

the Six Point Group are provided. It is depressing to realise how many of the issues taken up by the Six Point Group—for instance, equal pay and equal opportunity—are still unresolved.

Another corrective provided by Spender is in the area of the suffrage movement. It has long been received wisdom that this was a single issue movement, concentrated solely on the obtention of the vote, which then dissolved once this aim was achieved. The members of the suffrage movement were women of diverse interests, who, once the vote was obtained, continued to pursue these issues. The suffragettes also enable Spender to take up again a recurrent theme of the book, namely, the harassment of women who formulate feminist or anti-patriarchal ideas. Indeed, the harassment of the suffragettes, especially the Pankhursts and the WSPU, is so blatant that it becomes emblematic of the fate of all women who protest. Furthermore, it calls into question the relationship of women and politics. As Spender states,

Because it is fundamental to the frame of reference in a patriarchal society that men are the political creatures, the political activists and theorists, women's activities in relation to power are *denatured*, classified as something else. Either it is denied that the women are concerned about power (the women have got the issue all wrong) or else it is asserted that the women are not real women (the women themselves are wrong), for it is mandatory that the deficiency be found in the women and not in the means of interpreting the world. (p. 396)

It would seem that feminist activity implies the most radical shift of perspective in one's view of society and that such a realignment exacts a heavy toll from those who are committed to it.

It is commonly supposed to be the reviewer's duty to point out flaws in the work under discus-

sion. Naturally, it is possible to do this with *Women of Ideas*; however, in mentioning shortcomings, one is really stating that the work is not perfect. In a book of this scope, there are bound to be some errors; since there is no attempt at specialisation, those expert in a particular discipline or especially knowledgeable about a particular individual may find some minor deficiencies. Nevertheless, I do not think that this in any way invalidates the overall achievement of the book. In addition, it may be argued that Spender is repetitious in driving home her main ideas. Yet this is, given the basic premise and the methodology of the work, quite unavoidable; on the contrary, it enables Spender to lend weight to her argument through the cumulative examples of the historical suppression of women's ideas. In sum, this is an exciting and thought-provoking work.

Dorothy Zaborszky  
Laurentian University

**Lydia Maria Child: Selected Letters, 1817-1880.** Edited by Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland; Associate Editor, Francine Krasno. *Amherst, Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1982. Pp. 583.*

Lydia Maria Child, like many others of her era, was an inveterate letter writer. She commented in 1855 in a letter to a literary admirer that she would welcome correspondence between them "just as it bubbles up—gas, steam, or diamond water drops" (p. 273). Fortunately for us, thanks to the painstaking and judicious editing work of Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland, readers of *Lydia Maria Child: Selected Letters, 1817-1880*, now have the opportunity to savor the "diamond water drops" produced by Child's pen over a full, rich lifetime which spanned most of the nineteenth century.

Child is perhaps best remembered in history books as an abolitionist. She irreparably dam-

aged a promising genteel literary career when in 1833 she penned the first anti-slavery tract of the abolition movement in America, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. A few years later Child became the first woman editor of a national newspaper, *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*. She continued throughout her life to espouse the cause of black people who sought freedom and dignity in America, both before and after the Civil War.

What is not generally remembered is that Child, in contrast to most of her contemporaries (reformers included), championed the cause of American Indians. In a century which witnessed the forceable removal of the Cherokee Nation from their rightful homeland in Georgia to Oklahoma—the “Trail of Tears” which resulted in the deaths of 4,000 Indians—and the internment onto reservations and, later, the extermination of large numbers of Plains Indians, Child’s stand is important to understand. Her first novel, *Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times*, represented a plea for understanding and compassion between the white and red races and was well received in 1824 when it first appeared in print. Throughout her lifetime Child remained a staunch friend of the Indian and a cogent critic of duplicitous, and deadly, government Indian policies.

With this publication of Child’s letters, it is clear that scholars will want to pay more attention in the future to her thoughts on “the woman question.” While Child eschewed a leadership role in the women’s movement and was at times critical of movement strategies, she steadfastly supported the struggle for women’s rights both in actions and in words. Between 1832 and 1835 Child published a five-volume series on the history of women which has yet to receive the recognition it deserves. In addition to this scholarship, Child’s letters reveal that she pondered deeply and philosophically the tragedy of woman’s subject condition in western patriarchal society. She realized that the female socialization experience lay at the heart of her own

struggles to break out of the Victorian true womanhood mold she found herself imprisoned in; she was not afraid to write candidly to her good friends on this subject even when it touched upon her personal life, particularly upon the difficult but loving relationship she had with her reformer husband, David Lee Child. In old age Child felt herself to be more “radical” than in youth. She stated emphatically in 1869 that: “‘the woman question.’...is decidedly the most important question that has been before the world” (p. 486). She also insisted in 1877, three years before her death, that:

...every individual, and every society, is perfected just in proportion to the combination, and cooperation, of masculine and feminine elements of character. He is the most perfect man who is affectionate as well as intellectual; and she is the most perfect woman who is intellectual and well as affectionate....Society will never come truly into order until there is perfect equality and copartnership between [women and men] in every department of human life.” (pp. 538-39)

This was heady thought in 1877—it still is today!

When we consider Child’s long and productive life as a person of letters, a humanitarian, and a social critic in the broadest sense, we realize the appreciation and understanding of the person behind the image is long overdue. Meltzer and Holland’s choice of Child’s letters—over 400 of a total of 2,604—is balanced. Their editorial comments and introductory sections to various stages in Child’s life are useful and contain many insights which are based upon a great deal of careful research. This book should be in every university and junior college library. It represents an important source for the study of nineteenth-century American society in panorama. For those engaged in research on specific topics related to literary history, social reform, and fem-

inism, this collection of Lydia Maria Child's letters is required reading.

Frances H. Early  
Mount Saint Vincent University

**Female Soldiers—Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.** Edited by Nancy Loring Goldman. Contributions in Women's Studies, Number 33. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982. Pp. xix, 307.

To read *Female Soldiers—Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical Female Soldiers-Combatants or Noncombatants? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* immediately after Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, as I have just done, is to suffer a wrenching of the mind. From Woolf's feminist pacifist position, whether female soldiers should take part in combat is the wrong question: in her view women should not be soldiers at all. And neither should men. The authors of the papers edited by Nancy Loring Goldman, however, all take for granted the necessity, past, present and future, for militaries; they disagree only over the extent to which women should be involved in them as combatants. In the minds of the contributors to this volume, that question turns on two major considerations: whether social justice and equal rights for women require the inclusion of women in combat; and how the combat effectiveness of a given military will be or has been affected by such integration.

This perspective is not surprising, given the fact that the papers were originally prepared for a 1980 international symposium on the role of women in the armed forces which was sponsored by the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, an association on good terms with the militaries of the U.S.A. and other western nations, including Canada. The volume is dedicated to the Fellows of the Inter-University

Seminar; its founding chairman, Morris Janowitz, has written the Foreword, and its current Secretary/Treasurer, Nancy Goldman, is co-author of one of the pieces as well as author of the Introduction and editor of the whole collection. Research for two of the papers was funded in part by grants from IUS; and six others were sponsored by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. The remaining six do not acknowledge support from a funding agency.

Divided into three parts, the collection ranges in time principally over the last two centuries, and in space over Europe, Africa, Asia and North America, although the focus is clearly on the United States and its allies and enemies. The case studies on Algeria, Yugoslavia and Sweden are the exceptions. The first two of these are contained in "Part I: The Experience of War" along with pieces on Great Britain and Israel, both allies of the U.S., on Russia, long-standing cold-war enemy, on Vietnam, enemy in one of the recent and nastiest wars in U.S. history, and on Germany, enemy in the two world wars of this century but currently, as divided, part friend and part foe.

The four papers in "Part II: The Threat of War" deal with U.S.-allied Greece, Japan and Denmark plus neutral Sweden, all countries which have had little experience with women in their armed forces until very recently.

Taken together, the eleven papers in Parts I and II all ultimately serve as background discussion to the real debate of the book: whether or not the U.S. military should proceed further in the direction of admitting women to combat roles. This question is set forth in "Part III: American Dilemmas and Options" in the manner of a scholastic disputation with one paper stating the problem, one making the argument against female combatants, and a final one, the argument for. Despite the fact that this debate is being waged today in very similar terms within the Canadian Defence Forces, Canada, one of the