

Religious internationalism and Educational Activism: Women at the Geneva Bahá'í International Bureau and Beyond

Joyce Goodman

Abstract

This chapter explores the entanglement of Bahá'í belief, internationalism and educational activism in the pursuit of peace. It focuses on the activities of a number of women who were associated with the Geneva Bahá'í Bureau from its establishment in 1925 to its closure in 1957. It situates Bahá'í belief within religious internationalisms and outlines the Bahá'í approach to the creation of universal peace and a world society. It highlights the importance Bahá'ís attributed to education if individuals and society were to be transformed in the pursuit of peace. It discusses the Bahá'í view that the League of Nations was a progressive but insufficient mechanism to bring about world peace. It uses pen portraits of women associated with the Bahá'í International Bureau at Geneva to relate the mobility associated with their internationalism and educational activism to Bahá'í beliefs about the earth as one land. It ends by arguing that a comparative and transnational focus on relations between religious internationalisms and education would prove a fruitful approach for future historical studies of educational internationalism

Introduction

This chapter explores the entanglement of Bahá'í belief, internationalism and educational activism in the pursuit of peace. It focusses on the activities of a number of women associated with the Geneva Bahá'í Bureau from its establishment in 1925 to its closure in 1957. The first section of the chapter situates the Bahá'í faith within religious internationalisms and exemplifies the entanglement of religious internationalism and educational internationalism through the activities of Laura Dreyfus Barney at the League of Nations (SDN) and the International Council of Women (CIF). The second section of the chapter outlines the Bahá'í approach to peace and to the creation of a world society. It highlights the importance Bahá'ís attributed to education in transforming individuals and society in the pursuit of peace and discusses the Bahá'í view that the League of Nations was a progressive but insufficient mechanism to bring about world peace. The third section illustrates some of the activities at the Bahá'í International Bureau at Geneva and sketches pen portraits of women associated with the Bureau. The chapter concludes that the mobility associated with the women's educational internationalism related to Bahá'í beliefs about the earth as as one home and by arguing that a comparative and transnational focus on relations between religious internationalisms and education would prove a fruitful approach for future historical studies of educational internationalism

The chapter draws on the Bahá'í journal, *Star of the West/The Bahá'í Magazine* and on material from the Bahá'í national archive at Willmette and from the CIF collection at the Amazone archive, Brussels. The analytical approach to the Bahá'í Bureau, the CIF and the SDN is underpinned by Herren's (2014) definition of international organisations as "a self-declared form of interaction across borders that produces footprints and patterns characteristic of the time frame concerned" (Ibid., p.2). This casts organisations through a view of space as a product of social interrelations and as the sphere of possibility always under construction (Massey, 2005, pp.10-12); and it casts place as a "temporary meeting-up" (Ibid., p.6) and a "meeting of histories" (Ibid., p.141) in ways that can accommodate the geographical mobility of Bahá'í women like those associated with the Bahá'í International Bureau, as well as the diversity in religious internationalisms (Green, 2016) that the Bahá'í aspiration for a world society exemplifies.

Religious internationalisms, educational internationalisms

A persistent theme in histories of education is the relation between religion and education. Intersections of religion, imperialism and education have received more attention than entanglements between religion, internationalism and education. Yet, as Abigail Green argues, religion constituted an integral factor in the emergence of internationalism, as formalised trans-state and intercultural networks and structures of so-called "world religions" of the Early Modern era were transformed into "more modern, properly international communities of opinion" (Green, 2016, p.17). Green places the emergence of religious internationals in the early nineteenth century as a "new and distinctive social and political phenomenon" supported by the growth of associational culture and the communications revolution (pp.17-18). But she also notes that religious internationals emerged within faith communities in different parts of the world at different moments in time. She argues that the emergence of the trans-Atlantic Protestant world, with roots in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands, was "ahead of the game" as a result of the late eighteenth century development of mass printing, the expansion of missionary activity and the "transformative impulse" of the anti-slavery movement (p.18). She positions religious internationals emerging slightly later in other faith communities with a base in Western Europe; and she sees the emergence of non-Western religious internationals in extra-European contexts (Muslims and Buddhists, for example) "propelled by the complex interplay between old and new forms of empire and the dislocations of the First World War" (p.19).

The millenarian Bahá'í' faith, now considered a "world religion" (Maneck 1994, p.212), provides a counterpoint to Green's analysis. It arose in Persia (Iran) in the 1840s out of the matrix of Shi'ite Islam (Stockman, 2013, Mottahedeh 2013). The imprisonment and eventual execution of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirzi (1819-1850) (the Bab), who predicted that after him another greater figure would arise, paved the way for a successor religion, the Bahá'í faith, founded in 1863 by Mirza Husain 'Ali Nuri (1817-1892), known as Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh claimed to be the latest messenger sent by God and to be the inaugurator of a new age in world history that would bring about the establishment of a global world civilisation animated by his teaching (Cole, 1998; Mottaheden, 2013). He made a public declaration as the promised one of the Bab and the inaugurator of a new age in world history, the major theme of which would be the gradual establishment of a global world civilization animated by his teaching (Cole 1998, 57; Mottahedeh

2013). Bahá'u'lláh was exiled for unorthodox belief from Persia to Ottoman Baghdad in 1853, to Edirne (former Adrianople) near Bulgaria between 1863 and 1868, and thereafter to 'Akka (today's Acre), the Ottoman prison city on the coast of Syria. In 'Akka, where French ideas around the Rights of Man circulated in periodicals and among political prisoners, he wrote his canonical texts. Illustrating some of the “East-West” cross-currents that inflected Bahá'í belief and would continue to characterise Bahá'í religious and educational activism, these texts called for freedom of conscience and religious liberty, constitutional democracy, equality under the law, and the attainment of equality for women and men (Cole 1998; Maneck 1994). When Bahá'u'lláh died in 'Akka in 1892, leadership of the Bahá'í community passed to his eldest son Abbas Effendi, known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1841-1921) and on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death to his grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957) (Maneck 1994). Both had lived in 'Akka as part of Bahá'u'lláh's household until the “Young Turk” revolution of 1908 led to the release of Ottoman political and religious prisoners (Stockman 1995; Mottahedeh 2013; Smith 1996).

Several Western women who had embraced the Bahá'í faith visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá' in 'Akka, prior to his release from house arrest in 1908. These included the American Laura Dreyfus Barney, who came into contact with Bahá'í believers in Paris (one of the European centres of the Bahá'í faith) in the early 1900s. Dreyfus-Barney made a number of extended visits to 'Akka at a time when conditions in 'Akka were sparse and to be a Bahá'í was dangerous. She lived in the household of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for two years from 1904. Here, she taught English to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's four daughters and his wife Munihi Nahri (1847-1938) (Smith, 1996), learned Persian, and collected material for what would become *Some Answered Questions* (Barney, 1908) [French trans. *Les Leçons de St Jean-D'Acre*], a compilation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings that were published in English, French and Persian. By the time of her last major journey as a Bahá'í emissary in 1922, Dreyfus-Barney had visited Palestine, Persia, Russian Turkistan, Egypt, Turkey, China, Indochina, Burma, Korea, India, and the United States, journeys which she undertook with her husband after her marriage in 1911 (Goodman, 2018a). In 1922 the Dreyfus-Barneys arrived in Haifa from Indo-China by way of Burma and Bombay when Shoghi Effendi succeeded to the leadership of the Bahá'í community on the death of his father and wished to consult prominent Bahá'ís about the community's future (Weinberger, 2012). Dreyfus-Barney also financed the journey's “West” that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made between 1911 and 1913 when he outlined his universal conception of peace and of the oneness of humanity to Western audiences in America and Europe (Mottaheden introduction). She hosted him in Paris and later assisted him during his visit in the United States (Khademi 2013).

Dreyfus-Barney's Bahá'í faith, educational activism, peace activism, and internationalism entangled in her work for diverse international educational, humanitarian and women's organisations, as her activities linking the work of SDN and the CIF illustrate. She was a founder member (and instigator) of the League of Nations' Liaison Committee of Major International Associations (Goodman, 2018a). This met under the auspices of the League's International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation at Paris (IIIC) and aimed to “furnish a point of contact for those of the great international associations which are interested in the education of children and young people in international understanding and world friendship” (League of Nations, 1929). Dreyfus was also a prominent member of the CIF, which saw itself as the “mother of the League of Nations” or as the female side of the League of Nations (Gubin & von Molle, 2005, p.29; Rupp, 1997). She

acted as liaison officer for the CIF with both the IICC and with the League's International Institute for Educational Cinematography, established in 1925 at Rome (Goodman 2018b, 2018c).

At the 1927 CIF conference Dreyfus-Barney cited the work of the Liaison Committee when proposing a resolution that aimed:

To enable the child to strike root in its natural setting of family and homeland [which] remains today, as in the past, the first principle of all sound education ... Alike for its own balance and for the general wellbeing, the child, who is the citizen of tomorrow, should be brought to the idea of duty and should learn that it will have to fulfil actively all its obligations to its family, to its companions, to its village, town or city and to its country. At the same time, the instruction given to children should not stop there. They should be taught that this essential solidarity neither can, nor should, be confined within national boundaries; for there exists between peoples as between the various members of any one society a community of rights and duties as well as an actual and ever-increasing interdependence ... Children should learn especially that civilisation is the common world of all people, including those who in the course of centuries have been the most bitter enemies; and that notwithstanding inevitable differences it is out of the fact of this common heritage and the desire to preserve and to develop it, that the League of Nations was born (ICW, 1927, pp.14-15).

To pursue this agenda, teachers were use formal school subjects and informal means to teach children courtesy to strangers, and to inspire them with a curiosity to know their habits and to understand their language and their thought. The resolution noted that these activities would "have the effect of leading young people into habits of intellectual cooperation and thus support the League of Nations" (Ibid., p.16). It concluded that education would help the organisation of peace by paving the way to mutual knowledge and mutual understanding between peoples.

As the following section outlines, For Dreyfus-Barney, the resolution's statements about interdependence and civilisation being the common world of all people resonated with her Bahá'í beliefs. Her activities at the League and the CIF also illustrate how Bahá'ís worked to promote security and peace among the peoples of the world through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Cole, 1998). While Bahá'ís did not engage with party politics they saw organisations like the the SDN, the CIF, women's suffrage, and the desire for universal education, as progressive movements that signalled a positive force in the world towards peace (Harper, 1925). But as the following section illustrates, Bahá'ís also viewed the League as an insufficient mechanism to bring about the universal peace that Baha'u'llah termed The Most Great Peace, which was a central motif in Bahá'í belief.

The Bahá'í' faith, peace and the League of Nations

As Kluge (2012) and Nakhjavani (2008) outline, Baha'u'llah's plan for attaining world peace comprised two major phases, a Lesser Peace and The Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace, which was primarily political in nature, grounded in human will and "established through the efforts of the nations of the world" (Nakhjavani, 2008, p.290), would work toward equality of rights for all. The Most Great Peace, "the ultimate peace promised to all the peoples and nations" (Ibid., p.295), comprised "a unity based on spiritual principles" (Kluge, 2012, p.75) when the earth would become one home and peoples would be unified. The complete eradication of religious and racial prejudices in The Great Peace was a spiritual condition and a matter of conscience (Nakhjavani, 2008, p.290). While the Lesser Peace was a necessary stage towards The Great Peace, it was not sufficient for the fullest development of human potential, whether individual or collective. As Dreyfus-Barney records of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's answers to her questions in 'Akka, in The Great Peace differences of religion, race, class and nationality would be overridden: "All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself" (Barney, 1908, p.65).

Shoghi Effendi (1974) described the international form of government in the Most Great Peace as "a world federal system." (Ibid., p.203) in which "the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty" formed an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the "Commonwealth of all the nations of the world" (Ibid., p.40). Kluge (2012) notes that foundational to the Bahá'í vision of the future world order is the abandonment of the basic principle of the Westphalian system of international politics in order to attain genuine security and progress in eliminating the basic causes of war. A world tribunal was to adjudicate any disputes between the various elements constituting the universal system (Effendi, 1974, p.202). As Kluge (2012) maintains, the application of a federalist principle to the international spheres was conducive to the central Bahá'í concept of unity in diversity, exemplified in Bahá'í metaphors of the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch and of the human race as a flower garden made beautiful by its diversity of colour and form (Cole, 1998).

'Abdu'l-Bahá welcomed the League of Nations as being in harmony with the teachings of Baha'u'llah. He encouraged the formation of the Bahá'í International Bureau at Geneva to act as a liaison with the League and other international organisations (Hutchinson & Hollinger, 2006) and to link the Bahá'í center at Haifa and Bahá'í centres around the world. But he acknowledged that the League was incapable of establishing universal peace because it had been created by member-states that could withdraw at will, and was only supported through moral sentiment and public opinion, which rendered it impotent and lacking final authority in the face of nationalistic pretensions (Balyuzi, 1934). Bahá'ís contrasted a strong covenant of God with a weak covenant of nations (Anon 1920), and argued that it was useless to expect governments to accept the dictates of a league of nations unless such a league had the firm foundation of divine laws (Carpenter, 1926). They deemed it impossible to abolish war by human politics, or to fully improve the social condition of the world, without the spiritualisation of the world and the fusion of its peoples (Afn'an, 1924). In working towards unity in the political realm the League as currently constituted left Baha'u'llah's conditions for The Most Great Peace unfulfilled (Kirkpatrick, 1932).

As outlined by Baha'u'llah, universal peace and the organisation of a world state depended upon a transformation of human character in which all were called to a higher loyalty than either ethnic group or nation, a loyalty to the planet earth and to the generality of humankind. In the Bahá'í social vision, creating a consciousness that all were one family required self-transformation and education of the highest order (Smith 1996). For 'Abdu'l-Bahá teaching children was “the most meritorious acts of humankind”. As “the indispensable foundation of all human excellence”, it provided “a path for man [sic] to work his way to the nights of abiding glory” (Shahvar, 2009, p.17). Baha'u'llah maintained that education was capable of forming world citizens, when “all men shall be regarded as one soul” (Cole, 1998, p.131). A universal education for the children of all nations and a uniform educational curriculum to strengthen consciousness in the pursuit of universal peace was to include technical and scientific education, and to continually train the children to realise the perils of war and the glory of peace: “You must sow the seeds of peace in the plastic minds of the children”, said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for whom, “education in the oneness of mankind” was to “utilize every means to establish in the hearts of the children the consciousness of universal brotherhood”. But children’s education was not to start too early. 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised that studying in the early years was harmful and injured the quality of children’s minds and their mental development by “overtraining at a period when the child brain needs delicate nurturing rather than a forcing process” (Editorial, 1925, p.284). Rather, affirmed 'Abdu'l-Bahá, it was through joy that the intelligence of the child was to be awakened and developed in contrast to the drudgery and drill that characterised current education systems: “The whole human race will be happier, more spontaneous and artistic, more intuitive and penetrating in mental qualities, when this new education is universally applied” (Ibid.).

It was the high importance that Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and later also Shoghi Effendi attributed to formal and informal education and to educators of the highest calibre that caused Bahá'ís to view education as a religious duty (Shahvar, 2009). The high value Bahá'í teachings ascribed to education led to the establishment of Bahá'í schools in various parts of the world, of which the most well known were the Tarbíyat schools in Tehran (Smith, 1996). While the Tarbíyat boys’ school opened in 1898, the Tarbíyat girls’ school, which became one of the most well attended girls’ schools in Tehran, was formally opened only in 1910 due in part to the controversies around girls’ education in Persia at the time and was closed in 1934 by state mandate (Rostam-Kolayi, 2008). Financial support for the Tarbíyat schools came from the Persian American Education Society (PAES), to which Dreyfus-Barney contributed financially. Illustrating the East-West cross-currents that continued to characterise Bahá'í activities, the PAES made assistance to the Tarbíyat schools its first priority (Stockman. 1995), in line with Baha'u'llah’s decree that the community was to provide for children’s schooling if parents were unable to do so financially. ('Abdu'l-Bahá, 1920). Prior to the foundation of the PAES, Dreyfus-Barney had also funded the education of a few “young folk” in Persia (Dreyfus-Barney to Sohrab, 1910). Like Dreyfus-Barney, Sara Louise, Lady Blomfield (1859-1939), an English Bahá'í who visited Geneva regularly, supported the education of Bahá'í children in Haifa (Weinberger, 2012), although her plans to establish a school at Haifa did not materialise, as the following section discusses.

The Bahá'í International Bureau at Geneva

Blomfield had become a Bahá'í in 1907 in Paris and had subsequently travelled with the Dreyfus-Barneys to Beirut, Damascus and Haifa (Ibid.). In 1912 she established a Bahá'í Centre at Geneva

and held regular Wednesday night meetings at Villeneuve (Ibid.). While the Dreyfus-Barneys had a summer residence at Mont Pelerin, and Dreyfus-Barney travelled regularly from Paris to Geneva for League-related activities, Blomfield came from London to Geneva most summers for the high season. She organised afternoon meetings to which she invited people from Geneva international circles for lectures on various subjects by well know individuals, after which question and answer sessions aimed to lead to discussion of the Bahá'í faith (Lynch to Dreyfus-Barney, 1962). Blomfield also collaborated in Geneva with Eglantyne Jebb, of the Save the Children organisation (Anon, 1924b). In 1923, as well as holding meetings about the Bahá'í faith and working on a book depicting the lives of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the women associated with them, Blomfield planned a meeting in Geneva to establish a Bahá'í school on Mount Carmel (in what is now Northern Israel) at which the Dreyfus-Barneys, Eglantyne Jebb and the American progressive educationist Stanwood Cobb were to speak. This initiative (which failed to materialise) was in response to a letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughter Rúhá, who had written to Blomfield that the poverty of Bahá'í families in Haifa meant their children were not attending school (Weinberger, 2012).

While Dreyfus-Barney was a regular visitor to Geneva and Blomfield was a seasonal visitor, other Bahá'í women were active for varying lengths of time at the Bahá'í Geneva Bureau. The Bureau was established in 1925 by the English Bahá'í Jean Stannard (1865-1944) on the encouragement of Shoghi Effendi, who intended the centre to act as an intermediary between the Bahá'í Centre in Haifa and to link the different Bahá'í centres but without international authority in the Bahá'í movement (Hoagg, nd). Stannard had espoused the Bahá'í faith around 1907. She was originally a “psychometrix”, a published “lectress of ability”, treasurer of the London Psycho-therapeutic Society, and a member of Society for Psychical Research. Around 1908 she became a travelling Bahá'í teacher in Egypt and India (Kuhn, 2017, pp.55, 90). She spoke in London in 1911 on the Awakening of the East at a meeting the Bahá'ís organised to run alongside the 1911 Universal Races Congress (Anon, 1911a) and on Women of the East (a recurrent message in her work) at the farewell meeting for 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London (Anon, 1911b). Near the end of 1911 and back in Egypt she wrote letters to the Egyptian Gazette about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's travels in Switzerland, London and Paris (Stannard, 1911). During 1913 she left Egypt for India (Savi 2013), where she delivered a range of lectures (Vakil, 1914). Speaking to the Theist society in Karachi in 1913 on women's lives, their education and the equality of the sexes, she argued that “Persian womanhood” could show they were equal in every respect to their men, for “acts of unparalleled heroism were manifested on the part of wives, sisters, mothers in the Bahá'í cause” (Correspondent, 1914, p.23). She also urged her audience to consider the “problem of raising the standard of female education on practical lines”, noting that keeping “the future mothers of the race in ignorance, ineptitude or bigotry” was “to stultify and rob man of half of his forces for good”, and that “girl children should receive as much educative attention as boys so that the mind of the mother may be able to help and not hamper the grown minds of her children” (Ibid.). Stannard also undertook extensive speaking tours in India and Burma during 1923 (Anon, 1923).

In 1925 Stannard rented a suite of rooms for the Bahá'í International Bureau in Geneva (Nourse, 1925). There was a large communal area seating 60 and doors opened into her office to accommodate another 40. Around the time of Stannard's arrival in Geneva, the American Bahá'í teacher Martha Root (1872-1939), who travelled the world almost continuously from 1919 and

supported herself by journalism (Hutchinson & Hollinger, 2006), moved to Geneva and to the Bureau to seek contact with Esperantists, as did another American, Katherine Nourse with her two children (Weinberger, 2012). The Bureau arranged outside speakers, a study class on Bahá'í teachings, and socials, conferences and weekly meetings (Nourse, 1925). By 1926 the Bureau's official organ, *Le Messager Bahá'í de Genève*, was emphasising "in the light of the Bahá'í Teachings some of the great thoughts and striking utterances delivered here from time to time by prominent people" (Pinchon, 1927). There was also a lending and circulating library with Bahá'í publications and books on philosophy and science, international affairs and social movements.

In 1925 and 1926 the Bahá'í International Bureau organised conferences on Esperanto, the artificial language created by Zamenhof (1859-1917). Cole (1998) argues that the world languages that Baha'u'llah called for in pursuit of a peaceful world may have had some roots in Islamic esotericism and the late Hellenistic world that influenced the Kabbalists and characterised the Shaykhism out of which the Bahá'í faith grew. Baha'u'llah stressed the value of a universal language for scientific exchanges and to contribute to unity and world peace and suggested that children should learn both their vernacular and a universal language. Although Esperanto was not taken up officially as a Bahá'í language, Smith (1996) notes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá praised Esperanto, which he encouraged Bahá'ís to learn and an Esperanto booklet on the Bahá'í faith was published in London in 1907. The Bahá'í movement included prominent Esperantists, and Bahá'í-Esperanto contacts were particularly strong in the 1920s and 1930s. A monthly Bahá'í Esperanto magazine (*La Nova Tago*, 1925-36) was published in Germany, where a network of Bahá'í Esperanto groups was established. Root utilised Esperanto contacts in her worldwide travels and from 1925 began the practice of having Bahá'í representation at world Esperanto congresses. Lidia Zamenhof youngest daughter of Ludwik Zamenhof, creator of Esperanto, became a Bahá'í and translated Bahá'í literature into Esperanto. When the Esperanto Congress was held in Geneva in August 1925, two Bahá'í Esperanto sessions were held at the Bureau attended by Edouard Combe, Esperantist and journalist at *La Tribune de Genève* and Charles Bedouin, a professor at Geneva University, who addressed one of the Bahá'í sessions (Root 1926). The Bahá'í sessions at the 1928 Esperanto congress in Antwerp were chaired by Lidia Zamenhof and attended by individuals from 25 countries. Root spoke on Universal Education for World Peace and addresses were given by the Bahá'í Dr Ernst Kliemke (1870-1929), President of the German Esperanto Society, who spoke (under the *nom de plume* of Heinrich Nienkamp) on The Bahá'í Movement and Politics; H. S. Mohammed Ruhani of Resht, Persia on The Bahá'í Movement and Esperanto in Persia; Vuk Echtner of Prague on The Spirit of the New Day; and Mary Hanford Ford of New York City on The Succession of Prophets (Root, 1928).

By 1927, the Geneva Bureau was serving as a meeting place for Bahá'ís arriving from France, Germany, America, Russia, Austria, India, Egypt and Palestine and weekly Bahá'í meetings were being held at a hotel at Lousanne-Ouchy (Pinchon, 1927). Blomfield, who was kindly disposed towards the International Bureau but not a frequent visitor (Lynch to Dreyfus-Barney, 1962), was part of a group consulted in 1927 on the Bureau's work and about whether resources were available to sustain it. Up to 1927 Stannard largely supported the expenses of the Bureau but when American Julia Culver (1861-1950) came to assist in 1927 Culver assumed financial responsibility and the office stayed open but with reduced activity. In 1928, the American Bahá'í Emogene Hoagg (1869-1945) (who would manage the Bureau until 1935) came to assist Culver when Stannard returned to Egypt. The former Bureau was closed and temporary rooms were taken for

the summer months. When Root returned from her Esperanto tour in 1928, lectures were re-started, social and spiritual gatherings were held and new accommodation was found at rue Général Dufour.

The Bahá'í International Bureau became linked with the grouping of international associations co-ordinated by the Quakers and was recognized by the League of Nations in 1929 (Savi, 2013). Like Dreyfus-Barney, Root was an active participant in international activities associated with the League. Both attended public sessions of the 1930 League Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments and for a period of three months Root met statesmen from more than fifty countries, spoke with them about Baha'i principles and gave them Baha'i literature (BIC, online). As vice-president of the Peace and Disarmament Committee of Women's International Organizations (PDC-WIO), which represented international women's organizations with branches in fifty-six countries, Dreyfus-Barney processed into the assembled conference with the other PDC-WIO officers at the head of representatives from international women's organisations who carried thousands of peace petitions to the conference (Garner, 2016).

The International Baha'i Bureau was maintained after the League of Nations ceased to function in Geneva (BIC online). Anne Lynch (1892-1966), who with the German Bahá'í Margaret Lentz (1879-1965) came to work at the Bureau under Hoagg's management and subsequently under the management of Helen Bishop, had settled in England at the end of World War 1 and had become a Baha'i in Italy in 1926. Lynch was fluent in Russian, French, English, German, Italian and Esperanto and during her time at the Bureau a range of Bahá'í translations and publications were produced, as well as new bulletins in various languages, including from 1945 the English-language European publication *News Exchange* (Bahá'í Library, online). Like Culver and like Lenz, who went on to work in Austria, Lynch spent time in Haifa after becoming a Bahá'í. During the second world war she was the sole worker at the Bureau. After 1940 when her independent income ceased she kept up the Bureau's correspondence while working for the YMCA. In 1946 she wrote to Dreyfus-Barney that what was needed at the Bureau was a person or persons with a conversational knowledge of French and a thorough knowledge of German to communicate with Germany and with German-speaking Switzerland, which was the only part of Switzerland, she wrote, where there were Bahá'ís; and they would need to be assisted to "get to know the European mentality so as not to antagonize it by too unfamiliar procedures" (Lynch to Dreyfus-Barney, 1946).

Having passed the second world war in the United States Dreyfus-Barney returned to Paris at the end of the war. She continued her international activity as CIF liaison officer with the United Nations (UN), as a member of the UN Economic and Social Council, and by helping to develop relations between UNICEF and various NGOs (Hutchinson & Hollinger 2006). Letters between Dreyfus-Barney in Paris and Edna True of the Bahá'í European Teaching Committee in the USA (Dreyfus-Barney to True, 1948) illustrate that Dreyfus-Barney advised on the reorganisation of the International Bureau in 1948, where Lynch remained in charge at 37 Quai Wilson (and subsequently at 29 Route de Melagnon) until it was closed in 1957

Conclusion

For the Bahá'í women associated with the Geneva Bahá'í International Bureau, educational activities in the pursuit of peace, whether through the ICW, League-related activities, the encouragement of Esperanto, or through Bahá'í initiatives like the PAES and the Geneva Bureau, meshed with the Bahá'í imperative to foster universal peace and a world society outlined by Bahá'u'lláh in 1875. Changes in consciousness and in society central to the Bahá'í notion of universal peace informed the Bahá'í emphasis on universal education and educators of the highest calibre and for children to be taught a universal language as well as their mother tongue. While not participating in formal politics from principle, Bahá'ís like Dreyfus-Barney and Root engaged in educational internationalism through organisations like the League of Nations and the CIF, seeing these as institutions advancing a peace-agenda that Bahá'u'lláh had foreshadowed. But for Bahá'ís the League was an insufficient mechanism to deliver Bahá'u'lláh's Greater Peace.

The Bahá'í Bureau at Geneva was an international organisation linking the Bahá'í centre in Haifa and Bahá'í centres in different parts of the world. The Bahá'í women who “met-up” with varying degrees of im/permanence at Geneva and at the Geneva Bahá'í International Bureau were transnational actors who brought histories inflected by a mobility generally associated with notions of freedom and change, supported by the wealth that Dreyfus-Barney, Blomfield and Culver illustrate. For Bahá'ís, national boundaries were man made, frontiers were imaginary distinctions that God had not made, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1920, p.125) told the Committee of the Central Organisation for a Durable Peace in 1920. For the women whose Bahá'í faith took them “East” and also brought them to Geneva and to the Geneva Bahá'í International Bureau, the transnational mobility that supported their internationalism was an element of the Bahá'í belief in the earth as one land, and “the terrestrial globe [as] the motherland of all” (Ibid.).

Entanglements between Bahá'í belief, internationalism and educational activism highlight the importance of the contribution of faith-based networks to educational internationalism in the cause of peace. Research on theosophy and women's educational activism in the New Education Fellowship (Brehony, 2004), Catholic women's leadership roles in the education of girls (Raftery and Smyth, 2015), and Quaker women's educational activism (Roberts, 2011), illustrate possibilities, constraints and some of the ambiguities of educational activism that could result from the ideological and institutional impediments for women where organised religion was concerned (Malmgreen, 1986). Attention to religious movements originating in non-Western countries also highlight some of the ambiguities of transnational currents, as for example with Bahá'í women of European and American descent acting as spokespersons in Geneva for a religious belief originating in Persia. Green's analysis of the emergence of religious internationalisms within faith communities in different parts of the world at different moments in time suggests that further comparative and transnational studies of relations between religious internationalisms and educational activism would prove a fruitful approach for future historical studies of educational internationalism

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