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EMMA THOMAS IN ENGLAND, SWITZERLAND AND ITALY

– A LIFE DEVOTED TO EDUCATION

Introduction

I came to Miss Thomas through an Italian who intrigued me immediately the first time I read an essay about him: Aldo Capitini (1899-1968). Subsequently I read various biographies and then some of his books, which led to the translation and publication of the aforementioned essay and of one of his works. Miss Thomas met him in Rome when she was in her seventies and decided to move to Perugia, his native town, to work with him mainly on religious reform and Gandhian non-violence.

Though I had been interested in Capitini for over ten years, and had read references to Miss Thomas in various books and in Capitini's reminiscences of her shortly after her death, I had never tried to find out more about her. It was a meeting with some Italian scholars of Capitini in Capitini's flat, where part of his library still remained, that the interest was sparked, a connection made perhaps by seeing a large photograph of her for the first time.

It has been far more satisfying and instructive than I had imagined: I wanted to get to know a little bit more about Emma Thomas and found myself making the acquaintance of inspirational people, some of whose names appear in the chapters that follow, and got sidetracked because of my desire to read more about them along the way.

It is a world inhabited by philanthropists and activists in the realms of peace, women's rights, human rights, education, social work, post-war relief work, welfare ...; of organisations and movements like the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Service civile internationale, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, L'education nouvelle, the League of Nations ...

Letters, documents, some books and photos belonging to Emma Thomas are housed in two archives in the city of Perugia: the State Archive (SA), and the archive of the Biblioteca San Matteo degli Armeni (SMA).

Acknowledgements:

Thanks go first of all to Emma Thomas for thrusting me into a marvellous new world of people, women in particular, whose strength of character, determination, vision, and self-abnegation have astonished me. Not only that, but researching into her life has introduced me also to three ladies mentioned below, whom I have never met, but with whom I have struck up a friendship by correspondence.

Those who helped me with research:

The librarians at Friends House, Euston Road, London.

Gabriele de Veris, librarian at the Biblioteca San Matteo degli Armeni, Perugia, Italy.

The following document which I found on the internet proved invaluable: *Switzerland Yearly Meeting History and Biography Project "Let Their Lives Speak", A Resource Book*, by Michael and Erica Royston, Summer 2005. The project deals with Quakerism in Switzerland. Research was done for the 60th anniversary of the annual meeting, which fell in 2007. Mrs Royston put me in touch with the Geneva Monthly Meeting archivist, Michel Mégard, who very kindly sent me a photo of Emma Thomas and a page from '*Marguerite Gobat: le pacifisme au féminin*' by Stéphanie Lachat et Dominique Quadroni, *Memoires d'ICI*, which mentions Miss Thomas. The Fellowship School postcard on the title page of this article was also taken from this page.

Mandy Mordue and Phaedra Casey, Archivists at Brunel University Archives.

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Some years ago a previous, punier version of this was put online by the Quakers in Geneva. Imagine my surprise when out of the blue I received an email from a lady who had found it because she was researching her family tree. It turns out that she is Miss Thomas's great grand-niece. Both she and her mother gave me useful details about the family, and her mother was able to furnish me with information regarding Miss Thomas's school in England in the 1940s. So, thank you, Niki Follina and Mrs Burrell.

Marta Cramer and Elisabeth Hallett. These sisters live in Montana. Their father, Frank Brutto, was an American journalist who was sent to Europe as an Associated Press correspondent. He arrived in Rome shortly after the Italians had entered the war (June 1940). Soon after his arrival it became obvious that the USA was about to enter the war. Press offices were closed and he was due to be sent back home via Switzerland, except that shortly after his arrival in Switzerland he was ordered to stay

there and continue reporting. He returned to Rome in the post-war period. His wife, Sallie, and daughter, six-year-old Marta, joined him there in 1946. Elisabeth was born in Rome. Just after her birth, Mrs Brutto engaged Miss Thomas to teach Marta, thus giving rise to a very close, sixteen-year relationship. Sallie Brutto wrote a book about their domestic life in Rome. Chapter 17 of that work introduces us to Miss Thomas, and is included here as Appendix A with Marta and Elisabeth's permission.

Marta and Elisabeth are delightful correspondents and have shared their very fond memories of Miss Thomas with me. It has been such a thrill. Thank you so much. Not only that, Elisabeth proof-read this document. I am grateful to her for offering to do so.

Without internet, all those people, institutions and so forth that have uploaded information, and without digitisation of books and documents, this small research would have been much more laborious, time-consuming and certainly more impoverished.

Chapter 1 – Emma Thomas in England

From the Preface to a book written in 1870 whose aim was to introduce and explain the brand-new Elementary Education Act we learn that '[it] is a statute which is calculated, more than any other of recent times to elevate the masses of the people; and is the result of many years agitation by the various religious denominations and political parties in the State. The object which it will accomplish may be stated in a very few words. It will place an elementary school wherever there is a child to be taught, whether of rich or poor parents ; and it will compel every parent and guardian of a child to have it taught, at least, the rudiments of education, and without reference to any religious creed or persuasion.'¹

The government introduced School Boards, which were local providers of education in the Metropolis, in municipal boroughs, for the local Board of Health in the district of Oxford, and in all parishes in England and Wales. School Board members were elected by ratepayers and those whose names were on the burgess role in a borough. The children concerned were between the ages of five and thirteen. The weekly fee for the children's education was to be paid by the family, or if the family was poor it was paid partially or totally by the board for a certain period of time, and in any case not more than six months.

Emma Thomas's education benefited directly from this act and led to a life dedicated to teaching in one way or another right up to the end.

Biographical information

She was born in Lewisham, Kent, on 8 February 1872 to James Thomas, a master bootmaker, and Emma Thomas née Cornell. She was their first child, to be followed over the years by three boys and three girls. In the 1881 census we find the household comprised of father, mother, and five children (Edith, aged seven, is missing from the list), plus a servant and a lodger. Emma is listed as a 'scholar'. Ten years later she and her sister Florence, aged sixteen, are both School Board pupil teachers. The pupil-teacher system replaced the use of monitors, which after decades of practice was eventually deemed to be unsuitable. After their elementary education was completed at the age of thirteen, those who were to become pupil teachers started a sort of apprenticeship at a school, teaching elementary classes, for which they were paid. At the same time they also studied at centres for five years to bring them up to the standard required for admission to a Training College. Evidently Miss Thomas realised early on that teaching was going to be her profession in life, as did Florence, who followed in her footsteps. At twenty years of age Emma Thomas duly enrolled in Stockwell College, a teacher training college at the time. After finishing, she went to France as an exchange student before returning to London to take up teaching. In the 1901 census she was down as an Elementary teacher. Then in 1905 she enrolled at the London School of Economics and graduated in 1909 with Social Sciences as a special subject. Shortly afterwards, she became an assistant teacher in a London County

¹ The Elementary Education Act, 1870, with introduction, notes and index, and appendix containing the incorporated statutes. By W. Cunningham Glen, Barrister-at-law. London, Shaw and Sons, Fetter Lane, 1870.

Council (LCC) school.² In October 1915 she took a part-time, one-year course on practical phonetics at University College, obtaining a free place through London County Council.³

Miss Thomas retired at around 49 years of age. During her working life she lived in the family home at 28 Limes Grove, Lewisham, until some time between 1901 and 1911, for in the 1911 census she is living at 26 Limes Grove with Edith, who was head of the household and a widow aged thirty-seven.

Miss Thomas's family were firmly Church of England⁴ yet at a certain point for some reason she decided to join the Friends.⁵

The Fellowship of Reconciliation

The outbreak of the Great War was a source of deep discomfort for Christian men and women who could not reconcile war with their beliefs. Gradually small groups came into contact with each other and at the end of 1914 a hundred and thirty people gathered in Cambridge and after much discussion founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation (F.O.R.). From Lilian Stevenson⁶ we learn that 'its special testimony was in regard to war but, from the first, its founders realised that the law of love is violated to-day in many other directions and that, to eradicate any one form of social strife, one must go deep down to the roots of all. They were convinced that the whole structure of society needed refashioning on a different basis, that the present social order should not be accepted as inevitable; that those who held these convictions were called to search resolutely for the Will of God for modern life and to unite with men and women in all lands in a common quest after an order of society in accordance with the mind of Christ.'⁷ Their task, therefore, was 'to set out to discover together how the way of love and service, as shown in Jesus, could be followed in every relationship in life, and human society be thereby radically transformed.'⁸

2 London County Council was created in 1889 as a result of the local government act 1888. The L.C.C. developed secondary education.

3 Entry Form from UCL archives.

4 According to Mrs Burrell, her great-niece.

5 There is a small book in the Friends House Library, Euston Road, London entitled *The Next Step in Social and Industrial Reconstruction – being papers prepared for meetings of the committee on war and the social order (appointed by London yearly meetings of the Society of Friends). Together with minutes recording the considered views of the committee and a short bibliography.* It was published in 1919 and of the ten contributors only one is female; Emma Thomas's contribution is *Private Property*.

6 Among the founding members of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Also very involved in the Student Christian Movement.

7 Lilian Stevenson (1870-1960), *Towards a Christian International*, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Gordon St., London W.C.1, 1941, p.2.

8 Lilian Stevenson, op. cit., p.1.

Chapter 2 – Emma Thomas in Switzerland

Miss Thomas evidently had a dynamic, outgoing personality. Retirement from teaching in LCC schools meant she was now able to dedicate herself to experiments in education. This she did in Switzerland in a small town named Gland in the district of Nyon, canton of Vaud. In an article published in 1924, see page 10 of this document, she herself tells us that the school was founded in October 1921 with help from the F.O.R.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation and education

In his 1986 thesis entitled *The Fellowship of Reconciliation 1914-1945*,⁹ Gijsbert Gerrit Jacob den Boggende informs us that: 'The justification for the Fellowship's interest in both formal and informal education can be found in the FOR's presupposition that action followed thought. Education, therefore, was crucial to the establishment of the new society the FOR envisaged... The growing concern among the membership about militarism in schools brought about several schemes for an FOR school. Such a school would combine FOR principles with progressive educational ideas such as those of Montessori. An attempt was made to start such a school in September 1918, but inadequate finances made it impossible to get the scheme going. It was not until the 1920s that such a school came into existence, but then in Gland, Switzerland.' He describes Emma Thomas's Fellowship School as 'The most important experiment, from the FOR's viewpoint ... The *News Sheet* of May 1923 invited FOR members to cooperate with this experiment which had started as a private adventure.¹⁰ ...FOR members raised the financial support necessary to rent the estate at Gland.'¹¹

Geneva

Miss Thomas also became involved with the Geneva Monthly [Quaker] Meeting, giving new impulse to it and becoming its clerk till 1936, according to Robert J. Leach.¹² In fact, among her papers there is an extract from the Minutes of the Geneva Meeting dated 11 March, 1936. In it we learn that Miss Thomas resigned from the Clerkship because she had been away from Geneva for some time and was unsure whether she would return, and she is praised for contributing to a feeling of stability, calmness and serenity during the Sunday Worship.

Gland is very close to Geneva, which must have been a vibrant, stimulating environment at that time as it was the centre of important international offices; for example the International Labour Organisation started up in the summer of 1920, the League of Nations moved there from London on 1 November 1920, the Headquarters of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom were transferred there from Zurich around 1920, The International Peace Bureau moved its offices there in 1924.

⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20151222152300/https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/14210/1/fulltext.pdf>
p.317

¹⁰ op. cit. pp. 201-202

¹¹ ibid. p. 343, note 38

¹² Robert J. Leach : A short history of the Friends Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 1920-1960, Geneva, 1963, pp.5,21.

Furthermore, there was also the Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau (or Académie De Genève) founded in 1912 by Édouard Claparède, a psychologist interested in education. It became an international centre for experimental research into child psychology. Claparède criticised traditional education's view of the child as an imperfect adult and its method of filling the child with what were believed to be essential things to know. On the contrary, said Claparède, it is the school that should adapt itself to the child, and this can only occur in an 'active' school where the staff is assisting the child's development according to his or her natural abilities and attitudes, and is investigating and trying to understand which 'functions' in his or her make-up are helping or hindering that development. Apart from Claparède, other famous names associated with the Rousseau Institute are Paul Bovet, Adolphe Ferrière and Jean Piaget.

New Education

'New Education' was in the air. Naturally, it comprised a plethora of theories and approaches. In 1921 the 'Ligue Internationale pour l'Education Nouvelle' was founded as the result of a congress in Calais. New Education was based on putting the child at the centre of education and aimed at social reform, international understanding, and promoting world peace through education.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, of which Miss Thomas became an active member, had already directed its attention to education right from the Hague Congress in 1915. A resolution adopted then mentioned the need to educate children in such a way that their thoughts and wishes be directed towards the ideal of a constructive peace.¹³

In 1923 there was a World Conference on Education in Oakland, California. It was attended by delegates from 50 nations, and thousands of individuals besides. In his speech, Dr. P. W. Kuo, chairman of the Chinese delegation, stated the goals: 'The fundamental purpose of the conference is to consider how to promote world peace through education. We are ambassadors of peace, sent on a mission to promote friendly relations, one with the other. Our common and only aim, therefore, should be to consider how we can, through education, turn the nations that are enemies into friends, and make more friendly those that are friendly. We must teach the nations of the world to realize that true greatness and nobility in a nation does not depend upon its bigness, nor upon its military power, nor upon its wealth, but upon just dealing and unselfish service to others. We must remove through education and other effective means all selfishness, pride, hatred, revenge between nations, and cultivate in their place the spirit of good-will, of sympathy, and of mutual confidence. I share with others the belief that if five millions of teachers and educators of the world are fully convinced of the evils of war and the necessity for peace and are willing to dedicate themselves to the task, they can make a great contribution to the cause through the various educational agencies at their command. Their greatest service will naturally be the bringing up of a new generation of people possessing the right kind of ideals of

13 M. G. Suriano, *Donne, pace, non-violenza fra le due guerre mondiali: La Women's International League for Peace and Freedom e l'impegno per il disarmo e l'educazione*, Ph.D. thesis, Bologna University, 2007, p. 311. Online version: <http://amsdottorato.cib.unibo.it/623/>

international relationship.¹⁴

A new world

One of the teachers at The Fellowship School wrote an article which shows they believed they were engaged exactly in what Dr. Kuo expressed: 'Nous avons besoin d'un monde nouveau, ... C'est ce monde nouveau qui se prépare dans l'école de Gland.'¹⁵ [We need a new world, ... This is the new world that is being prepared for at the school in Gland.] The idea of a 'new world' often crops up in pacifist-religious writings of the time: Lilian Stevenson, who has already been mentioned, writes on the subject of suitable reading for children, 'Let it be a quest among old books and new, but a quest from a fresh standpoint – that of the new world which is to be.'¹⁶ Vera Brittain,¹⁷ in her book on 'pioneer peace-makers', recalls the first editorial in October 1915 of *The Venturer*, the Fellowship of Reconciliation's monthly magazine, 'The war is the nemesis and the end of an age ... This is the most terrific and the most critical hour since Calvary ... It is very little of the old world that we shall carry over into the new ... The task before us is none other than the creation of a new world.'¹⁸

Writing about the Great Britain branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation in the post-war years, Lilian Stevenson tells us that, 'With the passing of the sense of crisis associated with the war, the abolition of conscription, and the release from the strain of more than four years, direct peace effort tended somewhat to slacken. While the iniquity and menace of the peace treaties was widely recognised, hope was cherished in the League of Nations in spite of the sanctions clauses... The immediate reason for maintaining branches was felt to have passed; a period of "dispersion" began;... and the witness of the Fellowship tended to become less corporate and more individual... Others felt drawn to help in remoulding education in the spirit of Christianity and fellowship. Experiments like Riverside Colony, on the one hand, and institutions like Children's House in East London and the International "Fellowship School" at Gland, Switzerland, with its training in service and freedom, on the other, were the outcome.'¹⁹

The Fellowship School, Gland – from little acorns...?²⁰

A letter in the State Archive, Perugia, from Miss Thomas's cousin, now Mrs L. Christen, informs us that she, Miss Thomas, and Miss Lilian Watson were 'pioneers of the Fellowship School at Gland.' She goes on to say that 'I worked with them until I married in 1926.'²¹

14 From the Bulletin of the World Conference of Education (Oakland-San Francisco, June 28 to July 6, 1923, under the auspices of the National Education Association of the United States), pp.3-4.

15 M. B. Thornton, *Aujourd'hui: feuille d'éducation*, January 1923, p.6.

16 Lilian Stevenson, *A Child's Bookshelf: Suggestions On Children's Reading, With An Annotated List Of Books*, Student Christian Movement, London, 1918, p. 11.

17 Pacifist, courageous speaker and campaigner against the dehumanisation which takes place in wars, both on the battlefield and in the corridors of power. She was widely reviled by members of the public and largely ignored by many politicians. She put herself and her reputation on the line, and suffered as a consequence. Her most well-known book is *Testament of Youth*.

18 Vera Brittain (1893-1970), *The Rebel Passion*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1964, p. 41.

19 Lilian Stevenson, *Towards a Christian International.*, pp. 61-62.

20 The word 'gland' in French indicates an acorn. Later on in her life Miss Thomas will buy a small flat in a street with a very significant address.

21 SA Box 1608C, folder 5, fo. 71.

Information about the Fellowship School follows from Emma Thomas, from someone who worked for a time as a teacher there, P. Natarajan, and one of the pupils, Gioconda Salvadori.

Here is a slightly-edited transcription of the article written by Miss Thomas mentioned on page seven.²² 'The school was founded with help from the Fellowship of Reconciliation in October 1921. It began with eleven pupils of three nationalities: English, French, and German. At the end of June last when the children went home for the holidays there were thirty-two pupils of eight nationalities: Swiss, English, French, German, Dutch, American, Austrian, Italian, with among the staff a Belgian and a Czecho-Slovakian. We have several Jews, and for six months we entertained and were entertained by a jolly little American negro. One of our latest friends, M. Paul Richard, who knows Tagore, has promised to put us in touch with him with a view to exchange of pupils and teachers.

'One of the first questions we are asked by visitors is, "What about the language difficulty?" I remember Hans from Berlin somewhere about the first morning of his arrival calling out, "Wilfred, avez-vous gut sleep?" I agree that this is not an ideal solution, but we have all been astonished at the small proportions of the problem where children are concerned; the most wonderful thing being how they are able to learn two and even three languages at once and yet keep them distinct each from the others....

'We are very wishful to take root in the affections of the neighbourhood where we are known as either "l'école anglaise" or "le pensionnat international." The local doctor told us we should preach our pacifism mainly by what we were among these practical peasants. They all take a keen and friendly interest in us. They much enjoy our efforts to entertain them and we generally have to repeat our performances twice or even three times to crowded houses. The pastor and village schoolmaster, both young and enthusiastic, have a special affection for us. The former gives us lantern lectures, and supplies the artificial lighting for our amateur stage. One of his lectures, without slides, was on our lack of order: a very friendly piece of criticism.

'Mr. Fluck, the school master, came with us to Florence in the spring and since then is considered by us and by himself as one of the family. Our school journeys and expeditions are an active phase of our internationalism. Twelve of us took a cycling tour through the little towns of northern Lombardy last year and had to hold impromptu public meetings in the cafés because people were so interested in us and our ideas.²³ Our Florentine expedition was more sophisticated but nevertheless bore unexpected fruit when it led to the school becoming a sanctuary for the persecuted Salvadori family.²⁴ ...

22 The collected edition of THE FRIEND in the Friends' Library, London, NEW SERIES no. 64. Page 770. Dated 5 Sept., 1924.

23 An undated letter (SMA file 2, fo. 84) from a certain Trudy Feiss in the USA mentions a pageant she remembers when the school visited Vicenza, in the Veneto region. She writes, 'I will never forget the peace pageant that we put on for the town when the Fascist mayor came and the officials from that very militant [*sic*] boys' school. I've often wondered what they thought about it.'

24 Florentine fascists tortured and almost killed Guglielmo (called Willie) and Max Salvadori, father and 15-year-old son in a street in Florence. They were saved from death by an Army officer passing by. The fascists, however, promised to go round to the Salvadori home sometime to finish the job. Thus the family decided to leave the country as quickly as possible. To understand how they ended up at Miss Thomas's school see Gioconda Salvadori's

'Everywhere we go we explain our pacifism and its implications and are received with sincere interest. It is our happiness that generally strikes people whether they are at home or abroad and they are always ready to discuss our ideas sympathetically. The school has a constant stream of visitors from almost every country in the world. M. Richard came one day in Indian robes and brought a Jain, a Parsee and a Brahmin to see us. We all sat cross-legged on the polished oak floor of the Hall and spent an unforgettable two hours talking philosophy. Pitar Walter had been giving us morning talks on comparative religion and this seemed a happy illustration.

'In our studies too we are international. We do our arithmetic problems from French books as soon as we can read them. The teaching of history becomes strangely different from what one is accustomed to when there are six nationalities in the class. Bible reading is in four languages and the library has books in all the languages we study. Our latest arrival, Mòtò, a distinguished Dutch lady and a Montessorian, is inventing a sort of Montessori occupation for learning three or four languages at once and the pupils are finding the comparisons a very fascinating study.

'English Hilda remarked when she had been here a few weeks, "Mòtò, I always used to think the Germans were quite different from us English, but they are just like us, aren't they?" It was the same with David, the negro. We were all perhaps almost disappointed because we could not find any special difference between him and others except in the colour of his skin.

'We have a newspaper talk once a week, from English, French, and sometimes German papers. Politics are uninteresting because they are meaningless. We do not understand the necessity for passports or visas or any kind of distrust of each other. The things we care about are the latest achievements in aviation, the developments of wireless, climbing Mount Everest, the discoveries of Einstein, and so on, we do not much concern ourselves as to the nationality of those who have taken part. Some people smile at us and say frankly, "What difference can you make to the world?" We do not waste time in thinking about that. We are just trying hard to begin to establish the kingdom in that small spot of earth where alone our will rules.'

Miss Thomas's brother, James, sent four of his five children there. One of them, Hilda, perhaps the same Hilda already mentioned in Miss Thomas's article, came back fluent in French, German and Esperanto.²⁵

At a certain point, perhaps at the very beginning, an association was formed to buy the property and was given a French name: l'Association "Les Rayons". Some members of the Thomas family were on the committee.

A teacher at the school

Now we come to a teacher's point of view on New Education in general and day-to-day activities at the Fellowship School recorded by P. Natarajan (1895-1973) many years later in his autobiography.²⁶ He was born in Bangalore and educated there, then in Trivandrum (Kerala) and Kandy (Ceylon) before taking a post-graduate Licentiate in teaching at Saidapet Teacher's College, Madras. He became a teacher, and

testimony later in the chapter.

²⁵ This information comes from Hilda's daughter, now Mrs Burrell, already mentioned in note 4.

²⁶ Nataraja Guru, *Autobiography of an Absolutist*, DK Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2011

headmaster, in schools which were part of the gurukula system whereby schoolchildren live with, or close to their master. These schools were founded by Natarajan's master, Guru Narayan. His master decided that Natarajan should complete his studies in education abroad and provided him with the wherewithal to cover expenses. Natarajan ended up in Geneva and enrolled as a student in the Institute Jean-Jacques Rousseau, studying under Claparède and Bovet, and meeting Ferrière. He decided to write a thesis entitled 'The Personal Factor in the Educative Process' and approached the University of Geneva about it. However, he was told that the University of Paris was much easier for foreign students to get into, so he made enquiries. Yet, somehow, a few weeks before he was due to leave Geneva for Paris, he gravitated towards the Quaker Meeting, met Miss Thomas, whose school he had heard about, and asked her whether he could stay somewhere near the school and observe lessons. She interpreted this as a round-about way of requesting a job; one was available and she offered it to him. So it was that he taught Science at the Fellowship School, enrolled at the Sorbonne, and completed his thesis.

Natarajan is quite scathing when he describes certain aspects of New Education. One is that the children are given complete freedom so that there is a real danger they will adopt, or fall into, the "I can if I want to" and "I don't have to" attitudes. Gioconda Salvadori, whose memoirs as a pupil follow, gives us the French version of the latter. According to Natarajan, penmanship and the three R's²⁷ suffered as a result. He also points out that the freedom given to the pupils sometimes led to chaos in the classroom and that at times there was little difference between the school working day and a holiday. Apart from this, what does he tell us about the Fellowship School itself? He was very happy to have been able to work there as a teacher while researching and writing his thesis. We should also remember that Gland is in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and he was enrolled in the Sorbonne, so when travelling between the two he did not have to cope with abrupt changes in language. Indeed, he studied French with some of the teachers at the school.

All in all he found himself quite at home in his new surroundings 'as a pacifist, vegetarian and a cosmopolitan with flexible, open and dynamic notions of religious, moral or spiritual values.' While he was there, ca.1928-1933, the staff comprised Negro, Chinese, German, French, British and American teachers, the ratio being 12 teachers to 40 or so girls and boys. Everyone who worked in the school, including the director, cook and gardener received a hundred Swiss francs a month. Those who lived on the premises had board and lodging included. The teachers were called Pitar followed by name if a man, and Moto followed by name for women. Pitar is Sanskrit for father, Moto is Emma Thomas's version of the Sanskrit for mother, Mâtâ. The food was lacto-vegetarian, and at mealtimes tables were made up of a male senior member, a female senior member, a senior male student, a senior female student, and three or four children of different ages. Each year, usually at Easter, there was a school outing, called a pilgrimage, mainly to southern climes. There were months of compulsory preparation classes for both staff and pupils. Natarajan mentions school visits to Arles²⁸ in the south of France, Venice and environs, Rome, Milan-Rome-

27 Reading, (W)riting and (A)rithmetic.

28 An envelope, no. 7, containing photographs in SA box 1608C (3-7) includes postcards showing a number of

Naples²⁹-Syracuse, including their performing a dance recital at an ancient Greek theatre near Palermo for a large audience of tourists. In winter they went to Zermatt and Singen, in Germany. He also mentions that among the pupils he taught were Frank Friedman Oppenheimer, the younger brother of J. Robert, and a six-year-old Marshall Hodgson, later to become a scholar of Islamic civilisation and professor of history and social thought at the University of Chicago.³⁰

A pupil

Gioconda Salvadori (1912-1998), better known in Italy as Joyce Lussu, described her stay at the Fellowship School in *Portrait*, a memoir about certain people and events in her life.³¹ She also recounted many of her memories in recorded conversations with Silvia Ballestra.³² She was the youngest of the Salvadori family, already mentioned in Emma Thomas's article on her school (and in note 24), and was 12 years old when she arrived. In *Portrait* she writes, 'During those days [while the family was deciding where to flee] an English spinster turned up in Florence. She had light-coloured eyes and pink skin below her straight white hair. She had brought us greetings from some English cousins of my mother's, feminists and pacifists. She was called Emma Thomas and was the director of a very new type of school based on the principles of non-violence and fellowship among all peoples. We decided to go to Switzerland...

'There was a series of bungalows in a lovely garden which overlooked the lake...

'Children, teenagers and teachers of all ages and nationalities lived in the bungalows. The teachers... taught their subjects, only if requested by a group of children, generally in French or English. However, many other languages were spoken. There was a Dutch family, the Prins (the parents were teachers and their children students), and the German brother and sister, Georg and Charlotte Metz. A pale Russian teenager, Alexander Katznatcheff, who had lost his parents in the commotion during the October Revolution, had wandered around with his grandmother in the midst of terrible violence. Then there was Wanda from Poland, Karl from Hungary, Walter from Wales, David, an Afro-American, Joan from Tasmania, Zouzou Zézette and Georgette from France, and many others.

'Then there was our cousin Lilian,³³ a pretty red-haired lady, a hardline suffragette and feminist, with her son Percy and three younger siblings; they had rented a villa called La Falaise near the school, and were often visited by other relatives of ours ...

members of the school, wearing costumes similar to Isadora Duncan's, performing a festival of dance in the amphitheatre there.

29 Just south of Naples is a town called Cava de' Tirreni. In 1932 the school organised a Festival of Friendship there. In the SA archive, box 1608C, folder 4, fo. 27-35 and fo. 36-37, there are two handwritten copies (in English and Italian) of what was presumably a speech given by the local representative of Fascism, in which he extols the school's 'noble ideals'. The speech is a perfect example of Fascist rhetoric. He also makes reference to the 'new world' and 'kingdom of God', though it is hard to see members of the F.O.R. and Fascism agreeing to the means by which they could be brought about.

30 Nataraja Guru op.cit., pp. 209-11, p. 213, pp. 214-215, pp. 217-219, p. 225, p. 229, pp. 246, p. 248, p. 250, p. 252, pp. 254-257, pp. 259-261, p. 649.

31 Joyce Lussu, *Portrait*, TRANSEUROPA, Bologna, 1988, pp. 30-33. New edition, L'asino d'oro edizioni, Roma, 2012.

32 Silvia Ballestra, *Joyce L. Una vita contro*, Baldini & Castoldi, Milano, 1996, pp. 98-100.

33 Lily Ermengarde Grant Duff (1881-1956) had married Gerard Collier, a cousin of Gioconda's mother. Gerard Collier, who had been present at the founding of the Fellowship, and International Fellowship of Reconciliation, died in 1923 aged 44.

'Famous pacifist celebrities came by: from Romain Rolland to Coudenhove-Kalergi, from Bertrand Russell to Pandit Nehru (then young and handsome with his tight-fitting, cream-coloured Indian jacket and cap at a jaunty angle). Other interesting but not so famous people who were passing through came and gave lessons or started up a debate. The only ones to hold regular lessons, following the British school syllabus, were Môtô Sarah and Môtô Simone, two rather neurotic girls, one very blonde and the other very dark, who were most deeply attached to each other. But we thought their courses were tiresome and didn't go to them since our motto was *je ne suis pas obligé*.

'However, we happily accepted to do manual work all together. Cleaning the rooms, cooking the meals (healthy food with no salt), and looking after the garden were done by groups of children and adults following a rota scheme. We all learned to cook, wax and polish the lovely parquet floors, look after flowers and the vegetable garden. Creativity was encouraged, so we could sing and dance, draw and paint, try to play various instruments and organise shows.

'But that experiment of a new form of education and a culture of peace, stimulating though it was, did not produce the desired results. Tensions and conflicts arose for futile reasons, and Miss Thomas was lacking in the cultural maturity and depth that could have smoothed things over. Though she had the sweetest of smiles below her white hair, she was basically authoritarian and irritable, and every so often exploded into fits of anger which were anything but pacific and educative. Once Zézette and I were victims of it. My French friend Zézette and I shared a room and we had decided to give rein to our imagination and decorate it in very odd ways. One time, when we had transformed it into a harem after searching for a long time for suitable furnishings: curtains, carpets, cushions absolutely everywhere, dimmed lights, goblets full of sweets and burning perfumed sticks with their thin wisps of smoke and the two of us dressed as odalisques with flashy boleros decorated with silver sweet wrappers, Môtô burst in like a fury, flung the window open, tossed the curtains and cushions all over the place and called some of the children and staff that were passing by to come and see, called us dirty, untidy girls and enjoined us to restore it to its primitive austerity. In the end, our parents took us away ... '

In her conversations with Silvia Ballestra Joyce Lussu describes it as a strange, extraordinary place and remarks that in the field of education as she was speaking (1995) very modest progress had been made in comparison with the daring set-up in Gland. It seems the pupils demanded a lot from their teachers, and since it was they who had asked for the lesson, attention was guaranteed. She remembers that it was a very agreeable set-up thanks to the equal relations between staff and pupils.

Georgia Lloyd

Daughter of Lola Maverick and William Bross Lloyd. Following her parents' divorce in 1916 she lived in Winnetka with her mother, brother and two sisters. Lola Maverick Lloyd was co-founder of the Women's Peace Party and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In connection with her activity as a pacifist, in 1926 she went to Switzerland with the children. Georgia attended the

Fellowship School there.³⁴ In a conversation published in 1996³⁵ she mentions that the school had 36 pupils from 14 different nationalities. Georgia Lloyd became a peace activist, women's rights activist, advocate of world government, socialist and philanthropist.

WILPF summer schools

In 1926, from 26 July to 4 September, and in 1927, from 25 August to 8 September, the International Fellowship School hosted a Women's International League for Peace and Freedom summer school, something that had begun in Salzburg in 1921. They were generally held in countries or regions where internal conflict was present, e.g. Czechoslovakia (Podebrad, 1923), or where Foreign Policy was a source of possible conflict, e.g. Northern Italy (Varese, 1922, which, however, had to be moved to Lugano out of fears for the delegates' safety because local fascist bands were creating trouble a few months before the congress was due to begin). After the congress in 1923 it was decided to form a working group on summer schools under the direction of Andrée Jouve. We find Emma Thomas's name among the members of the working group confirmed by the congresses in Dublin (1926), Prague (1929), Grenoble (1932).³⁶ The 1926 summer school in Gland *A Training School for Peace Workers* was an anomaly in more ways than one. First of all, it was 'imposed' by the American section of the League in order that the delegates, especially Jane Addams, President of the League and renowned international figure, who were in Dublin for the congress, might reach out to a wider audience. That particular audience was a very specific group of people, those working in international institutions in Geneva, instead of the broader audience that other summer schools were aimed at. Then, it lasted more than a month, instead of the usual fortnight. Naturally, it led to a few ructions within the League. The 1927 summer school was on *Relations Between White and Coloured Races*. It went back to the normal format, but does not seem to have interested a broader audience, nor did it make any radical declarations regarding colonialism.³⁷

Gandhi in Switzerland

After the Round Table Conference held in London in 1931, Gandhi returned to India via France, Switzerland, and Italy accompanied by a group of chosen friends during the European part of his journey. In Switzerland he spoke to large public meetings in Lausanne on 8 December and Geneva on 10 December organised by Swiss Pacifists led by Edmond Privat and Pierre Cérésolle, and had two private meetings with activists in Lausanne. P. Natarajan refers to a meeting at the Quaker Centre in Lausanne.³⁸

Three well-known people who taught at the school

Three people whom we know worked as teachers at the International Fellowship

34 PDF document by Laura Ruttum (February 2007). *Georgia Lloyd Papers 1915-1994*, Mss Col 1787. The New York Public Library Humanities and Social Sciences Library Manuscripts and Archives Division.

35 <http://winnetkahistory.org/gazette/georgia-lloyd-reminisces/>

36 M. G. Suriano, op. cit., pp. 464, 466, 470.

37 M. G. Suriano, op. cit. I am indebted to her for all this information.

38 Nataraja Guru, op. cit., pp. 259-60.

School were Pierre Cérésolle, Marguerite Gobat and Truda Weil.

Pierre Cérésolle (1879-1945) was at the first meeting in Bilthoven, Holland, out of which sprung the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. He will always be remembered as the man who founded *Service Civil International* in 1920, an international voluntary force of men and women who travelled to areas devastated by war or natural calamities and began reconstruction. The British branch was called The International Voluntary Service for Peace.

In the San Matteo degli Armeni archive³⁹ there are some undated pages of notes as if for a lecture of some sort – perhaps at one of the meetings held in her flat in 1955 (see page 30) – written in Italian by Miss Thomas about him. She writes, 'During the first year a very tall man learned in mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, engineering, languages etc came to visit us and offered to help. He had come to offer his services to us because he was an active member of the IFOR. I told him that I would be most grateful to have him with us but, alas, we only had eleven pupils and I could not afford to offer him a salary. He replied that it didn't matter; if we could offer him some work from time to time when he asked us he would be happy just to have board and lodging. He stayed with us off and on for eight years. Little by little I learned his story.'

Marguerite Gobat (1870-1937) was the daughter of Nobel Prize laureate (1902) Albert Gobat, lawyer, politician, superintendent of public education for the canton of Bern, member of the National Council of Switzerland, director of the Interparliamentary Bureau, director of the International Peace Bureau. From around 1890 to 1914 she was her father's secretary and after his death she remained at the International Peace Bureau. From 1915 to 1920 she worked at the Union mondiale de la femme pour la concorde internationale (World Union of Women for International Concord). From 1915 to 1922 she was with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Then from 1922 to 1927 she was a teacher of French at Emma Thomas's school. At the same time she continued working for the WILPF and in 1924 was present at the fourth congress of the Women's League for Peace and Freedom in Washington. As far as education was concerned, she was an admirer of Pestalozzi. She went on trips with the Fellowship school to Venice, Verona, and in 1925 to Provence. She left Miss Thomas's school at a time when 'the personnel is almost as numerous as the pupils!' and because 'I think I might be able to do something more useful elsewhere. We'll have to see!'⁴⁰ After leaving the Fellowship School she eventually opened up a children's home in Macolin.⁴¹

Truda Weil (1899-1971). The following information comes from the obituary mentioned in the note on the next page. During her working life Miss Weil had many official appointments in New York: executive secretary of the Teachers Union Auxiliary from 1923 to 1928; confidential secretary to Mrs. Johanna M. Lindlof of the Board of Education from 1936 to 1943; assistant administrative director in the city school system; Assistant Superintendent of Schools in 1951; Acting Associate

39 SMA. Uncatalogued.

40 Archives de la Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté, microfilm 86, letter from Marguerite Gobat to Myrrha (?), 26 January 1927, Palais des Nations, Genève. In: Stéphanie Lachat et Dominique Quadroni, *Mémoires d'Ici, Marguerite Gobat: le pacifisme au féminin*, pp. 147-9.

41 Stéphanie Lachat et Dominique Quadroni, op. cit. p. 149.

Superintendent of Schools from 1963 to 1965. She was also editor of Board of Education publications and editorial director of Board of Education films.⁴² She taught English and dramatics at the Fellowship School while P. Natarajan was there. She was a life-long devoted friend of Miss Thomas.

Miss Thomas in America

Miss Thomas seems to have been the kind of person who easily makes friends and often invited people she met by chance to visit her wherever she was. One such case was an American lady, a teacher by profession, whom she met on a boat from America to Europe. A letter⁴³ from this lady, Alice Holloway Brown, written on 1 June 1955 starts 'A number of years ago – 1925, to be exact, it was my great good fortune to make your acquaintance on the steamship "Republic" as you were returning from the United States to your school at Nyon. You invited me to visit you, should I get to Switzerland'. She did get to Switzerland and even to Gland. The letter continues, '[T]he memories of a lovely afternoon and evening with you on the lake shore, and the supper with you at the Peace School, will always be the high point in that Alpine trip.'

We don't know exactly when, but Miss Thomas also visited the experimental school 'Manumit' at that time in Pawling, New York, because she is mentioned in the autobiography written by one of its teachers, Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn.⁴⁴ A propos of Manumit, one of its teachers, Anna F. Gifford, had taught at the International Fellowship School before working there.⁴⁵

Financial problems.

According to Bertram Pickard of the Geneva Meeting 'the economic crisis of the early 1930s was too much for the Fellowship School under the direction of a saint whose unshakeable (and sometimes obstinate!) determination to trust others, in terms of her own high standard of conduct, reduced her assets while loading her liabilities...'⁴⁶ The School could not afford to continue and the remaining co-founders returned to England.

Lilian Watson started teaching at St Christopher School⁴⁷ in Letchworth in September 1935 and remained there until December 1945.⁴⁸ She 'worked selflessly in many

42 Follow this link for her obituary: <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/02/04/archives/truda-t-well-innovator-in-schools-is-dead-at-71.html>

43 SMA file 4, fo. 49.

44 Sarah Norcliffe Cleghorn (1876-1959), *Threescore*, Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, New York, 1936, p. 272-3.

'But the children were sometimes unkind to each other than they would have thought of being to animals. Teasing, that hateful vice, was brought up in vain at a community meeting — it obstinately continued. I remember that when Miss Thomas, the founder of the Fellowship School in Gland, Switzerland, came to see Manumit, the children asked her, "What's the worst thing in the Fellowship School?" and when she said, "Teasing", our children exclaimed, "It is here, too."'

45 From Manumit school brochure 1929, <http://manumitschool.com/ManumitDocs/Brochures/bro1929.htm>

46 SA Box 1608C, folder 5, fo. 4. This is a short article written after Miss Thomas's death. It was published in 'The Friend', August 26 1960, p. 1159.

47 This independent school offers its services to day and boarding pupils from three to eighteen years of age. It was opened in 1915 with the name Garden City Theosophical School and was part of the New Ideals in Education group. The foundation stone for a new day school was laid in September 1919 by Annie Besant, who named the school St Christopher.

48 Email from David Cursons, Membership Secretary and Treasurer of the St Christopher Club.

capacities for the next eleven years, as the first House Mother at Arunside, in the early war years helping evacuees, and later as housecraft teacher.⁴⁹

St Christopher School and the Fellowship School had close contacts from the very beginning and promoted student exchanges.⁵⁰

Miss Thomas leaves Gland. Difficulties in selling the school premises.

Although she left the school in early 1936, the premises would not be sold until late 1954 and even though there are a lot of gaps, the information we have indicates a fairly messy situation involving creditors, debtors, a mortgage still to be paid off, a large villa becoming dilapidated and requiring large sums of money to make it presentable for prospective buyers, worry and distrust, and various trips by members of the Association from England to Switzerland to meet the estate agents in the hope of finding a way out of the predicament. Also, we mustn't forget problems arising from difficulties in travelling between England and Switzerland during the Second World War.

49 Email from David Cursons.

50 Letter to Capitini dated 23 August 1960 from Eleanor Harris, ex-co-principal of St Christopher, SA Box 1608C, folder 5, fo. 45.

Chapter 3 – Emma Thomas back in England

After leaving Gland Miss Thomas went back to London. Then she moved into the country with evacuee children and opened a school named Dittoncroft School in Stowell Park, Wilts. It was a mix of boarders and day-school pupils. Her niece, Hilda, who was also cook, and Hilda's two daughters also stayed there.⁵¹ Miss Thomas also taught Italian POWs in a detention camp in the vicinity. Not only that, but between 1943-45 she was busy writing to associations and relief agencies in the hope of finding a way to get to Italy immediately after the war. Perhaps the various 'pilgrimages' made by members of the Fellowship School led to, or confirmed, her desire to move there. The earliest document we have which makes reference to it is in a letter⁵² from Sir D M Stevenson dated 25 May 1936. Miss Thomas was staying at the Hôtellerie Féminine in Lausanne. Sir Daniel Stevenson (1851-1944) obtained great wealth from coal exporting and was a councillor and then Lord Provost of Glasgow from 1911 to 1914. After the Second World War he was active in endeavours to nurture international understanding. He was also a great benefactor of the university. He writes, 'The new scheme of which you speak seems interesting and will give you scope for the much desired extension which has always been your aim. I do not know what to say to you about Italy;... What it needs is to cultivate the international spirit which you teach at Gland... If you go to Florence I shall be glad to give you a card of introduction to my friend Captain Goad, Director of the British Institute there, of which I am chairman.'

The British Institute in Florence was set up in 1917 by a group of Anglo-Italians 'to counter pro-German feelings in Florence, and to promote the interests of Italy among politicians in England.' It was granted a Royal Charter in 1923 'to promote understanding between the citizens of Italy and the countries of the British Commonwealth through the maintenance of a library in Florence illustrating Italian and British culture and through the promotion of study of both the English and Italian language and the cultures of both countries.'⁵³ Captain Goad, who was its director from 1922-1939, gave very public support to Fascism in 1923, which left a stain on the Institute's reputation for which he was admonished by its Council.

Searching for a way to get to Italy

In July 1943 she receives a letter⁵⁴ and application form from the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad. In her notes for the form we learn that she is a 'member of the Auxiliary Land Army – having specialized in milking'. However, nothing seems to have come from it.

A year later from March to May there are three letters from Truda Weil on official paper from the Mayor's Office of the City of New York. Miss Weil has been trying to help her friend to make contact with Governor Lehman, Director of the UNRRA⁵⁵

51 This information comes from Niki Follina, Hilda's granddaughter.

52 SMA. Uncatalogued.

53 From the Institute's website.

54 SMA. Uncatalogued.

55 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Founded in 1943, its aim was twofold: to provide post-war

and other officials of the Agency, but to no avail. On 31 May Miss Weil writes⁵⁶, 'I am afraid it has been a lot of goose-chasing and "buck-passing".' In the same letter she states that the only procedure would be for Miss Thomas to contact Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, Deputy Director-General of UNRRA in London, and suggests that 'If you suppose that any letter sent from here to Sir Frederick would be of any help, please let me know. If so, I should be glad to have it written on the stationery of the office of the Mayor.'

In October 1944 it's the turn of the Friends Relief Service and the Friends Service Council (F.S.C.). Two of her letters to 'Friend Christina' give us insight into her desire to get to Italy and news about happenings at the school. 'My concern for Italy is daily becoming more insistent. I know that I ought to go and am only anxious not to miss the lead. So I must act on this suggestion – don't you think? And I am taking advantage of your sympathy and understanding to ask you for advice as to whom I should write. Or if that isn't the best way what I should do about it... I was interested to read in the Telegraph that Mayor La Guardia of New York may be America's representative in Rome because a great friend of mine is one of his secretaries... My evacuees are beginning to go back. From Saturday I shall only have five boarders and five day pupils. I am more grateful than I can tell you. Indeed I feel you are part of the "lead."⁵⁷ Exactly a week later she writes, 'I am very grateful indeed for your kind attention in sending me this job and sincerely wish I could do it better. This is all the information I have in my mind and I am so much out of the world here that I have no way of making it fuller or more definite. I send it for what it is worth. I think I told you I am bent on working in Italy as soon as possible. My first impulse was to offer myself for relief work but I was foolish enough to state my age (it being asked for) and that seems against me. Of course I meant to make it Friends work anyhow but now I am beginning to think that I ought rather to go directly and perhaps solely as a Quaker settler – or (very lowly) Minister. I am convinced that Mazzini was right in his dream of a great spiritual future for Italy and there is something in me which strongly and insistently prompts me to go and help. I wonder if you could tell me of anyone else likely to be interested. Also what I ought to do with regard to the F.S.C... Here I have been spending two evenings a week (i.e. an hour or so each time) with Italian "prisoners" teaching them English and so on and my Italian has profited greatly thereby; – also theirs, by the way, because they had to talk proper Italian to me rather than their own dialects. One or two of them now read English better than Italian!!'⁵⁸

On 1 October 1945 a letter⁵⁹ was sent to Stowell Park from the Friends Service Council with the following decision: '... Friends recognise the strong concern which you have for service in Italy, but the Executive regretfully came to the conclusion that the way still does not seem clear for you to go ahead. The Committee felt that we should acquaint you with this decision right away... but we trust that later on changed

economic assistance to European nations, and to help repatriate and assist refugees in those areas under Allied control.

56 SMA. Uncatalogued.

57 SMA. Uncatalogued.

58 SMA. Uncatalogued.

59 SMA. Uncatalogued.

conditions may make it possible for you to carry out your concern without the complications that appear to hold it up just now.'

In October and November she has an exchange of letters with the Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Section of the Save the Children Fund. They ask her age. She replies that she is sorry to have to state her age because mathematically it is against her. However, in order to give an example of how fit and healthy she is, she writes 'I can work physically and mentally without strain for 12-14 hrs a day. In point of fact I actually did that, Sundays included, and with only about twelve days holiday, for nearly two years while in charge of my evacuees down in Wiltshire. I taught them (there was no suitable school nearby), bathed them, washed and ironed their clothes, and cooked two out of three meals a day. So I am not afraid to tackle any job you may find me.'⁶⁰She was over-estimating her own stamina, or simply bluffing, as we shall see shortly. They did not offer her anything. Her age *was* against her.

However, it did not deter Carleton W. Washburne, Lt. Col. A.U.S., Director of Education for the Allied Commission Education Subcommittee. He made her a firm offer. It is interesting to note that while the other agencies contacted by Miss Thomas were involved in 'relief' of some sort or other, this offer has to do with education. It seems very fitting. Who was he?

C.W. Washburne

C. W. Washburne (1889-1968) was a famous American educator and superintendent of schools in Illinois, developer, in 1919, of the famous 'Winnetka Plan', a series of innovations in the school curriculum. This educational experiment involved elementary schools, its aim being to break loose from the restrictive, uniform grading system which kept all children to the same rate of progress, and to allow children to develop under their own steam instead. There was grade work in the three R's and spelling, creative periods and physical activities. As soon as a child had mastered a unit in the grade curriculum, he could move on to another; sometimes a child might be working on more than one unit at a time. Since the creative and physical activities were not graded, the child dedicated as much time to them as he or she wanted.

After the allies had occupied and gradually liberated Italy, various bodies of the 'Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory' started operating. One of these dealt with education: re-establishing the institutions, working on new curricula, rewriting textbooks, training teachers in new methods and so on.⁶¹ Washburne was called to coordinate work on primary and middle school education, and made responsible for the regions of Milan, and later, Rome and Naples. He then became vice-director and eventually director of the allied subcommittee on education. He was also president of the USIS (United States Information Service), whose headquarters were in Milan, and contributed many articles in 1945 and 1946 to a monthly bulletin on education, psychology and social welfare. The aim of the articles was to introduce the American scholastic system to Italy and improve educators' understanding of new educational and psychological research and their application, which he held could be useful for the reconstruction of Italy.

60 SMA. Uncatalogued.

61 We must remember that Italy had been under a dictatorship during which schools had to use fascist textbooks.

There must have been several opportunities for Miss Thomas and he to get acquainted. The 1925 trip to the States, for instance. Manumit. Then in 1926 Washburne had written a book, *New Schools in the Old World*, describing new schools he had visited in Britain and Europe. One of them, Glarisegg, was in Switzerland. Also the World Conference on New Education which was held in England in 1936. Moreover, in a document we shall see later on, Miss Thomas refers to him as Friend Carleton Washburne, so there was that link, too. Anyway, he came up with an offer, not only for Miss Thomas but also for Lilian Watson, who decided to leave Letchworth for Italy.

But at the last minute Washburne sent an unexpected cable, as we learn from his letter⁶² dated 28 December 1945 to Emma Thomas at the Minerva Club,⁶³ 28a Brunswick Square, London WC1. 'It was with great regret that I cabled you this morning advising the cancellation of your trip. The situation is this: Following the announcement that jurisdiction for all Italy ... is to be handed over to the Italian Government at midnight 31 December, I was informed that the Education Subcommittee would be liquidated during January – probably before the date of your proposed arrival. While I personally may be kept on as an educational advisor, I will certainly have to reduce rather than augment my staff. Furthermore, the transportation facilities which I would have been able to offer you will probably no longer be available.' He goes on to warn her that by the time she reaches Italy there will probably be no Education Subcommittee to attach her to, or to offer employment to her friend. He ends by saying that he realises what a disappointment it will be, but it is a matter beyond his power.

However, on 18 January 1946 J.V. Vella, Capt. Executive Officer of the Education Subcommittee writes⁶⁴ to the Head of the YWCA, Rome. 'Miss Thomas and Miss Watson came to Italy at the invitation of the Education Subcommittee, Allied Commission Headquarters. They will be attached to the Education Subcommittee until this office closes down.' They had officially arrived.

62 SMA file 3, fo. 1.

63 This was an offshoot of the Minerva Café in Holborn. The café's premises were the headquarters of the Women's Franchise League and a place where meetings of various activist groups took place over the years. There was also an archive and accommodation. The café served vegetarian lunches. One of the leaseholders was Dr Elizabeth Knight, who became one of the leaseholders of the Minerva Club, too. Meetings also took place there and rooms were available for women. Miss Thomas and many of her female correspondents stayed there when they were in London. For more details see this link: <https://libcom.org/history/minerva-café>

64 SMA file 14, fo. 3.

Chapter 4 – Emma Thomas in Italy

Once again, Miss Thomas starts a new teaching adventure in the company of Miss Watson. Lilian Watson arrived in Italy on 13 January 1946,⁶⁵ whereas Miss Thomas left from Newhaven on 14th and arrived on 16 January.⁶⁶ Upon reaching Italy Miss Thomas fell ill and was hospitalised. A letter⁶⁷ from a Mrs Fischer (25 March 1946) lists the series of problems which beset her: 'First appendicitis, then flu, then a double attack of pneumonia and still in hospital when you wrote... What an experience being turned out of one hospital before the other was ready. Too bad altogether. I hope the military hospitals don't submit many of their patients to such treatment.'

Another letter⁶⁸, with a squiggle instead of a signature, dated 14.4.46 is most revealing about Miss Thomas's state before she left England, 'Dear Moto, It was with a thrill of pleasure that I picked up your card and recognized your hand writing. That quickly vanished when I read how ill you had been and still were... I can hardly believe how you expected to escape a break-down. 5 years of real hard work more strenuous than you have ever had in your life (you said yourself) and then without a days rest; off to Italy. If you had taken a months rest you might have gone on. I believe you think you have a machine for a body. Even a machine has to have a rest, over-haul and oil up.'

When Emma Thomas arrived, the Italians had just emerged from the dictatorship of the Fascist régime which began in 1922 when the King invited Mussolini to form a government. Thus an entire generation had grown up under fascist education and propaganda. Since around 1943, partisan forces had been fighting guerilla warfare against the nazis, who were being pushed back by allied troops from the south to the north. The most important partisan groups were those organised by the Italian Communist Party, the Socialist groups, plus Catholic and autonomous groups, including ex-soldiers loyal to the King.

Elections for an institutional referendum and the constituent assembly were held on 2 June 1946. The referendum choice was between a return to the Monarchy or the formation of a Republic. Just over 28 million people had the right to vote. Just under 25 million did so. A million and a half votes were rejected. The Monarchy received 45.7%, so the Republic won with 54.3%.

As regards the constituent assembly, voters had sixteen parties and numerous small lists to choose from. The results were: Christian Democrats 35.2%, the Socialist Party of the United Proletariat 20.75%, the Italian Communist Party 18.9%. The fourth party received 6.8%, with all others lagging well behind.⁶⁹

The UNRRA supplied aid to Italy to satisfy its immediate needs for food, and to start up industrial production again. Between January and June 435 million dollars of aid were given, but the sum was wholly inadequate to put the country back on its feet.⁷⁰

On 4 October 1944 the Società Italiana per l'Organizzazione Internazionale (Italian

65 SA Box 1608C, folder 4, fo. 18.

66 SA Box 1608C, folder 4, fo.19.

67 SA Box 1608B, envelope 1946, fo. 80.

68 SA Box 1608B, envelope 1946, fo. 61.

69 Storia d'Italia, Cronologia 1815-1990, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara - 1991, pp. 511, 522.

70 *ibid.* p. 520.

Association for International Organisations) was founded with a view to promoting Italy's adherence to the main International Organisms. Realising that democratic Italy would be legitimised if it were admitted to the World Federation of the United Nations Associations (WFUNA), it pressed for Italy's candidature. In 1946 it was accepted.

On 27 March 1946, Roberto Ago⁷¹ of the Association wrote⁷², in English, to Miss Thomas: 'I received your kind letter of 15 March and I assure you that we are all looking forward with an even greater impatience and expectation than yourself to the moment of your "release". We shall then be able to meet you, together with Miss Watson, and discuss at length all matters of common interest.' At the time Miss Thomas was in the British General Hospital n. 100 in Rome. Mr Ago goes on, 'I share with you a great faith in the possibilities of our work in support of United Nations ideals in this country... Our Society [Association]... will soon take ... all the steps necessary to develop its activities on this line... I am sincerely grateful ... for the help that you so kindly propose to give us. It will certainly be a worthy contribution to the success of our effort, particularly during the initial phase, which will be the most delicate, of the development of the Society's branches and activities throughout this country. This development will require, I am sure, a great effort on the part of us all. Here is another reason for us for wishing you rapid, complete recovery, and your earliest possible return to active life. The intention that you express in your letter, of devoting yourself of Italy reaches our hearts. The warm sympathy of such friends as you and Miss Watson is the best guarantee of a quick and sure "recovery" of our country.'

Miss Thomas's activities in Rome

We are fortunate to have a report⁷³ written by Miss Thomas, intended quite likely for some Quaker organisation in England, detailing what she was actually engaged in after her convalescence, together with a proposal for an International Centre of Good Will. Though in places it seems hastily typed, perhaps a first draft, here it is:

'... I want to reiterate my point of view that here in Rome the abyss between Right and Left is very bad – as it is in the whole of Italy indeed; but here from Rome it seems possible to start with a Centre of International Good Will; this work may help really to bridge the difficulties arising of misunderstanding and political hatred – forgetting the many things in common remaining to be done by all men and women of good WILL. But this common understanding and collaboration can rise only of common work for something which is dear to all. Foreigners can have here the task to be temporary catalysators to help to speed up mutual understanding plus giving technical advice if wanted or needed.

'Preparatory work leading up to it has been done already. There is all the "good will" produced by AFSC [American Friends Service Committee] and FRS [Friends Relief Service] in these last years which have proven that the Quakers are not making proselytes – here in the "Proselypolis" of the world – something which seems most

71 A jurist, later becoming Professor of International Law, member of the International Court of Justice 1979-1995.

72 SMA file 3, fo. 8.

73 SMA. Uncatalogued.

astounding and incredible to many here who are still believing that people should be kidnapped if need be into their own saving. Some distrust will always remain and will need great care and tact. My own activities are f.i. my former work in the Education Sub-Commission where I was running courses for teachers, soldiers, students, farm-hands and similar professions on democratic citizenship (under Friend Carleton Washburne as my immediate superior); then my work as Chief of Camp Welfare Services – first in UNRRA Displaced Persons, and now in IRO (International Refugee Organisation) Italian Headquarters, then my extra-professional activities as lecturing in three different schools of social work; helping to organise new forms of social activities to be organised in Italy especially child probation work which is absolutely unknown in Italy, youth centres and community work which I fervently hope may end in a community centre; work with the organisations for adult education; – these are some of the activities still going on with the help of my students of the above mentioned schools of social work, where I shall be lecturing again this year (actually work in the universities does not start until January and the schools follow suit). In one school i.e. one near to the Vatican but run on very modern lines I have been invited to lecture to guards for women-prisons which have been sent here to be trained. They have no training whatsoever and are all nuns who have of course no idea whatsoever on the problems or psychology of their charges who are entirely in their hands. These students are expected to instruct their fellow guard-nuns on the why and how of social understanding though it may be for the first time that a Quaker lectures to a class with so many nuns it seems to be important to help the poor women in prisons and it seems to give an ideal chance to show the objective point of view to be taken. Another hope I still nurture is the establishment of aid for the slums by means of concentrated activities of these schools and the young students – as mentioned above in one we have started already. All this is very difficult as there are no old trained social workers to lecture nor modern forms to show and everything has to start from scratch.

'Now to the International Centre – what should be its special purpose? Maybe unlike other centres its main-work should be to bring Italians together with Italians on a neutral ground of good will for all – something which is almost unknown now in over-politicised Italy.

'Contact of foreigners to Italians and vice versa. Here it seems very difficult for foreigners of good will to meet the right Italians; the old remainders from post GI-days haunt them still in the streets for black market rackets. They don't know where to go in order to be helped to meet those of common interests whether Italians or fellow-foreigners. Rome is a first rate International traffic centre and it seems beyond doubt that much mutual understanding and help may spring up from this part of activities.

'Contact with International or foreign organisations for peace, social progress and friendship. There is no doubt a great necessity for such activities to serve as go-between between Italian and foreign international or national agencies in order to foster mutual understanding.

'To point one is to be added the social work activities in order to foster new forms of social work and adult education as a means of mutual interest for all of good will. (At

my flat at a meeting on the youth-centre there were present a catholic priest next to a fervid communist, a ultra-conservative civil-servant next to a violent propagandist of new youth organisation, a judge of the Juvenile court near a young ex-convict etc. – all forgetting their differences but eager to help "the cause".)

'Here in Italy people talk very much and do very little if anything then, but somebody who actually does get things done is highly-appreciated.

'If people see that this is a centre where things actually born to live we may have won half the battle.

'Dangers: The greatest danger is to be mixed up with any side – but in all these years I am working in Italy nobody has found out yet what political game I play – because I don't play one – and rather reluctantly it was agreed that the undersigned is nobody's agent but rather a harmless type of queer foreigner. To-day I have friends everywhere and only some Britishers distrust me because everybody in Displaced Persons work – especially with a Jewish background – may have helped people to go to Palestine (which of course I didn't dream to do). Another danger – as mentioned before would be anything which might be misunderstood as proselytising. Therefore the Centre and the Meeting must be absolutely separate and while it is obvious that people will like to know about Quakerism they should be told that this is not a Quaker Centre but an International Centre only run by Quakers.

'Any kind of propaganda would defeat its purpose immediately.

'A last point I wish to mention only as other more concerned should deal with it – IVSP [International Voluntary Service Project] – work; it goes without saying that this ideal form of collaboration would be sponsored by the International Centre.

'I do hope that this centre may come soon into being and I am sure that it will be trying hard to become a centre of service and good will as those who want to help to found it will want it to be. Budget and Work Set Up attached. In Friendship.'

Relief work also covered taking delivery of and distributing clothing. There is a letter dated 19 March 1946 from Italian General Shipping Limited (with two addresses in London) which informs Miss Thomas that a bale of clothing consigned by the Dowager Hon. Lady Barlow will be arriving in Naples and that she should make arrangements to take delivery of it.

Thanks to a letter⁷⁴ from the Friends Service Council dated 7 June 1946 we learn that Miss Thomas has moved from the YWCA to an address in Rome c/o Contessa Nuvoli. The author of the letter, Frank Williams, mentions that they are interested to hear about the UNA Committee, and in particular about the prospects of a small Quaker Meeting starting up in Rome. It seems that some Italian POWs after returning home were interested in finding Quaker contacts back in Italy. He writes, 'We are in touch with Aylesbury Meeting with a view to benefitting by the information they have about friends of Friends in Italy; you may know that Aylesbury is a meeting that has done a great deal in contacting Italian Prisoners of War in the District and in consequence has a good many links among those who have returned to their home Country... I am interested to see your news from Rome in today's "Friend", I suppose the results of the Election and in particular the change over from the Monarchy must have been causing quite a bit of excitement even though all the current difficulties of

74 SMA. Uncatalogued.

life in Italy must presumably be more important to a good many folk. With best wishes to Lilian Watson and yourself.'

For some reason the Italian adventure did not last long for Miss Watson and she returned home. In a letter she received from Miss Thomas's brother Jim dated June 29 1947,⁷⁵ among other things he wrote, 'Thank you for your letter and good wishes and also acting as postman for Moto. It was sometime since I had heard from her and now that you are no longer there to keep an eye on her I hope we shall hear rather more frequently. We are all grateful to you for looking after her especially during that first year... I hope you will find congenial work and that should not be difficult nowadays as there is plenty of scope in this country.' She and Miss Thomas, devoted friends, often visited each other and maintained regular correspondence right up to Miss Thomas's death.

In April 1947 Miss Thomas found a position working at the US Army Rest Center in Rome. She was classified as a teacher with working hours from 0800-1800.⁷⁶

Wider Quaker Fellowship

A circular letter⁷⁷ in Italian to Italians known to be interested in the Friends was sent out on 23 October 1952. Here is a translation: Dear Friend, since we have had your name and address from a small list of people interested in the Friends movement, we hope that you will be pleased to know that over a year and a half ago a group of 'friends of the Friends' was formed, also known as the Wider Quaker Fellowship, with an office in Florence. Furthermore, in via Balbo, 4, in Rome regular meetings for silent meditation have been held for some time every Sunday at 11 o'clock. If this should interest you we would be very glad if you joined us. For any other information please write or telephone sig.ra Barocchi at the 'American Friends Service Committee'... signed Warren Staebler and Guido Graziani.

Aldo Capitini (1899-1968)

While she was in Rome Miss Thomas often used to go to conferences on religious reform and non-violence organised by Aldo Capitini and friends of his. She was eventually to move to Perugia in order to pursue common aims together. So here is a brief introduction.

He was born in Perugia, Umbria. This region is known as the 'green heart' of Italy and counts among its other famous towns, Assisi, Gubbio, Nursia, Orvieto and Spoleto. Capitini's father was a Town Hall employee and one of his duties was to ring the city's bells; the family had apartments below the bell tower. From his small study Capitini could look over the plain to Assisi: a splash of pale-coloured stone on the slopes of Mount Subasio. For a while he took lessons at a technical college, and then at a school for bookkeepers, but a natural inclination for literature and the classics led him to abandon the latter and dedicate himself wholeheartedly to the study of Latin and Greek, classical and modern literature. He studied alone, twelve hours a day from the age of 19 to 21, with serious consequences for his health and eyesight. He took

75 SMA. Uncatalogued.

76 In the SA archives file 1608C, folder 4, there is an I.D. card (item no. 1) issued to her by the Civilian Labor Officer at the U.S. Army Rest Center in Rome.

77 SMA. Uncatalogued.

the school-leaving exam, passed with flying colours and obtained a scholarship in 1924 to the Scuola Normale Superiore, a university college in Pisa founded by Napoleon along the same lines as the *École normale supérieure*.

Antifascism at college and after

He took his degree in Letters, became secretary of the college, joined the anti-fascist group there, began studying philosophy, saw the Concordat between the Catholic church and the Fascist state as a 'betrayal of the Gospel', and would probably have remained at the Normale had its Rector, Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944),⁷⁸ not asked him to become a card-carrying member of the Fascist party⁷⁹ in order to keep him in his post⁸⁰. Naturally, faithful to his Gandhian-inspired non-cooperation with fascism, Capitini refused. He was asked to resign, refused to do so – after all, he was a conscientious member of staff – and was, therefore, dismissed.⁸¹ On the ninth of January 1933 he left the college, left Pisa and went back to his room in the bell tower at Perugia. From that moment to the liberation (25 April 1945) he worked tirelessly in the anti-fascist network and wrote what he called his 'anti-fascist tetralogy'.

Politics in the post-fascist period

As we saw earlier, after the liberation political parties were formed for the new elections. Capitini refused to be involved with parties, which led to him being left on the sidelines despite all he had done and the contribution he could make to the founding of the Republic. It was not only the desire parties had for power that Capitini could not stomach, he also found them too narrow: what he desired was democracy from the bottom-up in the form of local meetings open to everyone. To this aim, at the end of the war he set up a centre in Perugia which he called The Centre of Social Orientation (C.O.S.) where regular meetings were held on all sorts of topics: from roadworks to educating the young who had been brought up under fascism and brainwashed by it; from public order to controlling the price of foodstuffs; questions related to morals, religion, science, culture. Everyone was given space to speak, from the illiterate to the intellectual. It was a success and several other Centres were founded in the area and in other cities in Italy. They lasted about four years. However, the major drawback was that the meetings were not deliberative, and even if members of the local administration were present, there was no guarantee they would act on what they had heard. In addition, since the meetings were open to everyone there was a risk that old sluggish, conformist attitudes from the recent past could easily creep in. Then there was the question of the organisation of the C.O.S. If political parties gained control, allegiance to their ideology, and thirst for power would lead them to hinder the centre's activities and stifle its open spirit, unless they were checked by an independent committee. But it was hard to find activists who were not supporters of one party or another.⁸²

78 Author of the 1925 Fascist Intellectuals' Manifesto whose aim was to deny what Mussolini called 'the idiotic myth of a so-called incompatibility between intelligence and fascism.'

79 On 28 August 1931 university professors were forced to swear fidelity to the régime or lose their jobs. Only 13 out of 1200 refused.

80 Aldo Capitini, *Attraverso due terzi del secolo* in 'Scritti sulla nonviolenza', Protagon editrice, Perugia, 1992, page 4.

81 Aldo Capitini, 'Antifascismo tra i giovani', Il Ponte editore, Firenze, 2018, p. 22.

82 Aldo Capitini, *Nuova socialità e riforma religiosa*, Il Ponte editore, Firenze, 2018, pp. 93-94.

A secular religious life

In 1946 Capitini founded the 'Religion Movement' with a former priest, Ferdinando Tartaglia. The aim was ambitious, not to say audacious: 'to bring secularism to the point where it could produce a new religious life as a substitute for the traditional one which derives from the Counter-Reformation.'⁸³ This lasted two years and petered out due to lack of interest. It was during this period that he and Emma Thomas first met at one of the conferences.

Criticisms of Catholicism

Capitini had various run-ins with the Catholic church, and one of his books was put on the Index. It must be said that due to his practice of non-violence, Capitini's attitude was to criticise the mistake and not the person who made the mistake; non-violent practice means that you also have to be open enough to see whether your position is mistaken, and act accordingly. Capitini's criticisms were firm and respectful, as always. The Church's behaviour, on the other hand, was petty and later on they hindered his university career at every turn. Capitini was a religious man who refused the myths and institution of the church. He also held that religion and non-violence went hand in hand.

The Perugia-Assisi peace marches

The most well-known and longest-lasting non-violent initiative connected with Aldo Capitini is the annual 'March for Peace and the Brotherhood of Peoples' from Perugia to Assisi, which began in September 1961 and has continued to this day, albeit with some breaks. He is the man who, under Fascism, introduced non-violent action to Italy. For Capitini, non-violence was the means to attain the end, which was a 'transmutation' of society.⁸⁴ He founded the 'Movimento nonviolento' and its magazine *Azione nonviolenta*, which are still going.

University lecturer

Despite being incredibly busy with the above-mentioned activities, at the same time he was also teaching at university: in 1944 he was Commissioner at the Università per stranieri in Perugia,⁸⁵ in 1946 he was back at the Normale in Pisa as secretary and a lecturer in Moral Philosophy. In 1956 he was at the university of Cagliari (Sardinia) teaching Pedagogy, which he continued teaching in Perugia when he was finally offered a position in his home town in 1965.

Operation and death

In 1968 Capitini had to undergo surgery to have his gall bladder removed. He had two operations but then died of complications on 19 October.

Emma Thomas's vision of the C.O.R. and subsequent move away from Rome

⁸³ Aldo Capitini, *Attraverso due terzi del secolo*, p.9.

⁸⁴ This ties in with the F.O.R.'s opinion that the present social order should not be accepted as inevitable.

⁸⁵ Founded in 1921 with the aim of teaching Italian language and culture to foreigners. It continues to do so today, and since 1992 also offers university courses to Italian students in, for example, teaching Italian as a foreign language, international relations, advertising, international business.

From an important letter written in Rome to Capitini on 28 July 1951 we learn of a variation on the theme of the C.O.S. and her total willingness to dedicate herself to its accomplishment.

Miss Thomas writes,⁸⁶ 'The convent bells next door woke me up as usual at 5 o'clock in the morning but, instead of turning over for a little more sleep, I began reading just where you say "Here we have to examine the problems related to the C.O.S."⁸⁷ – the subject which most took hold of my attention and thought on first reading. It did occur to me that the COS was a kind of secular "Friends Meeting" – at least such as George Fox intended. And, if I understand rightly, you too say that "the method" is applicable to religion. (For my part I don't believe in "water-tight" compartments). As you know I have been trying for nearly five years to sponsor a "Friends Meeting" in Rome, but I have felt increasingly that... it suffers from being a foreign import... Now, so suddenly that I think very humbly of the light that put Paul on the right way, I have a vision of a religious C.O.S – only the S would be changed into an R – meetings which would be of Italian origin, with no taint of any existing religious organization upon them. In fact just as in the C.O.S all political parties meet and profit from each other's distinctive contribution to the solution of social problems, so in the possible C.O.R.(?)⁸⁸ the more aspects of religious thinking the better... So I offer to settle down anywhere that you thought suitable and help to build up such a group of seekers.... personally I think a smallish town with a more local nucleus of civic life would be preferable to Rome.'

After consulting with friends, Miss Thomas was convinced that Perugia was the right place and set about looking for accommodation. She eventually bought a flat in a building under construction. So at eighty years of age she started a new life in via dei Filosofi. What could be a more suitable address for a bunch of seekers?

The aim of this centre was formally expressed as 'to promote free discussions and meetings on subjects of a religious nature. The COR is independent of traditional forms of religion and political parties, and is open to any and every individual's research for the renewal of humanity, society and reality. This research will be effected through conferences, readings and, in particular, conversations and meetings at weekends.'⁸⁹ A quarterly calendar was drawn up of topics to be discussed on Sunday afternoons. A (partially illegible) handwritten list from the Aldo Capitini library gives an example of topics Miss Thomas was due to speak about in 1955. Here are some, translated from Italian: My Beliefs; Religion and Freedom; Pierre Ceresole and the IVS; An economy founded on giving; External authority and individual conscience; A saint on the march, Vinoba Bhave.

In reality, Capitini, Miss Thomas and others had already founded another Centre in 1952, this time dedicated to non-violence. It was inaugurated in the main hotel in Perugia. In his book of memoirs, Edmondo Marcucci gives us a flavour of the atmosphere and approach taken.

86 SA Box 1608A, file 1 (1297.1), envelope 1951, fo. 35.

87 Aldo Capitini, *Nuova socialità e riforma religiosa*, Il Ponte editore, Firenze, 2018, p. 93.

88 Her suggestion for the name was accepted.

89 Fondazione Centro Studi Aldo Capitini, *Aldo Capitini - Edmondo Marcucci Lettere 1941-1963*, edited by Amoreno Martellini, Carocci editore S.p.A, Roma - Fondazione Studi Aldo Capitini, Perugia, 2011, p. 96 note 2.

Edmondo Marcucci (1900-1963)

He was born in Umbria, but spent most of his life at Jesi, close to Ancona in the Marche Region on the Adriatic coast. His interests were: religions; pacifism; what we would call today animal rights, and hence vegetarianism; Tolstoy and Jules Verne. From his autobiography we can see that he was incredibly active and travelled far and wide for meetings and conferences on the themes above. He and Capitini were very close, consequently he came to know Emma Thomas. Here is what he tells us about her in various extracts from his book.⁹⁰

'On 30 January 1952, we met in Perugia at an "International Conference for Non-violence" on the occasion of the anniversary of Gandhi's death (30 January 1948). The tireless Capitini came up with the idea and had excellent collaborators in Emma Thomas, an English Quaker living in Rome (vegetarian, getting on for eighty years of age, but incredibly active and young-at-heart), and Maria Camberti (a Florentine who had lived for 40 years in Germany. A friendly, jovial polyglot). The aim of the meeting was to present specific principles, methods and decisions of non-violence in relation to the present moment. The aim was essentially practical, not at all academic. A lot of circulars were sent all over Italy and abroad.

'We met at the Brufani Hotel, in a room that had been prepared with a display of books, newspapers and posters (written beautifully⁹¹ by Miss Thomas in large letters) with sayings of St. Francis and Gandhi, together with pictures of these two great advocates of non violence⁹²... Then Miss Thomas read the Beatitudes from Matthew's Gospel in English, followed by sig.ra Zilli in Italian. At 5:00 pm we paused for some minutes of silence and recollection in memory of the hour of Gandhi's death⁹³....At 10:00 am on 31 January we went to Assisi to St. Francis's tomb. There, under the silent, vaulted ceiling of the great Basilica, Miss Thomas read in English an "Appeal to the Peoples of the Western continents".⁹⁴

'On 11 and 12 [September 1952] I was in Perugia for a study meeting organised by my unflinching friend Capitini and Miss Thomas at her home, which had also become the home of a "Centre of Religious Orientation"⁹⁵ (the latest ramification of our movements which began in Perugia in October 1946). The first conference of its kind. Very few people spoke (I think vegetarianism is a plant that is unlikely to thrive in Italy!).⁹⁶

'From 28 to 30 August [1954] I was at the second congress of the Italian Vegetarian Society⁹⁷, followed by the annual meeting of the East-West Society. The usual small international gathering (about fifteen all told, and the foreigners made up 50% if not more) in via dei Filosofi, 33, Perugia, home of the Centre of Religious Orientation and of Miss Thomas. She has a ready smile on her lips, is nimble (over eighty),

90 Edmondo Marcucci, *Sotto il segno della pace – Memorie*, Jesi, Centro studi per la pace Edmondo Marcucci, 1

91 In their letters to her, several correspondents congratulate Miss Thomas on her beautiful handwriting. Both Marta Cramer and Elisabeth Hallett mentioned it in separate emails to me.

92 Ch. VI (1950-1952) p. 145 section 12

93 *ibid.*, p. 147

94 *ibid.*, p. 148

95 Capitini had postcards printed to announce the founding of the C.O.R. The message begins, 'Inspired by the example of Emma Thomas, its aim is to promote free discussions on religious themes'.

96 Ch. VII (1952) p. 166 (section 10).

97 Founded by Marcucci, Capitini and Miss Thomas in 1952.

thoughtful in offering tea to the police in civvies who never miss a meeting out of homage to democratic freedom (the police headquarters in Perugia don't want politics to be talked about at Miss Thomas's home, since she's a foreigner – something that astounded one of those present, the French-Argentine naturalist Prof. Juan Estève-Dulin, and which vexed me)⁹⁸... Miss Thomas told us about the World Religion Congress which was held in Japan this spring;⁹⁹ the big, fat Contessa di Caporiacco (from Florence, whom Sig.ra Zilli, also present at the congress, knows) spoke about women's rights (divorce and so on, herself a victim of the current marriage system).¹⁰⁰ 'From 31 July to 6 August the large World Vegetarian Congress [Cité Universitaire, Paris], organised by the International Vegetarian Union ... Miss Thomas was there, too.'¹⁰¹

There is a group photo of official delegates to the Paris conference. Miss Thomas is easily recognisable in the front on the right.¹⁰²

A joyful period

Photographs of Miss Thomas during her Perugia period show a joyful person bursting with life. She taught English to private students and worked tirelessly in various capacities for the associations she had helped to found. National and international correspondence was enormous, for example, and she was frequently to be seen going back and forth between her flat and the Post Office. This work in Perugia may well have been the most fulfilling of her enterprises. There are exercise books full of various notes and summaries of C.O.R. meetings. There are countless envelopes of letters she had received turned inside out so she could write on the back – waste not, want not. These are mostly her first drafts of translations of Capitini's writings. In him she met a kindred spirit, someone whose thoughts and activities she found fascinating and stimulating. One has the sensation that she had found what she had been looking for, and that Capitini was extremely fortunate to have such a zealous, experienced, and tireless companion he could count on. In addition, her being a native-speaker of English and sufficiently proficient in Italian and French was obviously a huge asset for international contacts. Although she wrote quite a number of letters to him in Italian, after a while, since he became one of her students, she also wrote to him in English. In the last few years sometimes her letters to him start with 'Beloved' or 'Dear Heart' and she also uses Quaker 'Thou' and 'Thee'. Through him she met stimulating thinkers and activists from all over Italy, some of whom went to the C.O.R. meetings regularly.

They were both utterly devoted to trying to convert narrow concepts of how lives should be led into wider, richer horizons for all. She was faithful to her beliefs, i.e. to try her hardest to establish the kingdom of God here and now in everyday dealings with people. This she did through her own personal testimony, via actions arising

98 Ch. IX (1954) p. 197 (section 4).

99 A report on the proceedings exists in print: The Report on the Second World Religion Congress. Under auspices of the Ananai-Kyo. Ananai-Kyo is an ecumenical Shinto group with headquarters in Shimizu, Shizuoka.

100 *ibid.*, p. 199 (At the East-West Society Congress).

101 Ch. X (1955) p. 208 (section 4).

102 <https://ivu.org/history/world-forum/paris/paris11.jpg>

from conscious choices based on ideals and sheer kindness towards others.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, she did not live long enough to take part in the first Perugia-Assisi March for Peace and the Brotherhood of People. But let us imagine her there, anyway: a small, sprightly figure in the company of thousands of others from all walks of life, hailing from all over Italy and even abroad. There she is, striding along the country lanes, immersed in nature, a broad smile on her face.

Capitini describes Miss Thomas's hospitalisations and death (23rd July 1960)¹⁰⁴

In January 1959 she was taken to hospital with serious pneumonia. Doctor Benda, who had been one of her students of English, cured her, but she stayed in hospital because she was weak. After a while she went back home, but she wasn't herself. She went back into hospital in February this year [1960] because of weak lungs and heart and problems with her blood circulation. The doctors have always said she was able to resist and gain strength again. Her mind was always clear. She had a cataract removed.

Over the last few months in hospital she became weaker and weaker. The doctors and nurses gave her all their attention. Some months prior she had given her flat over to the Centre of Religious Orientation because she wanted it to continue, even if her illness was prolonged or she was to die.

On Monday 18 July her situation became graver, confined to bed, alternating between drowsiness and unconsciousness to moments of lucidity. Signora Anna Ascani was like a sister to her: with her in her room night and day. Over the last few days she had periods when she spoke unclearly sometimes in Italian, sometimes in English. The day before she died she called her friend Lilian's name a number of times. She did not suffer. Her body by now was consumed.

Her funeral took place on Monday 25th at six in the evening without any Catholic ceremony. On her coffin was her name and a cross. Posters and an announcement in the papers informed the townsfolk of her death. During the funeral a speech was read out in the name of her friends. There were a lot of flowers. Her body was placed temporarily in the tomb of Giancarlo Sargenti, one of her students. In a few months' time it will be placed in the tomb belonging to friends of the Centre of Religious Orientation.

Capitini on Emma Thomas¹⁰⁵

Emma Thomas loved opposites: space and barriers, openness and exclusion, life and death. She thought that creating closed systems, erecting barriers, coming up with too many definitions all suffocated life, which is a manifestation of the divine spirit among us. Christianity has declared the authority of the Pope and the holy scriptures (whereas the Bible is only a period in the development of religion). The Society of Friends (or Quakers) do better by declaring the immanence of authority and truth, and

103 She was well-known in her quarter of Perugia for her thoughtfulness. Marta Cramer wrote this to me, 'I came across [a letter] recently, she was thanking one of my aunts for a blouse, I believe, which she had received — and of course, which she had straightaway given to one of her poorer friends!'

104 *Le periferie della memoria, Profili di testimoni di pace*, A.N.P.P.I.A. Torino - Movimento Nonviolento Verona, 1999, pp. 171-172.

105 *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

thus has no priests, rites or dogmas, because the divine seed is in each man, woman, child. We must let this seed grow: the energy which spreads outwards is creatrix, the energy which goes within is ruinous, cancerous. She often quoted Eddington: 'Not once in the dim past, but continuously by conscious mind is the miracle of the Creation wrought.'¹⁰⁶

Just as bodies are individual, and not even two blades of grass are the same, so, much more, are souls. Emma Thomas always insisted on the value of an individual, its singularity, difference, un-equal-ness. Religion is the expression of the intimate relationship of the individual soul on the one hand with God, on the other with all living things: the life of the One-All. Each one of us has a unique, indispensable contribution to make to the kingdom of God on Earth, and nobody else can do it in his or her place.

Evolution takes place through infinite variation. Life works always through wider harmonies, towards cooperation – just as it is in the physical organism, so it is in societies. And the struggle against that certain inertia which must be undertaken by life in the individual and in society is more a stimulus to growth than an obstacle. 'There is no absolute, no perfection, not even in God himself, since that would signify a negation of life, whose essence is infinite change. Life cannot stop'.

Love is the fullness and superabundance of life, which urges us to give, to serve, to lose our life in that of the others right up to our own sacrifice. Emma Thomas loved that well-known prayer of St. Francis: 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace ... Grant that I may not so much seek to be loved as to love'.¹⁰⁷ She would not accept that there should be eternal torments, hell. The universe has surely an end, we cannot live without ideals...

In her I met someone who lived and spontaneously created characteristics of the Gandhian spirit, such as openness, nonviolence, loyalty, festiveness, rationality, constance. She was truly, as Gandhi said of himself, a 'practical idealist'.

Among the people I have met, among the many who conformistically repeat ideas received from tradition, like the pagans did, or who refuse them without searching for others, Emma Thomas was one who possessed sure, freely-formed ideas, and yet every day she was willing to reconsider, correct and deepen them: she put into practice the idea of the Centre of Religious Orientation.

A tree planted in her name

The Biblioteca comunale San Matteo degli Armeni, just a short walk outside the walls of Perugia, is a lively town library which is often open in the evening for talks and various activities. It has recently given space to Aldo Capitini's personal library, plus a large number of documents, photos and some books that belonged to Miss Thomas. It also has a large garden and vegetable plot. A portion of the garden is given over to the 'Garden of the Righteous', since they participate in the European Day of the Righteous, held annually on 6 March. In 2018 they planted three new trees, one of which was dedicated to Emma Thomas in memory of her efforts in promoting peace, non-violence, religious reform and mutual aid among people.

¹⁰⁶ The Nature of the Physical World, A. S. Eddington, Cambridge University Press, 1929, p. 241

¹⁰⁷ There is no trace of this among St. Francis's writings.

"How Silently, How Silently..."

A little gray-haired lady with hands clasped behind her back stood at the foot of the crib and looked down into the sleeping face of the new baby, across whose doll-like features played the ghost of a smile, like the flicker of sunlight under breeze-stirred boughs.

"They say it's only gas," I said deprecatingly of the smile, not wanting to seem to believe, as of course I did, that my baby was exceptional.

"Oh, well!" she said in a spirited voice, tossing her head, as if to imply that *they* were cynics and why shouldn't there be little fleeting dreams of joy passing through the fresh, untrammelled brain. And then, in a different voice, almost as if she were talking to herself, a soft yet resonant voice, each word precise and mellow as a jewel:

"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given..." she quoted.

It was somehow such a surprising and a right thing to say. I thought of the various comments I had heard people make at the cribside of a new baby, struggling to say something complimentary and kind, and ending with something lame and inexact like, "How cute!" over the mite of humanity still bearing birth bruises and a preview of senility in its minute features. But this was different. Here was a comment that struck deeper than appearances. "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given..." It spoke of the mystery at the core of being. It implied a benediction upon the small dreaming object as well as the beholder. It hinted comfortably of an indwelling spirit of continuity and divinity.

For a moment, there in the room, in the stillness, while the clock ticked and the fire whispered in the flue and the words and the sound of her voice seemed to hang suspended in time like a tangible fusion of several of the nobler aspects of the human soul – for a moment the room became the cave on the outskirts of Bethlehem. The Magi converged. The cynics of scientific analysis went limping out the door. Gas indeed!

It was my first real acquaintance with Miss Thomas, the English lady whom I had phoned to ask if she could come to tutor Marta since our means of getting her to a regular school had failed. I did not know then, as I came to know later, that the essence and the substance of her character and her spirit were in that quotation, that to Emma Thomas the star bends low for any newborn babe, no matter how humble. In each of her fellowmen she sees the spark of divine fire and regards it as worth fanning and sustaining, and by virtue of sheer personal kindness wherever she has gone in her long and busy life she has been dispersing the forces of cynicism and fortifying the ramparts of faith in humankind.

It was under other skies than the bright, metallic blue of Italy's that Emma Thomas was born and first became aware of the wonders of the world around her. She was the daughter of London shopkeepers who, judging by her well-remembered anecdotes, must have been persons of rare good humour and spirit. "Come for a walk, Emmy?" her boot-maker father used to say, and they would set off without any objective, exploring the country byways, eating when they came upon an inn, returning by whatever conveyance was available when they were tired. Once, she recalls, they walked for eleven miles before they came to a place for refreshment!

Those walks were excellent training for the sturdy pair of legs that still, at eighty, carried her briskly about the streets of Rome, trotting past the Romans who proceed at what she calls the "Roman crawl." They were excellent training for the eyes that still read without glasses and observed, as then, the minute beauties of the natural world, the moods of weather, the changes of season.

108 *The Lady Is Delicate - An Italian Villa Memoir*, Sallie Sinclair Maclay, ed. Elisabeth Hallett, iUniverse, Bloomington IN., 2010, chapter 17 pp 115-121. There also exists a more detailed, unpublished article written by the author entitled "My Most Unforgettable Character". Somehow a copy of it ended up in the archives of the Geneva Meeting, though they had no record of the author's name.

They were excellent training for the memory that still, at eighty, reached back to her second year—and never failed in the lists of lessons, appointments, meetings that crowded her Roman days, for it was on those walks as well as at other times that her father played his game of mental arithmetic. "Eleven, add seven, take away five, times two – got it?"

She went on, then, in the gray and smoky atmosphere of the great city which was not without its special beauty, amidst the busy confusion of family birthings and illnesses and deaths, to become a practiced hand with the younger ones, a wiper of noses and a teller of stories. She was only thirteen when she became a student teacher under the British system of teacher apprenticeship. Then came Stockwell Training College, and finally the new and exciting London School of Economics in the days of the Webbs and other famous Fabians. Here she was the first woman ever to take an honours degree in Sociology.

As we came to appreciate later, Miss Thomas is that rare thing, a born and inspired teacher. For over sixty-seven of her eighty years she had been teaching continuously in various parts of the globe, under diverse circumstances, with or without "equipment," with or without a salary. Her contacts and associations reached from Jane Addams to Mahatma Gandhi –and back to the Italian gatekeeper's children with equal interest and pride.

But all these things I did not know that day when she came to see about lessons for Marta. I had only sensed, seeing her for a brief time as directress of studies of the English language school in Rome, that here was a distinguished and gentle lady whose English put to shame my own sloppy "American." Had I known then the excellence of her training and experience I would have hesitated to call her to teach the three R's to a seven-year-old, but I didn't know, and she was without the false professional pride that would have prevented many a graduate of an institution such as the London School of Economics from stooping so low in the pedagogical field. To her, as I was to find out, teaching is teaching, and vistas of a more tolerant, more kindly, more abundant spiritual life can be opened even in – or especially in – the mere beginner's mind.

It was Miss Thomas who broke the spell. "You know," she said brightly, "I am very good with babies. I was the eldest of seven, so I've had a great deal of experience."

We discussed then the details of her coming out to the villa to give lessons to Marta, and she undertook the work, for after considerable urging she named a ridiculously low fee. She would come three afternoons a week and she was completely undaunted by the fact that she would have to ride the six or eight kilometres up from Rome in the miserable, dirty little tramcars, crowded in among the country people and their market baskets.

We went out into the courtyard to find Marta and apprise her of the arrangement. Then Miss Thomas took her departure. Her handclasp made me wince and left indentations from my ring, and dispelled any misapprehension I may have had as to the fragility of this person, who only in point of years could be said to be old.

And so for Marta – who had already sampled American kindergarten, an English language school in Rome in its larval stage, an Italian private Catholic school, a bit of tutoring by the Italian *signorina*, and a smattering of my own attempt at teaching – there began a new type of education which made all the alleged benefits of classroom training (except possibly the association with other children) tame by comparison.

Under the mulberry trees, across the courtyard, down the *viale*, out into the garden among the cabbages they played follow-the-leader, the brisk figure of Miss Thomas, hands clasped behind her back in characteristic stance, and the long-legged child in shorts, one behind the other, singing French *chansons* as they went, pausing to study a praying mantis on a twig, picking up a bright pebble and learning something of the story of geology. Never, I thought, had pleasure and learning been so harmoniously combined.

There were sessions, of course, of more formal study when they sat together at a table, Marta sketching interminably while Miss Thomas explained some problem¹⁰⁹ or related an anecdote out of her rich memories to point up some theory. They played the game of mental arithmetic. Sometimes

109 In one of her emails to me about Miss Thomas's teaching methods, Marta Cramer wrote, 'An example that comes to mind – sitting at a table, she was telling me about "lake dwellers", while I drew my concept of their village.'

Marta would be lying flat on her back on the rug during these sessions, and my sense of propriety was shocked, but Miss Thomas waved aside my anxiety. "I never mind," she said, "if pupils get into comfortable positions, so long as they are interested." Still, it seemed to me that a certain disrespect for the teacher was implied in this casual attitude. Miss Thomas thought not. She was an old hand at liberal ideas in education. Long before progressivism became a theory – and an issue – in American education, she had been working toward liberalizing the pupil-teacher relationship. "Greater freedom for the child and greater trust in the child's personality," as she expressed it. But freedom itself she regarded as a kind of discipline. "You are not free in the water," she sagely pointed out, "until you have learned to swim," leaving me to reflect upon the conclusion that, as she phrased it, freedom is capacity.

When Miss Thomas had finished her thirty years of teaching in the London school system, she "retired" at 51 to implement her dream of a better way of educating children. She opened a school in Switzerland. Known as the Fellowship School, in those years between the wars this school became a little island of brotherhood in a sea of national tensions. Children of all nationalities were welcome and their differences soon vanished in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Except for a cook there was no domestic staff and all the work was done by the teachers and the children themselves.

"We felt," Miss Thomas explained, "that if children were not dictated to, they would tend to turn naturally to their elders for help and advice." An effort was made to eliminate as far as possible the barriers between teachers and students, with the result that all – teachers and students alike – were interested in learning. So there in the Fellowship School for nearly fifteen years the principles of cooperative democracy were not only taught to but lived by children from all parts of the world.

These facts regarding Miss Thomas's theories and background came out one by one during our conversations before and after the lesson hours. It is a question whether Marta or I benefited the most from those three afternoons a week. Marta absorbed information like a sponge, while I had someone with whom to discuss theories of education, baby care, personality problems, religion – and household crises.

If we were without help, Miss Thomas pitched in and washed the dishes or carried wood for the fires. A Quaker for many years, she had been long schooled in the philosophy which puts friendship and usefulness to others ahead of personal ambition and false pride. She makes friends and finds ways of being useful wherever she goes.

There were the years of siege in London when she served as a fire warden; the later years of the war when singlehanded she cared for fifteen evacuee children in a country house in England. She had helped on English farms during World War 1, and one of her proudest accomplishments was her ability to milk a cow. There was a brief visit to Chicago when she took on a class of Mexicans preparing for citizenship, teaching them English though she knew not a word of Spanish. She taught English to dozens of Italians, with or without compensation according to their means. She tutored many a laggard schoolchild with his Latin or his math. She trotted all over Rome, knocking on the doors of ministers or judges, to try to find living quarters or justice for some poor Italian about to be evicted. She was a one-woman distribution agency for clothes and kindnesses to poverty-ridden Italians.

In a situation where Emma Thomas cannot be useful she has little desire to remain. It was for this reason that she finally "retired" from her work in Rome and went to Perugia where a wider field seemed to be opening. She felt that, with the resumption of regular schools, the increasing availability of tutors, the better staffing of relief agencies and the Quaker center, her work in Rome was no longer as vital as it had been – even though her pupils still included, among others, a high official of the Italian government who had come to lean upon her not only as a teacher of English but as a friend and confidante as well.

Long an advocate of non-violence, Miss Thomas found in the ancient but liberal city of Perugia a little nucleus of workers for a better and more peaceful world. Undaunted by the rumors of war rumbling ominously about the globe, they work busily and enthusiastically (much in the spirit of the saint of Assisi whose feet once trod those very hills and vales, and Gandhi) to implement their

dream of a kinder, more humane civilization.

There is a steady trickle of idealists through the world from end to end who steer steadfastly by some fixed star of hope and charity and brotherhood, and they coalesce from time to time into a thin stream that flows toward some pool of mutual faith and work. Perugia is such a pool, and chief among its wellsprings is the mind and spirit of the little, plainly-dressed, gray-haired lady who taught French to a leggy seven-year-old by singing French songs under the ilex trees; who stood one day at the foot of a crib in a room that looks out on the Sabine hills, and finished the quotation for an ignorant and absent-minded mother..."So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven."¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ The title of the hymn from which these quotations are taken is 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. The words were written in 1868 by an American churchman named Phillips Brooks.

APPENDIX B

This handwritten document is to be found in the State Archives in Perugia¹¹¹ among the many letters received after Miss Thomas's death. The author, Raymonde Aron, was presumably an orphan, for she was adopted by Lilian Watson. They met at the Fellowship School and both ended up at the St Christopher School in Letchworth after the school in Gland closed down.

This short obituary appeared in the Summer 1979 St Christopher Magazine¹¹²: 'We have learnt with sorrow of the death of Raymonde Kipling on June 19th in her 59th year. The many members of our community who knew her as a fellow pupil, or colleague, or loyal friend will not need telling how closely her life was linked with that of St Christopher.

Raymonde Aron spent three years here as a pupil before taking her Montessori training; after several years teaching experience she served on our Junior School staff for ten years, before moving on to other work, partly with young children and lately with teaching English to Asiatic immigrants. She married Joe Kipling in 1962.

A life-long member of the Society of Friends, she lived out her strongly held religious and social beliefs to the full; it was a life dedicated to giving, and many good causes, as well as many people she befriended, are better because of that life.'

Raymonde Aron on Miss Thomas.¹¹³

I should like to write a few words about Emma Thomas, who died 23rd July at Perugia, Italy, at the age of 88. It is a very difficult task, for she was so much, so great and all with such simplicity and humility. To start with, I owe her my life, in more senses than one. Her real love of humanity caused her to help everyone, in every way possible and at whatever cost to herself. And so her international school in Switzerland, 'The Fellowship School' at Gland, contained not only pupils who had come from all over the world for their education, but also many refugees who came for help and refuge – including myself at the age of three. [We found] security [there] between the mountains, by the lake, and surrounded by love and caring.

I think that nearly every progressive thought, idea, principle or belief which has meant anything real in my life, I first met, chiefly through her at Gland, where these were preached and to a great extent practised in this wonderful experiment of fellowship and community living. For instance:

Respect and love for the individual, of whatever class, colour, creed, political view, nation and of whatever age. And so: learning to think for oneself, discussion, practical democracy, tolerance, internationalism, pacifism. Practical work for peace, such as was demonstrated by her great friend and colleague Pierre Ceresole, the founder of the 'International Voluntary Service'.

'Progressive' education and co-education, now so much better understood and practised, but then so amazing and horrifying to some of our neighbours! The Montessori Method with its freedom to move about and choose your work. Dalcroze Eurhythmics, of which we did a lot, with Jacques-Dalcroze so near to us in Geneva, encouraging us in our festivals of dancing, music and song.

'Projects' and expeditions, with 'School Journeys' to 'Foreign' lands to learn past history and present friendship at first hand.

A respect and love for the animal world. Vegetarianism, including an excellent cook from Alsace

111 SA Box 1608C, folder 5, fo. 6-8.

112 From David Cursons, St Christopher School, Letchworth.

113 This document has been redacted.

who might have converted the butcher himself, and amazingly modern ideas on diet already in 1921 when eating a raw carrot was 'asking for trouble', and people would expect to shrivel up and die, or worse.

Interest in current affairs, social problems, Justice, Truth, People, great and small, who visited us from all over the world.

A communal sharing in the cleaning of the school, to the accompaniment of our own 'Music while you work'! A sense of the dignity of manual labour as well as the greatness of Literature, Culture and Art.

Religion and Religions of all kind, and the Society of Friends, which became dear to me personally. And a way of life.

Yes, it is impossible to explain how much one person can inspire in those around her by her vitality, humour, goodness and sincerity. I even understood through her the agony and the meaning of 'doubt' – for she went through a stage during the last war, after suffering great personal bereavement, of doubting her own principles, her own faith and her own pacifism. But even then she spent herself for others, day and night.

After the war she returned to Italy which we had often visited and which she had so loved, and with her great friend and former colleague Lilian Watson, spread the ideas of U.N.A., of Friends, of Peace and Progress and Fellowship there. ...

She was a source of Joy and Love and Vitality, and I thank God for her life and her example.