

Charlotte Kellogg: Women of America and Belgium

A biographical study on American and Belgian women during and after the First World War. (1916-1920)

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ABSTRACT

Charlotte Kellogg was the first and only woman to live in occupied Belgium as a representative of the *Commission for Relief in Belgium and Northern France* (CRB). For six months, from June 1916 until December of the same year she visited local charities in Belgian towns on behalf of the CRB. Following Armistice in November 1918 Charlotte returned to Belgium. Until January she travelled in particular through West-Flemish communities which were off limits during the war. The observations she made resulted in no less than three books of whom the first two are characterised by propaganda for the CRB.

Based on her publications as well as her private correspondence this paper aims to answer two questions. The first one concerns Charlotte's Californian background. While she was the only female representative in Belgium, the local CRB in the US was largely organised by women. The question analyses, through Charlotte, how they organised themselves. Did conventional notions of sister- and motherhood motivate them or did they aspire to progressive political and social rights?

The hypothesis assumes that Charlotte's work reflects the ideas of a whole group of American women involved with relief work. The answer on the above mentioned question is twofold. In their public events (benefits, speeches, etc., ...) women stuck to conventional notions of sister- and motherhood to convince Americans to support Belgian women and children. Within the organisation itself a different image comes up. CRB women were ambitious. They tried with varying success to take matters in their own hands and omit male influence from the headquarters in New York, London, and Brussels. More often than not Charlotte stumbled over this masculine overarching framework.

The second question concerns Charlotte's analysis of women in Belgian society. While her first book is aligned with her task as a representative in Belgium: observing and describing local charities. The other two have a more clear social agenda. Herein she addresses ideas on women in family life, employed in the textile industry, and educative roles as well as broader themes such as industrialisation,

education, the social question and religion. The question that follows from her observations and analyses is: how did Charlotte see the role of women in her ideal post-war Belgian society?

Here, too, the answer is not straightforward. During the war Charlotte expressed her contentment with class-transcending solidarity and national unity in Belgium. After Armistice, the social coherence that prevailed during the war falls back apart. Charlotte is afraid that the progress made - with support from the CRB - in terms of female working conditions and religious unity will be undone. Her two final books are primarily concerned with preserving the road towards social upheaval, which was, according to Charlotte, due to American influence embarked upon during the war.

Charlotte Kellogg wasn't an educated historian and her writings were never intended to be historical analysis of Belgium and California. But, like most pre-1960 female historians, she had a clear social angle to the question of womanhood. Historians committing to women's history wanted to reveal the voices of the common people, which included women. By doing so they argued that women are also actors in history and not merely acted upon. In the conclusion of this paper it will be argued that Charlotte shared a similar intent, that she herself can be added to the pantheon of women's history.

PREFACE

"I remembered that in all that stricken country, I was practically the only woman who could seek such relief!"¹

Charlotte Kellogg was the first and only woman to live in occupied Belgium as a representative of the *Commission for Relief in Belgium and Northern France (CRB)*. From its very first days in September 1914 Charlotte and her husband Vernon Kellogg became part of the organisation. While Vernon went to occupied Brussels as a general-director, Charlotte organised fundraising events in their home state California. After nearly two years, in the summer of 1916, the CRB let her travel overseas. As an official representative she lived for six months in occupied Belgium. After the war she immediately returned to Belgium on behalf of the *Californian Commission for Relief in Belgium (CCRB)*. She stayed until January 1919.

As a representative Charlotte witnessed the operation of numerous local charities. These were organised and aided by the Belgian *Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation (CNSA)* in cooperation with the CRB. Her observations resulted in no less than three books and a dozen articles. The earliest publications focussed on the misfortunes of Belgian women and children who lived under military occupation. These writings had to persuade American readers to support the CRB and its related organisations. Despite the deliberate use of propaganda her work gives valuable insights in how women lived and worked under occupation as well as allows a better understanding of local American relief organisations, in particular in California. While Belgian women ladled soup for the hungry in Brussels, American women organised a forget-me-not-benefit in Sacramento.²

Charlotte was the only woman who travelled, lived and worked on both sides of the Atlantic. In general, American women were discouraged from serving in the CRB abroad.³ Moreover, a well-documented account of occupied Belgium by an American woman is unique. Paradoxically she hardly made a footnote in historiography. Contrary to other prominent women like the suffragette Millicent

¹ C. KELLOGG, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal of Belgium*, New York, 1920, 15.

² NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique du Nord (Denver, Minnéapolis, Nouvelle-Orléans, Philadelphie, Washington)*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mrs Harkin, 22 April 1918.

³ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman: The life of Lou Henry Hoover*, Westport, 2000, 64.

Fawcett, the ill-fated British nurse Edith Cavell or Lou Hoover, who was also closely involved with the CRB but never lived in Belgium, Charlotte's narrative remained unacknowledged. By bringing her work into the spotlights this paper offers new insights on the particular roles women took - or were expected to take - in occupied Belgium as well as in the United States.

The paper is structured along four parts. The first part focuses on the methodological and historical background of this research. Hereafter the actual research begins centred around Charlotte's life between 1916 and 1920. Based on largely primary sources her life and work in California, the American east coast, and Belgium is analysed. The third part focuses on the three books she published. Each book is treated separately before coming to an overall conclusion which answers the research questions of this paper and positions Charlotte within the overall framework of women's history.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Research question

Charlotte lived in a distinct academic environment. Not only did she study languages and literature at the university of California, she also married a zoologist - Vernon Kellogg - who was associated with Stanford University.⁴ She took part in a social network composed of Californian intellectuals such as the writer Mary Austin, the naturalist John Muir, and - for this research - most importantly Herbert and Lou Hoover.⁵ In fact, most American founders, men and women, of the CRB came from the same Californian social circle around Herbert Hoover. The difference between Charlotte and her female counterparts in the CRB is that they didn't write down their experiences nor did they cross the Atlantic.

Charlotte's view on society and womanhood in particular reflects those of the context she lived in. By analysing her publications as well as her correspondence between 1916 and 1920, the year in which she first went to occupied Belgium and the year in which she published her final work concerning Belgium, this paper seeks to answer three major questions. First of all, while Charlotte was the only female CRB representative in Belgium, the local CRB in the US was largely organised by women. By using Charlotte's perspective this research looks at a particular group of American women who were involved with Californian relief work. How did they organise the local CRB? What were their incentives to commit themselves? Did conventional notions of sister- and motherhood motivate them or did they aspire to progressive political and social rights?

The second question concerns Charlotte's analysis of women in Belgian society. While her first work - *Women of Belgium* - sticks to conventional ideas of motherhood and charity, the two following books have a more clear social agenda.⁶ Charlotte had an outspoken opinion on how an ideal society would look like as opposed to an occupied militarised one. In these books she addresses ideas on women employed in the textile industry, industrialisation, education, safety at the workplace

⁴ B.Z. BERSON and D.E. KAPLAN, *Guide to the Kellogg-Dickie Papers*, New Haven, 2000, 4.

⁵ D.C. MAYER, *Lou Henry Hoover: A Prototype for First Ladies*, New York, 2004, 145.

⁶ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium: Turning Tragedy to Triumph*, New York, 1917.

as well as religion. She doesn't limit her critique to German occupation but also disapproves of the Belgian pre-war society. The question then is: how did Charlotte see the role of women in her ideal post-war Belgian society?

To conclude this paper will argue if Charlotte's work can be regarded as a part of women's history. She wasn't an educated historian nor were her publications intended as a part of historical research. But, like most pre-1960 female historians, Charlotte had a clear social angle to the question of womanhood. In her work on women's and gender historiography historian Laura L. Downs describes the pioneers - Ivy Pinchbeck, Mary Beard and Léon Abensour - as historians who wanted to reveal the voices of the common people, which included women. By doing so they argued that women are also actors in history and not merely acted upon.⁷ In the conclusion it will be argued if Charlotte shared a similar intent, if she herself can be added to the pantheon of women's history.

2. Methodology

The research for this master paper is first and foremost based on Charlotte's publications between 1917 and 1920. In three years she wrote dozens of articles for American magazines such as *The Atlantic*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Women's Magazine* and published three books on Belgium. Secondly, archival research has been conducted to be able to adequately analyse her publications and her role within the CRB. Finally works of her contemporaries, in which Charlotte is mentioned, have been used to get a better understanding of her role within the CRB as well as her life in occupied Belgium and California.

3.1. Publications

In April 1917, a few months after her first period in Belgium, Charlotte published *Women of Belgium: Turning Tragedy to Triumph* which was also gradually disclosed in *The Atlantic Monthly*.⁸ Based on her own observations *Women of Belgium* idealises the Belgian women who were involved in all kind of local charities, such as canteens and orphanages. The book was published at the moment the US entered the war and

⁷ L.L. DOWNS, *Writing Gender History*, 2e edition, London, 2010, 9-11.

⁸ C. KELLOGG, "A Cinema of the C.R.B.", *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1917, 535-545.

as a result thereof had to cease its involvement within the neutral CRB. *Women of Belgium* deliberately appealed to the conscience of American readers, who in spite of being at war with Germany were encouraged to support relief organisations in occupied Belgium.

In 1919 a second book with a similar presumption followed. Instead of charities *Bobbins of Belgium: A Book of Belgian Lace, Lace-Workers, Lace-Schools and Lace-Villages* encouraged Americans to support the Belgian lace industry.⁹ Charlotte argues that lace was not only important for the Belgium's economical recovery or its cultural heritage but also for the predominantly female employees in this sector. Contrary to *Women of Belgium*, she is not only critical of the German occupation but also for the pre-war social conditions. If these conditions were to be improved, Americans had to become, or stay, involved, thus Charlotte.

Her final book, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal of Belgium*, is different from the previous two. In 1920, three years after the war, Charlotte no longer had to open American purses. By consequence this book turned out to be much more influenced by personal convictions.¹⁰ It highlights her Christian-conservative and paternalist sentiments. Relieved from any obligation *The Fighting Cardinal* idealises the deeds of the Belgian cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier during the war. By opposing him to the German military occupier, Charlotte on the one hand glorifies the role of Christianity and on the other hand criticises the lack of morality in the German army. *The Fighting Cardinal* is a modern hagiography and only indirectly concerned with womanhood.

While writing her books Charlotte also published articles about her post-war visits to Belgium, about the Belgian royalty, and about Herbert Hoover, who was the leading figure of the CRB.¹¹ In order to adequately analyse her multiple publications, which are written with a target audience in mind and in most cases are not without the deliberate use of propaganda, archival research is required. It is important to notice that *Women of Belgium* Charlotte doesn't mention any names. This might have been a convention at the time or to protect those women who played a role in Belgian politics and various social and political rights movements. To overcome these difficulties especially her private correspondence turned out to be worthwhile.

⁹ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium: A Book of Belgian Lace, Lace-Workers, Lace-Schools and Lace-Villages*, New York, 1919.

¹⁰ C. KELLOGG, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal of Belgium*, New York, 1920.

¹¹ C. KELLOGG, "The First Industrial Fair at Brussels", *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1920, 264-269; C. KELLOGG, "The Young Hoovers", *Saturday Evening Post*, September 1920, 232-237; C. KELLOGG, "Belgium's Queen", *Women's Magazine*, June 1919, 16-18.

3.2. Unpublished sources

The National Archives of Belgium (NAB) located in Brussels holds a major collection on the CRB and its regional offshoots such as the *Californian Committee for Relief in Belgium and Northern France* (CCRB).¹² While their collection is substantial, it is far from complete. The NAB only holds those documents which are relevant to the CRB's operations in Belgium. As a result files related to other CRB headquarters in respectively Rotterdam, London, and New York won't be found in the NAB. In addition, a fire in 1956 randomly destroyed over 400 files.¹³ The remaining sources on the CRB are primarily composed of accountancy reports, reports of official meetings, and official accounts of provincial - local - CRB representatives. The incompleteness of this predominantly administrative collection is not insurmountable as Charlotte's assignment in Belgium didn't include any of these tasks.

Apart from the collection on the CRB the NAB also holds collections on the Belgian lace committee (*Aide et Protections aux Dentellières*) during the war as well as the correspondence between regional American commissions, such as the CCRB, and Belgian diplomats.¹⁴ As Charlotte was the leading representative for the CCRB her correspondence with Belgian envoys in San Francisco, New York, Washington and overseas in Europe has proven crucial to accurately analyse her publications as well as her role within the CRB. Contrary to the NAB the Archiepiscopal Archives at Mechelen (AAM) do not reveal much. Apart from a couple of commonplace letters the collection on cardinal Mercier hardly mentions Charlotte.¹⁵

In the US there exist two relevant archives, one at Stanford and one at Yale. Both were not essential given the availability of sources in Belgium and the well-defined scope of this research. The so-called CRB Records which are held in the Hoover Institution Archives (HIA) at Stanford encompasses CRB's operations not only in Belgium but everywhere.¹⁶ However, most files on Belgium are also available

¹² NAB, "Commission for relief in Belgium." et "Comité hispano-néerlandais." ,T-535, 1914-1918.

¹³ A. COSEMANS, *Inventaire des archives de la 'Commission for Relief in Belgium' et du 'Comité Hispano-Néerlandais'*, (http://search.arch.be/nl/zoeken-naar-archieven/zoekresultaat/ead/index/eaid/BE-A0510_002302_003851_DUT/anchor/descgrp-content_and_structure-accruals), last visited on 11/08/2014.

¹⁴ NAB, *WO I. Nationaal Werk voor Steun aan Kantwerksters, Aide et Protections aux Dentellières*, T-042, 1914-1921; NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique du Nord (Denver, Minnéapolis, Nouvelle-Orléans, Philadelphie, Washington)*, T-521 , 1914-1918.

¹⁵ AAM, *Archief van aartsbisschop Désiré-Joseph Mercier*, B.1.2.1.5, 1863-1926.

¹⁶ HIA, *Commission for Relief in Belgium Records*, 1914-1930.

in the NAB making access to the HIA almost redundant. The Manuscripts and Archives (M&A) at Yale hold the Kellogg-Dickie papers.¹⁷ This collection contains documents on Vernon and Charlotte Kellogg as well as their daughter Jean Dickie. While the documents are valuable concerning the private life of the Kellogg family, access was not obtained. On the one hand most correspondence related to the CRB is also available in Belgian archives, on the other hand information on Charlotte's background can be obtained through secondary accounts of her contemporaries.

3.3. Contemporaries

Charlotte had a very peculiar role as a CRB representative in Belgium. The fact that she didn't write any official reports - as other representatives did - shows that her function wasn't like that of her male colleagues. To highlight this difference, published personal accounts by CRB representatives Francis Wickes and John Simpson are worthwhile.¹⁸ As a whole they give a better idea of what was expected of the male representatives and more importantly what was not expected from the only female representative.

Given her exceptional position it is also desirable to use accounts about her which haven't been written by herself. Like his wife, Vernon Kellogg, wrote various books and articles on his stay in Belgium and Northern France.¹⁹ As a former director in Brussels and Charleville in France his writings are primarily concerned with diplomacy or his relations with the German military command. As a result, his wife is only sporadically mentioned. The autobiography by Brand Whitlock, *Belgium, a Personal Narrative*, has considerable more information on Charlotte. As the American ambassador in occupied Belgium Whitlock, and his wife Ella Whitlock, became close friends with Vernon and Charlotte Kellogg.²⁰

¹⁷ M&A, *Kellogg-Dickie Papers*, MS 626, 1884-1976.

¹⁸ F. WICKES, "The American Delegate in Belgium" in G.I. GAY ed., *Public Relations of the Commission for Relief in Belgium*, Stanford, 1929, 478-492; J. SIMPSON, "The American Delegate in Northern France", in G.I. GAY ed., *Public Relations of the CRB*, 492-507.

¹⁹ V. KELLOGG, *Headquarters Nights: a Record of Conversations and Experiences at the Headquarters of the Germany Army in France and Belgium*, Washington, 1917; V. KELLOGG, *Fighting Starvation in Belgium*, New York, 1918; V. KELLOGG, *Herbert Hoover, the Man and his Work*, New York, 1920.

²⁰ B. WHITLOCK, *Belgium, A Personal Narrative*, 2 vol., New York, 1919.

3. Historiography

The logical consequence of studying Charlotte's publications and life during the First World War is that this research belongs to the school of women's history. It is not as much part of the broader analytical framework of gender history as the focus is on one specific female social group rather than the social relations between sexes or the historical construction of female identities in relation to male identities. The First World War has been a much favoured topic within women's history. Research has typically focussed around the question if the war brought significant social and political change to women.

More specific, common themes were - and still are - the home front where women combined family life with working in a munitions factory, the development of the feminist movement during the war, and the role of women within charities, among which the Red Cross. While Charlotte and her associates certainly fit in the third category, the same does not necessarily apply for her writings. *Bobbins of Belgium* emphasizes the role of women in textile industry and criticises prevailing social injustice. More recent works on women and labour during the war have been written by numerous historians among which Laura L. Downs and Deborah Thom.²¹ In *Nice Girls and Good Girls* Thom argued that British women not merely entered arms factories as a result of male absence but also because of an already growing political consciousness before the war.²²

Comparable works have been written on and by their continental counterparts. Ute Daniel's *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft* analyses how German employed women viewed the war as well as how the predominantly male establishment perceived women in the workforce.²³ A final example, Margaret Darrow's *French Women and the First World War* has a broader reach, also including women volunteering for various charities and women cooperating with resistance movements.²⁴ Similar to the first generation of women's historians Darrow wanted to give a voice to a hitherto silent social category, a goal Charlotte also aspired with

²¹ L.L. DOWNS, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender division in the French and British metalworking industries, 1914-1939*, London, 1995; D. THOM, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls, Women Workers in World War I*, London, 1998.

²² D. THOM, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*, 5.

²³ Ü. DANIEL, *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft, Beruf, Familie und Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Bielefeld, 1989.

²⁴ M.H. DARROW, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front*, London, 2000.

Bobbins of Belgium.

Different from the before mentioned examples is that Charlotte focussed on the lace industry in an occupied territory, not a militarised factory in a country at war. The classic work *Women, Work, and Family* by Louise Tilly and Joan Scott demonstrated that the majority of the employees in the textile industry were women and that by 1914 the sector's economical importance had considerably declined.²⁵ Based on her own observations Charlotte lamented the decline of the lace industry and the abysmal labour conditions. Her two other works on Belgium, the older *Women of Belgium* as well as her final work *The Fighting Cardinal*, also hold a clear social message.

While *Women of Belgium* befits the theme within women's history focussing on women and charities, *The Fighting Cardinal* is far less straightforward. This work reveals Charlotte's attachment to Christianity. It positions her within the whole feminist movement. Historian Françoise Thébaud attempted to unravel stereotypes in *La femme au temps de la Guerre de 14*.²⁶ According to Thébaud the war strengthened traditional female values rather than undermining them. By studying the "forgotten" women in occupied France: women working in brothels along the frontline and women volunteering for various charities, Thébaud wants to nuance stereotypes as "the Red Cross as the grandest mother on earth."²⁷

In *Excluded from the Record* Katherine Storr analyses the connection between women - especially suffragettes and Quakers - and charity during the First World War.²⁸ Like the aforementioned Darrow and Thébaud she intended to reveal voices who remained silent in traditional war historiography which, thus Storr, solemnly focussed on men's heroism and sacrifice. *Excluded from the Record* is one of the few works which acknowledge Charlotte as her "role dented the boundaries of the new male world of international relief."²⁹ Apart from Storr's work Charlotte is regularly mentioned in biographical studies of other prominent historical women but hasn't been the subject of research herself. A clear example are the biographies on Lou Hoover by Anne Beiser Allen and Dale Mayer where she is mentioned as one of Lou's many acquaintances.³⁰

²⁵ L.A. TILLY and J.W. SCOTT, *Women, Work, and Family*, New York, 1978, 149.

²⁶ F. THÉBAUD, *La femme au temps de la Guerre de 14*, Paris, 1986.

²⁷ Ibid., 7.

²⁸ K. STORR, *Excluded from the Record, Women, Refugees and Relief 1914-1929*, Bern, 2010.

²⁹ Ibid., 115.

³⁰ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman*, 2000; D.C. MAYER, *Lou Henry Hoover*, 2004.

It is remarkable that the only female CRB representative and someone with a personal library which besides the works on Belgium also includes a translated biography of the physicist Pierre Curie and the medieval Polish queen Jadwiga hasn't been studied before.³¹ Other women involved in the First World War, such as Mata Hari, Louise Weiss and Edith Cavell have attracted much wider attention. In addition to answering the research questions this paper hopes to show that Charlotte is a relevant and interesting starting point for anyone willing to study women's history during the First World War and the interwar period.

To conclude, in *Gendering Historiography, Beyond National Canons* Angelika Epple and Angelika Schaser elaborated on how gender history as well as women's history can go beyond the conventional national historiography.³² Despite this opportunity most of the before mentioned works stick to national boundaries or are comparative studies of different nation-states as is the case with Laura L. Downs's *Manufacturing Inequality*. Herein Downs compares French with British metalworking industries.³³ This paper is a modest attempt to write transnational women's history. In its essence it is about an American woman who came to continental Europe to observe the work and life of women and children in Belgium.

³¹ M. CURIE, *Pierre Curie*, C. KELLOGG transl. and V. KELLOGG transl., New York, 1923; C. KELLOGG, *Jadwiga, Queen of Poland*, Washington, 1936.

³² A. EPPLE ed. and A. SCHASER ed., *Gendering Historiography, Beyond National Canons*, New York, 2010.

³³ L.L. DOWNS, *Manufacturing Inequality*, 1995.

PART II: RELIEF FOR BELGIUM

1. Background

In 1857 a couple dozen German immigrants settled near the Platte River, Nebraska. Driven by wild ambitions they wished to establish a new, more centralised, capital for the United States. Unexpected weather conditions and struggles with Native Americans rapidly tempered their attempt. The settlement never developed into a noteworthy administrative centre but the connection to the railroad in 1868 ultimately secured its survival. By the 1870s the population had gradually grown to more or less a thousand. The settlement became a town and was officially named Grand Island.³⁴

It is in this unremarkable town, only two decades after its foundation, that in 1874 Charlotte Hoffman was born.³⁵ Not much is known concerning her childhood besides the fact that her parents were Swiss migrants. Grand Island's economy depended on a cigar factory, a couple of flour mills and the cultivation of sugar beets.³⁶ More important was the extensive development of the rail and road network in the state Nebraska. The network not only secured trade but also numerous travellers eagerly made use of it. Most of them, inspired by the earlier Gold Rush, were on their way to chase their own Californian Dream in the west.³⁷

At a certain point Charlotte's family moved to Oakland in California. At that time this port city served as the terminus for most train travellers coming from the east. Oakland boomed after the infamous 1906 earthquake which ravaged neighbouring San Francisco.³⁸ By then Charlotte had already earned a degree in English at the University of California and had become a teacher at the renowned Anna Head School for girls in Berkeley. Eventually she got appointed as the head of its English department.³⁹ In 1908 Charlotte's life changed drastically. She married the zoologist Vernon Kellogg, gave up teaching, and settled permanently in the still

³⁴ *The Pioneer Spirit*, 2014, (<http://www.grand-island.com/index.aspx?page=147>). Last visited on 11/08/2014.

³⁵ B.Z. BERSON and D.E. KAPLAN, *Guide to the Kellogg-Dickie Papers*, 4.

³⁶ *The Pioneer Spirit*, 2014

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman*, 56; *History of the 16th Street Station*, 2012, (<http://www.16thstreetstation.com/history/>). Last visited on 11/08/2014.

³⁹ B.Z. BERSON and D.E. KAPLAN, *Guide to the Kellogg-Dickie Papers*, 4.

recovering city San Francisco.⁴⁰

Vernon was born in 1867 in Kansas. He had held an academic position at the University of Kansas before moving to California to become part of the new Stanford University.⁴¹ Though Charlotte had an academic background of her own it is her marriage with Vernon that truly opened up California's academic world. A biography on Lou Hoover describes the Kellogg's as "fringe members of the flourishing Bohemian colony that Jack London and Lincoln Steffens had established at Carmel." London and Steffens were both prominent authors, journalists, and social activists in California.⁴²

Charlotte befriended prominent intelligentsia, among whom the aforementioned Herbert and Lou Hoover. Vernon used to be their lecturer when they both studied at Stanford. According to another biography on Lou Hoover she "especially liked Charlotte's good nature and common sense, recognizing in her a shared love of adventure."⁴³ The years preceding the First World War most certainly confirmed this sense for adventure. Together with Vernon she regularly travelled to Europe where she stayed respectively in Leipzig and Paris. During the summer of 1912 she stayed in London with the Hoover's.⁴⁴ It is clear that both couples befriended each other before the outbreak of the war and the subsequent foundation of the CRB.

When Herbert Hoover established the CRB he immediately called upon his acquaintances for support. Vernon travelled to Belgium for the first time in October 1915. He was appointed general-director in Brussels but had to return after a few weeks to his research in Stanford.⁴⁵ During his brief stay in Belgium Charlotte travelled on-and-off to London, there are no records of her visiting Vernon in Brussels. In California she primarily occupied herself with the organisation of the Stanford Committee, one of the many local offshoots of the CRB. The Stanford Committee organised local fundraising events to support the CRB. Partly due to her commitment the first relief ship was able to set sail from San Francisco in November 1914.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ B.Z. BERSON and D.E. KAPLAN, *Guide to the Kellogg-Dickie Papers*, 4

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² D.C. MAYER, *Lou Henry Hoover*, 145.

⁴³ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman*, 56.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ B. WHITLOCK, *Belgium, A Personal Narrative*, 317.

⁴⁶ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman*, 64.

According to Herbert Hoover, the leading figure of the CRB, women were not needed in occupied Belgium as "there were plenty of Belgian women available to do the 'women's work' of preparing and distributing food."⁴⁷ How is it then that in the summer of 1916 one exception was made? In *Women of Belgium* Charlotte gives her own explanation. Herbert Hoover in his introduction of the book as well as Charlotte's own correspondence show that it wasn't as straightforward as she wanted her readers to believe. Charlotte wasn't a regular representative like her male colleagues but was given a specific assignment. Partly because she was known as a decent writer, but more importantly because she was a woman.

2. Going to Belgium

Charlotte arrived in occupied Belgium in July 1916. In *Women of Belgium* she wrote how the Belgian nurse Marie Depage convinced her to go overseas. Depage had travelled to the US to collect funds for her hospital in the unoccupied municipality De Panne. Her appearance and story impressed Charlotte, who at that time was working for the Stanford Committee. Following her three month tour through the US, Depage boarded the ill-fated RMS Lusitania in the spring of 1915. She became one of its many victims due to a German torpedo attack. Charlotte's enduring commitment to her hospital in De Panne demonstrates how inspired she was by Depage. But this alone wasn't enough to get her into Belgium.⁴⁸

Financially the CRB relied on sponsorships and fundraising events which were organised throughout the US. Especially fundraising was seen by Hoover and the male authority of the CRB as work ideally carried out by women: "To finance a nation's relief requiring eighteen million dollars monthly [...] from the world's public charity by actual executive labour from early morning till late at night - by giving themselves to the actual manual labour of serving the lowly and helpless; to do it with cheerfulness, sympathy and tenderness, not to hundreds but literally millions, this is woman's work."⁴⁹ Propaganda which confronted the Americans with the harsh conditions in Belgium had to assist the women who were organising all kinds of benefits.

As a former English teacher who had been to Europe, who was involved with

⁴⁷ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman*, 64.

⁴⁸ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, 6-8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, XII-XIII.

relief work from the start, and was married to one of the CRB's most prominent representatives Charlotte was most suited to put the tragedy of Belgium into words. The CRB asked Charlotte to join her husband on his coming trip to Belgium to observe and write about the suffering of, in particular, women and children. In the summer of 1916 Vernon had to temporarily replace W.B. Poland as director in Brussels before becoming director of the operations in occupied France.⁵⁰

3. In Belgium: July 1916 - December 1916

In Belgium Charlotte enjoyed the same privileges as her male colleagues. Much like them she travelled continuously from town to town to visit relief centres. Only the area of direct military occupation near the frontline remained off limits to all representatives.⁵¹ She was aware of her exceptional position as she drove in "practically the only automobile carrying a woman on the road."⁵² Francis Wickes, a representative in 1917, explained how he and his colleagues had to ensure that imported goods - food and clothing - were equally and solely distributed among civilians, and that the native products, which were guaranteed from German requisition, were also exported and sold on foreign markets.⁵³

Their inspections led to numerous official reports as well as weekly meetings held at the headquarters in Brussels. There is no single report written by Charlotte nor was her voice ever recorded at a meeting, though she could have been present. Her assignment was to write articles for American newspapers, magazines, and CRB pamphlets about life at their relief centres and those of the Belgian CNSA. While the male authority of both organisations, according to De Schaepdrijver, in particular their leaders Herbert Hoover and Émile Francqui, were often quarrelling with each other, Charlotte visited the canteens, orphanages, and schools in various Belgian cities and towns.⁵⁴

She occasionally accompanied Ella Whitlock, the wife of the American ambassador Brand Whitlock, on her diplomatic missions. In *Women of Belgium* Charlotte describes a scene where a whole street filled with people when Ella

⁵⁰ B. WHITLOCK, *Belgium, A Personal Narrative*, 317; C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, XVI.

⁵¹ F. WICKES, "The American Delegate in Belgium", 481-482.

⁵² C. KELLOGG, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal*, 15.

⁵³ F. WICKES, "The American Delegate in Belgium", 482.

⁵⁴ S. DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *De Grootte Oorlog, Het Koninkrijk België tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Antwerpen, 2013, 117-118.

Whitlock came to visit. Apart from Charlotte, she was the only American woman, but independent from the CRB, who lived in occupied Belgium.⁵⁵ The Kellogg's regularly stayed at their home in Brussels as especially Brand Whitlock appreciated their company. Having to cope with a persisting depression he wrote in his autobiography: "I could count myself fortunate that there had just come to Belgium a friend, in whose society I was to find the sympathy and comradeship [...] for every day during the long hard months remaining before me in Belgium. That friend was Vernon Kellogg."⁵⁶

At the various canteens and orphanages Charlotte met with prominent figures, especially women working for the CNSA. In *Women of Belgium* they remained anonymous but in her later work and correspondence Charlotte revealed their identities. She regularly met with Jane Brigode who was a prominent member of the suffrage movement and later a politician for the liberal party. Another prominent woman whom Charlotte visited was Louise Van den Plas. Van den Plas was a prominent member of the Christian Feminists.⁵⁷ According to Storr, Brigode and Van den Plas together organised the *l'Union Patriotique*. This Patriotic Union tried to enhance Belgian women social conditions during the war.⁵⁸ Charlotte regularly met the leading women of the lace industry. Elizabeth d'Oultremont, Josse Allard, and Kefer-Mali were the most prominent members of the *Aid et Protection aux Dentellières* (the Lace Committee) who defended the rights of thousands of women employed in the lace industry.⁵⁹

Apart from these prominent women Charlotte met almost daily with local volunteers in various Belgian towns. Two organisations in particular drew her attention. The one that struck her most was *Les Petites Abeilles* (The Little Bees) in Brussels. This organisation consisted primarily of women who served soup to impoverished children and orphans.⁶⁰ The second organisation that grasped her interest was the *L'Assistance Discrète* (The Discreet Support). They delivered provisions to families who didn't want to undergo the humiliation of publicly queuing

⁵⁵ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, 49.

⁵⁶ B. WHITLOCK, *Belgium, A Personal Narrative*, 351.

⁵⁷ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mrs Crocker, 8 September 1917; Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 8 May 2018.

⁵⁸ K. STORR., *Excluded from the Record*, 109.

⁵⁹ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium*, 17.

⁶⁰ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, 120.

for food but nonetheless required it.⁶¹ Before Charlotte left in December she had the opportunity to meet Cardinal Mercier at his Archbishops Palace in Mechelen.⁶² She had seen him, as one of the many spectators, during his inciting 21st of July speech at the Cathedral in Brussels. Following his speech riots broke out, which Charlotte silently applauded.⁶³

Officially a CRB representative had to remain strictly neutral. While she criticised the German occupation in her private correspondence with Belgian diplomats as well as in later public statements, she refrained from doing so in *Women of Belgium*. She strongly sympathised with the Belgian population, as did every American representative. After the war she wrote how "Our C.R.B. men were all but breaking under the strain. Mr. Tuck, stationed at Mons, left everything, and rushed out across the Channel to England to join the British army and fight his way back to Mons to put an end in the one way possible to the horrors he had witnessed."⁶⁴

The ever-present mistrust between the American representatives and the occupier reached new heights at the start of 1917. This is best demonstrated by *Conversion d'un Neutre* (Conversion of a Neutral), an opinion piece written by Vernon Kellogg. After leaving France Vernon explained how his relation with the German authorities as well as reports on German atrocities changed him from being a pacifist to a committed supporter of American military intervention.⁶⁵ As the tensions between the US and Germany rose, the privileged position of the American representatives in Belgium became more and more precarious. By the American declaration of war on April 6th most representatives had already left the occupied territories.

⁶¹ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mr Cerf, 13 June 1918.

⁶² C. KELLOGG, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal*, 118.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁴ C. KELLOGG, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal*, 157-158.

⁶⁵ V. KELLOGG, "Conversion d'un Neutre", *L'Echo Belge*, 8 May 1917.

4. Back Home

"Oh you who are going back in that free country of the United States, tell to all our suffering, our distress; tell them again and again our cries of alarm, which come from our oppressed and agonized hearts!"⁶⁶

Charlotte's assignment ended in December. She had to return to California while Vernon decided to stay in France until the American declaration of war.⁶⁷ For roughly six months she had travelled through Belgium and Northern France but her actual work only started now. On the one hand she devoted her time to propaganda in support of Belgium. She wrote articles, held public talks in California and elsewhere in the US, and published her first book. On the other hand she got deeply involved in the organisation of the California Committee for Relief in Belgium and Northern France (CCRB). By entering the war the US terminated its role in the CRB. The CCRB was one of many regional offshoots who, by using its old networks, organized financial relief for Belgian charities. Charlotte's ambitions went a step further, she advocated in favour of a national committee and the formation of new local committees elsewhere in the US.

4.1. The CCRB

In June 1917 the CCRB was established under the guidance of two women in particular: Ethel Crocker and Charlotte Kellogg. As the official treasurer Ethel financed the whole project with private funds. Because of her marriage with the Californian banker William Henry Crocker she had access to the means of the Crocker National Bank. Ethel was in charge of the day-to-day organisation as Charlotte was rarely seen in San Francisco.⁶⁸ The experiences acquired in Belgium gave Charlotte, as honorary secretary, the legitimacy to give general directions to the CCRB. Not only did she allocate the donations to their respective Belgian charities,

⁶⁶ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, "The need is urgent!", *Pamphlet for the CCRB by C. Kellogg*, 1918.

⁶⁷ B. WHITLOCK, *Belgium, A Personal Narrative*, 421-422.

⁶⁸ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Official rapport on the organisation of the CCRB, October 1917.

she also corresponded with the Belgian envoy in Washington and was the public spokeswoman of the committee.⁶⁹

In a letter to Baron Emile-Ernest de Cartier de Marchienne, the new Belgian envoy in Washington, the organisation described itself as being "a new organisation [...] will continue to appeal for help for Belgium, especially for the regions of Mons and Charleroi, already 'adopted' by California, and for the Base Hospital of La Panne".⁷⁰ Despite being a new organisation Charlotte hoped to "save as much of the old machinery of the CRB as possible".⁷¹ Like Ethel and herself most of the people involved in the project had earned their stripes in the CRB and its regional subdivisions such as the Stanford Commission. The sort of activities – all kind of benefits and fundraising events - didn't alter much. Also known networks were called upon to get financial support where it was most needed.⁷²

Not everything remained the same. First of all, the donated money was transferred through the Belgian embassy in Washington to its final destination in Belgium. Since 1917 the embassy had a new envoy: Baron de Cartier de Marchienne. Coming from his post in China he had to ensure that the donations from various American organisations reached its recipients. More than his predecessor he associated himself with American relief organisations such as the CCRB.⁷³ Secondly, the decentralization of American relief projects created opportunities as well as challenges. Various projects began to compete with each other and with the Red Cross, who also recruited former CRB volunteers. Lastly, now the US were at war the CCRB continuously struggled to convince Americans to donate money to a civilian, non-American cause.⁷⁴

Despite these difficulties the Belgian envoy considered the CCRB as one of the most valuable projects. As he wrote to Charlotte, "California really is becoming the banner state of our cause in America and is running Massachusetts and Pennsylvania very near in this race of humanitarian sentiments."⁷⁵ While the envoy saw fruit in the competition between the different regional commissions Charlotte

⁶⁹ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Official rapport on the organisation of the CCRB, October 1917.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 13 June 1917.

⁷¹ Ibid., 14 June 1917.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Mrs Kellogg and Mrs Harkin, 4 August 1917.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 14 June 1917.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Letter from Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Mrs Kellogg, 14 August 1917.

suggested an alternative approach. She wanted a centralised federal framework in cooperation with other committees from respectively Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania.⁷⁶ Her idea, which included collaboration with leading women elsewhere, was quickly discouraged. The Belgian envoy in consultation with Vernon Kellogg, who had returned from France, argued that the present circumstances were not ideal.⁷⁷

4.2. A Public Speaker

If Charlotte was disappointed it surely didn't influence her commitment. On the contrary, from August 1917 onwards she began with holding several public talks a day in California. These propaganda speeches were certainly not without success. A substantive amount of the money raised is attributed to her gifted storytelling. In October 1917 the San Francisco Examiner wrote an ecstatic review on one of her talks, "In a torrent of words, and with the simplest and most lofty eloquence Mrs. Kellogg swayed at will the thousand men and women who crowded into the big dining room".⁷⁸ Charlotte herself was more critical of her work and the prevailing competition between American relief organisations. In a letter to the envoy she wrote how "the demands for money for the Red Cross and our own war needs make it difficult to get large sums, but we are really encouraged by the spirit".⁷⁹

As a speaker Charlotte appealed to the moral conscience of her audience. She spoke vividly about the tragedy of occupation, the harsh conditions Belgians had to live in, and the lack of German empathy. As Spain and the Netherlands were still organising the CRB - without official American help – she argued that it would be a shame if Americans refrained from donating through other channels such as the CCRB. Eventually the success of her speeches brought her to the capital, Washington DC. Starting in January 1918 and on the expenses of the Belgian embassy she embarked on a six month tour through American cities among which Nashville, Albany, Memphis, Richmond, and Princeton. Wherever she went donations for the

⁷⁶ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Official rapport on the organisation of the CCRB, October 1917, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 14 June 1917.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Letter from Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Mrs Kellogg, 3 July 1917.

⁷⁸ "Mrs. Kellogg voices plea for Belgium", *The San Francisco Examiner*, 21 October 1917.

⁷⁹ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 25 October 1917.

CCRB poured in.⁸⁰

The lack of a federal framework didn't stop Charlotte from getting involved elsewhere. Writing her letters on the train between public appearances she told the Belgian envoy how two new local committees had been established in Tennessee and Kentucky. She also negotiated with committees in New York and Pennsylvania concerning the support of different local charities in Belgium. It wasn't uncommon that the CCRB transferred some of its donations to Pennsylvania and vice versa.⁸¹ The monthly collection in California alone was too unstable for their recipients to rely on. In the first months the total amount remained under \$10 000, from October onwards the CCRB reached \$20 000 and exceptionally peaked above \$30 000. However, the fluctuation between two consecutive months could mount up to \$10 000.⁸²

Charlotte's rhetorical talent didn't escape Hoover's attention. In April 1918 she was asked to speak on behalf of the United States Food Administration (USFA), Hoover's latest project. In short, as explained by former associates, the USFA issued guidelines on food consumption in the US so there were no shortages for the army who fought overseas.⁸³ For a crowd of 3000 people in the Grand Opera House of Chicago Charlotte gave a speech on the shortages and threatening tuberculosis in Belgium. She appealed to the attendees - the kitchen patriots - to limit the use of fats and sugar. This had to be done not only for the wellbeing of American soldiers but also Belgians, especially children, living under occupation.⁸⁴

After Chicago Charlotte became exhausted of holding speeches as is apparent in another letter to the Belgian envoy: "Unfortunately my time and strength get pretty much used up in just the food talks, but in each city I have at least seen some group and tried to start them off. I should be able to stay instead of hurrying ahead always".⁸⁵ With the official appreciation of the Belgian King and Queen and a letter from the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul Hymans, saying: "You,

⁸⁰ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mr Paternotte, 29 August 1918.

⁸¹ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, March 1918.

⁸² Ibid., Monthly financial reports from July 1917 - February 1919. (Except February 1918 and August 1918)

⁸³ F.M. SURFACE and R.L. BLAND, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period. Operations of the Organisations Under the Direction of Herbert Hoover 1914 to 1924*, Stanford, 1931, 15.

⁸⁴ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 30 April 1918; Ibid., 1 May 1918; "Women Thrill at Recital of Allies' Needs", *Chicago Examiner*, 1 May 1918; "Urgent Need for Saving Food to Win the War", *Chicago Evening Post*, 30 April 1918; "U.S. Overfed as Others Starve, Woman Asserts", *Chicago Journal*, 30 April 1918.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 11 June 1918.

Californians, do things 'big' particularly when it comes to help friends in need."⁸⁶ She returned to San Francisco in June 1918.

4.3. The Final Months

Back home Charlotte was confronted with rival organisations and the suggestion of the Belgian envoy, Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, to reshuffle the donations so his home region Marchienne, near Charleroi, would benefit more.⁸⁷ California primarily donated its money to charities which had impressed Charlotte during her time in Belgium in 1916. Examples are the Holland Fund, which took care of Belgian Children in the Netherlands, the Milk Fund for Belgian Babies and of course the aforementioned *Les Petites Abbeiles* and *l'Assistance Discrète*.⁸⁸ Charlotte valued her personal connection to local charities and didn't want to cut ties with them, however small the financial support might be. To somewhat accommodate the envoy's request she asked the sororities at Stanford to organise a benefit for Marchienne.⁸⁹

Charlotte stayed the whole summer in San Francisco. Apart from the envoy's request she had to address allegations made by a rival organisation who operated under the same name. They accused her of slander and withholding donations for personal gain. While she was never convicted and didn't lose support of the CCRB or the Belgian consulate the allegations were the final blow to her plans to federalise relief work.⁹⁰ In September 1918 she returned to New York where she once more held a series of talks for the USFA. When the war ended two months later she immediately embarked on a ship to Belgium. Together with Ethel Crocker she remained in liberated Belgium for three months.⁹¹

Back in Brussels Charlotte used Californian and Pennsylvanian funds to establish a home for independent employed women but she primarily travelled through the former warzone in the province of West Flanders.⁹² Here she visited

⁸⁶ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mr Hymans to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 19 June 1918; *Ibid.*, Letter from Mr Hymans to Mrs Kellogg, 20 July 1918.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter from Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Mrs Kellogg, 13 June 1918.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, "The need is urgent!", *Pamphlet for the CCRB by C. Kellogg*, 1918.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 17 June 1918.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Letter from Baron Cartier de Marchienne to Mrs Spreckels, 30 June 1918; *Ibid.*, Letter from lawyer Edward Hohfeld to the CCRB, 7 June 1918.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Mr Hymans, 3 December 1918; *Ibid.*, Letter from Baron Cartier de Marchienne to Mrs Crocker, 8 December 1918.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Telegram from Mrs Kellogg to the CCRB, 20 December 1918.

convents and schools who educated and employed girls in the lace industry. From her first days at the Stanford Committee she, at the request of Lou Hoover, aided the lace industry. But it's after witnessing the working conditions with her own eyes, during her second visit, that accelerated her commitment. As in 1916 Charlotte began writing articles and pamphlets to convince Americans to aid Belgium.⁹³

December, primarily due to Thanksgiving and Christmas campaigns, was the last successful month of the CCRB.⁹⁴ In 1919 donations declined rapidly and the continuity of the CCRB was questioned. Disillusioned and frustrated Charlotte had to leave Belgium in February. In a five pages long letter to the Belgian envoy she gave words to her incomprehension of Belgium's request to end the aid. "They would, unfortunately see only the elaborate dinners and pearl necklaces, and not see the misery which still exists [...] nor have they yet been where I have spent most of my time - in the poor Flanders, where the suffering is very great."⁹⁵

On the 31st of March the relief operations in California ceased.⁹⁶ While Ethel Crocker continued to assist an orphanage in Charleroi and a hospital in Antwerp, Charlotte began a campaign to support the Belgian lace industry.⁹⁷ Ultimately this led to the publication of *Bobbins in Belgium* and yet another tour through American cities where she promoted Belgian lace. In 1921 Charlotte returned once more to Belgium. This time together with her husband and newborn daughter Jean Kellogg. She primarily sought more support for her lace-campaign. An audience with the King and Queen was not granted but for her merits she was awarded the *Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Couronne*.⁹⁸

⁹³ A.B. ALLEN, *An Independent Woman*, 65; NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron Cartier de Marchienne, 18 May 1919.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Harkin to Baron Cartier de Marchienne, 15 January 1919.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron Cartier de Marchienne, 7 February 1919.

⁹⁶ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mrs Parker, 7 March 1919.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 28 May 1919.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Letter from the Belgian customs to the Belgian embassy in Washington, 22 June 1921; Letter from the Belgian ambassador in the US to Mr Blondiau, 21 June 1921.

PART III: BOOKS

1. Introduction

Between 1917 and 1920 Charlotte published three books which are all based on her experiences in Belgium. They were written to draw American attention to the difficulties Belgians had to endure. The two books, *Women of Belgium* and *Bobbins of Belgium*, are primarily concerned with the lives of women during occupation and subsequent reconstruction. The third book, *Mercier, The Fighting Cardinal of Belgium*, is an idealised biography of the Belgian cardinal. The origins the three works can be traced back to the numerous articles she had written earlier for American newspapers and magazines.

With the possible exception of *The Fighting Cardinal* her writings are based on personal eyewitness accounts. They are characterised by propaganda, she never intended to narrate the facts or seek objectivity. Instead, she wanted to rally American support for the Belgian case. *Women of Belgium*, the only book published during the war, refrains from directly criticising Germany. Arguably because the neutrality of the CRB had to be preserved. As one of her letters to the Belgian envoy shows, Charlotte struggled with this: "I had to be neutral! It all had to be done in a great hurry and it does not begin to give a glimpse of the superb spirit and triumph of your poor people."⁹⁹

In this chapter all three books will be analysed. Despite their obvious agenda the writings give insight on how Charlotte perceived the role of women in a West-European society. "The martyrdom of Belgium was being prevented by its women", she wrote in *Women of Belgium*.¹⁰⁰ How does she relate this "prevention of martyrdom" to the role of women within families, charities, and the workplace? Her final book concerning Belgium is different from the earlier works. *The Fighting Cardinal* is not as much the result of propaganda but of a personal adoration of Cardinal Mercier. Relieved from obligations and restrictions Charlotte wrote explicitly on her view of what an ideal West-European society should be like. An

⁹⁹ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron Cartier de Marchienne, 6 August 1917.

¹⁰⁰ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, 10.

idealised description of Cardinal Mercier served as her medium to do this.

2. Women of Belgium

"It ought to be read by every American who does not want to shut both his heart and his purse against that awful need."¹⁰¹ *The New York Times*

"In her book, Mrs. Kellogg has glorified the women of Belgium, but in so doing, she has glorified the Women of America who have extended a helping hand to their sisters of Belgium in their hour of need."¹⁰²
Baron Cartier de Marchienne

"It is one of the most thrilling books which I have ever read."¹⁰³ *Paul Hymans*

In April 1917, only a few months after her return to California, Charlotte published *Women of Belgium: Turning Tragedy to Triumph*. An advertisement describes the book as "an absorbingly interesting narrative of personal experience by the only woman member of the Relief Commission who tells in moving language the story of the unbreakable spirit sustaining the Belgians and the noble service the Belgian women have rendered and inspired in a land made desolate by war".¹⁰⁴ Its only one of many examples. Critics received the book positively and Belgian representatives responded ecstatic, though their personal letters shouldn't be overestimated.

Based on her own observations *Women of Belgium* tells the story of the Belgian women who were involved in local charities. The book was published at the moment the US entered the war and by consequence ended its involvement within the CRB. Comparable to the fundraising activities and her public talks Charlotte wanted to draw attention to the Belgian issue. On the one hand she demonstrated the commitment and perseverance of these women. On the other hand, the book stresses the importance of the CRB: without American support the commitment of the Belgian women would be in vain. By donating the profits of her book to the newly established

¹⁰¹ "Review: Women of Belgium", *The New York Times*, 23 April 1917.

¹⁰² NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Speech by Baron de Cartier de Marchienne for "The Daughters of the American Revolution, 15 April 1918.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, Letter from Mr Hymans to Mrs Kellogg, 6 May 1917.

¹⁰⁴ "Women of Belgium, Turning Tragedy to Triumph", *Pamphlet*, 1918.

CCRB she set an example for others to follow.¹⁰⁵

From ladling soup and sewing clothes to the treatment of the sick, elderly, and children: as a representative of the CRB Charlotte meticulously described the functioning of these different charities. Hereof *Les Petites Abeilles* are one example. In the smallest details she described and idealised how this charity distributed food to the malnourished children and elderly in Brussels: "For over nine hundred days now, ladling out one and one-quarter million pints of soup, and cooking for, and scrubbing for, and yearning over, hundreds of thousands of more rows."¹⁰⁶ For resources and logistics they depended on international relief as "their dull and dry calculations of protein, fat and carbohydrates, bills of lading, cars, canal boats, mills and what not, is the replenishing of the life stream of a nation's blood."¹⁰⁷

Throughout *Women of Belgium* Charlotte emphasises the strength of these women whose husbands and sons were either killed, in the trenches, imprisoned, or deported. According to Charlotte they had found "in their Queen the leader typifying the highest ideal of their service, and the actual comrade in sorrow, working shoulder to shoulder with them in the hospitals and kitchens."¹⁰⁸ While her focus is clearly on the conventional roles of women, the women of whom Hoover supposedly said "have become the Mother of Belgium", she also noticed new opportunities.¹⁰⁹ "While the war has brought unutterable misery, it has also brought extraordinary opportunity, and Belgium is seizing this opportunity wherever she can."¹¹⁰ According to Charlotte social and class barriers disappeared - as everyone shared in the suffering - and women had to look out for work.

For Charlotte it was remarkable how girls begged to be taken in, in industries other than the textile industry.¹¹¹ She considered this as a positive evolution, hoping that the girls would remain employed once the war was over. The US had to open its markets for the products manufactured by female employees.¹¹² The alleged disappearance of class barriers is not as clear. Charlotte suggests the existence of a class transcending solidarity. However, on the one hand she refrained from analysing

¹⁰⁵ "Women of Belgium, Turning Tragedy to Triumph", *Pamphlet*, 1918.

¹⁰⁶ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, 39.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹¹² NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 12 May 1917.

the varying degrees of suffering and on the other hand she does acknowledge different kind of charities which were largely class-bound. The well-off contacted the *Assistance Discrète* rather than having to stand in the soup lines of *Les Petites Abeilles*. The so-called ashamed poor were supported privately with, according to Charlotte the motto, *donne, et tais-toi*, give, and be silent.¹¹³

In his introduction Herbert Hoover wrote "The soul of Belgium received a grievous wound, but the women of Belgium are staunching the flow."¹¹⁴ For Charlotte the women involved in charity work were the ones staunching this flow. "I was to learn in what glorious manner [...] the women of Belgium, true to the womanhood and motherhood of all ages, were binding the wounds and healing the soul of their country!"¹¹⁵ While the subject of employed women is touched upon, the traditional roles linked to motherhood - nursing, feeding and caring - dominate her rhetoric. Charlotte herself referred subtly to the topic of her next book as " a full account of the struggle of the lace-workers would take us straight to the heart of the tragedy of Belgium."¹¹⁶ Although *Women of Belgium* had sold over 2.350 copies by December 1917 and a French translation was underway, it would take three years before the publishing of her next book.¹¹⁷

3. Bobbins of Belgium

*"Mrs. Kellogg s'est intéressée à la dentelle Belge depuis le premier voyage qu'elle fit en Belgique. Elle a donné dans différent grand centres des séries de conférences sur la dentelle Belge, qui ont été très écoutées."*¹¹⁸ *Baron Cartier de Marchienne*

In the spring of 1920, financially as well as logistically supported by the Belgian government, Charlotte repeated her performance from '17-'18. To promote Belgian lace she published a book and toured through American cities.¹¹⁹ From her earlier

¹¹³ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mr Cerf, 13 June 1918.

¹¹⁴ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, XVI.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹¹⁷ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Financial rapport of December 1917.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter from Baron de Cartier de Marchienne to Mr Hymans, 5 April 1920.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Mr Paternotte (Belgian consul in the US) to Mr Tyck (Secretary of the Belgian Chambre de Commerce), 11 March 1920; Letter from Mr Healy (American consul in Belgium) to Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, 15 March 1920.

publications it becomes clear that she had a personal interest in the lace industry. As a consequence *Bobbins of Belgium: A Book of Belgian Lace, Lace-Workers, Lace-Schools and Lace-Villages* is much more than a work of propaganda. Relying on personal observations, which she made in her first visit during the war but especially during her second visit following Armistice, she wrote a critical assessment of the existing social conditions.

Charlotte stressed the importance of the lace industry for the Belgian economy as well as its cultural heritage. By giving a broad historical context with a long chronological run-up - beginning in the Middle Ages - she emphasised the longstanding tradition and uniqueness of Belgian lace.¹²⁰ War, but especially industrialisation threatened its survival. Her work had a clear social agenda. The historical approach is used to criticise the poor conditions female employees have to live and work in. Indeed, contrary to *Women of Belgium* her second book doesn't shy away from criticising the role played by the German occupier as well as the pre-war Belgian institutions, or the lack thereof.¹²¹ Once more it were the Americans who through the CRB played a key role in ameliorating the conditions, thus Charlotte.¹²²

Shortly before the beginning of the war four aristocratic women, Elizabeth d'Oultremont, the Vicomtesse de Beughem, Josse Allard, and Kefer-Mali, had established the *Amies de la Dentelle* (Friends of Lace). They defended the rights of 45.000 women employed in the lace industry by advocating for higher wages, better schooling, and better working conditions.¹²³ Despite their efforts these challenges were not solved by 1914. During the war its successor the *Aide et Protections aux Dentellières* (Lace Committee or LC) cooperated with the CRB. The CRB imported thread and exported an equivalent of weight in lace on behalf of the LC. In exchange for this cooperation the LC vowed to ameliorate the conditions of lace workers.¹²⁴ The German *Allgemeine Spitzen Centrale* (General Lace Centre) rivalled the LC.

According to Charlotte the Centre was successful "with the simpler, more helpless workers, who because of their great misery may be forgiven for selling to them."¹²⁵ Unschooled lace workers were defenceless against the exploiting Germans.

¹²⁰ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium*, 26-29.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 243.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 17 and 25.

¹²⁴ NAB, *Nationaal Werk voor Steun aan Kantwerksters, Aide et Protections aux Dentellières*, T 042, 1914-1920, Nr. 14, Expéditions de dentelles par la Commission for Relief in Belgium.

¹²⁵ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium*, 120-121.

This brought Charlotte to her first of three points of critique: "One of the great evils of the past has been the absence of training schools [...] at least trained workers will enjoy the freedom to choose and the feeling of independence that comes from a thorough knowledge of their métier."¹²⁶ Girls had to be schooled but during the war this also meant longer hours.

"Unfortunately in this, which is considered a 'good' school for Flanders, I found the longest hours I had yet met", thus Charlotte came to her second point.¹²⁷ The longer hours were connected to the low wages, the final point of critique: "Because of the miserable lace-wage this industry has always been regarded as a supplementary occupation, on which the family could not rely for its main support, and which was not capable of organization and amelioration as other industries are."¹²⁸ These were the three challenges - lack of schooling, low wages and poor working conditions - addressed by the CRB and the Lace Committee.

During the war the standards noticeably increased. The Lace Committee regulated the production and trade process and ensured a minimum wage of three francs per week, an improvement but still insufficient according to Charlotte.¹²⁹ However, the biggest threat remained industrialisation. It made the lace industry economically less relevant, which led to substandard organization and consequently the perseverance of exploitive intermediaries due to the lack of syndicates.¹³⁰ Charlotte worried about the cultural consequences of industrialisations, "Since Ypres is dead, only Bruges and Turnhout remain as true lace cities of Belgium; Ghent, herself once a Queen in the lace world, has turned to her factories and no longer counts."¹³¹

The traditional industry charmed Charlotte as she hoped that if Bruges would ever look to large industrial development the city would guard her "lovely, tranquil beauty of long ago".¹³² The Catholic béguinages and the convents where girls were introduced in the world of lace by nuns fascinated Charlotte utmost. The protection of the cultural heritage is in *Bobbins of Belgium* at least as important as safeguarding the social improvements made during the war. Charlotte doubted however if the post war

¹²⁶ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium*, 55.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹²⁹ NAB, *Nationaal Werk voor Steun aan Kantwerkster*, T 042, Nr. 1, Réglement et organisation.

¹³⁰ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium*, 38-39.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 165-166.

government could sustain a socially ameliorated lace industry, "we might hope that the state would undertake such a work, but with its present overwhelming burden, it is a question if the government can occupy itself with lace needs."¹³³

Her second book ends with a comparable message as her first, it is a call to Americans to help preserve and ameliorate the Belgian lace industry. Her final book on Belgium has a more subtle message and doesn't plead for active American support.

4. The Fighting Cardinal

"A thousand years from now there will be poems and paintings and statues to celebrate Albert, King of the Belgians, and beside him there will be the figure of the great Cardinal who held aloft in his pious hands the ideal of patriotism and endurance and kept alive the spirit of the nation."¹³⁴ *Brand Whitlock*

Charlotte's final book concerning Belgium was published in 1920, three years after the war. Americans no longer had to be convinced to open their purses for Belgian charities or lace. *The Fighting Cardinal* is a modern hagiography. The book idealises the deeds of the Belgian cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier during the war. Charlotte has witnessed many public gatherings with cardinal Mercier. The first time on the Belgian national holiday in July 1916. The cardinal preached in the St. Gudule Cathedral in Brussels. Charlotte was deeply impressed and after the mass concluded that "those who fail to accept his argument are often captivated by the beauty of his style."¹³⁵

As a representative of the CRB she met the cardinal once in his archbishop's palace in Mechelen.¹³⁶ After the war in 1918 she had a second meeting with him. Despite the fact that, according to Charlotte, they talked in both meetings "freely and generously" the majority of *The Fighting Cardinal* is composed of speeches and writings by Mercier himself rather than their conversations.¹³⁷ The few personal observations and her selection of the cardinal's gives the reader insights on Charlotte's view of resistance, the German occupier, and the role of the Catholic Church in Belgian society.

¹³³ C. KELLOGG, *Bobbins of Belgium*, 243.

¹³⁴ C. KELLOGG, Mercier, *The Fighting Cardinal*, VII.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 9.

In *Women of Belgium* and *Bobbins of Belgium* Charlotte describes the CRB representatives as neutral despite the misdeeds of the occupier. In *The Fighting Cardinal* the representative becomes more active. On the one hand Charlotte welcomed acts of public disobedience through the illegal press and riots following preaches by Mercier as "the Bruxellois had promised to remain quiet; but his own example steeled their hearts to danger. We have seen how splendidly they broke their promise."¹³⁸ Charlotte no longer hid her disgust for the German military, she vividly describes the deportations as follows: "those of us who have seen the men torn from their wives and children and started along the tracks in open cattle cars toward the unseen horror, and who later saw the return of groups of these victims, against whom even the slave-driver felt it useless to struggle further, whose bodies were emaciated and broken by agony of hunger and disease, it is still impossible to look back without a sense of physical, as well as spiritual, illness."¹³⁹

In an earlier article, published during the war in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Charlotte elaborated on her view of Germany. She argued that the Germans were waging war "in accordance to the dictates of cold-blooded cynicism that is the outgrowth of their philosophy."¹⁴⁰ Similar to Mercier she did not differentiate between the German government and its people. According to her the German people is the army, and the army is the German people. On top of this the army is guilty of numerous misdeeds, from suppression to deportation.¹⁴¹ In *The Fighting Cardinal* it becomes clear that CRB representatives struggled to not publicly take side.

The Church united the Belgian people who were opposing their occupier. Cardinal Mercier was "the voice, not only of the Church, but of Belgium heartening her children."¹⁴² The Church managed to united Flemings and Walloons, Catholics and Protestants against the invader who did not dare to lay its hands on the clergy, thus Charlotte. Mercier aspired national unity as the "Fleming-Walloon fusion has never been complete."¹⁴³ Charlotte wished that the Catholic Church would have taken the opportunity to become a universal Church. In a meeting with Mercier she talked about how according to her many felt that during the war the Catholic church failed to seize one of the greatest opportunities in its history, freeing itself temporal

¹³⁸ C. KELLOGG, Mercier, *The Fighting Cardinal*, 9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

¹⁴⁰ "Mrs. Kellogg voices plea for Belgium", *The San Francisco Examiner*, 21 October 1917.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² C. KELLOGG, Mercier, *The Fighting Cardinal*, 133.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19.

ambitions, the Church might have become a universal church again. "¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ C. KELLOGG, Mercier, *The Fighting Cardinal*, 173.

CONCLUSION

1. Women of Belgium

Charlotte Kellogg's departure in January 1919 was very different from her departure two years earlier in December 1916. In 1916 Charlotte left Belgium charmed by the patriotism, persistence, and solidarity she had witnessed amongst especially women. Two years later she left disillusioned and disappointed. The tendency of class-transcending solidarity, national unity, and social progress for women did not appear to be continued. The opportunities she saw led to disillusionments. This motivated her to commit herself to lace industry and write a book on the ultimate shortcoming of the Catholic Church.

The difference between '16-'18 and the following years is reflected in Charlotte's writings. Of course, the context had drastically changed. Germany no longer occupied Belgium and the CRB, as well as its offshoots, had ceased to exist. Initially her focus was on Belgian women who had to cope with a foreign, military occupation. She describes them as patriotic soldiers working shoulder to shoulder in the hospitals and kitchens. They answered the call of duty as their fathers, husbands and sons did. The women did what was expected of them, they became the mother of Belgium.¹⁴⁵

Criticism on social injustice, in particular in the lace industry and Belgium's schools, was largely omitted. Charlotte saw how under American guidance (the CRB) the historic deficit in these sectors was being addressed. On top of that, the period of occupation left no space for social or political activism. Women were to be idealised. Despite the everyday hardship they exalted in becoming 'national mothers'. Nuns left their convents to ladle soup in canteens, aristocratic women organised committee's to support female employees, and those employees delivered provisions to the proud Belgians "who are making the tragic fight to keep off the terrible soup lines."¹⁴⁶

This path was no longer followed once the war was over. Disappointed Charlotte wrote how the Belgian aristocracy failed to see the social injustice women had to cope with, especially in war stricken West Flanders. With the disappearance of

¹⁴⁵ C. KELLOGG, *Women of Belgium*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ NAB, *Archives de la Guerre, Consulats et l'ambassade de Belgique en Amérique*, T-521, 1914-1918, Letter from Mrs Kellogg to Mr Cerf, 13 June 1918.

the CRB Charlotte no longer believed that the social progress made during the war, for example through the Lace Committee, would be sustained. Therefore she became personally involved in, on the one hand, promoting Belgian lace in the US, and on the other hand, defending social rights of women employed in the sector.

Charlotte's focus had shifted from united in suffering to the amelioration of social rights for women. *Bobbins of Belgium* is a clear example as well as, albeit less straightforward, *Mercier, the fighting cardinal*. She adored Mercier's message of national unity through Catholicism. During the war the Belgian Church acted as a catalyst for civil disobedience and resistance. It brought a kind of unity which was unseen before but lost again after the war. Charlotte wasn't a political activist. She befriended Belgian suffragettes, feminists, and liberals but she herself took no active position in the debate.

The ideal post war Belgian society is one with better social protection for employed women and education for girls. She believes this has to be achieved paternalistically top-down, initially through the CRB and the Church. While her visits to workhouses, schools, and convents convinced her of Belgium's good intentions, it also convinces her of its incapability to address the situation. The aristocracy, who took the lead during the war, all but abandoned their support after the occupation was over. The Church who had united Belgians during the war failed to sustain this unity. In 1918 her hope lays with the Belgian government. But, since they have to rebuild a whole country she doubted if the economically less-relevant lace industry would get the attention it required.

2. Women of America

In California, and in the US in general, Charlotte was surrounded by likeminded women. Due to her experience in Belgium, as well as being one of the founders of the CRB in California, Charlotte took the initiative in the development of its organisation. The initial social circle around Lou Hoover gradually expanded and by the end of the war in almost every American city a committee was established. Charlotte's ambition to centralise the efforts were only tempered by the overarching conservative male establishment of the CRB.

From the analysed sources it is not clear if women used the CCRB to ameliorate their own social and political rights. Women were to stick to conventional

notions of sister- and motherhood to convince Americans to support Belgian women and children. Benefits and other fundraising events organised by the CCRB propagated these traditional ideas. American women had to become kitchen-patriots, so mothers could feed their children in Belgium. Despite the fact that Charlotte carried out this message in her writings and in the numerous public speeches she held, it does not explain her commitment.

In these years Charlotte lived largely independent of her husband, who was often abroad. She didn't stay home to nurture her newborn child but instead became a liberated, somewhat rebellious, woman who travelled throughout America. She challenged her male superiors in the CRB and constantly sought the limits of her power. Charlotte's particular stance does not apply to her colleagues. While most of the women involved had a comparable background in the academic world they did not share the exceptional route Charlotte had taken. Having been the only female representative in Belgium gave her tremendous legitimacy until long after the First World War.

In the interwar years Charlotte diverted her attention to literature and Polish relief work. On the one hand she began writing poetry and children's books in California, on the other hand supported a Polish relief commission organised by her husband. Already during the First World War Vernon Kellogg, after leaving France, began with organising relief for Polish refugees. After her campaign on lace was finished in 1921 Charlotte devoted herself to this organisation. This began with a diplomatic mission in 1921 to escort the known scientist Marie Curie in Poland and resulted in a historical biography on the medieval Polish queen Jadwiga in 1936.¹⁴⁷

Charlotte had a very outspoken opinion on social rights for women. Politically her position was less clear. It is correct to say that she combined her Christian, paternalist convictions with a deep concern for social injustice regarding women and children in Belgium. By writing and speaking about it she initially stuck to what was asked of her: to convey the suffering of Belgian women to American mothers. After 1918 she alters her approach. The topic is no longer to avoid famine but to maintain social progress. According to Charlotte, therefore American interference was needed.

Her work can be regarded as one of the first, unintentional, steps towards women's history. She wasn't an educated historian but, like pre-1960 female

¹⁴⁷ KELLOGG C., *Jadwiga, Queen of Poland*, Washington, 1936.

historians, Charlotte had a clear social angle to the question of womanhood. Her works give voice to a group of women who were silent before. She shows how women are actors in history though stumble on greater historical tendencies and structures. Industrialisation, occupation, governmental institutions, and the Church are the prime actors in holding women back. She also shows that women were limited by an overwhelming male establishment. In this case the CRB, but also the German military and the Belgian government who failed to ameliorate women social conditions.

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