

## Chapter 6

A Fascist Triangle or a Rotary Wheel:

The Sino-Japanese War and the Gendered Internationalisms of

Sylvia Pankhurst and Carlos Romulo

by

Erika Huckestein and Mark L. Reeves

### Abstract

In comparing the political discourses of two newspaper publishers, politically and geographically worlds apart, this chapter seeks to understand how gendered visions of the world directly influenced geopolitical analysis. The disparity in the responses to the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 by a British socialist and former suffragette, Sylvia Pankhurst, and an upper-class, center-right Filipino, Carlos Romulo, reveal how their gendered political imaginaries shaped their ability to offer solutions to war and envision a new world order. Both Pankhurst and Romulo interpreted the significance of the Sino-Japanese War from the perspective of their own gendered forms of internationalism; Pankhurst was inspired by an anti-fascist feminist internationalism, and Romulo embraced a masculinist socially-elite internationalism. Though both wrote sympathetically about China's plight in the face of Japanese aggression, their reasons for sympathy and their proposals for restoring order diverged along the lines of their gendered internationalisms.

Keywords: Internationalism, Sino-Japanese War, Carlos Romulo, Rotary, Philippines, Sylvia Pankhurst, feminism, women, anti-fascism

The outbreak of a second Sino-Japanese War in July 1937 quickly brought explicitly gendered images into the global media narrative. These ranged from the “Rape of Nanking” to the diplomatic role played by Madame Chiang Kai-shek to rally support for Nationalist China. During the 1930s, onlookers from a destabilized Europe, a wary United States, and concerned nations all across East and Southeast Asia placed the war in China into a global context, especially alongside the ongoing Spanish Civil War. 1937 appeared to be the beginning of a global world war against fascism.<sup>1</sup> When the war broke out, the British radical publisher and political activist Sylvia Pankhurst interpreted the war in China as part of an international fascist menace, and the more conservative Filipino publisher Carlos Romulo ran a cartoon in his English-language Manila daily, the *Philippines Herald*, depicting “the world’s two major headaches,” as large lumps on Spain and China.<sup>2</sup> While not explicitly connecting the conflicts’ causes, Romulo nevertheless recognized the global scale of the international crisis.

This chapter begins the process of placing the Sino-Japanese War into the context of the gendered trans-Pacific by analyzing the responses of two intellectuals to the conflict’s beginning. Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960) was an activist and former suffragette who was deeply involved in the pacifist and socialist movements. Carlos Romulo (1898-1985) was a

---

<sup>1</sup> The year also could be interpreted as the middle of a “Fifteen-Year War” of Japanese expansion, dating from 1931’s invasion of Manchuria to the collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945. What followed from the events of 1937, from the bombing of civilians to the coercion of thousands of “comfort women” into forced prostitution, would become part of a gendered narrative of the Second World War.

<sup>2</sup> “The World’s Two Major Headaches,” *Philippines Herald* [hereafter *PH*], July 10, 1937.

center-right Filipino newspaper editor who eventually served as his nation's ambassador to the United States and the United Nations. The ideas of these individuals do not necessarily represent their respective nations (much less regions), sexes, or political ideologies. Rather, as interwar newspaper editors with activist interests in politics, their commonalities illuminate their different gendered readings of the Sino-Japanese War. That is, their interpretations of the conflict reveal how these figures gendered international politics and understood the scale of the war differently. Sylvia Pankhurst saw in Japan's attack on China another example of a global fascist advance, stemming in part from the exclusion of women from politics. In contrast, Romulo regarded the war as less explicitly global in reach; instead, he understood international relations as akin to the intimacy of club-like interactions among equal, rational, and reasoning men. War, in his eyes, was an implicit violation of an idealized masculine, international social circle.

Pankhurst and Romulo were both outsiders to China, but they recognized China's centrality in world affairs. They viewed China as the lynchpin for maintaining peace in the Pacific; the fate of the Middle Country could affect the stability of Europe, Asia, and the Trans-Pacific alike. Pankhurst recognized that China was imminently threatened by the global forces of fascism. The fall of China could portend an advance in Asia, just as fascism menaced the heart of Europe. Similarly, Romulo feared that China's loss would lead to a Japanese domination of Asia, which would fundamentally alter the U.S. relationship with Southeast Asia, and thus the Philippines. However, Pankhurst and Romulo did not look at China through purely geopolitical lenses. For both, China's political importance came from its symbolic importance as a part of their respective internationalist projects: an anti-fascist feminist internationalism for Pankhurst, and a liberal, American-style

internationalism for Romulo. Thus, Pankhurst saw China as the latest victim of fascist aggression, while for Romulo, China represented the need for Pacific nations such as the Philippines and the United States to cooperate in a liberal, open fashion.

As this chapter will show, Pankhurst and Romulo's respective internationalisms were profoundly shaped by their gendered politics. These two journalists wrote from articulated very different vantage points. The similar origins of their thinking reveals how gendered politics played a significant role in generating competing forms of internationalism.

#### The "Berlin—Rome—Tokyo Triangle": Sylvia Pankhurst and the Sino-Japanese War

On August 22, 1936, almost a year before Japan would invade China for the second time within the decade, Professor Hu Chow Yuan expressed his support for the Ethiopian cause. In a newspaper article, Hu described the outpouring of support for the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, from a variety of Chinese organizations. He argued that this great sympathy between the countries resulted from the fact that "both have suffered from Fascist robbers and gangsters—Italy and Japan;" he was referring to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.<sup>3</sup> Japan's invasion of China in 1937 would further strengthen the sentiment that China and Ethiopia were united

---

<sup>3</sup> Professor Hu Chow Yuan, "Chinese Opinion: Long Live Ethiopia," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, August 22, 1936.

by their victim status. This was especially true among activists on the British left whose ‘Aid China’ campaign framed the war in China as one fascist conflict among many.<sup>4</sup>

The British anti-fascist and socialist activist Sylvia Pankhurst edited the *New Times and Ethiopia News*, a weekly newspaper that printed Hu’s article in 1936.<sup>5</sup> Though Pankhurst initially established the newspaper to advocate on behalf of Ethiopia, she portrayed the conflicts in Ethiopia, Spain, and China as intimately connected. She viewed all three as theatres of fascist aggression.<sup>6</sup> Unlike some leftist activists, Pankhurst did not privilege the European conflict in Spain above those in Ethiopia and China. Instead, she repeatedly reminded readers that despite differences in race or language, the global victims of fascism shared a common humanity. Pankhurst also departed from other activists, particularly men, in her analysis of the gendered threat of fascism. In her opinion, the

---

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Clegg, *Aid China 1937-1949: A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2003); J. K. J. Perry, “Powerless and Frustrated: Britain’s Relationship With China During the Opening Years of the Second Sino–Japanese War, 1937–1939,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 3 (2011): 408–30; Tom Buchanan, *East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Tom Buchanan, “‘Shanghai-Madrid Axis’? Comparing British Responses to the Conflicts in Spain and China, 1936–39,” *Contemporary European History* 21, no. 4 (2012): 533–52; Buchanan, *East Wind*; Tom Buchanan, “China and the British Left in the Twentieth Century: Transnational Perspectives,” *Labor History* 54, no. 5 (2013): 540–53.

<sup>5</sup> According to her son Richard Pankhurst, Sylvia was partly inspired to name her newspaper *New Times and Ethiopia News* by Charlie Chaplin’s popular 1936 film *Modern Times*. Richard Pankhurst, “Sylvia and New Times and Ethiopia News,” in *Sylvia Pankhurst: From Artist to Anti-Fascist*, ed. Ian Bullock and Richard Pankhurst, 1992, 154.

<sup>6</sup> Most of the biographies of Pankhurst focus on her Ethiopian activism, but do not examine the connections Pankhurst made between the conflicts in Ethiopia, Spain, and China in particular. Patricia Romero, *E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Ian Bullock and Richard Pankhurst, eds., *Sylvia Pankhurst: From Artist to Anti-fascist* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992); Barbara Winslow, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Sexual Politics and Political Activism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); Mary Davis, *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Life in Radical Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); Shirley Harrison, *Sylvia Pankhurst: a Crusading Life 1882-1960* (London: Aurum, 2003), and Katherine Connelly, *Sylvia Pankhurst Suffragette, Socialist, and Scourge of Empire* (London: Pluto Press, 2013).

exclusion of women from positions of power within governments contributed to the emergence of fascist dictatorships and their militaristic policies. In fact, she believed that bellicose, autocratic policies would be particularly damaging to women. The equal participation of women in government and politics was a central component of Pankhurst's vision of peaceful internationalism. For Pankhurst, internationalism had the potential to facilitate progress toward a better future in which transparency, democracy, and justice were the basis of diplomacy and lasting peace. An examination of Pankhurst's stance on the Sino-Japanese War illuminates her internationalist vision and demonstrates the role that her feminist politics and experiences of World War I played in shaping her beliefs and activism.

Many women, including Pankhurst, turned to international activism after the First World War. Though these women did not necessarily agree on a specific feminist program, many activists viewed working beyond the national level as the way forward to achieve equal rights for women.<sup>7</sup> British women activists on the international stage had distinctly gendered responses to international conflict and fascism, as the work of Julie Gottlieb has shown.<sup>8</sup> The Women's Co-operative Guild, for instance, linked women's roles as mothers to pacifism and stressed that women as nurturers had a crucial role to play in promoting

---

<sup>7</sup> Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 108, 130; Carol Miller, "'Geneva – the Key to Equality': Inter-War Feminists and the League of Nations," *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 219–45.

<sup>8</sup> Julie V. Gottlieb, "Varieties of Feminist Responses to Fascism in Inter-War Britain," in *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period*, ed. Nigel Copsey and Andrzej Olechnowicz (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 101–18; Julie Gottlieb, *"Guilty Women," Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

peace through propaganda and education.<sup>9</sup> This gendered understanding of conflict and pacifism was prevalent among many women internationalists in the interwar period. They used this to argue that women were more suited than men to be diplomats. As “natural pacifists,” women were believed to be far less likely than their male counterparts to use war as a means to settle conflicts.<sup>10</sup> Their use of an essentialist gender strategy to remedy unequal access to international politics and diplomacy underscored the importance of women’s work for international peace.<sup>11</sup>

**[PLACE ILLUSTRATION 1.1 (Sylvia Pankhurst) HERE]** A life-long political activist, Sylvia Pankhurst was a leading participant in the suffrage movement and a feminist who campaigned against the Great War, supported Bolshevism, advocated for maternal welfare, opposed fascism and imperialism and championed Ethiopian independence until her death in 1960. The daughter of the radical Liberal barrister Richard Pankhurst, and Emmeline Pankhurst, the founder of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), Sylvia Pankhurst was well-positioned for an entry into political life in Britain. Pankhurst followed the example set by her parents and became a member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) as a young woman, and joined her mother in the suffrage movement. She later created her own suffrage organization, the East London Federation of Suffragettes, after becoming disenchanted with the politics of the WSPU, which catered to middle-class

---

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Flinn, “‘Mothers for Peace’, Co-Operation, Feminism and Peace: The Women’s Co-Operative Guild and the Anti-War Movement between the Wars,” in *Consumerism and the Co-Operative Movement in Modern British History: Taking Stock*, ed. Nicole Robertson and Lawrence Black (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 144.

<sup>10</sup> Julie V. Gottlieb, “‘Broken Friendships and Vanished Loyalties’: Gender, Collective (In)Security and Anti-Fascism in Britain in the 1930s,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13, no. 2 (2012): 205–206.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 207; Jo Vellacott, “Feminism as If All People Mattered: Working to Remove the Causes of War, 1919-1929,” *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 3 (2001): 393.

women. Through this organization, Pankhurst fulfilled her desire to advocate for both women's and workers' rights. In 1914, she launched her first periodical, *The Woman's Dreadnought*. As Pankhurst turned toward socialism, and later communism, she changed the name of this paper to the *Workers' Dreadnought* and filled its columns with articles supporting the Bolshevik revolution, communism, and socialism.

The next political step in Pankhurst's career became clear in 1922, as Benito Mussolini's March on Rome marked the beginning of the rise of fascist governments in Europe. Pankhurst's first published condemnation of fascism appeared in the same year.<sup>12</sup> According to Sylvia's son Richard Pankhurst, her political opposition began a few years earlier in 1919, when she witnessed members of a fascist squad in Bologna, Italy, violently suppressing their political rivals. She also was influenced by Silvio Corio, her Italian partner, who was forced to flee Italy due to his politics. He routinely published articles about Italian fascism in the *New Times and Ethiopia News* and served as its unofficial co-editor.<sup>13</sup> Pankhurst's critique of fascism became broader and more severe, however, when confronted with the rise of Hitler, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and Japan's invasion of China.

In October of 1935, after months marked by border skirmishes and Ethiopian appeals for League of Nations intervention, fascist Italy invaded independent Ethiopia.<sup>14</sup> Pankhurst immediately opposed the Italian invasion. She worked to publicize the Ethiopian

---

<sup>12</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Fascisti Menace," *Workers' Dreadnought*, November 11, 1922.

<sup>13</sup> Pankhurst, *Sylvia Pankhurst, Artist and Crusader*, 185; Richard Pankhurst, *Ethiopian Reminiscences: Early Days* (Los Angeles, CA: Tsehai Publishers, 2013), 7–8.

<sup>14</sup> For more on this period of Ethiopian history see Saheed Adejumobi, *The History of Ethiopia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007); Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997); Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Addis Ababa University Press, 2001).

cause and win over British public support. This time she did so through a new newspaper, the *New Times and Ethiopia News*, which first appeared in London in May 1936.<sup>15</sup> She viewed the Italian invasion as a violation of the founding principles of the League of Nations. Established in 1919 in the aftermath of World War I, the international body sought to prevent war by advocating for the right of nations to determine their own governments. In the first years after the Italian invasion, Pankhurst continued to pressure the British public and government to take steps in support of Ethiopia. In an article in the *New Times and Ethiopia News*, she wrote that the “duty of all honest people” was clear; the “violations of Fascism—the arch-promoter of dissension, violence and civil war” did not start in Ethiopia and thus would not end there either.<sup>16</sup> Pankhurst warned that the injustices and violations caused by fascism had occurred elsewhere in Europe and would continue to spread beyond Ethiopia.

Fascism, reasoned Pankhurst, was an insidious and dangerous disease that threatened world democracy. She linked Italian fascism to Hitler’s rise to power and the Nazi movement. She also connected the Italian invasion of Ethiopia to the Spanish Civil War.<sup>17</sup> Pankhurst characterized Ethiopia and Spain as sacrifices in vain “to the god of

---

<sup>15</sup> She continued to publish and serve as the editor of the paper until moving to Ethiopia in 1956. During its first year 10,000 copies were printed per week and at its peak circulation of the paper reached 40,000. Metasebia Woldemariam, “Sylvia Pankhurst: Against Imperialist Occupation of Ethiopia,” in *African Agency and European Colonialism: Latitudes of Negotiation and Containment: Essays in Honor of A.S. Kanya-Forstner*, ed. Kwabena Opare Akurang-Parry and Femi J. Kolapo (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 147; June Purvis, “Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960), Suffragette, Political Activist, Artist and Writer,” *Gender & Education* 20, no. 1 (2008): 84.

<sup>16</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Not for C3 Men,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 5, 1936.

<sup>17</sup> “Fascists Versus Nazis,” Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst Papers, Internationaal Instituut Voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam.

war.”<sup>18</sup> She also lamented that “the horrors which are suffered in Ethiopia and Spain to-day may at any time break upon any and every other country, for the peace of the world is broken, and none can tell how fast or how far the breach will spread.”<sup>19</sup> Pankhurst presciently warned that fascism as a global force could plunge the world into another war.

Japan’s invasion of China in 1937 escalated Pankhurst’s fears about world war. Japan had previously attacked Manchuria in 1931. Pankhurst traced the historic links between the 1931 and 1937 invasions with other instances of fascist violence. She argued that “the [1931] Japanese aggression against China in the Manchurian case paved the way for Italian aggression in Ethiopia. The collapse of the League measures of restraint of Italy’s Ethiopian crime opened the path for the Italo-German aggression against Spain. Now China is again the victim.”<sup>20</sup> She was not alone in this assessment. In an interview she conducted with the Chinese Ambassador, Dr. Wellington Koo also condemned the League for failing to take sufficient action. The lack of response to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the civil war in Spain, and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria led to renewed Japanese aggression in China, according to Koo. Furthermore, he warned that there was the potential for another world war with battles ranging from Europe to Africa and Asia.<sup>21</sup>

In response to the conflict in China, Pankhurst offered her support to the newly founded China Campaign Committee (CCC). Chaired by the leftist publisher Victor Gollancz and political writer and activist Dorothy Woodman, the CCC was the most influential

---

<sup>18</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Not Universal,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 10, 1936; E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Fascism As It Is,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 19, 1936.

<sup>19</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “The Grave International Situation,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, November 28, 1936.

<sup>20</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “No Recognition of Conquest,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, August 14, 1937.

<sup>21</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “An Interview with Dr. Wellington Koo the Famous Chinese Ambassador,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.

organization in Britain attempting to press the British government into aiding China.<sup>22</sup> In his historical account of the China Campaign, national organizer Arthur Clegg remarked on Pankhurst's willingness to aid the campaign run by the CCC. Pankhurst's offer was not accepted, according to Clegg, because Woodman "for some reason, was far from enthusiastic, and nothing came of it."<sup>23</sup> Clegg acknowledged his unwillingness to challenge Woodman at the time. Decades later, Clegg still thought "it is a pity we did not accept her [Pankhurst's] help."<sup>24</sup>

Despite her rejection from the CCC, Pankhurst began publishing a supplement to *New Times and Ethiopia News*, titled *China News*. In the first issue of *China News* Pankhurst explained her threefold motivations for creating the supplement. She hoped to increase awareness of China's plight among the British public, advocate for the independence of China, and protect the lives of the people who were living in conflict zones.<sup>25</sup> Only three issues of the separate supplement were published, but Pankhurst also featured articles on the conflict in China in her newspaper.

Pankhurst argued that Japanese aggression in China should be of concern to the entire world as a global conflict could emerge. In keeping with Dr. Koo, she warned that "if Japanese militarism subjugates China[,] the dragon's teeth may be sown there[,] as they were in Germany at the close of the Great War!"<sup>26</sup> Pankhurst argued that those who wished to prevent another world war, including the League, could not afford to disregard the

---

<sup>22</sup> Clegg, *Aid China 1937-1949*, 8-11; Robert Bickers, *Britain in China: Community Culture and Colonialism, 1900-1949* (Manchester; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 233.

<sup>23</sup> Clegg, *Aid China 1937-1949*, 54-55.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "To Our Readers," *China News* supplement to *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 4, 1937.

<sup>26</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "Ethiopia...Spain...China," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 4, 1937.

conflict in China due to its geographic distance from Europe.<sup>27</sup> She emphasized that Chinese people deserved as much sympathy as those fighting fascism in Italy, Germany, and Spain. In her coverage, she portrayed Japan as a member of a global fascist alliance.<sup>28</sup> To counter the attacks of such an alliance, Pankhurst argued for the need for a common humanity, regardless of geographical or racial divides. In accordance with her particular brand of internationalism, she viewed “humanity as a whole: White, Black, Red, Yellow, all have their rights, their hopes, their lives.”<sup>29</sup> According to Pankhurst, the “unity of the human family” had to be recognized and thus people had a duty to prevent fascism and jingoism from fostering divisions between nations.<sup>30</sup>

In an effort to gain widespread support for her opposition to fascism, Pankhurst both promoted a gendered analysis of the impact of war and utilized gender symbolism as a call for action. She proclaimed that “war is the inferno of women, and under Fascism the State is perpetually at civil war!”<sup>31</sup> Pankhurst’s empathy for the suffering of women and also children as innocent victims of war had already emerged as a fundamental component of her pacifism during the First World War.<sup>32</sup> Female pacifists, who adopted essentialist maternal identities, argued for the need to protect other mothers and children. To urge the British people and government to take action in the fascist conflicts around the world in

---

<sup>27</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “No Recognition Uphold the Covenant,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 4, 1937.

<sup>28</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Fascist Armies Mutiny in Ethiopia,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, November 13, 1937.

<sup>29</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Our Quest” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, June 18, 1938.

<sup>30</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “War Here at Home?” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 1, 1938.

<sup>31</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Fascism As It Is,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, November 28, 1936.

<sup>32</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Going to War: What Women Can Do,” *Woman’s Dreadnought*, August 8, 1914.

Ethiopia, Spain, and China, Pankhurst again highlighted the suffering and devastation experienced by women and children. She denounced Italy, both for its bombing campaigns in Ethiopia as well as its sale of weapons to Japan. She argued that “the bombs Fascist Italy sells to Japan will destroy, have destroyed, thousands of non-combatant lives, women and children.”<sup>33</sup> Disarmament campaigners, and feminists in particular, shared this concern about the vulnerability of the civilian population. They strategically portrayed non-combatants as female and those underage, utilizing normative cultural assumptions regarding womanhood and youth, to emphasize the defenselessness of innocent victims of war. They marshaled these cultural gender scripts to argue against new forms of warfare, such as aerial bombing, that enacted random violence experienced by both combatants and non-combatants.<sup>34</sup> After the bombing of the Chinese city of Canton, Pankhurst hoped that the appeal from the mayor of that city would move other city officials in Britain and France to pressure their governments to take action. The newspaper reported that “two thousand civilians have been killed and upwards of five thousand injured in this one city during about a fortnight’s air raids. Hundreds of mothers, with their babies in arms, have been crushed to death by falling masonry.”<sup>35</sup> The evocation or overrepresentation of women and children as victims of war revealed how those who tend to be underrepresented or unrepresented in the national polity nevertheless suffer from the political decisions and military actions of men.

---

<sup>33</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Boycott the Aggressors,” *New Times & Ethiopia News*, September 25, 1937.

<sup>34</sup> Susan Grayzel, *At Home and under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Gottlieb, “Broken Friendships and Vanished Loyalties,” 205–206.

<sup>35</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Our Quest,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, June 18, 1939.

Pankhurst's gendered analysis of and gendered arguments against war also addressed the pro-natalist concerns of European policy maker. She argued that the wars in Ethiopia, China, and Spain not only caused immediate suffering and death to family members. These conflicts also contributed to decisions about whether to reproduce. For Pankhurst, it was commonsense that "women shrink from bearing children with the menace of war;" with war "overhanging every country," women fear that "their children have barely a chance of escape."<sup>36</sup> She maintained that falling birthrates were not surprising as European women watched newsreels of Chinese cities being bombed and the overall devastation of war in China.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to arguing that fascist war harmed women and families, Pankhurst also emphasized the ways in which fascism threatened women's rights both globally and domestically. Even though she evoked the symbolism of female innocence and vulnerability, Pankhurst was committed to women's political engagement. As she wrote, "in view of this danger, I utter the strongest appeal I can to women: ROUSE YOURSELVES AGAINST FASCISM...it certainly means war."<sup>38</sup> Pankhurst also was concerned by fascist attacks on women's rights. She decried women's lack of economic and political autonomy in Italy and Germany, as women were forcibly removed from employment as teachers and other professional positions. Although Pankhurst appealed to pro-natalist arguments to argue for intervention, she also criticized the Italian Fascist Government for its reproductive politics. She contended that the government only valued women as

---

<sup>36</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Population Problem," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 4, 1937.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Stott, the editor of the *Woman's Outlook* the journal of the Women's Co-operative Guild, shared Pankhurst's view of the situation publishing an editorial in 1939 which also credited women's fears of war and economic uncertainty

<sup>38</sup> "What the Suffragettes Should Do," ESPP.

reproducers of militant men who would serve and fight for the fascist cause. Pankhurst critiqued how the women's movement were "menaced on every hand" by fascism; in "an attempt to put back the clock," these governments reduced women "to a position of even greater subjection than that against which Mary Wollstonecraft [sic] issued her historic 'Vindication of the Rights of Women' in 1792."<sup>39</sup> At the end of an article Pankhurst published in the *New Times and Ethiopia News*, she exclaimed, "alas, poor woman; hers is a wretched position in the Fascist State!"<sup>40</sup> For Pankhurst, and her fellow British feminists, fascism presented a threat to all of the achievements of the women's movement.<sup>41</sup>

In order to combat fascism from Ethiopia to China, Pankhurst proposed a politics of gendered internationalism rooted in democracy and international justice. She advocated for support for victims of fascism, understood as women and children. She argued for the arbitration of disputes by the League of Nations, but also warned against making concessions to dictators. Pankhurst maintained that "the League of Nations must be made a bulwark of peace and democracy."<sup>42</sup> For her, this was the proper way to fight for peace, security, democracy.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> "What the Suffragettes Should Do," ESPP. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was a British writer and advocate of women's rights who was considered to be one of the leading heroines of the feminist movement by Pankhurst and her contemporaries.

<sup>40</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "Fascism As It Is," *New Times & Ethiopia News*, November 21, 1936.

<sup>41</sup> Julie V. Gottlieb, "Feminism and Anti-Fascism in Britain: Militancy Revived?," in *British Fascism, the Labour Movement and the State*, ed. Nigel Copsey and Dave Renton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 76; Gottlieb, "Varieties of Feminist Responses to Fascism in Inter-War Britain," 101-102.

<sup>42</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "A New Year - A New Policy," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 31, 1938.

<sup>43</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "Courage, and Again Courage," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, March 11, 1939.

In an effort to garner more support for the Chinese, Pankhurst stressed that China was an innocent and peaceful victim, coded female, while Japan was the male aggressor.<sup>44</sup> In her weekly editorials Pankhurst tried to convince her readers that China lived up to internationalist ideals through social campaigns of social reform, including gender reform. Pankhurst cited women's progress, advances in education and social justice, as well as the Chinese government's work in combating opium trafficking as evidence of China's worthiness for British support. She also highlighted the reluctance on the part of the Chinese to break diplomatic relations and confront the Japanese militarily. On May 20, 1938 a "good-will flight" of Chinese planes took place over Japan. This plan devised by Madame Chiang Kai-shek, and approved by the Chinese government, consisted of Chinese planes scattering "leaflets appealing for peace and friendship" instead of dropping bombs.<sup>45</sup> For Pankhurst, this was persuasive evidence that support for China, with its commitment to female progress and respect for female leadership, was support for international justice.

Pankhurst portrayed women's status in China as a stark contrast from the restricted roles of women in fascist states. While attending League proceedings in Geneva in 1937 Pankhurst interviewed the female member of the Chinese Delegation to the League, Miss Hilda Yen. Yen expressed her disapproval of the League's inaction in terms of the conflict in China and proposed economic sanctions as a means to force Japan to withdraw from China. In addition to these policy recommendations, in the course of the interview, Yen also highlighted women's status in China. She maintained that women in China "have complete

---

<sup>44</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "Lest We Forget," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, August 21, 1937; E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Conspiracy Against World Peace," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.

<sup>45</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "Important News of Ethiopia," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, June 4, 1938.

equality!" pointing to women's participation in the diplomatic service, a sector in which British women would not be allowed to hold positions until 1946.<sup>46</sup> When reporting on the Equal Rights Committee luncheon at the League, Pankhurst also used the opportunity to praise the gains of Chinese women. Pankhurst noted that Hilda Yen was present and conveyed "the most striking success of all to record" in terms of women's equality in China.<sup>47</sup> Combined with her portrayal of China as democratic and peaceful and therefore an innocent victim of Japanese aggression, Pankhurst also framed China as beacon of women's progress in order to gain support for the Chinese cause.

Pankhurst conceived of women as ideal agents of anti-fascism and internationalism.<sup>48</sup> Fascism endangered women and threatened women's rights. In addition, Pankhurst understood women as particularly suited to pacifist activism. She attributed the League's decision to establish a Committee for the Study of the Legal Status of Women around the globe to "the strenuous work of women for peace."<sup>49</sup> Additionally, women were valued in the international organization, because in every country women's organizations provided "the most faithful support, the most constant work, for the League of Nations and for peace itself."<sup>50</sup> Chinese women shared or perhaps strategically evoked female internationalism and pacifism. Yen, in an interview with Pankhurst, appealed to

---

<sup>46</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "A Chinese Woman Sees the League," *China News* supplement to *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.

<sup>47</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "The League and the Work and Status of Women," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.

<sup>48</sup> For more on feminists who argued that women made ideal internationalists and diplomats see Gottlieb, "Varieties of Feminist Responses to Fascism in Inter-War Britain," 104-105; Gottlieb, "Broken Friendships and Vanished Loyalties," 205-206; Flinn, "'Mothers for Peace', Co-Operation, Feminism and Peace," 144.

<sup>49</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "The League and the Work and Status of Women," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

English women in particular regarding the war in China, asking Pankhurst to “tell them women have an instinct for peace and justice. They must educate themselves to defend peace: they must fight for it—not peace at any price. We must fearlessly say to the aggressor, ‘you are the wrong party in this quarrel!’”<sup>51</sup> Pankhurst and her internationalist allies ironically utilized gender essentialism to encourage women to break political barriers. Pankhurst challenged mothers who were “long excluded from public affairs,” but now full citizens in Britain and many other countries, to work for peace.<sup>52</sup> She called on British women to push the British government to support China in the face of Japan’s abuse and “rise up...to prevent this monstrous iniquity receiving the support of this nation.”<sup>53</sup> Without women, lasting peace and international justice could not be attained in China or anywhere else.

Through her publication of the *New Times and Ethiopia News*, Pankhurst attempted to convince the British public and government that the aggressive and masculinist policies of Italy, Germany, and Japan should be a concern of every member of the international community. She viewed fascism as a global threat to independent countries, and she foregrounded the gendered threat of militarism and fascism to women around the world. Unlike some activists on the British left, Pankhurst did not privilege the European conflict in Spain. Instead, she championed the cause of Ethiopian independence, seeing that conflict as intimately connected to the violence in Spain and China.<sup>54</sup> While she primarily

---

<sup>51</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “A Chinese Woman Sees the League,” *China News* supplement to *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.

<sup>52</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Challenge of the Dictators to the Peaceable World,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 11, 1937.

<sup>53</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, “Honesty Still the Best Policy,” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, July 29, 1939.

<sup>54</sup> Buchanan, “‘Shanghai-Madrid Axis’?,” 549.

focused on women who were victims of fascism in Ethiopia and Spain, Pankhurst highlighted the progress of women in China, as well as their suffering, in order to rally support for China. Though women's emancipation in China was far from complete, Pankhurst presented an image of China to her readers that would elicit sympathy and support for China's strength as well as its weakness. Pankhurst's advocacy for China thus demonstrates her commitment to a feminist internationalism. As someone who was dismayed with the secret treaties of the First World War and sought to promote the international language *interlingua*, Pankhurst wanted an international system based on transparency and justice and viewed the participation of women as an essential part of this project.<sup>55</sup> She was not the only activist to understand fascism in gendered terms or make connections between global theaters of war, but Pankhurst's life and work is compelling evidence that feminism and anti-fascism were compatible in the interwar period.

#### "Any Group of Enlightened and Progressive Men": Carlos Romulo, Rotary, and the Sino-Japanese War

In comparison to Pankhurst's panoramic view of a fascist international, Carlos Romulo's writings, which failed to explicitly connect the China war to events in Spain or Ethiopia, might seem less complex. However, the fact that Romulo did not see a global fascist threat does not indicate he did not think internationally. Rather, he saw a different configuration of power. Other columnists, writing in Romulo's *Philippines Herald*, did make connections similar to Pankhurst's, but their views cannot be read to reflect Romulo's

---

<sup>55</sup> E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "The League of Nations," *Workers' Dreadnought*, January 18, 1919; E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *Delphos: The Future of International Language* (London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1927).

thinking directly. The *Herald's* columnists differed over the Spanish Civil War, as did many in Manila. Consequently, the paper did not present a clear editorial preference on that ideologically-charged conflict. Thus, this analysis will not use opinions voiced in columns from the paper, even though Romulo served as editor and publisher. However, Romulo did have a history of close involvement with the *Herald's* political cartoons. His interest dated back to 1922, when Romulo oversaw the creation, and eventual retraction, of a cartoon depicting a U.S. governor-general “raping” the honor of Philippine democracy.<sup>56</sup> As this powerful example shows, political cartoons in the newspaper provide a window into Romulo’s thinking about gendered internationalism.

Political cartoons in the Philippines have generated a limited but fruitful scholarly discussion since the 1980s. Political cartoons in the Philippines and the U.S. were both heavily gendered. American political cartoons have typically represented the Philippines as female, helpless, and victimized, in need of a strong American savior. Conversely, they also represent Filipinos as savage men in contrast to a virtuous woman representing American liberty.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, American political cartoons often coded Filipinos as children, in need of an elderly Uncle Sam’s paternal leadership.<sup>58</sup> As we will see, the *Philippines Herald* reused but also altered these gendered representations. A close reading of the images support Alfred McCoy’s argument that the transformation of cartoonists’ America into a “wise paternal figure” reflected changing Filipino attitudes, from a rejection of the U.S.

---

<sup>56</sup> Bernardita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919-1934* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983), 39; Carlos P. Romulo, *I Walked with Heroes* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), 163–164.

<sup>57</sup> Abe Ignacio et al., eds., *The Forbidden Book: The Philippine-American War in Political Cartoons* (San Francisco: T’Boli Publishing, 2004); Servando D. Halili, *Iconography of the New Empire: Race and Gender Images and the American Colonization of the Philippines* (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2006).

<sup>58</sup> Halili, *Iconography of the New Empire*, 43–59.

towards an embrace of binationalism. This political stance emerged from the success of an American educational system that “worked to instill a bi-national loyalty in the Filipino child – loyalty to an emerging Philippine nation and loyalty to its protector America.”<sup>59</sup>

**[PLACE ILLUSTRATION 1.2 (Carlos Romulo at UN) HERE]** Carlos Romulo’s personal background demonstrates how the U.S. educational system shaped the political subjectivity of Filipinos. Born in 1898, the year of the Spanish-American War, Romulo came of age under the American occupation and describes in vivid detail how his American teachers wooed him away from his father’s anti-American guerrilla activity. Instead, they taught him to embrace the occupation.<sup>60</sup> Romulo’s success in ascending the educational ladder offered by the new American regime led him to his first trans-Pacific venture. In 1919, he traveled to New York to attend Columbia University. He graduated in 1921 with Master’s degrees in foreign trade service and comparative literature.<sup>61</sup> The next year, Romulo accompanied a Philippine Independence Mission as a “publicity agent” while he was assistant editor of the *Philippines Herald*.<sup>62</sup> Even though Romulo recognized the benefits of U.S. occupation, his participation in the Mission demonstrates that he also supported Philippine independence through negotiation with the United States. Romulo’s loyalty to the United States manifested itself in his faith in the U.S.’s benign intentions in the Philippines and its magnanimity in ceding independence to the archipelago. Throughout his post-World War II political career as ambassador to the United Nations, the United States, and then as Foreign

---

<sup>59</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, “Images of a Changing Nation, 1900-1941,” in *Philippine Cartoons: Political Caricatures of the American Era 1900-1941*, by Alfredo R. Roces and Alfred W. McCoy (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1985), 17.

<sup>60</sup> Romulo, *I Walked with Heroes*, 30–33, 45, 48, 55, 58.

<sup>61</sup> Augusto Fauni Espiritu, *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Churchill, *Philippine Independence Missions*, 429.

Minister, Romulo would continue to affirm his faith in the good intentions of the United States.

This faith contrasts sharply with the anticolonial posture of Sylvia Pankhurst; it was an optimism shaped in part by Romulo's apparent lack of exposure to the horrors of total war. Despite the brutality of the U.S.-Philippine War during his youth, Romulo rarely wrote or spoke about it. Looking at Romulo's writing at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War thus provides a useful lens for comparing his thought with Pankhurst's. Pankhurst viewed the Japanese invasion of China through the tragic prism of 1914-1918. Romulo, in contrast, recognized a breakdown in international order but still retained his optimism for a better future.

Unlike Pankhurst, the First World War left Romulo relatively unscathed. Still in his early twenties in the late 1910s, he makes no mention of the conflict in his memoir. The global cataclysm made very little impact on the Philippines, particularly compared to Britain. The United States did not enter the war until 1917, and relatively few Filipinos were involved in the conflict. Romulo's experience of war before 1941 remained limited to his early childhood memories of the U.S.-Philippine War, when his father fought as a guerilla against the occupying U.S. forces. However, both Romulo and his father appeared to have been reconciled with Filipino defeat. Romulo's father became a member of the U.S. regime as a local politician and state governor. Romulo interpreted his father's actions as an indication that acceptance of the U.S. represented a continuation rather than a

contradiction of his father's fight for Philippine freedom.<sup>63</sup> Romulo even understood his grandfather's torture at the hands of U.S. troops as an unrepresentative aberration.

This lack of an aversion to war and violence framed Romulo's internationalism, as did his masculinist politics. In comparison to Pankhurst's insistence on the need for a female-inclusive internationalism, Romulo envisioned diplomacy as the realm of robust businessmen. This understanding of an international fraternity emerged in his response to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, one of the most destructive conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Pankhurst, Romulo expressed little concern for civilian casualties, much less the gendered burden of those casualties on women. If Pankhurst's position as a pro-Chinese propagandist blinded her to the political realities of Chiang's non-democratic regime, Romulo's bloodless, masculinist, liberal internationalism blinded him to the reality of its destructiveness. Pankhurst saw war as an inexcusable aberration and a blight on the international system. Romulo saw violence as a routine problem for cool-headed men to respond to evenly. War was to be solved in the company of male social equals.

Romulo relished his own part within such a world order, viewing himself as a personification of the Philippines. Both he and the Archipelago served as intermediaries between "West" and "East." He saw himself performing an indispensable role of interpretation. He faced "both East and West, and [was] both of the Occident and of the Orient."<sup>64</sup> Similarly, from early in life he characterized the Philippines not quite as the center of the world but as "the meeting place, the melting pot of the nations, the bridge

---

<sup>63</sup> Romulo, *I Walked with Heroes*, 30–33, 45, 48, 55, 58; Carlos P. Romulo, "My Father Fought Americans, but I Fight for the U.S.A.," *The Rotarian*, February 1943.

<sup>64</sup> Carlos P. Romulo, *Mother America: A Living Story of Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1943), 7.

upon which rested the four corners of the world.”<sup>65</sup> Thus the Philippines, and Romulo in particular, became interlocutors and facilitators of other nations gathered around the conference table of international affairs.

By 1937, Romulo could claim a seat at such a table. He secured a lucrative deal in 1935 as the publisher and part-owner of four newspapers, including Manila’s flagship English daily - the *Philippines Herald*.<sup>66</sup> Romulo had a strong patron in Manuel Quezon, president of the Philippine Commonwealth, the internal self-government scheme set up by the U.S. in 1934. The Commonwealth was created as a compromise that allowed the U.S. to immediately begin restricting Filipino migration to the states while promising independence for the Philippines in 1946.

In addition to Quezon, Romulo retained strong relationships with Americans, and traveled to the United States several times throughout the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>67</sup> In 1931, Romulo had joined the Manila Rotary Club, an organization predominantly for U.S. businessmen. As a Filipino, he was a distinct minority. Nevertheless, Romulo was able to rise to the Club’s presidency in 1935.<sup>68</sup> The Rotary Club constituted another forum for

---

<sup>65</sup> Romulo, *I Walked with Heroes*, 27.

<sup>66</sup> For the story behind this coup, arranged through Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon, see Theodore Friend, *Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929-1946* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 115; Churchill, *Philippine Independence Missions*, 288. The other papers were a Spanish daily, *El Debate*, a Tagalog daily, *Mabuhay*, and the English-language weekly *Monday Mail*.

<sup>67</sup> Espiritu, *Five Faces of Exile*, 9.

<sup>68</sup> Romulo, *Mother America*, 43–44; Romulo served as the Manila Club’s president in 1935, and Rotary International’s Third Vice-President in 1937-1938: “Rotary’s New Board of Directors,” *The Rotarian*, July 1937, 42; for an excellent analysis of Rotary Club ethnic politics in Southeast Asia more generally, see Su Lin Lewis, “Rotary International’s ‘Acid Test’: Multi-Ethnic Associational Life in 1930s Southeast Asia,” *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (July 2012): 302–24.

imperial education. Romulo's experiences in the club served as a model of how he envisioned international governance by elite men.

Throughout the 1930s, Romulo openly embraced the United States as a good faith broker, and even a righteous actor in bringing democracy and self-government to the Philippines. Writing for Rotary International's magazine in 1936, Romulo described the U.S. imperial role in the Philippines as an embodiment of Rotary's core values. These included "neighborliness," a trait that combined a paternalist "service to his fellow man" with a solidarity-like "fellowship." America had served the Philippines by protecting "a weak people who could use help and plenty of it," and extending "a hand of Fellowship to a people who could at the time offer them nothing but opposition." Thus, America emerged as the older brother, bringing light to a benighted Philippines. The U.S. performed its role despite initial Filipino opposition, which "disappeared in the warming glow of fellowship." America, symbolizing Rotary values, ushered the Philippines into diplomatic manhood; the U.S. endowed Filipinos with "individualism, the feeling that every man is a *man*, that he can stand side by side with other men, that he can defend his own rights." This spirit had always been found in Filipino elites, "but America has liberated it...among the great masses of the people."<sup>69</sup> Thus, Romulo's internationalism, inflected through his Rotary experience, positioned the U.S. as the mature, patrician, older figure who groomed less advanced peoples and cultures into manhood. Having attained that manhood, the Philippines could participate as an equal, as a neighbor, but only after they had relied on the intimate intervention of the U.S. to achieve that status.

---

<sup>69</sup> Carlos P. Romulo, "A New Nation Is Born," *The Rotarian*, February 1936, 21–22.

**[PLACE ILLUSTRATION 1.3 (Political Cartoon #1) HERE]** This age- and masculinity-based hierarchy framed how Romulo's newspaper presented the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. The *Philippines Herald* offered an image of the Far East as a childish place, awaiting the parental correction of strong, male leaders. A cartoon appearing days after the beginning of the war showed Generalissimo Chiang as a mother holding an infantile China that has just bitten the finger of a cruel Japanese military figure (figure 1<sup>70</sup>). The cartoon mixed several gendered metaphors: showing Japan as a male aggressor violating the sacred mother-child bond, and presenting China as a weak child still in its mother's arms. The cartoonist coded the martial Chiang as female, both the victim of the male Japanese violation but still cool and collected, with a wry smile, firmly in control of the situation. In the cartoon's configuration, Chiang became the midwife of a new nation, the birth-mother for China's rebirth as a virile power. The country, here still an infant, has the ability to "use its first tooth" to fight from the start rather than stoically accepting abuse.<sup>71</sup>

**[PLACE ILLUSTRATION 1.4 (Political Cartoon #2) HERE]** The infantilization of China surfaced in another cartoon. This time the nation attempted to draw in the parental correction of a strong father-figure for the Pacific: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Capitalizing on rumors circulating during the summer of 1937, the *Herald* editorialized on a possible visit by the U.S. President to the Philippines as part of a larger Far Eastern tour. Based on FDR's success in brokering the promise of Philippine independence in 1934, the editorial argued, he would be uniquely suited to "weave...a design of friendly cooperation" between the nations of Asia.<sup>72</sup> The cartoon accompanying the editorial showed infantilized

---

<sup>70</sup> "The Baby Uses Its First Tooth," *PH*, July 13, 1937.

<sup>71</sup> "The Baby Uses Its First Tooth," *PH*, July 13, 1937.

<sup>72</sup> "President Roosevelt Is Coming!" *PH*, July 17, 1937.

personifications of the Philippines, China, and Japan, eagerly awaiting the adult FDR; the Asian countries are portrayed as children awaiting their father's daily return from work. The paternal FDR appeared complete with briefcase and hat (figure 2).<sup>73</sup> With the headline's cry, "President Roosevelt Is Coming!" the childish Asians await a stern but loving assessment by their father. An editorial two weeks later bemoaned the lack of European interest in the Sino-Japanese crisis due to growing tensions on the continent. However, the column reassured readers with the notion of a paternal United States. Their father would surely not "leave China and the entire Far East at the mercy of an Empire steadily on the march."<sup>74</sup>

The Sino-Japanese relationship, according to Romulo, presented a stark contrast to the U.S.-Philippine relationship. After the latter war, the U.S. had come alongside its "little brown brother." America had taught the child-nation of the Philippines a proper sense of self-respect. In contrast to the U.S. treating the Archipelago as a mature equal, Japan bullied the child China.

Romulo and his Rotary counterparts certainly recognized that the Sino-Japanese war reflected the distance between East Asia's geopolitics and their Rotarian ideals. Shortly after the beginning of the war, U.S. High Commissioner Paul McNutt, the highest U.S. official in the semi-autonomous Commonwealth, spoke at the Club's bimonthly gathering. Contrasting the decorum of the Rotarians gathered together with the collapse of international order, McNutt imagined "if men all over the world were calm and cool and willing to listen to reason[,] it would not be difficult to make the necessary adjustment to

---

<sup>73</sup> "President Roosevelt Is Coming!" *PH*, July 17, 1937.

<sup>74</sup> "The Other Powers Look On," *PH*, July 28, 1937.

insure peace.”<sup>75</sup> According to McNutt, world conflict did not arise out of competition over scarce resources or deep-seated problems. Rather, violence resulted from mere misunderstanding that could be corrected by the actions of a few cool and reasonable men. Naturally, the U.S.-based Rotary International represented such rationality. In contrast the leaders of Germany, the Soviet Union, and Asian nations simply would not listen to reason and comply in a rational peace. A Rotary speaker two weeks later likewise called for the Rotary “to spread a ‘little sanity around the world for the benefit of us all.’”<sup>76</sup>

The *Herald*, reflecting Romulo’s prominent position in Manila’s Rotary, supported McNutt’s idea and advocated Rotarianism as a philosophy for international relations. The newspaper introduced the “Rotary method and a Rotary principle...for adoption in the handling of international relations.”<sup>77</sup> According to this Rotary method, creating international peace required simply gathering bourgeois leaders to deal with the problems of their international neighborhood. As Romulo would write for the Rotary magazine in 1938, “all that is required of any group of enlightened and progressive men is to do its bit in conjunction with other groups of right-thinking people.”<sup>78</sup>

While Pankhurst foregrounded the role of Chinese women, like Madame Chiang Kai-shek in the Sino-Japanese War, Romulo focused on Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek as a worthy national and international elite. Carlos Romulo scored a major interview with Chiang in early August, a month after the beginning of hostilities. His admiration for Chiang shone through in the *Herald* as the paper described the city recently attacked and bombed

---

<sup>75</sup> “Local Rotarians Honor McNutt At Impressive Affair Held Last Night At Hotel Grand Ballroom,” *PH*, July 16, 1937.

<sup>76</sup> “Rogers Urges Brotherhood,” *PH*, July 29, 1937.

<sup>77</sup> “Rotarian McNutt and Rotary,” *PH*, July 16, 1937.

<sup>78</sup> Carlos P. Romulo, “A Philippine View of Rotary,” *The Rotarian*, April 1938, 7.

by Japan. Romulo characterized Nanjing, the capital city of the Republic of China, as calm, with “none of the mob hysteria so common in pre-war days.” The people in the city were remarkably stoic, despite “its territorial integrity seriously menaced by an aggressor nation.” This rational response flowed from Chiang, who not only led but also personified China. Romulo described Chiang as “quiet mannered, calm and serene,” “unruffled,” a man who “preserves all the time a most becoming poise.” Although, at times, “a slight flash of unrepressed emotion is shown...in his eyes,” Chiang retained control, which Romulo respected. Romulo also insisted there is “nothing dictatorial in either his appearance or speech,” eliding Chiang’s political autocracy by finding him temperamentally innocent. Romulo did permit the Chinese leader some emotion, given the gravity of the situation. Romulo came away from the interview impressed at “the maturity of mind of this patient, peaceful nation.” China “cannot be rushed off her feet by propaganda or provocations,” but “knows its destiny and in calmness and serenity it moves onward to make its rendezvous with it.”<sup>79</sup> Romulo presented an adult, self-possessed, China, a nation that could participate in the liberal international world order that he envisioned.

The *Herald's* editorial follow-up to the interview re-emphasized this interpretation. The column lauded Chiang’s diplomacy and tact as expressed through his reserved demeanor. Chiang was described as exemplary for how he “realizes his responsibility as the leader of his nation.” The Chinese leader controlled his emotions as an adult and as a representative of his nation. He did not “speak wildly.” Even better, “he is not a man to be stampeded into saying anything or taking a step that might result in injury to his people more than it will redeem their right to existence and their honor.” Chiang thus performed

---

<sup>79</sup> Carlos P. Romulo, “Chiang Kai-shek Says Nation Near Endurance Limit,” *PH*, August 10, 1937.

the role of a responsible father, protecting his nation/children through restraint, even when their childish passions demanded action.<sup>80</sup> In 1943 Romulo went even further, comparing Chiang to Gandhi and Lincoln, describing him as a “gentle warrior,” “spare, esthetic, delicately built, sensitive, and abstemious,” “deeply religious,” “direct and sure,” “calm and controlled,” but still the quintessential “Oriental.”<sup>81</sup> In this rapturous tribute, Romulo projected the Rotary vision of an international order onto Chiang. As a rational, calm Chinese male leader who converted to Christianity, Chiang demonstrated how an “Oriental” might be worthy of Occidental respect.

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, rather than a tragedy, presented an opportunity to realize the Rotary worldview. The war brought a mature, rational leader like Chiang Kai-shek into the limelight. He proved worthy, in Romulo’s eyes, of joining the international conference table and had the capability of enacting the Rotarian model of “neighborliness.” Rather than bringing women into the international system as Pankhurst advocated, Romulo envisioned a world of men like himself and Chiang Kai-shek managing the world as neighbors, meeting in the club.

## Conclusion

When confronted with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Pankhurst and Romulo understood the conflict through their gendered politics and advocated solutions through their version of internationalism. These two newspaper editors, immersed in the politics of the interwar period, articulated two contrasting visions of a global order. For Pankhurst, the rise of fascism, which manifested itself in conflicts in

---

<sup>80</sup> “No Peace Without Honor,” *PH*, August 11, 1937.

<sup>81</sup> Romulo, *Mother America*, 117–119.

Ethiopia, Spain, and China during the 1930s, was indicative of an increasingly bi-polar world. She saw the world as split between democracy and fascism. She also criticized the gendered divide in politics and diplomacy that marginalized women in global affairs. Pankhurst pursued a feminist internationalism in order to challenge these divisions. As an activist who sought to imagine the world as a global community, she believed that only with men and women working together across racial and national lines could democracy triumph over fascism and peace over war.

The Rotarian internationalism of Romulo served as an alternative model for ending the conflict between Japan and China. Romulo similarly understood the world as divided, but along imperial and generational lines. Romulo promoted an internationalism that would maintain a hierarchy between “fathers,” or imperial powers, and “sons,” representing colonies. The paternalistic relationship between imperial powers and their colonies reified Romulo’s Rotarian understanding of international affairs as conducted by men, divided into students and teachers depending on their place within the world order. Unlike Pankhurst, Romulo advocated for an internationalism that was more concerned with maintaining the order of things than altering the basis of politics.

The contrasting internationalisms of Pankhurst and Romulo demonstrate how central gender was to their understanding of politics and diplomacy. Their gendered political imaginaries shaped their ability to offer solutions to war and envision a new world order. An analysis of how Pankhurst and Romulo understood the Sino-Japanese War reveals competing understandings of internationalisms during the interwar period. Pankhurst’s feminist internationalism and Romulo’s masculinist Rotarian internationalism

represent two opposing views of global division and offered rival gendered solutions to political and military conflicts.

Both editors projected their own visions of Republican China according to the needs of their respective internationalisms. For Pankhurst, Chiang's China became a democratic oasis in an authoritarian East Asia, permitting the expansion of women's rights. For Romulo, Chiang served as an ideal patriarch, comparable to Lincoln or Gandhi, shepherding his people through crisis. From Pankhurst's perspective, if more nations could imitate China's brave resistance of fascist aggression and women's advancement, perhaps the worldwide scourge of fascism could be averted. Likewise, for Romulo, if more leaders could emulate Chiang and come to a level, rational discussion of international affairs, peace could be restored.

China's reality did not conform to the desires of Pankhurst and Romulo. By examining how they constructed their own imagined China, however, we can understand how thinkers such as Pankhurst and Romulo envisioned a particular global system that included Asia. That is, the writings of Pankhurst and Romulo do not necessarily tell us about China or even the Sino-Japanese War. However, they do reveal how Pankhurst and Romulo used the conflicts in East Asia to advocate for their respective gendered internationalisms. Their concern with affairs in China by civil society leaders in England and the Philippines supports to what Andrew Arsan, Su Lin Lewis, and Anne-Isabelle Richard have called an interwar moment of global civil society. During the period between World War I and II, a newly vibrant network of individuals and organizations emerged that

engaged in internationalist projects around the world.<sup>82</sup> The trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific political imaginaries of Sylvia Pankhurst and Carlos Romulo suggest that Asia played a key role in this interwar moment of global civil society, and that gender shaped their respective worldviews. Further research on the interwar period is needed, and perhaps juxtapositions like that of Pankhurst and Romulo, pairing the views of seemingly disparate figures from worlds apart, will most effectively point us to the underlying contours of global, and trans-Pacific, intellectual history.

### Bibliography

Adejumobi, Saheed. *The History of Ethiopia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007.

Arsan, Andrew, Su Lin Lewis, and Anne-Isabelle Richard. "The Roots of Global Civil Society and the Interwar Moment." *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (July 2012): 157–65.

"The Baby Uses Its First Tooth." *Philippines Herald*, July 13, 1937.

Bickers, Robert. *Britain in China: Community Culture and Colonialism, 1900-1949*. Manchester; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Buchanan, Tom. "China and the British Left in the Twentieth Century: Transnational Perspectives." *Labor History* 54, no. 5 (2013): 540–53.

———. *East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

———. "Shanghai-Madrid Axis'? Comparing British Responses to the Conflicts in Spain and China, 1936–39." *Contemporary European History* 21, no. 4 (2012): 533–52.

---

<sup>82</sup> Andrew Arsan, Su Lin Lewis, and Anne-Isabelle Richard, "Editorial - the Roots of Global Civil Society and the Interwar Moment," *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (July 2012): 157–65.

- Bullock, Ian, and Richard Pankhurst, eds. *Sylvia Pankhurst: From Artist to Anti-Fascist*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- Churchill, Bernardita Reyes. *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919-1934*. Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983.
- Clegg, Arthur. *Aid China 1937-1949: A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2003.
- Connelly, Katherine. *Sylvia Pankhurst Suffragette, Socialist, and Scourge of Empire*. London: Pluto Press, 2013.
- Davis, Mary. *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Life in Radical Politics*. London; Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 1999.
- Espiritu, Augusto Fauni. *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Flinn, Andrew. "‘Mothers for Peace’, Co-Operation, Feminism and Peace: The Women's Co-Operative Guild and the Anti-War Movement between the Wars." In *Consumerism and the Co-Operative Movement in Modern British History: Taking Stock*, edited by Nicole Robertson and Lawrence Black, 138–54. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
- Friend, Theodore. *Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929-1946*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965.
- Gottlieb, Julie. *"Guilty Women," Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

- Gottlieb, Julie V. "Broken Friendships and Vanished Loyalties': Gender, Collective (In)Security and Anti-Fascism in Britain in the 1930s." *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13, no. 2 (2012): 197–219.
- . "Feminism and Anti-Fascism in Britain: Militancy Revived?" In *British Fascism, the Labour Movement and the State*, edited by Nigel Copsey and Dave Renton, 68–94. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- . "Varieties of Feminist Responses to Fascism in Inter-War Britain." In *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period*, edited by Nigel Copsey and Andrzej Olechnowicz, 101–18. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Grayzel, Susan. *At Home and under Fire: Air Raids and Culture in Britain from the Great War to the Blitz*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Halili, Servando D. *Iconography of the New Empire: Race and Gender Images and the American Colonization of the Philippines*. Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2006.
- Harrison, Shirley. *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Crusading Life 1882-1960*. London: Aurum, 2003.
- Ignacio, Abe, Enrique de la Cruz, Jorge Emmanuel, and Helen Toribio, eds. *The Forbidden Book: The Philippine-American War in Political Cartoons*. San Francisco: T'Boli Publishing, 2004.
- Lewis, Su Lin. "Rotary International's 'Acid Test': Multi-Ethnic Associational Life in 1930s Southeast Asia." *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (July 2012): 302–24.
- "Local Rotarians Honor McNutt At Impressive Affair Held Last Night At Hotel Grand Ballroom." *Philippines Herald*, July 16, 1937.

- McCoy, Alfred W. "Images of a Changing Nation, 1900-1941." In *Philippine Cartoons: Political Caricatures of the American Era 1900-1941*, by Alfredo R. Roces and Alfred W. McCoy, 13-18. Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1985.
- Miller, Carol. "'Geneva - the Key to Equality': Inter-War Feminists and the League of Nations." *Women's History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 219-45.
- "No Peace Without Honor." *Philippines Herald*, August 11, 1937.
- "The Other Powers Look On." *Philippines Herald*, July 28, 1937.
- Pankhurst, E. Sylvia. "Boycott the Aggressors," *New Times & Ethiopia News*, September 25, 1937.
- . "Challenge of the Dictators to the Peaceable World." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 11, 1937.
- . "A Chinese Woman Sees the League." *China News* supplement to *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.
- . "The Conspiracy Against World Peace." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.
- . "Courage, and Again Courage." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, March 11, 1939.
- . *Delphos: The future of international language*. London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1927.
- . "Ethiopia...Spain...China." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 4, 1937.
- . "Fascism As It Is." *New Times & Ethiopia News*, November 21, 1936.
- . "Fascism As It Is." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, November 28, 1936.
- . "Fascism As It Is." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 19, 1936.
- . "Fascist Armies Mutiny in Ethiopia." *New Times and Ethiopia News*, November 13, 1937.

- . “Fascists Versus Nazis.” Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst Papers. Internationaal Instituut Voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam.
- . “Going to War: What Women Can Do.” *Woman’s Dreadnought*, August 8, 1914.
- . “The Grave International Situation.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, November 28, 1936.
- . “Honesty Still the Best Policy.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, July 29, 1939.
- . “Important News of Ethiopia.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, June 4, 1938.
- . “An Interview with Dr. Wellington Koo the Famous Chinese Ambassador.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.
- . “The League of Nations.” *Workers’ Dreadnought*, January 18, 1919.
- . “The League and the Work and Status of Women.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 2, 1937.
- . “Lest We Forget.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, August 21, 1937.
- . “A New Year – A New Policy.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 31, 1938.
- . “No Recognition of Conquest.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, August 14, 1937.
- . “No Recognition Uphold the Covenant.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 4, 1937.
- . “Not for C3 Men.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 5, 1936.
- . “Not Universal.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 10, 1936.
- . “Our Quest.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, June 18, 1938.
- . “The Population Problem.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, December 4, 1937.
- . “To Our Readers.” *China News* supplement to *New Times and Ethiopia News*, September 4, 1937.

- . "War Here at Home?" *New Times and Ethiopia News*, October 1, 1938.
- . "What the Suffragettes Should Do." Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst Papers. Internationaal Instituut Voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam.
- Pankhurst, Richard. *Ethiopian Reminiscences: Early Days*. Los Angeles, CA: Tsehai Publishers, 2013.
- . *Sylvia Pankhurst, Artist and Crusader: An Intimate Portrait*. New York: Paddington Press : distributed by Grosset & Dunlap, 1979.
- . *Sylvia Pankhurst: Counsel for Ethiopia*. Tsehai Publishers, 2003.
- Perry, J. K. J. "Powerless and Frustrated: Britain's Relationship With China During the Opening Years of the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 3 (2011): 408-30.
- "President Roosevelt Is Coming!" *Philippines Herald*, July 17, 1937.
- Purvis, June. "Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960), Suffragette, Political Activist, Artist and Writer." *Gender & Education* 20, no. 1 (2008): 81-87.
- "Rogers Urges Brotherhood." *Philippines Herald*, July 29, 1937.
- "Rotarian McNutt and Rotary." *Philippines Herald*, July 16, 1937.
- Romero, Patricia. *E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Romulo, Carlos P. "Chiang Kai-shek Says Nation Near Endurance Limit." *Philippines Herald*, August 10, 1937.
- . "A New Nation Is Born." *The Rotarian*, February 1936.
- . "A Philippine View of Rotary." *The Rotarian*, April 1938.
- . *I Walked with Heroes*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

- . *Mother America: A Living Story of Democracy*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1943.
- . “My Father Fought Americans, but I Fight for the U.S.A.” *The Rotarian*, February 1943.
- “Rotary’s New Board of Directors.” *The Rotarian*, July 1937.
- Rupp, Leila. *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women’s Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Sbacchi, Alberto. *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997.
- Vellacott, Jo. “Feminism as If All People Mattered: Working to Remove the Causes of War, 1919-1929.” *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 3 (2001): 375–94.
- Winslow, Barbara. *Sylvia Pankhurst: Sexual Politics and Political Activism*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996.
- Woldemariam, Metasebia. “Sylvia Pankhurst: Against Imperialist Occupation of Ethiopia.” In *African Agency and European Colonialism: Latitudes of Negotiation and Containment: Essays in Honor of A.S. Kanya-Forstner*, edited by Kwabena Opare Akurang-Parry and Femi J. Kolapo, 141–50. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007.
- “The World’s Two Major Headaches.” *Philippines Herald*, July 10, 1937.
- Yuan, Hu Chow. “Chinese Opinion: Long Live Ethiopia.” *New Times and Ethiopia News*, August 22, 1936.
- Zewde, Bahru. *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Addis Ababa University Press, 2001.

