, and academic training. This combination enabled some FPA women to create a profile as public intellectuals, combining empiricist scholarship and mass appeal.

Although the FPA has conventionally been portrayed as focused on the dissemination of information, it produced numerous publications which were often the first serious treatment of an international topic, ranging from international organization to global health or political developments in various regions of the globe.\textsuperscript{67} By the 1930s, the FPA was, in effect, a highly effective publishing empire, producing a range of formats such as a\textit{News Bulletin}, \textit{The Information Service} (later entitled \textit{Foreign Policy Reports}, semi-scholarly treatments of considerable length), a pamphlet series, books, and verbatim reports of dinner discussions.\textsuperscript{68} FPA materials represented respected sources of information in the U.S. press and State Department. Major funders such as the Rockefeller Foundation recognized the potential tension between the FPA’s commitment to both public education and research but thought, in the typical liberal internationalist mindset of the interwar years, that strengthening of the FPA’s research functions would resolve such conflicts. Indeed, it had been a 1925 donation from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. which enabled the Association to set up a Research Department under the direction of Middle East specialist and future pioneer of security studies Edward M. Earle. In 1927, Raymond Leslie Buell, another rising star in the academic field of international relations, took over the directorship of the Research Department which he professionalized further.\textsuperscript{69}

This process of professionalization took the shape of a new library and a newspaper clippings service, in accordance with the British template and under the guidance of female librarian Ona Ringwood. As did the RIIA, the FPA Library subscribed to a global list of newspapers and periodicals, and its Research Department developed a precise cataloguing system for the clippings and reviews it produced. This labor was performed by women as, in the 1920s

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Raucher, “First Foreign Affairs Think Tanks;” Parmar, “Carnegie Corporation.”
\item “A Few Facts about the FPA,” 1930, folder 1, box 11, M2011–044, FPA, WHS.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and 1930s, they researched and wrote most of the publications. Earle and Buell had hired them because they could afford to pay them less than male staff while at the same time benefiting from the expansion of women’s higher education in the Progressive Era which had produced high-quality female graduates. These women were also willing to undertake extensive travels and conducted interviews with politicians and international civil servants.70

A “Who’s Who” of the Research Department in 1929 provides a snapshot of the FPA’s women scholars, with seven women out of a total staff of nine working for this crucial part of its operations. Six had completed university degrees, two of them PhDs; two had worked for an international non-governmental body such as the Red Cross; four had trained in a women’s profession such as librarianship, secretarial, or social work; five had substantial experience travelling or working abroad; five would go on to publish significant amounts of journalism or research reports across the FPA’s outlets or in other venues.71 The FPA’s Research Department represented the heights of what it was possible to achieve intellectually for a woman of a certain social status, structured by race and class, in the world of U.S. liberal internationalism.

The five women most readily identifiable as intellectuals in the sense that they published significant works were Elizabeth Pauline MacCallum, Vera Micheles (Vera Micheles Dean after her marriage), Helen Howell Moorhead, Agnes Stewart Waddell, and Mildred S. Wertheimer.72 Moorhead and Wertheimer were both close to international policy-making, and entrenched in what historians describe as the ‘technical League,’ the distinct milieu shaping international governance at the League of Nations at Geneva. Moorhead specialized in the international regulation of drugs, Wertheimer in German politics and refugee policy. Wertheimer had prior experience in policy research as one of at least twenty-eight women on the Inquiry (1917–19), set up by Woodrow Wilson to prepare the U.S. recommendations for the Versailles Peace Conference. Elite white women were included in the Inquiry as they had the necessary academic qualifications, were part of liberal internationalist networks and remedied a lack of male experts able to do the work.73 The same profile led women into the FPA Research Department.

71. “Who’s Who in the Research Department,” 1929, folder 82.10, MacCracken Papers, VCA.
Ironically, it was also the success of women’s publications that resulted in an increasing masculinization of the research staff roster. The FPA’s main funder, the Rockefeller Foundation, frequently cited the quality and authoritativeness of its publications as a reason for its generous grants in the 1930s. As David Allen has argued, Buell sought above all influence with policy makers and knew that academic men would inevitably be taken more seriously in the corridors of power than academic women. As he became able to spend more money on salaries, he began to hire only men for the Research Department. However, the Department itself was taken over by Vera Micheles Dean in 1936. She continued to oversee the FPA’s publication output and became the organization’s foremost public intellectual in its mid-century heyday.

**THINK TANK WOMEN AS PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS: VERA DEAN AND ELLEN HAMMER**

Perhaps more than any other American woman at the time, Dean was a public authority on foreign affairs, present in the mass media, on university campuses and on the foreign policy lecture circuit. Born in imperial Russia, she moved to the United States as a student, and took degrees from Radcliffe College and Yale. She left Radcliffe with a PhD in international law and international relations and joined the FPA in 1928 as its Soviet expert. Dean combined serious scholarship with the ability to speak to a mass audience. She managed to sell hundreds of thousands of copies of her books, which were also used in college classes. Although her belief in the transformative power of public discussion was shaken when she became the target of anti-communist attacks in the 1940s and 50s—she remarked that U.S. democracy provided no protection to intellectuals, as “myths can be created even in a society which offers opportunities for free discussion”—she continued to address a broad audience, putting forward her vision of the Cold War as a conflict that could be overcome with sufficient good will on both sides.

Dean based her publications and talks on “a massive and ever-growing base of detailed information, including not only published and unpublished documents but also interviews and personal communications with global leaders,” none of which would have been available to her without her institutional

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74. Resolutions on the FPA, January 20, 1933; December 21, 1934; December 11, 1935; December 7, 1938; summary of grants, December 7, 1938, all in folder 3968, box 333, series 200 S, RG 1.1, RF, RAC.


77. Vera Micheles Dean, *Foreign Policy Without Fear* (New York, 1953), x.
Figure 2 and Figure 3: A Foreign Policy Think Tank and its Audience. The FPA experimented with shifting gender conventions in its publicity materials: one imagined reader depicted here is sober and prim, engrossed in a book; the other flamboyantly dressed and tenderly touching the mass-market book display, as if engaged in conspicuous consumption. Courtesy of the Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown NY.
context. As Andrew Jewett has argued, Dean was a “common-sense cosmopolitan,” who embraced international cooperation, collective security both in political and economic terms and opposed imperialist and racist domination. She argued that these conclusions stemmed from her materialist analysis of the economic and welfare needs that all humans shared, irrespective of ideological forces. Therefore, she continued to believe in the reform of the Soviet system, despite all evidence to the contrary, and continuously stressed the needs of the Russian people for security. At the same time, Dean shared an aversion to overly abstract international theorizing with other mid-century women international thinkers, and rejected utopian visions. Nonetheless, there were clear theoretical and ideological underpinnings to her work, even if she did not always articulate them explicitly. Her observations on the realities of human behavior and the facts of global economic interdependence led her to believe in collective security and international organization as the only realistic options for human advancement, a vision that idealized international cooperation while underplaying international antagonisms and clashes of interest.

Dean’s intellectual formation in the FPA provided her with an ideological framework which emphasized the power of open dialogue and nurtured her intellectual confidence in the accuracy of her own analysis of international relations. In the interwar years, the FPA’s research publications were used by high-level diplomats, government departments, and foreign policy elites. In 1950, the U.S. State Department invited Dean as a consultant on how to pitch its own publications to specialist and general audiences. Here, her expertise as a communications professional was in demand. Dean could flourish as a public intellectual in an institutional environment which provided her with the raw material for her thinking, indeed she relied on female labor to produce this raw material. The association with the FPA enabled her to participate in both the male-dominated world of policy expertise and international relations scholarship and a more popular marketplace for international information which was enmeshed with a network of women’s colleges and civic associations. It is the tension between visible and invisible, between professionalized and socializing labor that shaped the public intellectual Dean.

In the late 1940s, the peculiar epistemological ecosystem of the FPA moved into the crosshairs of a female counter-public when the ascendant U.S. right began to attack Dean because of her alleged pro-Soviet apologetics, her public

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79. For other examples, e.g., Elizabeth Wiskemann and Barbara Wootton, see Owens and Rietzler, eds., Women’s International Thought.
80. The FPA’s outputs were so highly respected that it lost many of its male researchers to the U.S. government during World War II, a development which heralded the loss of the FPA’s influence after 1945. Allen, “Every Citizen,” 191–200, 237.
visibility, and her status as a foreign-born American.\footnote{On the concept of the counter-public see Michael Warner, \textit{Publics and Counterpublics} (New York, 2002), 56–63.}

Conservative women accused Dean of presenting her vision of an internationalist and anti-colonialist U.S. foreign policy as one shared by all U.S. women, when that was not the case. Californian activists Lucille Cardin Crain and Anne Burrows Hamilton forensically analyzed the complex information dissemination and lobbying network that organizations such as the American Association of University Women or the League of Women Voters had created to “sell women” foreign policy ideas such as universal military training. In their view, this amounted to illegitimate propaganda: “ideas cannot, or should not, where the intellectual atmosphere is still free, be sold by the same technique which has successfully sold automobiles, soap, cigarettes, and thousands of other products.” Their polemic excoriated Dean’s “famous political sympathies” and portrayed the Foreign Policy Association as a sinister organization which indoctrinated gullible women in left-progressive “beatitudes of internationalism,” and shut out those that did not agree.\footnote{Lucille Cardin Crain and Anne Burrows Hamilton, “Packaged Thinking for Women,” \textit{American Affairs}, Supplement to Autumn 1948 issue, 10, 22, 23 see also lengthy quotes of Dean on 27; Michelle Nickerson, \textit{Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right} (Princeton, NJ, 2012), 54, 77. On the international affairs network of U.S. women’s organizations and its government links see Helen Laville, \textit{Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women’s Organisations} (Manchester, 2002), chapters 1–2.}

To some extent, they were correct in claiming that the ideological spectrum represented at FPA events had narrowed from at least the passage of Lend-Lease in 1941, when the FPA became increasingly reluctant to platform views that went against a liberal internationalist and government-backed consensus.\footnote{On the international affairs network of U.S. women’s organizations and its government links see Helen Laville, \textit{Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women’s Organisations} (Manchester, 2002), chapters 1–2.}

The accusations targeted Dean and the organization that employed her not only because of what she said but also because of how she said it. It was precisely because she was a successful communicator who knew how to shape public debate that women in the anti-communist movement resented her. For Dean herself, the consequences of anti-communist attacks were damaging, even though they never threatened her livelihood. As Senator Joe McCarthy (R-WI) and his supporters turned to purging foreign libraries sponsored by the State Department’s International Information Agency (IIA) in 1953, Dean’s works were among those that were removed from the shelves. However, Dean did not have to testify in front of a hearing, as did the African American activist and author Eslanda Robeson whose books had also been removed from IIA libraries.\footnote{Allen, “Every Citizen,” 185–190.}

Attacked in the world of para-diplomacy, Dean moved more securely into academia, first to the University of Rochester in 1954 and, in 1962, to New York.
University. In both posts, she directed area studies programs, continuing a trend that had been apparent in the FPA’s Research Department in the late 1920s, when almost all the women that had been hired had an area specialization. She continued her work for the FPA’s publications department, even though anti-communist activists continued to accuse the think tank of subversion until the 1960s.  

But how typical was Dean’s trajectory as a public intellectual? Reading her together with comparable women in the CFR provides a useful perspective. Ruth Savord and her female library assistants were not the only women to work at the Council. In the 1940s, the CFR availed itself of the hiring opportunities provided by expanding teaching programs in international relations at elite U.S. women’s colleges and recruited Ellen Hammer as a research assistant. A product of the expansion of women’s academic training in international relations in the interwar years, Hammer had taken a BA from Barnard in 1941 and worked for the Council before completing a PhD in International Relations at Columbia University. Hammer worked for the CFR in two capacities. First, fittingly for a recent graduate, she helped it map the emerging discipline of International Relations, surveying the academic offerings of 165 colleges and universities. Her research was foundational for an influential critique of the field penned by Grayson Kirk and published by the CFR.  

Hammer also supported the CFR’s efforts at public outreach. In 1938, the Council had begun to establish all-male Committees on Foreign Relations in several U.S. cities, in an effort to influence opinion leaders who would in turn shape their communities’ views on world affairs.  

This focus intensified as social science methods such as polling encouraged broad generalizations on the U.S. public’s capacity for international relations knowledge, which led to the widespread assumption that the ‘averaged American’ was ignorant of international relations. The results of a 1948 Gallup poll disaggregated by sex, income, education, and region led a male CFR researcher to conclude that “[o]f 45 million women eligible to vote, some 38 million are uninformed about the
most important issues and events in American foreign policy.” The CFR’s decentralized network of notables thus represented a crucial opportunity to “create and stimulate international thought among the people of the United States,” as the director of the program put it. Hammer’s role was to analyze a questionnaire sent out to the Committees in the winter of 1945–46 and to treat it as a survey of “informed” public opinion. In a short précis she concluded that Committee members possessed a “careful and thoughtful analysis” and remained optimistic regarding peace between the United States and the Soviet Union—a point of view that was not too distant from Vera Dean’s assessment of international politics in the early Cold War. It is striking that both Hammer and Dean applied their intellectual labor to helping think tank elites better understand the U.S. public, and that they shared an optimistic take on the public’s capacity to empathize with the peoples of other nations at a time when male experts stressed the public’s incapacity for understanding.

As a mere research assistant, Hammer was not able to deploy her role at the CFR to build her career as a public intellectual. Instead, she became a specialist on France and its colonial policies, especially in Indochina. She also contributed to conferences of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), another think tank, which would have been the most appropriate venue for a U.S. area specialist on Asia. In her writings, Hammer strongly criticized French colonialism and championed the Diem government in South Vietnam. After a string of publications, one of which appeared in a volume edited by former FPA Research Director Edward Mead Earle, she wrote a contemporary history of Vietnam, which became a 1954 History Book Club selection. Hammer published it under IPR auspices, soon after the think tank had been targeted by McCarthyites. Yet, this did not damage her public standing. Impeccably researched, including French, British, U.S., and Vietnamese sources and based on several trips to Vietnam, her study managed to combine popular appeal with

90. Martin Kriesberg, “Dark Areas of Ignorance,” in Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, ed. Lester Markel (New York, 1972 [1949]), 54. I refer to “sex” as the relevant category as the concept of gender identity was only in the process of being theorized in the late 1950s/early 1960s. For an insightful genealogy see Jemima Repo, The Biopolitics of Gender (New York, 2015).
specialist knowledge. She ended by warning Americans to heed the persistent and “profound attachment of the Vietnamese to their independence,” a warning that the U.S. foreign policy establishment duly ignored. Although she was not able to translate her insights into policy, Hammer gained lasting recognition as an authoritative voice seeking to help Americans understand the historical formation of another nation. She chose the life of a peripatetic scholar, including long stays in both Vietnam and France. And she thrived on all the advantages that a white woman of her generation could access—not only an elite education but also access to the resources provided by the U.S. foreign policy think tank landscape.

The world of U.S. foreign policy think tanks was never as hostile to women as official accounts of the CFR claimed. In the 1990s, the thought that the wise men who founded the CFR could not conceive of women as their intellectual equals may have seemed like a mildly embarrassing but plausible inheritance, especially as by then, the FPA had long ceased to be a serious competitor in terms of membership and policy influence. By the early 2000s, the CFR found itself in a different position. In 2002, Isobel Coleman, a former consultant for McKinsey and Senior Fellow, founded the pioneering Women and Foreign Policy Program at the CFR, and, in a bold but influential article in its house journal Foreign Affairs, argued that the “payoff from women’s rights” was important enough to U.S. power in the Middle East to deserve significant intellectual resources.

However, well before the recognition of the importance of women and gender to U.S. foreign policy went mainstream, women were present in think tanks and worked on a vast range of subjects, from area studies to colonialism to drug control to Nazism. Rather than demonstrating a singular focus on what are often termed ‘women’s issues’—the right to not lose one’s nationality after marriage, or suffrage rights—women working in think tanks made diverse intellectual contributions, in terms of content, methods, and field, and in terms of labor. If they were not admitted as members or as senior researchers, then they provided the foundational intellectual labor that made the work of foreign policy think tanks possible. Accurate research and a functioning press clippings archive in multiple languages were core functions of early foreign policy think tanks with their emphasis on impartiality in a political environment in which anxiety about propaganda and misinformation were rife.

Women employees thus enabled think tanks to produce their ‘product,’ an observation which might make us rethink the term ‘think tank’ itself. The main selling point of these institutions was not so much original thought (often a

95. Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina, 324.
marker of—masculine—genius) but carefully collected and processed information. Even those think tank women who became public intellectuals did not lose their connection to the empiricism inherent in the documentary approach. Foreign policy think tanks thus offered women a niche for gaining intellectual recognition in the face of formal barriers to participation in the policy-making process. As the example of Ruth Savord shows, changes in professional fields such as specialist librarianship, which became less of a women’s profession in the 1950s, removed some of these opportunities by making it less plausible that women would produce evidence-based analyses of international politics.

Women were also valued, however, for their emotional and socializing labor, organizing public events and talks, and communicating with specialist and non-specialist audiences. Here, women’s intellectual labor reconfigured older forms of female agency in the world of diplomacy and statecraft, recalling the function of the salonnière and, very occasionally, as in the case of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit or Golda Meir, that of a—honorary male—foreign diplomat speaking hard truths to the U.S. foreign policy elite. For some women, often those educated at elite institutions and to the PhD-level, think tank employment eased the path toward becoming a foreign policy intellectual. Given her many publications, both scholarly and popular, multiple speaking engagements, both in the United States and abroad, the many honorary degrees bestowed on her and also the antipathy directed at her as a woman who was seen as somewhat over-exposed, we can legitimately compare Vera Michelels Dean with well-known male figures such as Walter Lippmann or Charles Beard. But Dean was the exception, not the norm, and her trajectory was shaped by feminized forms of labor and the unexceptional women who performed it. Writing a history that incorporates many forms of women’s intellectual labor in one location, the think tank, might thus contribute, among other approaches, to the writing of a more gender-conscious ‘people’s history’ of how Americans discussed and debated their place in the world.