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THE POLITICS OF PENAL REFORM

MARGERY FRY AND THE HOWARD LEAGUE

ANNE LOGAN

The Politics of Penal Reform

In the context of recent media scrutiny on the state of prisons in the UK, the efficacy of incarcerating large numbers of offenders is an issue which is rising steadily up the political agenda. In 2016, the Howard League for Penal Reform – an organization that has energetically lobbied for improvements in the treatment of offenders throughout its lifetime – celebrated its 150th anniversary.

This book considers the life and work of Margery Fry, the woman who created the modern Howard League and dominated it from 1918 until her death in 1958, and places the UK's oldest surviving penal reform pressure group and its current work into their historical context. It examines Fry's legacy as a campaigner for an international standard of prisoners' minimum rights, which resulted in a United Nations charter, for the introduction of compensation for victims of criminal injuries, and for the abolition of the death penalty, and also considers her role in the establishment of criminology as an academic discipline and her organization of the first criminology lectures in Great Britain. It is essential reading for all those engaged in prisons research, penal reform and criminal justice history.

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Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	vi
<i>Foreword by Frances Crook</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
 Introduction	 1
 PART I	
Becoming Miss Fry	13
1 A Quaker daughter	15
2 A university woman	38
3 Women's suffrage and war relief	65
 PART II	
Woman champion of the underdog	89
4 The creation of the Howard League	91
5 Pressure behind the scenes	113
6 Popularizing penal reform	134
7 Promoting criminology	155
Conclusion	177
 <i>Bibliography</i>	 184
<i>Index</i>	190

Figures

1.1	A young Margery Fry with flowers	22
1.2	Dorothy Scott, Margery Fry, Constance Crommelin and Isabel Fry, <i>circa</i> 1895	30
2.1	University House group photograph, <i>circa</i> 1913	58
5.1	The Howard League's stall at Geneva, 1929	123
5.2	Front cover of <i>For All Prisoners</i>	125
7.1	Margery Fry in 1946	163

Foreword

This book is an essential contribution to the history of our country and a handbook on how to achieve social reform. It is a tribute to the life and work of one woman but illustrates that too many important women are written out of the history books and their contributions marginalised or ignored. Margery Fry was a whirlwind of energy, working on prisons, education and international issues, and her story needs to be told.

Women have been the drivers of penal reform, as in many other areas of the struggle for social justice. The imprisonment and brutal treatment of suffragists gave middle-class women an experience that transformed their understanding of the criminal justice system and energised the call for penal reform. The roots of the Penal Reform League were planted in this feminist movement, and when Margery Fry succeeded in amalgamating this small group with the equally small but better-established Howard Association, that radical ideological underpinning wove its way into the fabric of the new organisation, and was continued by another doughty woman, Cecily Craven, for two decades.

While prison conditions from the pre-First World War period to the 1930s were grim, at least the number of people affected was relatively small. The average prison population has increased from just over 17,400 in 1900 to just over 85,300 in 2016. This increase started in the 1950s and 1960s, but the number of men, women and children in prison rose sharply from the mid-1990s, significantly out of proportion to the rise in the general population. Despite – or perhaps because of – injections of public money and a building programme, the number of incarcerated people continued to increase and conditions continued to be inhumane.

There was no way that a small voluntary group could stem the onslaught of political exploitation of crime and prisoners for short-term electoral gain. The visceral nature of the politics of crime and punishment since the Second World War has led to an inflation in the number of people sucked into the corrections industry. The role of groups like the Howard League for Penal Reform has been to stand in the way of the torrent, to bear witness to its injustice, to mitigate its excesses and to try to stem the flow.

This book covers a time of momentous change, including two world wars. It is a story of one woman's contribution to that change; but more than that,

viii *Foreword*

it shines a light on domestic and international flux from one person's perspective. There is an interesting question at its heart: why choose to campaign on *this* issue in *this* way? As Margery Fry's successor, I have been asked that question many times, most recently by a Secretary of State in our first formal meeting. Penal reform was Fry's passion, but she saw it in the wider context of social fairness, and she also contributed to advances in education and international issues.

The criminal justice system lies at the heart of democracy, and if it is unfair, democracy is failing. Margery Fry understood that truth, and it is one of the many reasons why her life is so illuminating.

Frances Crook
Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform
May 2017

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I owe the Howard League for Penal Reform (www.howardleague.org) a great debt of gratitude, not only for allowing me to use their archive at Warwick, but also for demonstrating such interest in the project. I am most grateful to Frances Crook, the League's Chief Executive, for writing the Preface. I would also like to thank Anita Dockley of the Howard League, Tom Sutton and Hannah Catterall at Routledge, and the SOLON Explorations in Crime and Criminal Justice series editors Kim Stevenson, Judith Rowbotham, David Nash and David J. Cox for their all hard work and enthusiasm.

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x *Acknowledgements*

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This book is dedicated to my husband, Brian Logan, and my daughters, Ruth Logan and Clare Logan, who were models of patience during the months when everything else was put on hold until 'the book' was finished.

Anne Logan
University of Kent
June 2017

Abbreviations

ACTO	Advisory Council on the Treatment of Offenders
AMSH	Association for Moral and Social Hygiene
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BWSS	Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society
CO	Conscientious Objector
COS	Charity Organization Society
FEWVRC	Friends' Emergency War Victims Relief Committee
IPC	International Prison Commission
IPPC	International Penal and Penitentiary Commission
ICW	International Council of Women
IWSA	International Women's Suffrage Alliance
JP	Justice of the Peace
MA	Magistrates' Association
MP	Member of Parliament
NCADP	National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty
NCW	National Council of Women
NUSEC	National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
NUWW	National Union of Women Workers
PRL	Penal Reform League
SPG	Six Point Group
UGC	University Grants Committee

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Introduction

Some time in the early 1920s, the writer Arthur R. L. Gardner joined the Howard League for Penal Reform. He soon met the League's honorary secretary, 'a Miss Margery Fry', whom he described as 'a charming lady, with the most lovely contralto speaking voice I ever heard'. Soon Gardner was volunteering in the League office, organizing press cuttings. 'I naturally saw a great deal of Margery Fry,' he recalled, 'admiring more and more her indefatigable energy and efficiency, and her infinite capacity in an entirely unemotional way to inspire everyone with whom she came in contact.' Decades later, he asserted that Margery Fry 'was the life of the League' and that 'so much of what the Howard League pleaded for in the 20's is nowadays the daily routine of HM Prisons'.¹

Today, nearly a century after Margery Fry took over what she called a 'small, sleepy' pressure group called the Penal Reform League (PRL)² and brought about its merger with the older, richer, but equally somnolent Howard Association, thereby creating the quintessential 'insider' lobby organization, her contribution to the politics of penal reform is not as well known as it was in Gardner's day. Yet she not only formed the Howard League but also helped to set up the Magistrates' Association, organized Britain's first official criminology lectures, and instigated campaigns for the abolition of the death penalty, for international recognition of prisoners' rights and for victims' compensation. Margery Fry did not merely influence routines in 'HM prisons' but helped to shape systems of criminal justice in British colonial territories across the world and prompted the United Nations' adoption of standard minimum rules for prisoners in 1955. She also did much to increase public knowledge of prison conditions in Europe, China and North America both in the UK and in other countries, and helped lay the foundations for the study of criminology in English universities.

These endeavours were widely recognized in Margery Fry's lifetime and for some years afterwards. R. A. Butler, the Home Secretary at the time of her

1 Quoted in J. Listowel, 'Margery Fry', *Homes and Gardens*, n.d., in Fry file, BBC WAC.

2 SMF to MF, 10 January 1919, MFP 8/6.

2 Introduction

death, claimed that ‘many features of the penal system in this country ... provide a fitting memorial to the work of this great lady’, while one of his predecessors, Lord Templewood, called her ‘an entrancing figure’ and ‘a pervasive influence for good’.³ A pressure group made up of eminent lawyers who supported Fry’s plans for victims’ compensation argued that its adoption would be a fitting memorial ‘to a remarkable woman to whom humanity owes much’.⁴ One might expect obituaries to be flattering and perhaps hyperbolic, but the tributes continued to flow for years after her death. In 1961, Gordon Rose dedicated his history of penal reform to Fry because she ‘not only saw what was needed, but with charm, wit, and good sense turned vision into reality’.⁵ The criminologist Terence Morris, who knew her when he was a young researcher, described her as ‘the dominant figure on the penal reform scene during the 1930s and 1940s’.⁶ According to Sir Leon Radzinowicz, whose career as founder of the Cambridge Institute of Criminology she had helped to promote, she was the Howard League’s ‘star’ and ‘a remarkable woman from a remarkable family’.⁷

Common to all these tributes – and many more in similar vein – is the sense that Margery Fry was extraordinary: it is unsaid, but the male admirers quoted above must have seen her as particularly outstanding for a *woman* of her generation. The word ‘charming’ recurs frequently in these and other tributes. It is a term that not only signifies much about her gender and perhaps about her privilege, but also marks her out for special distinction. Similarly, Gardner was not alone in complimenting her on her speaking voice, perhaps because in the mid-twentieth century, women talking on public platforms and in the broadcast media were still something of a rarity. (Their voices were commonly felt to be unpleasant and not microphone-friendly.) Leaving personal accolades aside, the records show that Fry exerted extensive influence over the shape of British, colonial and – arguably – worldwide penal reform in the forty-year period between assuming control of the PRL and her death.

It is now nearly two decades since Radzinowicz argued – with some justification – that Gordon Rose’s analysis of the early history of the Howard League needed ‘to be supplemented by a fresh up-to-date study’.⁸ This book is an attempt to provide such an account, but through the lens of a feminist, biographical study. Not only does the current work seek to affirm the influence of an individual upon the progress of penal reform politics from 1918 to the 1950s, it does so by placing that person in her gendered social and familial context. As a woman, Margery Fry necessarily operated mainly on the

3 Notes for Home Secretary’s speech, 28 June 1958, HO291/20; *The Times*, 23 April 1958.

4 *The Times*, 5 May 1958.

5 G. Rose, *The Struggle for Penal Reform*, London: Stevens, 1961, p. v.

6 T. Morris, ‘British Criminology, 1935–48’, *British Journal of Criminology*, 1988, 28(2): 20–34, p. 23.

7 L. Radzinowicz, *Adventures in Criminology*, London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 132–133.

8 *Ibid.*

margins of power. This account places her motivation within her career trajectory and seeks to dispel myths concerning a life's 'mission'. While she undoubtedly became passionate about the causes she espoused, she had no connection with penal reform before 1918 and did not take it up for religious reasons. It is a key proposition of this book that Fry's Quaker background (crucially, not her faith) was a powerful influence upon her work, but religion was not her motivation. Moreover, this book places emphasis on Fry's networking strategies, her feminism, and the impact of gender ideology both on her career and upon the specific form that the penal reform movement adopted under her leadership. This study is feminist because, despite the efforts over several decades by women's history scholars to 'recover' women from 'the condescension of posterity', the work of influential women like Fry is still too easily overlooked and often all but erased from the record.

As already mentioned, the main existing history of penal reform politics is Rose's account, published in 1961 as part of Stevens' 'Library of Criminology'. It is perhaps a little redundant to point out that this work is very dated. Rose did benefit from being a member of the League's executive and thus probably possessed first-hand knowledge of some of the later developments he described (the book goes up to the post-1945 period). On the other hand, this meant that he was not detached from his subject matter, but part of the story himself, although he claimed he intended to adhere to 'strict academic standards of impartiality'.⁹ The book's foreword was contributed by Hugh Klare, then the League's secretary, which further suggests – at the very least – the tacit approval of the organization for what amounted to an official history.

While most of Rose's book provides a conventional, mainly chronological narrative of penal reform movements from the early nineteenth century onwards (albeit with disappointingly little information on the Howard Association's predecessors), in his final chapter he turned to a rudimentary analysis of the Howard League's status as a 'pressure group'. Following conventional methods of classification, he identified the League as a 'promotional' or 'cause' group and proceeded to account for its influence. Again, in keeping with the political scientific consensus of his time, Rose made plain that exerting pressure on government officials was by far the League's most important activity. It was, he wrote, 'a body of experts who are prepared to press upon the authorities an attitude of mind with which the membership agree'. This, he argued was advanced through 'the association with the League of persons of standing and influence, the obvious example being Margery Fry'. Furthermore, he claimed 'the foundation of influence is very largely expertise', for which the League had 'a formidable reputation'.¹⁰ The construction and maintenance of this reputation was the work of the honorary secretary, a job which in Rose's time had been held by only three people – Fry, Cicely Craven and Klare. The first of these three

9 Rose, *Struggle for Penal Reform*, p. xi.

10 Ibid., pp. 264 and 266.

4 Introduction

undoubtedly set the tone of these working practices and established the League's reputation for expertise, as Chapters 4 and 5 of this current work demonstrate. In addition, Rose pointed out that the League had quickly built up a reputation with the press and gave concrete examples of its influence both domestically and internationally. Its success, he argued, was due to 'intelligent anticipation of trends'. Margery Fry's 'greatest ability', according to Rose, 'was to know what was going to happen, and then make sure that it did happen'.¹¹

Since 1961 there has been no dedicated history of English penal reform pressure groups as a category. In 1978 Ryan's case study on the Howard League, *The Acceptable Pressure Group*, cemented the organization's status as the quintessential, textbook example of an 'insider' pressure group that worked quietly behind the closed doors of Whitehall and arguably enjoyed far more influence than any group that was forced to take to the streets in demonstrations. Ryan acknowledged that the League's interwar emergence as real force in penal politics was 'thanks mainly... to Margery Fry' and noted its 'highly centralized' style of policy formation.¹² Ryan certainly gave Fry the credit she is due, calling her 'one of the most able and socially well connected reformers of the interwar period'.¹³ However, his references indicate that he was heavily reliant on Rose and the single published biography of Fry (see below) for his perspective on her work. In the first chapter of his later work *Penal Policy and Political Culture*, Ryan returned to the topic of the League's role as a source of expert policy advice to the government both in Margery Fry's time and subsequently.¹⁴ Recent academic analysis of the role of pressure groups in policy-making has focused on the concept of 'policy networks'.¹⁵

Away from the general pressure group literature, penal reform politics has been more commonly discussed in the context of single-issue campaigns. For example, several works examine opposition to the death penalty, a social movement in which Fry played an important – albeit not a central – part.¹⁶ This area of her work is discussed in Chapter 6 of this book. In addition, Paul

11 Ibid., p. 267.

12 M. Ryan, *The Acceptable Pressure Group*, Farnborough: Saxon House, 1978, p. 3.

13 Ibid., p. 32. According to one textbook, written in the 1960s, 'Cause groups ... are less likely than sectional interest groups to be consulted by the government, unless, like the Howard League ... they are able to offer specialist advice': R. M. Punnett, *British Government and Politics*, London: Heinemann Education, 1970, p. 138 (emphasis added).

14 M. Ryan, *Penal Policy and Political Culture*, Winchester: Waterside Press, 2003.

15 For a discussion of this literature, see A. Logan, 'Policy Networks and the Juvenile Court: The Reform of Youth Justice, c.1905–50', *Crimes and Misdemeanours*, 2009, 3(2): 18–36.

16 For example, E. Tuttle, *The Crusade against Capital Punishment*, London: Stevens, 1961; J. B. Christoph, *Capital Punishment and British Politics*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1962; H. Potter, *Hanging in Judgement*, London: SCM Press, 1993; J. Gregory, *Victorians against the Gallows*, London: IB Tauris, 2012.

Rock has highlighted Fry's early, vital role in the victims movement.¹⁷ In an earlier monograph, I discussed the surprisingly close relationship between penal reform pressure groups and feminist organizations in early twentieth-century Britain, a bond which owed much to Fry's personal history within the women's suffrage movement.¹⁸

To date, Margery Fry has been the subject of only one full-length biography – Enid Huws Jones' *The Essential Amateur* – which was commissioned by Fry's niece, Pamela Diamand.¹⁹ Jones, who had been an undergraduate at Somerville College, Oxford, during Fry's brief tenure as principal, produced an affectionate, if somewhat awed, authorized account of her mentor, conventionally chronological in form but sometimes florid in prose style. The author had access to Fry's personal papers (then in the custody of Diamand, but now held at Somerville), which formed the main source base of the book, supplemented by some of her published writings, the majority of which related to criminal justice. Necessarily, as an official biographer working at the suggestion of a beloved relative who was fiercely protective – and proud – of her family's reputation, Jones produced a text that is often opaque, especially regarding Fry's personal relationships. This book differs from Jones' biography not only because of the wider range of published and unpublished sources upon which it draws, but also because it is possible to be more frank about private matters nearly sixty years after Fry's death and with all the relevant papers now available for consultation in public archives. However, such personal details are covered here only in relation to the light they shed on her work, bearing in mind the central tenet of feminism that 'the personal is political'. As Ann Oakley argues, 'how someone's private life is lived is an essential part of the public story'.²⁰ As an upper-middle-class female born in 1874, the restrictions placed on women's lives and their comparative lack of freedom were especially salient in establishing the trajectory of Margery Fry's career. Jones' biography, which remains the standard reference point whenever Fry's work is discussed in academic publications, is particularly deficient in its understanding of its subject's feminism. Building on my earlier work, in which I identified Fry as a key member of an informal but influential 'feminist–criminal-justice reform network', this book places gender and feminism at its core.²¹ Moreover, whereas Jones chose 'The Essential Amateur' for her subtitle (with some justification, since it was Fry's own self-deprecating description), I have preferred to portray Fry as a proto-professional, not in the sense of

17 P. Rock, *Helping Victims of Crime: The Home Office and the Rise of Victim Support in England and Wales*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

18 A. Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice: A Historical Perspective*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008.

19 E. Huws Jones, *Margery Fry: The Essential Amateur*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

20 A. Oakley, *A Critical Woman: Barbara Wootton, Social Science and Public Policy in the Twentieth Century*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011, p. 9.

21 Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice*.

6 Introduction

being paid to do her work (she was not) but rather in terms of the seriousness of her approach and the wholehearted manner in which she invested her skills, knowledge, training and – above all – time in penal reform politics.²² Margery Fry was certainly no dilettante.

It might be questioned why the politics of penal reform during the early and mid-twentieth century should be explored through the lens of biography. As the quotations which open this chapter show, Margery Fry was – and was perceived to be – a leading figure in the field of criminal justice policy development over a forty-year period. Her influence, which was not confined to the UK, remained strong even after her death. Crucially, as this book demonstrates, the Howard League was very much her creation. The very merger between the PRL and the Howard Association which created the League was planned and executed by Fry, or ‘engineered’, as Ryan puts it.²³ The organization’s campaigns, strategy, methods, policies and practices were all shaped by her preferences and political choices, not only while she was in charge but long after she stepped down as honorary secretary. Nearly one hundred years later, and despite the existence of some challenger organizations from time to time, the Howard League remains the premier British pressure group in its field. Its reputation and stability have been enhanced for nearly thirty years by the work of another woman, Frances Crook, but the foundations upon which she has built were laid by Margery Fry. Importantly, as this book shows, Fry left an important legacy not only to penal politics but also to British criminology both in her own work and in the encouragement she gave to others.

This is not to say that Margery Fry was a dictator or that the League was a ‘one [wo]man band’. Although the Howard League never had a mass membership, it did have a strong executive committee. A significant aspect of Fry’s talent was her ability as a committee woman and the skills she acquired during a lengthy apprenticeship in policy formation, long before she adopted the issue of penal reform. A biographical approach permits the exploration of her family background, career and the experiences of the first half of her life, which illuminate and even account for her achievements in the penal reform field and the choices that she made subsequently. Two of Fry’s outstanding skills were her ability to choose allies and co-workers and her aptitude for inspiring others. She was, in modern parlance, a superb ‘networker’, and it is highly significant that her personal/political network was rooted in the women’s voluntary organizations which emerged during the so-called ‘first wave’ of feminism.

Although this book celebrates Fry’s achievements and seeks to establish a case for her importance in penal reform politics, it is not intended to be a hagiography. It is true that it was easy to find quotations praising her, and almost impossible to source critical remarks, but I feel sure that if I had met

22 A. Logan, ‘Professionalism and the Impact of England’s First Women Justices, 1920–1950’, *Historical Journal*, 2006, 49(3): 833–850.

23 Ryan, *Acceptable Pressure Group*, pp. 31–32.

her, I would have been terrified by such a formidable personality. Reading private letters undoubtedly gives a window into someone's personality, and I could not help noticing that Fry could be withering about people whom she disliked. Rather, this book is an attempt to explore her agency, and establish what a woman of her generation – albeit one from a privileged background, with excellent connections and private wealth – could achieve politically, despite never becoming a Member of Parliament or pursuing a professional 'career' of the kind we would recognize today. It seeks to establish the multiple sources of her inspiration for the work she did for penal reform.

For example, her Quaker heritage is undoubtedly relevant to her achievements, but so is her rejection of the religion in which she was raised. Perhaps nothing irritated Margery Fry more than people confusing her with the evangelical early-nineteenth-century Quaker prison reformer Elizabeth Fry – which happened a lot – or assuming that they were related. Responding to an invitation to talk about her 'ancestor' on the BBC, Margery wearily pointed out that 'Elizabeth Fry was not my ancestor; she married my great grandfather's first cousin, and I am rather tired of her, though no one could feel anything but admiration for her work'.²⁴ Yet the simplistic assumption continues to be made in historical literature that Margery's involvement in penal reform was a natural outcome of her Quakerism, a case of following in the tradition of Elizabeth Fry, William Allen, Charles Gilpin, William Tallack and many others.²⁵ In contrast, this book argues that Margery Fry's Quaker background was of only marginal significance in her decision to enter penal reform politics. Far from being a trivial matter of interpretation, this contention is central to an appreciation of Margery Fry, not as a traditional religious 'reformer' or an old-fashioned philanthropist, but as a twentieth-century professional lobbyist. This does not mean that her Quaker background had no influence; far from it. Indeed, this book underlines the significance of her family and upbringing, but it also takes issue with some common suppositions about Quakers in the historiography of social movements, especially the notion that all members of the Society of Friends had progressive attitudes towards gender during the late nineteenth century. Fry's support for women's suffrage – like her eventual adoption of agnosticism – was a reaction against her family, although her ability to question conventional attitudes was very much within their tradition.

Crucially, this book is intended as a feminist analysis of a feminist subject. A key proposition here is that understanding Margery Fry – and her gender – is fundamental to an appreciation of the form that the Howard League took in its early years.²⁶ Feminist history sometimes takes a biographical 'turn'

24 SMF to Angela Reeves, 15 May 1956, BBC WAC.

25 For example, Sybil Oldfield highlights Margery Fry's Quaker family as influencing her choice to work for the PRL: S. Oldfield, *Doers of the World: British Women Humanitarians 1900–50*, London: Continuum, 2001, pp. 83–86.

26 See also Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice*.

8 Introduction

because of the necessity to place women's neglected and overlooked work in the historical record and thereby examine the issue of women's agency.²⁷ The intention is not to adopt what Liz Stanley has described as a 'spotlight' approach to the subject – a method which, as Stanley points out, encompasses a 'depoliticised notion of "greatness", presenting this as a characteristic of individuals rather than the product of political processes and constructions'.²⁸ Fry's overlapping networks of family, friends, political allies and co-workers are part of this story, too. No matter how dominant or gifted an individual might be, he or she could not have such an emphatic bearing upon policy and politics without the aid of others. My intention, as June Purvis has suggested, is to 'study the material forces which have shaped ... lives and experiences, even though these experiences may be mediated through the "lenses" of the individuals' own histories, ideologies and cultures'.²⁹ For example, I argue that Fry's intellectual training and education – in her family as well as at school and university – inclined her towards the adoption of distinctive campaign strategies in her political work.

It has been argued that writers of feminist history should avoid using first names, as such a practice tends to belittle women. Interestingly, Jones' biography refers to its subject by her forename and surname throughout, avoiding both the formality of 'Fry' and the presumption of 'Margery'. By contrast, in the chapters after this Introduction (in which I have mostly used either 'Margery Fry' or simply 'Fry'), I have decided to refer to the subject mainly as 'Margery'. This choice is primarily a practical one, made in order to avoid confusion, as she had five sisters and two brothers, all of whom could be referred to as 'Fry'. First names are therefore used for all family members and for some of Margery's closest friends. Her co-workers are normally referred to either by forename and surname or just by surname.

Occasionally, Margery may be referred to as 'Miss Fry', which was the persona she presented in her political work. This was her professional guise, the formidable public woman with the impressive speaking voice who was revered by so many of those who met her. To government ministers, civil servants, lawyers, magistrates, co-campaigners, academics, students, audiences and the general public, Miss Fry was a potentially intimidating yet gifted communicator with a substantial knowledge and thorough understanding of penal policy – among many other issues. Therefore, Part I of the book, which is concerned with the first forty-four years of Fry's life, is titled 'Becoming Miss Fry', because it explores the experiences and influences that helped create the persona before she took up penal reform. Chapter 1 focuses on

27 J. Berney *et al.*, 'Introduction', *Women's History*, 2017, 2(1): 3.

28 L. Stanley, 'Romantic Friendship: Some Issues in Researching Lesbian History and Biography', *Women's History Review*, 1992, 1(2): 193–216, p. 193.

29 J. Purvis, 'Doing Feminist Women's History: Researching the Lives of Women in the Suffragette Movement in Edwardian England', in Mary Maynard and June Purvis (eds) *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis, 1994, p. 167.

Fry's influential Quaker family background, childhood and education. Particularly highlighted are her first stirrings of feminism, her interest in the suffrage movement and her crucially important friendship with Eleanor Rathbone (who became a Member of Parliament).³⁰ The limitations which gender ideology placed upon Fry as a girl growing up in late Victorian England are clarified. Chapter 2 covers Fry's career in higher education from 1899 to 1914. During the decade she spent working at Birmingham University (1904–1914) she developed her professional skills, not only in her job but also as a member of the Staffordshire Education Committee and in myriad other voluntary roles. This chapter therefore focuses on her innovations and influence in education, her involvement in networks and her approach to committee work, policy-making and service delivery, all of which informed her later strategies in the criminal justice field. Chapter 3 examines Fry's life immediately before, during and after the First World War, an event which precipitated the most significant turning point in her career. During the war she continued her work for women's suffrage and led the Friends' Emergency War Victims Relief Operation in eastern France. The conflict had devastating repercussions on her personal life, and probably influenced her decision to take over as secretary of the PRL. The possible reasons why she made this choice in 1918 (and ultimately did not follow another path, into politics) are critically analysed in this chapter.

Part II, 'Woman Champion of the Underdog', takes its title from a newspaper obituary of Fry.³¹ Although she had many other roles during the second half of her life (she was briefly a BBC governor, principal of Somerville College for a few years and active in a range of anti-fascist political campaigns in the 1930s and 1940s), the focus of this part of the book is almost entirely upon her involvement in the politics of penal reform. Part II has a mainly thematic, rather than chronological, structure. Chapter 4 analyses Fry's reasons for taking a job in the PRL and the strategy she adopted for its future and for strengthening the penal reform cause. This took the form of the creation of the Howard League by merging the PRL and the Howard Association. At the same time, Fry became one of the first woman justices of the peace, so the chapter also examines her work in that role, her involvement in the establishment of the Magistrates' Association, and the synergy she created between that organization and the League. These groups, together with the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty (discussed in Chapter 6) transformed the penal reform pressure group landscape for the remainder of the twentieth century. Chapter 4 reveals some of Fry's strategies in developing a new, more professionalized form of political lobbying. Building on my previous book, I argue that networking practices

30 Recent biographies of Rathbone include S. Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience*, London: Yale University Press, 2004.

31 *Daily Herald*, 25 April 1958.

10 Introduction

that were common in the women's movement were adopted in order to advance penal reform.³²

Chapter 5 examines some of Fry's committee work from the 1920s to the 1950s. The chapter seeks to problematize and evaluate the 'insider' strategy which Fry in part inherited and in part invented for penal reform politics. It also demonstrates that Fry's lobbying was conducted on an international as well as a national stage by examining her work for an international charter of minimum standards for prisoners and on an advisory committee for Britain's colonial empire.

Despite the Howard League's image as an 'insider' pressure group, Fry well understood the importance of influencing the public as well as politicians and administrators. Hence, Chapter 6, 'Popularizing Penal Reform', examines the methods she used to publicize the cause, from early speaking tours and letters to the press to later appearances on BBC radio and television, and evaluates her attempts to educate the general public about the criminal justice system, not only in the UK but around the world. Fry's involvement in the campaign to abolish the death penalty is also explored as a case study of her campaigning strategies.

Chapter 7 aims to establish Margery Fry's place in the history of criminology, both as an instigator of teaching and research in the subject and as a researcher in her own right. I contend that Fry's contribution in both contexts has been underestimated partly because of academic and institutional gender bias. Because her publication list is modest, and because she worked outside the formal academy, her work has been unjustly neglected since her death. In contrast, in the last years of her life and shortly after her death, her significance in British criminology as both a thinker and a facilitator was more widely appreciated. The chapter ends with her innovative work on criminal injuries compensation (for which she was still campaigning when she died), and suggests that her ideas on restitution to some extent anticipated more recent developments in criminal justice and criminology, including restorative justice.

When introducing her biography of Barbara Wootton – whose career had many parallels to Fry's – Ann Oakley noted 'the ways in which social interaction, at the personal level, shapes people's lives and thus the difference they make, or do not make to the world'.³³ It is with a similar thought in mind that I make no apologies for framing a discussion of penal pressure group politics through a biographical lens. The second half of Margery Fry's life was arguably dominated by the politics of criminal justice, but her experiences, ideas and relationships for all of her eighty-odd years had a – perhaps intangible – bearing upon her work. However, because this book is not a traditional biography, several important aspects of her life are not covered in depth. These include her membership of the China Campaign Committee (and, more

32 Logan, *Feminism and Criminal Justice*.

33 Oakley, *Critical Woman*, p. 10.

generally, her passionate interest in foreign policy), her many years as a member of the University Grants Committee, much of her radio and television work – including her regular appearances on *The Brains Trust* – and her friendship with Virginia Woolf. Readers interested in these subjects may wish to consult my other publications.³⁴

34 For example, the discussion of Fry's views on foreign policy in A. Logan, 'The International Work of Margery Fry in the 1930s and '40s', *Women's History*, 2016, 2(3): 23–29.