

Archives, c. 1848

Parisian Calls for 'Universal Emancipation'

Two known portraits of Chelmsford Quaker Anne Knight mark her evolution from an assiduous but reclusive supporter of the slave's cause to the swashbuckling suffragist, one of Europe's first, which she later became. The first, a composite group portrait of the World Anti-Slavery Congress in 1840 by Benjamin Haydon, shows her in profile, blending into a bonneted cohort sitting on the fringes of this seminal gathering. The second is a *carte de visite* which she sat for in 1855, in the studio of Victor Franck in a small village in eastern France, where she finally settled. Knight's portrait shows her in her late sixties, clad in the black plain dress customary of Quakers. Other prominent female reformers like Priscilla Bright McLaren, Maria Weston Chapman, or even Harriet Martineau, had themselves portrayed reading or sewing. Knight, however, looks directly into the camera and focuses attention on the placard on her lap (Figure 3.1). She motions as if she is helping the viewer recite her catechism, which reads: 'By tortured millions / By our Divine Redeemer / Enfranchise Humanity / Bid the Outraged World BE FREE.'¹

This placard was a distillation of decades of work formulating and publicising historical connections between struggles against different forms of oppression, often in formulaic forms of Knight's own devising (Chen 2023). She afforded the campaign against slavery, and particularly the Garrisonian outlook on abolition, pride of place in her 'pantheon' of feminist prehistory (Grever 1997). This chapter traces how she worked with an equally outspoken francophone colleague, Jeanne

¹ See also Allison Lange's discussion of the importance of strategically feminising portraiture of suffragists, 2020.



V. FRANK, Photo.

FIGURE 3.1 Anne Knight in 1855: 'By tortured millions / by the Divine Redeemer / Enfranchise Humanity / Bid the Outraged World / BE FREE'. Courtesy of the Friends House Library, London. © Britain Yearly Meeting.

Deroin, to promote a specific conception of what the struggle against slavery, and especially the event of French abolition in 1848, meant for women. Together, they came to demand publicly 'the complete abolition of all privileges of sex, race, birth, caste and fortune' (*À nos abonnés* 1849, 1), broadcasting ideas of 'universal emancipation' that were closer to American Garrisonianism than to the French Republicanism which they at first welcomed.² A striking case of 'information politics', Deroin's circle used the periodical press, correspondence networks, and public performance to assemble and internationally disseminate an archive of stories and materials from the antislavery campaign, both during the heady days of 1848 and the years of disillusionment that followed (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

² Some key writings of Knight and Deroin from this period were published in English translation in Bell and Offen, 1983.

Jeanne Derooin's dogged efforts to maintain a periodical publishing venture were indispensable to this work. The titles she published, *L'Opinion des femmes* and particularly the *Almanach des femmes*, were more than just a record of her and her colleagues' viewpoints. In the words of Isabel Hofmeyr, their pages served as 'intellectual archives' which invited readers to 'habituat[e] [...] to geographies, old and new' (Hofmeyr 2013, 91, 107). They also facilitated new infrastructures through the strenuous collaborative process of their creation and circulation (Hauch 2000, 654; Ferguson 2014). The widespread practice of 'writing with scissors', by which editors recycled and rearranged older texts into new configurations, made periodicals into complex cumulative archives not just of individual texts and data, but also of traces of, and cues about, their previous travels and significance (Ellen Garvey quoted in Hofmeyr and Peterson 2018, 10). What is more, as readers knew, these configurations were not the endpoint of texts – as these could in turn be taken up by others for further circulation.

This chapter will follow the thread of Knight and Derooin's work through the eventful middle decades of the nineteenth century. Foregrounding Knight and Derooin's activities and considering their writings in conjunction, it shines a light on one particular pathway for memories of anti-slavery, but also more generally on the memory work women's rights circles performed in this period. Knight and Derooin promoted their views of the movement and its history among a variety of groupings, including Chartists, London socialists, Quakers, Republicans and Fourierists in Paris, and the Worcester National Women's Rights Convention in Massachusetts. Their activities and investments show how, as the fledgling women's movement moved into repressive and uncertain times, vigorous voices were as concerned with the nature of their initiative, its historical lineage, and the contents of its usable past, as they were with concrete political demands.

Knight and Derooin's work is also a powerful example of the internationalism in the very fibres of these early initiatives. During this period, circles of women's rights advocates were intimately connected. Local initiatives kept close eye on each other and correspondents like Anne Knight and Maria Chapman, who were both living in Paris at the time of the upheavals of 1848, served as links between communities. For example, Louise Otto reported on Derooin in her newspaper *Frauenzeitung*, as did Maria Chapman in *Liberty Bell*, and Sarah Grimké published a letter to Derooin, praising her almanacs, in *The Lily* in 1856 (Anderson 1998, 3; Lerner 1998, 116–119; Chambers 2014, 170–171). Conversely, the

Almanach featured writings of Margaret Fuller and Anna Blackwell and celebrated the achievements of Harriet Taylor Mill and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Direct and indirect collaborations for the cause were textured not just by proclaimed universals, such as religion and the experience and duties of maternity (Offen, 2000, 114; Delvallez and Primi 2004), but also by different cosmopolitanisms, including the prophetic encompassing visions of the Saint-Simonians and the bold, border-defying agitation of Garrisonianism (Pilbeam 2013; Cole 2018). These various physical and imaginative connections have led several scholars to suggest that the wave of women's rights agitation that welled up in 1848 was in fact a transnational movement, which negotiated a shared 'language of feminist demands' (Offen 2000, 112; Anderson 1998; 2000; McFadden 1999; Delvallez and Primi 2004; Primi 2005; Tamboukou 2016).

The memories of antislavery Knight and Deroin channelled were accented differently than the fiction of the previous chapter. The earlier works focused on the denigration of women particularly within marriage, and on how this produced certain social ills and gave centre stage to motifs of the sensibility and natural feelings of sisterhood among women and the socially transformative potential of feminine appeals to empathy. By contrast, for Knight and Deroin antislavery was initially a model for political claims-making, as they advocated for a range of rights, from free association to suffrage. During their political exile, the history of abolition came to serve as inspiration for an attitude of steadfast moral absolutism, which they especially associated with Garrisonian abolitionists.

The socialist mother of three, Deroin, and the veteran abolitionist, Knight, started to work together in Paris, in 1848. The formation of their ideas, however, began in the 1830s, when each was trying to get across their vision in relative isolation, in Paris and Chelmsford respectively. This analysis follows their work through different media and in shifting political auspices, from Knight's international correspondence in the 1830s, through their collaboration on periodicals and letters in the years following 1848, and finally to Deroin's speech before a socialist assembly in London in 1857. Rather than their failure to achieve concrete political goals, which led contemporary allies to dismiss them as 'cracked' and as '*très impolitique*', this account centres on their success in fostering a transnational memory of antislavery and of Garrisonian radicalism (Stern 1862, 36; Anderson 2000, 175). The significance and originality of their efforts becomes clear when these efforts are contrasted with contemporary Parisian intellectual responses to events in 1848, with

which they were at odds at several levels. These included the efforts of prominent women's right advocate Eugénie Niboyet to bring women into the French public sphere, the nationally oriented commemorations of abolition by the French Republican government, and the discussions of abolitionism by the Fourierists.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Anne Knight and Jeanne Deroin came from different backgrounds but found common ground in their striking outspokenness on the issue of women's political rights. Knight was twenty years Deroin's senior, born to an affluent Quaker family that was active in several reform movements, including antislavery. Never married, she devoted her life to her activism against slavery and for women's rights. She was a zealous organiser, formative in the founding of several societies and, with the London Female Anti-Slavery Society, organised the movement's largest national women's petition against slavery (187,157 signatures, Midgley 2004, 58). In 1834, at age fifty, she embarked on a tour of France to collect evidence against slavery, consolidate the network, and occasionally to lecture. This French connection would remain important to her. She took a close interest in French political developments and travelled back and forth between France and the UK between 1834 and 1848. She spent the final years of her life in Waldersbach, near Strasbourg, before she died in 1862.

Knight was an immediatist abolitionist and one among a small number of British women who formed a concrete link between the antislavery campaign and women's rights agitation, including Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Harriet Martineau, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Josephine Butler, and Marion Kirkland Reid (Sklar 1994, 304; Midgley 2004). From 1840 onwards, when she met Central American feminist-abolitionists like Lucretia Mott at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London and experienced first-hand the row over women's exclusion from the event, she began to agitate for women's rights in her personal correspondence. She admired Garrison's uncompromising agitational style, expansive view of social injustice, and cosmopolitan orientation, and she began to make a similarly uncompromising argument that women's exclusion from politics was the cause of global historical injustices. In a letter to Garrison, she described 'the monopoly holding all power in the hands of the men' as the 'root of the tree' of all iniquities (Knight, Letter [14 Oct. 1845]).

In her sixties, influenced by her experiences with Parisian women's rights circles, she became emboldened to take her advocacy public. She became closely involved in the founding of the Sheffield Female Political Association and the Woman's Elevation League (Schwarzkopf 1991, 248–254), had several of her letters of complaint to notable figures printed, and even partook in ludic actions. Her language and actions became increasingly radical and she frequently employed the lexicon of physical combat. In her letter to Robert Bartlett, she called herself 'as true a KNIGHT as ever wore spurs, or brandished a sword in Christendom!' and described in some detail her public action of demanding in a crowded Council Room to be married to the state ('Letter to Robert Bartlett' 1852), a facetious reference to increased political representation.

British suffragists would later come to commemorate Knight as the author of the first pamphlet for female suffrage ('A Woman's' 1884; Blackburn 1902, 19). In her own time, however, her stridency left her alienated. Knight was frequently exasperated by the reticence and family obligations of her colleagues, while in turn, her tactics and outspokenness frustrated family and friends.³ In the 1840s, Knight began to include in her regular correspondence materials on women's rights and other causes, which she painstakingly collected. She circulated these materials not just as pamphlets, but also had short excerpts printed on coloured labels, which she attached to her letters. Her relations tried to discourage her from doing so and scolded her particularly for a letter she sent to Maria Chapman in 1840.⁴ The letter had been read at the annual meeting of the Boston Female (Antislavery) Society and subsequently printed in the annual report of the Glasgow Emancipation Society. In it, she called women men's 'better and wiser half – the being whose clearer and diviner instinct would enlighten, ennoble, and sanctify his counsels and hasten, with the help of divine providence, the renovation of our world' ('Appendix' 1840, 48). Her cousin was infuriated by this 'arrogant piece of bombast' and worried for the reputation of both their family name and the cause (Allen, Letter [19 Mar. 1841]). Lucretia Mott, a liberal Hicksite Quaker, regretted that Knight was a 'bigot' when it

³ On 30 October 1839, she wrote to Maria Chapman: 'Many thanks for your gift of papers[.] I feel your women to be far above us in the attitude of Christian action & endurance but I fear my beloved friends for those women who have withdrawn from the ranks of justice [*sic*]' (reprinted in Taylor 1974, 86). George Stephen gruffly reminded Knight of his family obligations (Letter [14 Nov. 1834]) and Knight bemoaned Chapman and the Grimké's married state in her correspondence (Malmgreen 1982, 103).

⁴ Allen, Letter [20 Oct. 1841]; [19 Mar. 1841].

came to denominational, and doubtless, tactical differences of opinion (Mott 2002 [1842], 109). Her tone also put off younger generations of women's rights advocates. When she contacted Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Rayner Parkes in 1850, they dismissed her as 'cracked' (Anderson 2000, 175). Knight's stridency found a warmer welcome in Paris, where romantic socialism had paved the way for grander turns of phrase and more dramatic action.

Born to a working-class family in Paris in 1805, Deroin was a seamstress and eventually with much difficulty obtained a licence to work as a schoolteacher in the 1840s (Riot-Sarcey 1994; Tamboukou 2016, 15). Jeanne Deroin first became actively involved with agitation for women's rights in the early 1830s. In the 'profession de foi' which she submitted to the Saint-Simonian journal *Le Globe*, she already associated women's societal position with slavery.⁵ In an image reminiscent of Sand's *Indiana*, she graphically likened the custom of women taking their husbands' surnames to 'the burning iron which imprints upon the slave's face the initials of the master' (Deroin [1831] quoted in Riot-Sarcey 1992, 134).⁶ Looking back at the revolution of 1830, she further argued that women's slavery was an obstacle to historical progress, an idea which she and Knight would come to emphasise again in 1848:

Great political events have followed each other, revolutions have shaken Europe, calls of glory and of triumph have reverberated throughout the universe, liberty and equality have been proclaimed for all. And woman is still the slave of man, and the proletarians are still under the yoke of destitution and ignorance. (Quoted in Riot-Sarcey 1992, 134–135)⁷

Only when emancipated could woman become 'the angel of peace and reconciliation whose sweet and powerful influence will connect all members of the family in a perfect understanding in a sacred harmony'

⁵ Writing 'Professions de foi' was a common activity among new acolytes of the Saint Simonians and several are preserved in the Fonds Enfantin at the French National Archives (Riot-Sarcey 1992). Whereas most were brief, Deroin's confident document spanned forty pages.

⁶ '[C]ette coutume qui oblige la femme à porter le nom de son mari n'est-ce pas le fer brûlant qui imprime au front de l'esclave les lettres initiales du maître, afin qu'il soit reconnu de tous comme sa propriété' (quoted in Riot-Sarcey 1992, 135).

⁷ '[D]e grands événements politiques se sont succédés, des révolutions ont bouleversé l'Europe, des chants de gloire et de triomphe, ont retenti dans tout l'univers, on a proclamé la liberté l'égalité pour tous, et la femme est encore l'esclave de l'homme, et les prolétaires sont encore sous le joug de la misère et de l'ignorance' (quoted in Riot-Sarcey 1992, 134–135, original spelling).

(quoted in Riot-Sarcey 1992, 139).⁸ Notably, Derooin's letter also liberally criticised elements of the Saint-Simonian doctrine (Riot-Sarcey 1994, ch. 3, esp. fn. 319; Rancière 2012, 176ff.).

Despite her early objections to women's subjection in marriage ('Profession' 1992 [1831]), she eventually married a fellow Saint-Simonian and raised three children, one of whom needed special care (Serrière 1981, 41). Her busy personal life made her activist record intermittent (Tamboukou 2016, 15). She was likely anonymously involved with the *Tribune des femmes* in 1832–1834 and again became vocal in the aftermath of the revolution of 1848, when her agitational, organisational, and editorial activities, particularly her self-proclaimed candidacy for the election of 1849, made her one of the most well-known and targeted women's rights advocates in Paris.⁹ Soon after her release from a six-month political prison sentence at Saint-Lazare in June 1851, she left for London, where, with her daughter Cécile Desroches, she struggled to make ends meet. Though she receded from visibility, she was involved with several socialist initiatives, and part of William Morris' orbit (Ranvier 1908; Baker 1997; Kunka 2014; 2016). She took up correspondence with French liberal feminists again in the 1870s (Dzeh-Djen 1934, 53–54; Kunka 2016).

Knight and Derooin began to work together in 1848, when they were both members of the small collectives Comité des droits de la femme and the Société de la voix des femmes.¹⁰ Theirs were among the handful of signatures on a few petitions on women's concerns to the provisional government in the spring of 1848 (Riot-Sarcey 1994; Tamboukou 2016, 167). Knight soon came to act as the greatest defender of Derooin's controversial tactics. She brought home with her, and carefully preserved, one of the posters Derooin produced for her electoral campaign (1849) and publicised Derooin's exploits in several of her letters to French and English dignitaries. For instance, she cited part of one of Derooin's electoral speeches in her letter to Lord Brougham (1849), referring to her as a 'magnificent creature! [...] greater than Brutus, than Boadicea, Joan of Arc, than the Maid of Zaragossa', and reminded the Sheffield Female Political Association in 1851 to 'Encourage and strengthen each other,

⁸ 'La femme libre sera l'ange de paix et de conciliation dont la douce et puissante influence unira tous les membres de la famille dans un parfait accord dans une sainte harmonie' (quoted in Riot-Sarcey 1992, 139).

⁹ Derooin was frequently caricatured, most famously by Honoré Daumier (Fraisie 2020).

¹⁰ Possibly they had already met earlier, as Knight met with Saint-Simonian women, including Derooin's friend Desirée Gay, in 1834 (Kunka 2014, 224).

dear sisters, for prison doors are not closing upon you as on our noble Jeanne Deroin and her companion [Pauline Roland]' ('The Rights' 1851; Drinkal 2018). Knight brought Deroin into contact with feminists in Europe and America, including the Sheffield Female Political Association and the Worcester Convention of 1851 ('Female Political' 1851, 3). Deroin in turn promoted Knight's ideas among Parisian women's rights circles ('Visites' 1851; 'To the editor', 1853; 'Lettre d'Anne' 1854) and counted on Knight's help when she moved to London (Baker 1997; Pilbeam 2003; Tamboukou 2016, 165).

Knight's Garrisonian inspiration and Deroin's Saint-Simonian background contributed to their shared conviction that women had complementary qualities to men and that therefore without her voice political representation was incomplete and ultimately unable to act for the public good. The printed correspondence in the *Almanach* for 1854, which details their disagreement over the ultimate purpose of female suffrage as a means or an end, indicates a high level of sophistication in their strategizing ('Lettre d'Anne' 1854). Besides their intellectual influence on one another, they were important brokers for each other's work and were indispensable to one another's efforts to seed an alternative framing of 1848.

KNIGHT'S GARRISONIANISM

While Deroin spent the early 1830s formulating her ideas among a core group of Parisian women's rights advocates, such as Suzanne Voilquin and Désirée Véret Gay, and gaining experience in periodical publishing, Anne Knight supported the British antislavery movement. From the 1820s onwards, Knight's correspondence reflects her admiration for women who dared to engage in public antislavery advocacy and her interest in broadening the sphere of women's public engagement grew concomitantly with her antislavery work. As was customary for women in the abolition movement, she was part of the supporting forces, fulfilling tasks such as petitioning and sewing for bazaars (Knight 'Appendix' 1840, 48; Knight 'To Richard' 1850, n.p.). She did not make public appearances for the cause in the UK, but made efforts to publicise the advocacy of other women such as Elizabeth Heyrick.¹¹ Her lecture tour in France in 1834, made by necessity as more prominent members were not available to join

¹¹ The correspondence indicates that meeting Heyrick in 1828 was a transformative experience for Knight; it does not appear to have been so for Heyrick (Letter to Anne Knight [25 Aug. 1828]; [5 Apr. 1830]).

her (Stephen, Letter [14 Nov. 1834]), acquainted her with public performance and she soon after encountered the ideas of the Saint-Simonians.¹²

In the late 1830s, Knight began building a transnational network of feminist-minded reformers from within the ranks of antislavery and the Chartists (Crawford 2003, 631). In 1838, she asked William Lloyd Garrison to forward a letter to Margaretta Forten, a female African American abolitionist (Knight, Letter [14 March 1838]) and also requested information on other 'brave *Amazons* in [his] ranks' in America (Knight, Letter [14 March 1838]), a request similar to the one she had made George Stephen in 1834 (Stephen, Letter [14 Nov. 1834]). Moreover, she wrote to romantic socialist Catherine Barmby after reading her 'Demand for the Emancipation of Woman, Politically and Socially' (1843), starting a dialogue that was eventually printed in the pages of radical papers like Holyoake's *Reasoner* and the White Quaker publication *Some Account of the Truth* (Knight, 'Catherine' 1844).

Knight asked colleagues internationally to expand on their ideas and to send her further promotional materials regarding slavery and women's position. Strikingly, she also enquired after their strategy. In her 1838 letter, she interrogated William Lloyd Garrison about his aggressive rhetorical style, rumoured to be 'declamatory violence which tended to repel & aggravate rather than persuade' (Knight, Letter [14 Mar. 1838]). She wished to know 'what success is given to [his] arms' (Knight, Letter [14 Mar. 1838]). Knight was particularly interested in the firebrand rhetoric and activities of Wendell Phillips and Garrison, an interest fostered both through correspondence and the reading of American abolitionist publications (Stephen, Letter [14 Nov. 1834]).

The year 1840 proved a pivot in Knight's activities from antislavery to women's rights. According to Lucretia Mott, Anne Knight did 'all she could' to organise a women's meeting at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 (Letter [1840] 2002, 79; see also Sklar 1994). Knight's engagement with American antislavery women, as well as her witnessing of Phillips' defence of women's political engagement and Garrison's refusal to participate in the proceedings while women were excluded, further cemented Knight's identification with the Garrisonian vision of 'universal emancipation' (Hogan 2008, 67). After the events of 1840, Knight began moreover to claim that women's work in antislavery legitimated their claims for political representation (Malmgreen 1982).

¹² This encounter is indicated by copied passages from *La Tribune des Femmes* and other materials in her notebook ('Notebook', n.p.).

She also began to air personal exasperation and a sense of injustice at the lack of recognition for women's efforts in the antislavery movement. She shared these frustrations with other female abolitionists; Maria Chapman had described the midnight toiling and sacrifices made by women for the abolitionist cause ([1843], quoted in Taylor 2009, 121) and her sister Lucia Weston recorded that her 'fingers [were] nearly sewed off' in preparation for a bazaar (quoted in Gardner 2016, 48; see also Jeffrey 1998). In 1840, Knight wrote to Chapman:

we tell them we are not the same beings as fifty years ago no longer 'sit by the fire & spin' or distil rosemary & lavender for poor neighbours – appoint *committees* for them to visit in sickness, old age, maternity, missions [?] Bibles [*sic*] *reporting to the men* sitting in their public meetings uniting with them in association committees, then comes our great & mortal conflict; the dreadful monster *slavery must be grappled with* & who is sent out to do it? not man not the stronger vessel with his nervous & brawny arm & great calibre of his stentorian voice the fierce *threatening* of his black beard & mustachios & his eye like Mars to threaten and command – not the sons of Mars the sons of thunder Boanergean not them? who then? some fierce dragon more horrible still? no! guess again? Cerberus? no weak slender untrained-for-the-work modest tender *woman!* & when she appeals to the men against such unheard-of folly & atrocity to the weaker vessel [English abolitionist] James Cropper has said it is no use talking [...]. (Letter [8 Apr. 1840])

Similar frustrations speak from a later letter to Richard Cobden, in which she spoke of the 'underground toils' of women's philanthropy, riffing on the well-known 'Song of the Shirt' (1843) to describe the work of sewing circles: 'health and mind equally suffer in the 'stitch, stitch, stitch, till the stars shine through the roof, and sew them on in a dream, & oh, it's to be a slave', ever toiling, never to see a Right!' (Knight 'To Richard Cobden', 1850).

In uttering these frustrations, Knight recalled and dramatised the unseen labour of female workers within the movement, which she meaningfully connected both to the cause of antislavery and the nascent cause of women's rights.¹³ Her concern regarding Benjamin Haydon's portrait of the 1840 Convention also speaks to the importance she attached the public commemoration of women's role in antislavery. She advised Lucy Townsend, who had been at the event:

I am very anxious that the historical picture now in the hand of Haydon should not be performed without the chief lady [Townsend] of the history being there in

¹³ Clare Midgley also reflects on the rarity of nineteenth-century commemoration of British women's role in antislavery, Midgley 2004, 2–3.

justice to history and posterity the person who established [women's antislavery groups]. You have as much right to be there as Thomas Clarkson himself, nay perhaps more, his achievement was in the slave trade; thine was slavery itself the pervading movement. (quoted in Simkin 1997, n.p.)

Perhaps Knight already understood women's role in abolitionism as part of an as yet unwritten history of a women's movement, a connection which she would continue to promote throughout the 1840s and 1850s. In her letter to Robert Bartlett, she not only maximised women's importance to antislavery, but also mobilised it as an argument for universal suffrage. Enfranchisement, she suggested, would

be a happy day for the many millions of our nation; & for our world, as many millions as there were thousands of black slaves in the empire; whose chain the Women of our land were the sturdiest toilers to break. Yes! eight hundred millions of our world all awaiting the day of our espousals [enfranchisement]! ('Letter to Robert Bartlett' 1852)

In Knight's rhetoric, commemoration of women's importance to anti-slavery and the rhetorical equation of suffrage with abolition went hand in hand.

Knight educated herself on women's history globally, on different arguments for women's emancipation, as well as on effective modes of persuasion. Her active study is evidenced throughout her archives and particularly in her political notebook ('Notebook', c. 1838–1862), in which she recorded her engagement with literature on the woman question in the 1840s. She copied articles from *La Tribune des Femmes*, from writings by Claire Démar and Flora Tristan, and from books on women's history, such as M. de Thorillon's *Idées sur les lois criminelles* (1788), a French edition of William Alexander's *History of Women for the Earliest Antiquity to the Modern Time* (1782), and the collected *La femme jugée par les grands écrivains des deux sexes* (1847), compiled by Louis-Nicolas Bescherelle and Louis-Julien Larcher. She also attended Ernest Legouvé's influential lectures on *L'histoire morale des femmes* in Paris 1848 (Knight, 'Woman', 1850).

One is struck by the cosmopolitan interests that speak from her studies and practices of collection.¹⁴ Despite being a devout Quaker, unlike many of her contemporaries she did not preclude the possibility of non-Christian cultures having more equitable gender relations, and she expressed anti-imperialist sentiments. One of her printed labels,

¹⁴ Lucy Delap refers to Knight's 'global imagination', 2022, 335.

'Missionary Contrast', stages a sarcastic contrast between imperial self-conception and the British presence as seen through the eyes of the Chinese, by printing two contrasting reports:

God has raised our country to an eminence unparalleled in ancient or modern times. 'The Mahommedans respect; the Natives of India obey; the Millions of China have been taught to fear.' *Church Missionary Report* 1840 – 'They [Chinese] have deeply deplored that spirit of commercial cupidity, which, by men professing Christianity, and in defiance of the imperial laws, has become the occasion of poverty and disease [...]' *London Missionary Society's Report*, 1840. (Knight [Annotated] 1843)

From her readings in English and French, she recorded sections on foreign or ancient egalitarian customs of, for instance, Hindus or ancient Gauls ('Notebook', n.p.). She publicised these facts in her letters and pamphlets (e.g., Knight 'Appendix' 1840; 'To Athanias' 1850). In a letter to Chapman in 1840, she elaborately drew on this collected historical knowledge:

Tacitus relates that the Germans always called the women to their war-counsels, because they had something divine in them; and do not your Indians have their conferences unitedly? [...] surely, if Indian women, if German women, if the women of France may hold colloquy with men, the women of England, not less Christian, and no less qualified than they, must, ere long what is dark illumine. (Knight Letter [8. Apr. 1840])

Knight's work resulted in a rich archive of materials which destabilised the idea of Western superior civilisation, as well as the notion of a natural order to gender relations. Her references indicate a cosmopolitan, Garrisonian understanding of oppression and emancipation.

Knight's correspondence also provides a glimpse into her unorthodox interpersonal agitation. She records an attempt to present 'that great wordy freedom's man' Félicité Lamennais with an appendix to his book on popular suffrage (*De l'esclavage moderne*, 1839; Knight 'Catherine' 1844). Written by his radical British translator James W. Linton, the appendix considered the issue of women's suffrage. To Knight's frustration, Lamennais merely laughed it off. Two of Knight's copies of Linton's 'Appendix' survive in her copy of Marion Reid's *A Plea for Woman*, with some blasphemous lines carefully blacked out. She had multiple copies of this pamphlet to hand out to significant persons, or to include in her correspondence.¹⁵ A family member later recalled that she tended to carry 'a

¹⁵ Knight's annotated copy of Marion Reid's *A Plea for Woman* is a unique document, giving insight into the critical disagreements and thought processes of these reformers. Knight carefully illuminated the margins of Reid's book with long-hand commentary

large black silk bag or pocket, suspended from her belt, in which she kept many papers, which she took out when she needed them in conversation' (Charlotte Sturge quoted in Chen 2023).

During the 1840s, Knight repeatedly asked prominent figures like Richard Cobden, Garrison, and Chapman to speak out on the issue of women's rights,¹⁶ and she sought to convert prominent reformers on the issue by sending packets of women's rights pamphlets to those she suspected might be supportive of her cause, such as George Jacob Holyoake and Mrs Ashurst Biggs in 1847 (Blackburn 1902, 19) and Anne Taylor Gilbert in 1849 (Anderson 2000, 29). She recommended and forwarded materials to American feminists as well and asked them to return the favour, calling on them to follow her example as 'these things [writings on the woman question] ought to be sent darting off like lightning to all the world if possible' (1847, quoted in Anderson 2000, 13).

In directing her efforts this way, Knight single-handedly emulated the propaganda model of the antislavery movement, with its reliance on moral suasion though massive cultural production. To achieve this, she often cannibalised her own materials, similar to the ceaseless adaptation of iconic images, poetic lines, and stories within the antislavery movement. One example of this is a fragment she composed and circulated as a coloured label in the 1840s (Figure 3.2).

This text is a rich example of Knight's memory work. In it, she condenses different registers and historical events into a single saying,

and folded in additional papers, including several of her own pieces and some of her preferred agitational materials, such as Linton's appendix to his translation of Lamennais' *Modern Slavery*. Her neat commentary resembles the work she did on the pamphlets she circulated and it seems likely that her copy was not just a private document, but part of her propagandistic material. Among the materials folded in it is a print of a weeping shackled African woman, pleading on a foreign shore. This image had originally been circulated as an accompaniment to some lines by Cowper, in a pamphlet of the Birmingham female society, around 1829 ('Female in chains' 1829). The cover of the book is fashioned from Knight's labels.

¹⁶ She admonished Chapman: 'I wish it were practicable for thee to come to England very soon & continuing the subject now begun spread the cause of humanity more fully through our land by the time of a second convention [...] You ought to communicate more incessantly with our great men & women on this subject' (Letter [8 Apr. 1840]). In 1845, she asked Garrison: 'how are you warring my dear friend? are you directing your forces to the root of the tree? the monopoly which holding all power in the hands of the men keeps the monopoly in its wicked strengths are you directing your forces to this citadel of wrong & with your battering rams making a sensible breach?' (Letter [14 Oct. 1845]).

By Leonidas,
By Spartacus,
by tortured millions,
by our DIVINE REDEEMER. Matt 7.12
Emancipate Humanity
and bid the insulted world BE FREE!

FIGURE 3.2 Label by Anne Knight, in her 'Notebook', c. 1840.

measuring only little over an inch of eye-catching coloured paper.¹⁷ Placing her campaign in this historical context, she framed the cause of women's rights as worthy, inevitable, and, ultimately, as part of the divine plan. Knight pasted this text as a blue label on a letter to a friend in 1845 (Letter to Mary Clutton [12 Mar. 1845]), elaborated on it in her open letter to Robert Bartlett in 1852, and finally had herself photographed with it for her *carte de visite*.

Another striking result of Knight's studies was her French epigram *Ce qui est*, which she began to send around in the early 1840s (Anderson 1998, 2):

That Which Is

Young women of the Gauls had the right to make laws, they were *legislators*.

African women have, in some tribes, *the right to vote*.

Anglo-Saxon women participated, in England, *in the legislature*.

Women of the Hurons, one of the strongest tribes in North America, formed a *council*, and *the elders followed their advice*.

See, in antiquity and with people who have been barely civilised, women enjoyed rights which modern peoples refuse them, in the countries where Christianity reigns, *where universal brotherhood is proclaimed, without distinction of sex*.

We fight for liberty!¹⁸

¹⁷ The references are to the Roman slave revolt led by Spartacus, 71 BCE; the Battle of Thermopylae, in which a small force of Spartans fought against a massive Persian invasion in 480 BCE; and the Bible verse 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets' (KJV: Matt. 7.12).

¹⁸ 'Les femmes Gauloises avaient le droit de faire les lois, elles étaient législatrices. / Les femmes Africaines ont, dans certaines tribus, le droit de suffrage. / Les femmes Anglo-Saxonnes participaient, en Angleterre, à la législation. / Les femmes des Hurons, l'une des plus fortes tribus de l'Amérique du Nord, faisaient partie du conseil, et les anciens suivaient leurs avis. / Ainsi, dans l'antiquité et chez des peuples à peine civilisés, les femmes jouissaient du droit que les peuples modernes leur refusent, dans des pays où le christianisme règne, lui qui proclame la fraternité universelle, sans distinction de sexe. / Nous luttons pour la liberté!' ('Notebook', n.p.; 'Ce qui' 1848).

As the simple declarative title indicates, the suggestion that there had been alternative, equitable ways of organising society in other cultures, and their contrast with the subjection of women closer to home, seemed to Knight to have a powerful mobilising force.

Knight avidly circulated materials which drew comparisons between women and the enslaved. She circulated Linton's 'Appendix' with her own added emphases in black ink next to several of the more vigorous woman-slave comparisons, such as Linton's claim that 'ancient slavery subsists' (Linton 1840, 29). In one of the copies, she illuminated Linton's question whether 'Some men [aren't], even, inferior to some women?' with her remark 'Ah, many!' (Knight [Annotated] 1843). She also had excerpts of American reformer Samuel J. May's sermon, 'The Rights and Conditions of Women' (1845), printed as a pamphlet, ending for emphasis with this comment:

Can those men feel any proper respect for females, who make them their drudges from morning to night, – or who are willing to pay them the miserable pittance which they do, for labours which consume the live-long day, and oft the sleepless night? Yes, about as much as the slaveholders feel for their slaves. (Knight, 'Notebook', n.p.)

Knight's accumulation and circulation of materials that invited comparison between women and the enslaved encouraged a transnational framework of comparison, which had deeper implications than woman-slave analogies in passing remarks and popular aphorisms such as P. B. Shelley's 'Can man be free, if woman be a slave?' (1817, canto 2). This well-known line from the *Revolt of Islam* served as the motto for Reid's *Plea*, and Knight vigorously commented next to it: 'No! Emancipate her then!' ([Annotated] 1843, n.p.). Knight invited readers to identify women's subjection not in the vague terms of the slavery of Antiquity, but in the concrete terms of plantation slavery, and to recognise those frames and methods of abolitionism that might serve their aims.

In the first edition of his *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison famously declared:

I will be harsh as truth, and uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; – but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest – I will not equivocate – I will not excuse – I will not retreat a single inch – AND I WILL BE HEARD. (Quoted in Arkin 2001, 75)

Following the Garrisonian example, Knight styled herself as an uncompromising, anti-institutional truth-teller.¹⁹ Peppered with fiery denunciations and passionate capitalisation, Garrisonian rhetoric had powerful affective potential. Channelling this register, additionally, projected the memory of immediatism into the question of women's rights. By writing in this manner, as will become even more pronounced in the following sections, Knight bestowed on women's rights the same urgency and moral implications which slavery had.

Besides strident rhetoric, Knight adopted several key Garrisonian tenets in her advocacy, such as faith in moral suasion, a deep-seated cosmopolitan orientation, and a rejection of gradualism. In her letter to Garrison in 1838, she affirmed his non-compromising maxims in his own register, calling slavery 'this bosom-sin this intestinal guilt' and warning Garrison not to compromise, as she regretted her compatriots had: 'Know what you are doing suffer no apprenticeship no quarter with the foe, never allow the words "safe & satisfactory", beware of Jesuitism; beware of Hill Coolies; a new species of slavery.' Knight's conviction often translated into battle metaphors. In a later letter, Knight asked Garrison how his 'warring' went and whether he was directing his 'battering rams' effectively ([1845]). In her letter to Catherine Barmby (1843), Knight used a similar register to profess her belief in the need for Garrisonian-style female defenders: '[we need] a few Lady Macbeths [...] with a holy seraphic ardour in the strength of "God of might" hacking & hewing right and left with their minds' best weapons'. In her letter to Robert Bartlett, Knight made her belief in moral suasion explicit in those terms, referring to the 'sword of justice and *moral* suasion' (1852, n.p.).

On 23 March 1848, Knight published 'Ce qui est', as well as two of her other labels with quotes from Jeremy Bentham and Talleyrand on women's exclusion from government, in the newly founded Parisian periodical *La Voix des femmes* ('Ce qui' 1848). Profiling herself as an example of the connection between antislavery and women's rights claims, she began to introduce memories of antislavery in Parisian women's rights circles. Her collaboration with Jeanne Deroin in the club culture of Paris, which flourished immediately after the February Revolution of 1848, was crucial to this venture.

¹⁹ Under siege himself for his style, Garrison had looked to Milton as a model of an uncompromising speaker and a political and stylistic model (Boocker 1999). On characteristics of Garrisonian rhetoric, Stewart 1976; Walters 1977; Abzug 1994; Boocker 1999; Arkin 2001; Bormann 2001.

FRENCH ABOLITION AND ITS REPUBLICAN
COMMEMORATIONS

In the spring of 1848, Republican, nationalist, and democratic agitation was brought to boiling point as a wave of revolutions shook the monarchies of Europe. Revolution broke out in Paris in February and insurrectionary activities spread across much of Europe. In Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, revolutionary forces made up of Republicans, nationalists, and socialists demanded democratic reforms, with varying success. In France, the Second Republic and universal manhood suffrage were established. In many contexts, liberalised press laws invited an avalanche of new publications (Sperber 2005, 160–161; Clark 2012, 191 ff.); in Paris alone hundreds of new periodical publications appeared in just the few weeks following the liberalisations, allowing working-class readerships to become politically engaged in new ways (Ambroise-Rendu 1999, 35; Bouchet et al. 2015, ch. 1; Hayat 2018, 128–129). Many of these new titles were ephemeral, however, and even better established newspapers were threatened in the European-wide conservative reaction to the revolutionary fervour.

Amid these developments, long-term abolitionists who had risen to prominence within the French Republican provisional government quickly pronounced the immediate abolition of slavery in the French colonies on 4 March and universal manhood suffrage the day after. Like ‘a bolt of living thunder’, the news of this development travelled through the transatlantic correspondence and print periodical networks of antislavery reformers (Frederick Douglass quoted in Hewitt 2007, 272; McDaniel 2013, 185 ff.). French abolition, ostensibly immediate and presented as an expression of the popular will, came much closer to the ideal that reformers had in mind than the British gradual scheme of 1833, Swedish abolition in 1847, or Danish abolition in 1848. For the brief period that the liberal hopes of 1848 lasted, Garrisonians and Republicans alike hailed French abolition as a powerful auspice of the progress of democratic and egalitarian principles (Anderson 1998, 5–6; Hewitt 2007; McDaniel 2013, 185 ff.; Dal Lago 2015, ch. 5; Sinha 2016, 363 ff.).

Though the thorny question of abolition had been a recurrent issue in French parliamentary debates, besides specific reform circles discussed in the previous chapter, French audiences had paid little attention for the plight of the enslaved in the colonies or for organised antislavery (Brion Davis 1984; Drescher 1991; 2007; Schmidt 2000). Abolition had not been part of popular revolutionary demands and other reforms more

directly relevant to ordinary life occupied the attention of the Parisian public in 1848. This was reflected by how little attention mainstream French newspapers paid to the development.²⁰ In contrast to the UK, abolition was not broadly experienced as a matter of collective interest or pride. Key abolitionist figurehead Victor Schoelcher's reputation was lacklustre (Drescher 1991) and the topic of slavery and abolition drew ridicule in the popular illustrated press (Grimaldo Grigsby 2015).

Republicans in government did seek to make French abolition meaningful to the general public (Schmidt 1994; 1999; 2006; 2012). Several government-commissioned paintings staged the iconic 'emancipation moment' in the West Indies, repeating the visual 'cliché of the slave with broken chains looking gratefully at the abolitionist' (Brion Davis 1994; Schmidt 2012, 115).²¹ Like abolitionist pictorial practices in the anglophone world, the paintings emphasised reconciliation between planters, officials, and freedmen and women (Brion Davis 1994; Wood 2010). By picturing the gratitude, and distinct submissiveness, of the formerly enslaved, and the apparent benevolence of white abolitionists and colonials, such images rewrote the history of abolition. These paintings exuded a sense that emancipation had been an unanticipated and emotionally charged event, which would be followed by peace and reconciliation. This emphasis on immediacy hid from view the long transatlantic deliberations, the involvement of both black and white international actors, and any fears of violent insurrection. Joyous, spontaneous scenes dispelled worry about repercussions or unrest as they

²⁰ An examination of the keyword 'abolition' in French newspapers reveals that abolition was much less discussed in the early months of 1848 than were other measures like the abolition of the death sentence for political crimes or the abolition of bargaining (*marchandage*). For the period 1 March 1848–5 May 1848, the *quotidien* collection hosted by the Bibliothèque nationale de France's (BnF's) service RetroNews only lists ten hits for discussions of abolition (search exact phrase: 'abolition d'esclavage', 'émancipation des esclaves'), compared to twelve hits for the abolition of *marchandage*, a form of subcontracting deemed exploitative (search exact phrase: 'abolition du marchandage') and twenty-seven hits for the restrictions on the death penalty, proclaimed on 26–29 February (search exact phrase: 'peine de mort en matière politique'). The coverage after formal abolition on 27 April shows even more divergence; even though the abolition of slavery was in fact the newsworthy item in terms of policy, RetroNews lists only three hits for abolition, compared to twenty-four for death penalty.

²¹ For instance, Louis François Gosse's *L'esclavage affranchi* (1849), sponsored by the Home Office; Alphonse Garreau's *L'Émancipation à Réunion* (1849), essentially a portrait of the white commission-general of Réunion; Auguste-François Biard's *L'abolition de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises en 1848* (1849), commissioned by the Interior Ministry to be hung in Versailles.

screened from view discontent among planters and anti-colonial sentiments in the Caribbean.

In these state media, the event of abolition, an 'attractive symbol for revolutionary idealism', was also explicitly connected to French Republican values (Sessions 2015, 75). Revolutionary symbols, such as the tricolour or a bust of Liberty, were included prominently in the compositions. In all, these images represented the event of abolition as an augur of the future justice and prosperity of the Second Republic (Schmidt 1999). In the background of the paintings, metonymies of colonial wealth, such as sugar refineries with smoking chimneys, abound. This iconography also expressed the moral legitimacy of the Second Republic, its fulfilment of revolutionary emancipatory promises, and the power of its revolutionary leadership both in France and in the colonies. Allegoric lithographs of the Republican victories of 1848, made for broader circulation, also made reference to abolition in connection to the values of the Republic. Some featured depictions of black enslaved figures actively resisting a chariot representing progress.²² All in all, Republicans sought to promote a triumphant memory of abolition in a narrow French Republican register (Brion Davis 1984, esp. 284). They also sought to renew imperial confidence. Abolition was no admission of faltering colonial policy, represented no doubts about the previous course. Instead, these images suggested, the Republic was abolishing slavery both physical and spiritual by spreading essential French values. Maintaining this confidence was indispensable, for Republicans, socialists, and feminists alike; after all, despite growing economic critiques of the utility, France at the time was knee-deep in its aggressive pursuit of cultural hegemony as well as settler colonial projects in Algeria (Zouache 2009; Sessions 2015, 90ff.; Andrews 2018; Eicher 2022, 25).

A REVOLUTIONARY WINDOW FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The eventual outcomes of 1848 disappointed progressive commentators both in Europe and America and inaugurated a decade of conservative rule. Not least among those disappointed were those Forty-Eighters

²² There are at least five lithographs of the popular theme *La liberté faisant le tour du monde*: one, depicting an overtly Catholic execution of the theme, was sold by A. Bres and F. Dubreuil. The Musée Carnavalet holds a copy. There were also two versions printed by Edme Lordereau, one held by the Musée Carnavalet and the other by the BnF. There are also versions by the engraver Ligny, held by the Musée d'Orbigny-Bernon, and one by Lefebvre, held by the BnF. In this last case, the allegorical slave depicted appears not to be a colonial subject.

(and female *quarante-huitardes*, Dyxon-Fyle 2006) who had hoped to see a revolutionary change in women's rights. In several contexts, women used the opportunity to argue for women's importance to the success of the revolution and for their rights to increased participation in the public sphere (Anderson 1998; Hauch 2000; Nemes 2001). Women's clubs and periodicals were founded in Paris, Berlin, and Cologne, over the course of 1848–1849, and 1848 was also the year of the American Women's Rights Congress at Seneca Falls (Anderson 1998; Offen 2000, 108 ff.).

During the February Revolution, male and female radicals in Paris had been brought together, as women had joined men in processions, protests, and clubs (Lucas 1851; Niboyet 1863; Riot-Sarcey 1992, 1994; Cross 1997; Hauch 2000; 2001; Lalouette 2001). Hopeful that the Second Republic might bring them closer to full citizenship, a band of Parisian women initially relied on a typical *quarante-huitard* repertoire of political action to voice their claims. Prominent among them were several former Saint-Simonians, including the weathered editor Eugénie Niboyet, Jeanne Deroin, Pauline Roland, and Désirée Gay. The group addressed the provisional government through petitions, deputations, and open letters, the most significant flourish of feminist political activity globally up to that moment (Moses 1984, Anderson 1998; Offen 2000; Schor 2022). They also set up regular meetings, most conspicuously the small Société de la voix des femmes, presided over by Eugénie Niboyet. In May 1848 the society started a public-facing Club des femmes, whose short-lived gatherings were disrupted by thousands of rowdy gawkers but did ultimately achieve the goal of raising enough funds to restart their journal, *La Voix des femmes* (Schor 2022, 165–167). In many ways, *La Voix* was the crux of these various efforts. As the editors perspicaciously explained, since no other newspapers were covering their activities with any degree of seriousness they needed their own – to publicise, collect, transmit, and record for posterity their actions and their significance (Schor 2022, 93–94). When, following the repression of the June Days workers' uprising, clubs were forced to close and women's political activities curtailed, *La Voix* also folded. However, the circle kept trying to make themselves heard through the periodical press. Some friendly media, particularly the Fourierist newspaper *La Démocratie pacifique* (edited by Victor Considerant, 1843–1851) occasionally included their pieces, but they primarily relied on their own productions. After *La Voix* (edited by Niboyet, March–June 1848), the torch was passed to the monthly *La Politique des femmes* (edited by Deroin and Gay, June 1848)

and *L'Opinion des femmes* (edited by Derooin, January–August 1849), and, finally, the *Almanach des femmes* (edited by Derooin, 1851–1854). The group was far from an intellectual monolith and the journals attest to major philosophical and strategic disagreements. How to relate their cause to international affairs and, specifically, to the unfolding history of antislavery, was one of these.

Critics of women's social status both in France and beyond had been quick to point out what they saw as the contradiction between the provisional government's swift action regarding colonial slavery and their lack of interest in changing women's social position. Well-known literary figure Delphine de Girardin opined that the fact that the Republicans 'freed the Negroes who are not yet civilized, while leaving women, those [...] professors of civilisation, in slavery' proved that they had not understood the true meaning of the Republic (1861 [1848], 468).²³ American educational reformer Emma Willard addressed a letter to the head of the provisional government, reproaching him for his 'oversight': 'The men of France are called upon to come forward, and by their representatives frame a constitution which they will thus be pledged to support. All the men are called. The slaves too are kindly remembered – but the women – they are forgotten!' (quoted in Offen 1999, 154). The provisional government received a letter to similar effect from Elizabeth Sheridan Carey, an English poet living in Boulogne (reprinted in Fauré 2004, 302).

Anne Knight was a member of this chorus. At a celebratory dinner with antislavery emissaries in London in 1848, she intervened when the topic turned to whether antislavery organisers could now withdraw from France, seizing the moment to bring the discussion to women's rights. She later reported her conversation to her friend Elizabeth Pease:

The Blacks are free, but there is still a slavery of the Whites. The French took liberty for all the men, and abandoned the rights of all their sisters. We feel that the rights of all human beings are equal; that women, being subject to all the burdens of the State in taxation and penalty of laws, had equal claim with men to vote for the legislators themselves, and having seen the frightful consequences of men's actions alone, it was our endeavour to place at his side the help-meet for him. (Quoted in 'Anne' 1884, 10)

²³ 'La preuve qu'ils ne comprennent pas la république c'est que, dans leurs telles promesses d'affranchissement universel, ils ont oublié les femmes! ... Ils ont affranchi les nègres qui ne sont pas encore civilisés, et ils laissent dans l'esclavage les femmes, ces docteurs émérites, ces professeurs par excellence en fait de civilisation' (Girardin 1861 [1848], 468).

Knight thought her intervention a success and 'rejoiced' at the table's 'reluctant assent to a great political truth; indeed the logic of it, simply stated, is irresistible' ('Anne' 1884, 11). In this performance, Knight was actively moulding the significance of French abolition. Rather than merely drawing attention to the contrast between women and emancipated slaves, Knight pointed out the ways in which women's rights claims flowed from the history of abolition, slavery being, to her, a primary case in point of the 'frightful consequences of men's actions alone'. The connection between women's rights and antislavery was a refrain in her advocacy and she tried to inject this connection into the debates over 1848, both in France and in England.

Knight consistently introduced herself as having come to see the importance of women's emancipation through her work in antislavery. She also emphasised that her track record lent her thoughts on reform authority. With this double move, she turned herself into an embodied example of the connection between the causes. In an open letter to French elected deputy Coquerel, she implored him to support the women's cause, explaining that she had 'fought against the oppression of slavery for twenty years; this question and that of the rights of women are one and the same. I will support them both' ('Miss' 1848, 3; see also 'La Brebis' 1848, 2).²⁴ When *La Voix des femmes* introduced 'Miss Kneight [sic]' to readers in the 'Faits divers' section of its eleventh issue, it gave further platform to Knight's insistence that her women's rights philosophy was inspired by her antislavery activities: 'A first idea guided her to another: the slavery of the negro and the slavery of woman approximate each other at more than one point' ('Faits divers' 1848, 4).²⁵

Pronouncing her own experience in abolitionism significant grounds for her political agitation, she invited other women to do the same. She would spell out this imperative most completely in her letter to the Sheffield Female Political Association (printed in *Reynolds's Newspaper*), calling on readers to devote to the woman question the same efforts they had to the slave's cause:

Yes, my country-women, be entreated to persevere earnestly in this good cause; it is the genuine anti-slavery. The black slavery was a very small portion; it was only the anti-black slavery. This is anti-slavery complete, and had we begun with

²⁴ 'Je lutte depuis vingt ans contre l'oppression de l'esclavage; cette question et celle des droits de la femme ne font qu'un. Je les soutiendrai toutes deux' ('Miss' 1848, 3).

²⁵ 'Une première idée l'a conduite à l'autre: l'esclavage du nègre et l'esclavage de la femme se rapprochent par plus d'un point' ('Faits divers' 1848, 4).

this, insisting on our own emancipation first of all, we should not have had to deplore the imbecility of our parliamentary doings for poor negroes, nor the plunder of our country in compensating 20 millions.²⁶ Our very hearts bled over masculine monopolous [*sic*] legislation, our brothers want us at their sides. ('The Rights' 1851, n.p.)

Besides equating women's subjection to that of the enslaved, Knight intimates that women's suffrage would have overhauled the antislavery campaign altogether and would have avoided crucial mistakes. Seeking suffrage was, she suggested, in fact the primary way in which women could work for the betterment of society. In her series of public letters to dignitaries (twice to Coquerel in 1848; Lord Brougham 1849; Cobden 1850; Bartlett 1852), Knight consistently propagandised this idea. She wrote to Lord Brougham:

the great hater of the race [Satan] persuades both men and women we have our proper sphere in the domestic merely, and that to go from thence, outstep his charmed circle, nothing but infamy! Ah! we have been taught another lesson, by our idle brothers driving us out into the battle-field to combat slavery and war, and every monster that is grasping the throat of our trampled [...] country; taught of other slavery than black! compelled to fight with hands tied these foes to our welfare; and now we see and know the evil, some of us; we are demanding the remedy. ('Letter to Lord Brougham' 1849)

The increasingly negative evaluation of the antislavery movement which Knight broadcast did not just reflect her personal experience, she was also prompting readers to consider the tactical lessons they might draw from the history of antislavery. By 1851, Knight had lost her belief in the efficacy of philanthropic efforts and made the advocacy of suffrage her sole focus. She wrote to her friend E. Rooke that the 'shoals of philanthropic societies' would not be necessary if the universal vote was obtained so that women could partake in the 'dirty work' of politics to drive out the 'rapacious hordes' of current lawmakers (Letter to E. Rooke [20 Jan. 1851]). By this time, British antislavery had for her become a negative example of the inefficient pursuit of social change: she asked Richard Cobden to compare the years of unsuccessful campaigning of British abolitionists in Europe with the fact that in 1848, the 'People-King [Lamartine] abolished black slavery at a breath' ('To Richard Cobden' 1850). In all, then, Knight tried to move interlocutors to see antislavery as a precursor to women's rights agitation, a meaningful point of comparison, and a

²⁶ Knight was critical of the British reparations for slaveholders and of the apprenticeship system put in place in the colonies as a transitional measure.

powerful argument against the leadership of men alone. She afforded antislavery pride of place in an unfolding feminist usable past.

In doing this, Knight brought a fresh perspective into the Parisian scene. In addition to joining the ranks of women's rights societies, she published her views in *La Voix des femmes* and *La Démocratie pacifique* ('Ce qui' 1848; 'Faits' 1848; 'La Brebis' 1848; 'Les femmes' 1848; 'Miss' 1848). The main medium of Parisian women's rights advocacy, Eugénie Niboyet's *La Voix*, had sought to legitimate women's political activity by closely adhering to the rhythms of daily politics of the French Republic (Bérengrère 2015, esp. 108). By contrast, Knight connected women's mobilisation to a decades-long transnational history of women's agitation against slavery. With her disregard for the national framework and her Garrisonian register of expression, Knight found herself broadly in line with the working-class Jeanne Deroin, Désirée Gay, and Hortense Wild – but not so with the newspaper's editor. To massage over these differences, Niboyet printed one of Knight's letters with an explanation that her demands were difficult to realise and that her statement served simply to showcase the allegiance of religious women to their cause ('Miss' 1848, 3).²⁷

Knight and Deroin soon began to advocate for the 'complete and radical abolition of all privileges of sex, race, birth, caste and fortune' (Knight, 'Notebook', n.p.). Despite the phrase's echoes of earlier French revolutionary writings,²⁸ this creed measured current developments by an alternative horizon than Niboyet's strategic adherence to the contours of Republican politics. Calling attention to women's subjection, putting it first, and framing it through the Republican diction of 'privilege', Deroin and her colleagues emphasised that women's equality was a precondition for proper governance and worldly progress. The privilege of sex, Deroin explained, was the 'source' of all the others, 'the last head of the hydra' ('Mission' 1849, 3; see also Schor 2022, 235). They first encapsulated their idea of universal emancipation in this formula in a public letter to Alphonse Esquiros, co-signed with an unidentified A. François,

²⁷ '[P]our prouver que la question d'égalité se fait jour précisément où se produit le plus pur sentiment religieux, nous reproduirons de miss Knight sa lettre au pasteur Coquerel. Qu'on n'oublie point que c'est une puritaine qui parle [...] Miss Knight, de son point de vue, demande des choses sinon impossibles, du moins d'une exécution difficile, chez nous surtout. Mais pour justifier notre sexe aux yeux de la morale, nous faisons valoir l'opinion des femmes qui parlent au nom de la Religion [...] ('Miss' 1848, 3).

²⁸ I am grateful to Karen Offen for raising this, particularly the potential echo of the Marquis de Condorcet's call that 'anyone who votes against the rights of another, whatever his religion, colour or sex, automatically forfeits his own' (2012 [1790], 157)

and repeated it throughout their agitational activity between 1848 and 1849.²⁹ The statement's phrasing recalled the October Constitution of the Constituent Assembly, which prescribed the abolition of 'all distinctions of birth, class or caste [*Sont abolis à toujours tout titre nobiliaire, toute distinction de naissance, de classe ou de caste*]' (*République* 1848, 14).³⁰ Women's emancipation, Deroin explained, was crucial unfinished business of this document:

The Constitution of 1848 has legally abolished the privileges of race, caste and of fortune by the liberation of black slaves, by the forfeiting of noble titles, by the suppression of the income-based franchise. But the privilege of sex has been maintained in this Constitution, undermining it at its base, because it is the negation of the principles upon which it was founded. (*Campagne Electorale* 1849, 2)³¹

The reworking of Article 10 of the Constitution which Deroin promoted undermined any Republican triumphalism. It not only found the abolition of privileges incomplete, but prefixed it with fundamental questions of race and sex. In invoking race, Deroin and her circle referred both

²⁹ Alphonse Esquiros directed the Club du Peuple. The short-lived publication associated with this club, *L'Accusateur public*, castigated moderates and reactionaries and referred to women as 'marchandise vivante' ('Grand complor'). See also Gossez 1966, 139, 150. Adèle Esquiros, a *quarante-huitarde* and part of the feminist circle, was also active in this club (Lucas 1851, 188).

³⁰ The concept of caste, as a way to describe cultural differences between social circles, would have been familiar to the liberals of the provisional government, as it was used by some social analysts. Most prominent among these was arguably Alexis de Tocqueville in his *De la démocratie en Amérique*. In footnote 11 of book 4, he wrote, for instance, that 'Quand un peuple a un état social démocratique, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'existe plus dans son sein de castes ni de classes [...]' (1848, n.p.), a remark that clearly echoes in the Constitution. However, when Ledru-Rollin, the firebrand socialist Minister of Internal Affairs, used the word in the soon infamous Bulletin 16 of 15 April 1848, in which he called on the people to rise up if a Conservative victory would occur in the upcoming elections, his detractors in the press ridiculed it as an obscure word. *La Presse* wrote: 'Que veut dire caste? – Caste est le nom donné aux diverses tribus ou familles formant une nation, et distinctes les unes les autres par les mœurs, le sang et la différence des races. [...] Où donc M. Ledru-Rollin voit-il qu'il existe parmi nous une caste?' ('Paris, 16 Avril' 1848).

³¹ 'Enfin nous affirmons que le comité démocratique socialiste aurait manifesté hautement sa foi dans les principes et son respect pour leur intégrité, en inscrivant sur sa liste le nom d'une femme; il aurait ainsi protesté hautement contre le dernier des privilèges. La Constitution de 1848 a légalement aboli les privilèges de race, de caste et de fortune par l'affranchissement des esclaves noirs, par l'extinction des titres de noblesse, par la suppression du cens électoral. Mais le privilège de sexe est resté sous-entendu dans cette Constitution qu'il sape dans sa base, parce qu'il est la négation des principes sur lesquels elle est fondée' (Deroin, *Campagne Electorale* 1849, 2).

to colonial subjects and to the equality of peoples in Europe. Deroin later clarified that ‘humanity cannot walk with nature in the providential paths of progress and of indefinite perfectibility until united work has guaranteed to each of the members of the human family, without distinction of sex or of race, the complete development and free use of all of their moral, intellectual and physical faculties’ (*Almanach*, 1851, 11).³²

These claims bore echoes of the Saint-Simonian search for the *mère suprême* of twenty years earlier. But their expression through the foregrounding of race was new. Rather than Republican inspiration, it reflected transnational alliances that would become more important to Deroin’s circle as the Second Republic began to be dismantled. Already in 1848, they phrased their claims in cosmopolitan terms, not those of the state: ‘for too long we have been excluded from the assemblies in which the great questions are discussed on which the fate of the world rests; [and this] has produced incomplete systems, egoistical laws, fanatical crimes, civil discord and all the miseries which degrade humanity’ (Knight ‘Notebook’, n.p.; see also Riot-Sarcey 1994).³³ The World’s Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 had been Knight’s pivotal experience of exclusion and she shared with her Parisian colleagues her conviction of the inseparability of national and colonial questions, the realities of slavery and of antislavery, the potential of international collaboration, and, specifically, the discussions that had come to a head at the 1840 Convention.

DEROIN’S INTERNATIONALISM IN FRANCE AND ABROAD

While she received few votes, Deroin’s electoral campaign in April 1849 was a powerful occasion to extend the ideas of her circle beyond the

³² ‘C’est avec une profonde conviction de la sagesse de la Providence et des saintes lois de la nature que nous affirmons que l’humanité ne peut marcher en mesure avec la nature dans les voies providentielles du progrès, de la perfectibilité indéfinie, que lorsque le travail solidaire garantira à chacun des membres de la famille humaine, sans distinction de sexe ni de race, le complet développement et le libre usage de toutes leurs facultés morales, intellectuelles et physiques’ (*Almanach* 1851, 11).

³³ ‘[T]rop longtemps nous avons été exclues des assemblées où se traitaient les grandes questions sur lesquelles reposent les destinées du monde; et la puissance de l’esprit humaine, scindée par l’orgueil de l’homme, n’a produit que des systèmes incomplets, que des lois égoïstes, les crimes du fanatisme, les discords civils et toutes les misères qui dégradent l’humanité. Que notre déclaration de principes proclame hautement l’abolition complète, radicale, de tous les privilèges de sexe, de race, de naissance, de caste & de fortune et vous verrez bientôt dans nos rangs des femmes de cœur & d’intelligence dévouées et courageuses qui seconderont vos héroïques efforts [...]’. Transcribed in Anne Knight’s notebook, c. 1848.

confines of her *Opinion des femmes* (Moses 1984, 147–148).³⁴ For weeks, she spoke to different assemblies and hung her campaign posters around the city (Deroin ‘Aux électeurs’ 1849; Stern 1862)³⁵ and the news of her campaign reached the anglophone world.³⁶ As part of an ongoing polemic with prominent socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, she stated that her demand to be recognised as an electoral candidate was her ‘duty’, rather than winning any votes (‘Réponse’ 1849, 4).³⁷ Her close colleague Hortense Wild would later single out for praise Deroin’s sangfroid in daring to set examples ‘premature to the point of being grotesque’ and ‘play the fool to achieve her aims, to satisfy her thirst for justice’.³⁸

As part of her advocacy, Deroin reframed French developments from the cosmopolitan perspective of universal emancipation. This outlook would become crucial to the survival of women’s rights discussions into the 1850s. As political auspices for social democracy darkened over the course of the year (Rowbotham 1992; Tamboukou 2016; Riot-Sarcey 1994), Deroin continued her efforts. With Pauline Roland she convened the Association fraternelle et solidaire de toutes les associations, founded to transform the new family of cooperative movements into a general union.³⁹ In 1850, the police raided one of their meetings and arrested its leaders on suspicion of seditious behaviour, and in May, Deroin and Roland were sentenced to six months in Saint-Lazare Prison (Pilbeam 2003, 286–288). During this period, Deroin relied on Anne Knight to ensure her message was being heard and to make contact both with local circles and new networks abroad. This shift from local politics to a transnational orientation was accompanied by substantial investments in memory work to create from the shambles of 1848 a new, usable past.

³⁴ According to Samuel Hayat (2014a), a tradition of ‘impossible candidacies’ was added to the repertoire of working-class organisers with François-Vincent Raspail’s candidacy in 1848.

³⁵ Copies are preserved in the BnF and in Anne Knight’s papers at the Friends House Library in London.

³⁶ Cf. the *London Examiner* (‘The French’ 1849) and Maria Chapman’s report on the campaign for American abolitionist audiences (Chambers 2014, 170–171).

³⁷ ‘En posant ma candidature à l’Assemblée législative, j’accomplis un devoir: c’est au nom de la justice que je demande que le dogme de l’égalité ne soit plus un mensonge’ (‘Réponse’ 1849, 4).

³⁸ ‘Elle faisait tout par principe, ne reculant pas à donner des exemples prématurés jusqu’à en être grotesques. La bravoure de Jeanne et son sang-froid lui permettaient d’affronter cette phase. Elle eut joué le fou de roi pour parvenir à ses fins, pour satisfaire à sa soif de justice’ (Wild, 1890, 474).

³⁹ Cf. the last issue of *L’Opinion des femmes* for a detailed outline of the aims of this organisation (‘Projet’ 1849; ‘Appel aux Associations’ 1849).

Part of this effort was to reframe abolition, from a French Republican to a cosmopolitan light, as they expressed in their international communications and, lastingly, in the *Almanach des femmes*.

After their arrest for illegal organising, Deroin and Roland continued their advocacy for women's rights in prison, petitioning the government and writing to other women's collectives nationally and internationally (Thomas 1956, 161; Pilbeam 2003, 278). These included the Sheffield Female Political Association (SFPA),⁴⁰ which Anne Knight had co-founded, the American Women's Convention in Worcester, and a group in Limoges (Deroin and Roland 1852; 'Female' 1851).⁴¹ They urged their colleagues to look towards the means of association and collaboration with working-class organisers to achieve their aims. They also addressed male Chartists in Sheffield to urge their solidarity with women, hoping to convince them that the 'work of enfranchisement [could] not be complete and durable but by the radical extinction of all privileges of sex, race, caste, birth and fortune' (quoted in Schwarzkopf 1991, 253). Knight kept them abreast of political developments abroad and certainly facilitated some of their connections (see also 'To the Editor' 1853). With her insistent framing over the previous years, Knight also had her share in formulating the international framework of understanding Deroin and Roland invoked.

The letters to Sheffield and Worcester, which shared much of the same wording, both enacted transnational solidarity and theoretically emphasised its importance. Roland and Deroin opened their letter by giving their 'Sisters of America' the encouraging news that their Declaration of the Rights of Woman (1848) had reached them in Saint-Lazare. They asserted that women across the world shared a fate: '[w]hether she be born on the banks of the Ganges, the Thames or of the Seine, it is the country of her master; for she ever bears the law imposed on her by man' ('Female Political' 1851, 3). In their letter to America, they stressed the progress of 'fraternal solidarity' in Paris and blamed the failings of previous associations they had been involved with on the fact that those had been 'isolated in the midst of the old world' (Deroin and Roland 1852, 34). By using abolition as a master frame, they established common

⁴⁰ The SFPA, which soon transformed into a national Women's Rights Association, was active from 1851 to 1853, its collapse coinciding with that of organised Chartism (Crawford 2003, 631).

⁴¹ The other groups they addressed were the Women's Convention at Worcester (Deroin and Roland 1852) and an unidentified group in Limoges ('Express', 18 Dec. 1851).

footing across different socio-political circumstances, carving a universalist message out of the complicated history of the events of 1848:

The darkness of reaction has obscured the sun of 1848, which seemed to rise so radiantly. Why? Because the revolutionary tempest, in overturning at the same time the throne and the scaffold, in breaking the chain of the black slave, forgot to break the chain of the most oppressed of all the pariahs of humanity.

'There shall be no more slaves,' said our brethren. 'We proclaim universal suffrage. All shall have the right to elect the agents who shall carry out the Constitution which should be based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Let each one come and deposit his vote; the barrier of privilege is overturned; before the electoral urn there are no more oppressed, no more masters and slaves.' Woman, in listening to this appeal, rises and approaches the liberating urn to exercise her right of suffrage as a member of society. But the barrier of privilege rises also before her. ('Female Political' 1851, 3)

Referring to both women and slaves as chained, and moving from the 'black slave' to the 'slavery' of the disenfranchised, the writers starkly visualised women's continued disenfranchisement and braided together the causes of women and the enslaved into a single vision of universal emancipation. Moreover, referring to abolition as fruit of 'the sun of 1848' rather than of the French Constitution and its by then beleaguered 'principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity', the letters reframed abolition through a world-historical lens – which chimed well with the way news of the provisional government's decree had first been received by reformers abroad.⁴²

After she was released from prison, Deroin turned her attention to producing a series of 'women's almanacs'. Three instalments appeared between 1851 and 1854, which were explicitly geared towards both French and English readerships, with the second volume appearing bilingually, with both languages printed side by side. Deroin circulated them among the original readers of the *Opinion des femmes* and reserved copies for the Phalansterian bookstore in Paris ('Causeries' 1851, 4; Pilbeam 2003, 116–119); they served as a source for women's rights advocates for decades to come.⁴³ In all, the almanacs offered a means of connection and continuity for women's rights advocates in what had become a sizeable diaspora of Forty-Eighters (Pilbeam 2003; Aprile 2008; Kunka 2016).

⁴² As an augur of the revolutionary potential of 1848, French abolition gained a special place in the American discourse of women's rights that year, as a milestone in the democratic movement for universal emancipation (Anderson 1998; Offen 2000, 108–109; Hewitt 2007; Alimi-Levy 2018, 8).

⁴³ Prominent women's rights advocate Léon Richer helped to publicise them in 1860s (Pilbeam 2003, 289–290) and Hubertine Auclert referenced them in her *Vote des femmes* of 1908 (94).

The *Almanachs* included articles on a wide range of contemporary and historical topics, including women's achievements at home and abroad, the history of Saint-Simonianism, vegetarianism, non-violence, and the Utopian community of Shakers in the US. To collect her materials, Derooin relied on many former contributors to *L'Opinion des femmes*, even after she had moved to London. They included Jean Macé, Henriette Artiste (Hortense Wild), and Anne Knight ('Visite' 1851; 'To the Editor' 1853; 'Lettre de Miss' 1854). Besides writings by Angélique Arnaud, Eugène Pelletan, and Caroline de Barrau, the almanacs also contain multiple contributions by Anna Blackwell, who was fluent in French, equally interested in romantic socialist theories, and moved frequently between the US and Europe (Wild 1890, 474; 'Les Résignées' 1892, 1). Derooin published well-known names, such as the Saint-Simonian poet Pierre Lachambeaudie, as well as anonymous contributors and cuttings from various books and periodicals, including the *Démocratie pacifique*.

Juxtaposing different international developments, the almanacs allowed readers to immerse themselves in a vibrant transnational reform community. The volumes also invited them to reflect on the interconnections between different movements and causes, nurturing the Garrisonian vision of universal emancipation. Events in world history were presented as the shared past of a transnational movement, within which Derooin explicitly situated herself: 'Since 1848, societies of Women have been organised in France, in America, and in England – composed of females claiming their political rights, that they may themselves watch the future social welfare [*sic*] of their children' (Almanach 1853, vol. 2, 14).

Produced in a single volume, the almanac format was less sensitive to the changing financial and political circumstances Derooin worked in than her more regular periodical publications had been. The medium allowed her to collect articles from her circle over a longer period and could escape the measures taken to progressively restrict the press after the June Days (Bouchet et al. 2015, pt. 3, n.p.).⁴⁴ It was also a vehicle for memory work par excellence. Almanacs had long been the dominant medium for spreading factual information across agrarian communities (Lyons 2008, 29), but in the 1830s the genre became politicised, when it became both the main form of 'documentary compendium' circulated by

⁴⁴ Besides generalised measures against the radical press across Europe, women's initiatives were also specifically targeted. In 1850, a law against female editorship was passed in Saxony, which became known as the 'Lex Otto' because it was clearly aimed at Louise Otto's *Frauen-Zeitung* (1948–1952) – which relocated to Gera (Della Rossa 2005, 129).

the antislavery movement and a genre typical of Republicanism (Gosselin 1993, 290ff.; Goddu 2020, 35ff.). An article on the 'history, purpose and use' of almanacs in the *République du peuple* of 1851, which Deroin read, traced their political significance from Roman Antiquity until the present day, explaining that they had been far from the trivial genre of astrological and meteorological speculations as they had supposedly been made to appear under despotic rule.⁴⁵ Instead, they were the first vehicles of history and political education, recording those personal and national events which '[man] wishes to keep in his memory for his own instruction, and for the teaching of the generations who are required to succeed him' ('Des almanacs' 1851, 18).⁴⁶ The author finally concluded that after the disappointments of 1848, almanacs were once again needed to instruct the people in patriotic and Republican values (21). Deroin's 'Introduction' to her own project, where she explained that 'Today an almanac no longer needs to indicate merely variations in temperature and the position of the stars, but also the variations and diverse tendencies of the heart, and the progress of those social truths that contain the prophecy of a better future' (*Almanach des femmes pour 1852* 1851, 9), echoes the same sentiment.⁴⁷

After 1848, Republican almanacs tended to refer back to the revolution of 1789–1794 in their calendars, titles, and imagery (Gosselin 1993, 291; see also Chambost 2018, 95–97). Deroin's almanacs, however, hardly looked to this French legacy at all. Instead, they were important archives of memories of antislavery and particularly of Garrisonianism. They featured several long articles detailing aspects of the history of abolitionism and its connection to women's rights and made short references to memories of antislavery throughout. Editorial decisions clearly reflected Garrisonian reform ideals of universal emancipation from interconnected forms of oppression. This belief was made explicit in the third

⁴⁵ The *Almanachs* show that Deroin read the *Almanach phalanstérien*, which was published by *Démocratie pacifique*, and the *République du peuple*, which was edited by a group of illustrious Republicans led by François Arago.

⁴⁶ 'Toutefois, l'homme n'a pas seulement une existence matérielle: dans ces alternatives d'ombres et de lumière par lesquelles il mesure sa vie, se produisent certains faits, surgissent certains événemens dont il veut garder la mémoire pour son instruction propre, pour l'enseignement des générations qui sont appelées à lui succéder. Sous ce rapport, le premier livre d'histoire devait être un journal, un répertoire, un Almanach enfin où auraient été consignées à leur date les chroniques mémorables de chaque nation. C'est ce qui a eu lieu, en effet' ('Des almanacs' 1851, 18).

⁴⁷ 'Aujourd'hui, un Almanach ne doit pas seulement indiquer les variations de la température et le cours des astres, mais aussi les variations et les tendances diverses des esprits et le progrès des vérités sociales qui renferment la prophétie d'un avenir meilleur' (*Almanach des femmes pour 1852* 1851, 9).

volume, in a long article on the Société de non-résistance (1854) founded in 1838 by Garrison and some of his followers. The article reprinted the Declaration of Sentiments of the group, who were described as the ‘pure abolitionists’ (‘Société’ 1854, 40), and explained that the different societies discussed over the several issues of the *Almanach* each in their own way contributed to the women’s cause and to the ‘transformation of the world’ (‘Société’ 1854, 39).⁴⁸

The first almanac contained the article ‘Abolition d’esclavage’, which reproduced much of the Declaration of William Lloyd Garrison’s National Anti-Slavery Convention (1833) and informed readers of the non-violent strategies of the Garrisonians (‘Abolition’ 1851, 163). It noted that the abolitionists accepted women as equals in their ranks, which for the editor, ‘explained without doubt why the abolitionists felt so naturally attached to all works of independence and high morality’ (‘Abolition’ 1851, 167).⁴⁹ The second almanac treated in depth the publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (‘Mrs. Harriet’ 1852; ‘The Women’ 1852; ‘American Reply’ 1852). The editor wrote:

In the great regenerating tournament, [woman] has boldly entered and has claimed [*sic*] a belligerent and glorious position. One lady for ever illustrious in the annals of America, has conquered amidst the plaudits of an entire universe, the purest of reputations, by the publication of those winning pages which relate the history of Uncle Tom. [...] It is when man of the freest countries, absorbed in calculation of oeconomy [*sic*], are intent upon improving the breed of animals, and of completing machinery whilst, from entirely mercenary interests, grave legislators establish temporising compromises upon the eternal and unchanging liberties of man, this woman at once arises; she has unfurled the standard of emancipation of the slave and has drawn from all mankind in a cry of alarm and pity [*sic*]. (‘The Women’ 1852, 197)

The martial characterisation of Stowe as a ‘belligerent’ standard-bearer is a striking echo of Knight’s diction. Deroin also reported on the Duchess of Sutherland’s initiative to organise an address in the name of English women to the women of America – the ‘Stafford House Memorial’. Presumably because she did not have the original address at hand, she reproduced the American reply to it, its barely veiled hostilities

⁴⁸ ‘Par ces associations diverses, mais reliées par un même esprit, la cause des femmes, qui ne peut s’appuyer que sur ce qui est réellement grand, se trouve être, en fin de compte, celle de toutes les vérités sublimes qui doivent amener la transformation du monde’ (‘Société’ 1854, 39).

⁴⁹ ‘Ces faits notables peuvent sans doute expliquer pourquoi les abolitionnistes se retrouvent naturellement attachés à toutes les œuvres d’indépendance et de haute moralité’ (‘Abolition’ 1851, 167).

notwithstanding. This episode of antislavery prompted the reflection that 'The year that is just beginning commences therefore under favourable auspices and as for ourselves, who are humble labourers [*sic*] in the work of general emancipation [...] we greet respectfully our sisters of 1852' ('The Women' 1852, 202).

Besides translating and circulating these primary materials, the almanacs also amplified other texts that made the connection. The opening article of the first almanac consisted of a report on and partial translation of Harriet Taylor Mill's landmark text, 'The Enfranchisement of Women'.⁵⁰ This essay had appeared in the *Westminster Review* in July 1851 and raised several key liberal arguments for women's emancipation which John Stuart Mill, Harriet's husband, would further elaborate in his *The Subjection of Women* (1869).⁵¹ The *Almanach* reproduced and reinforced, through its textual selection, Taylor Mill's emphasis on the connections between organised antislavery and the rise of women's rights advocacy ('Convention' 1851). It also specified that the history of women's involvement in antislavery in the US which Taylor Mill argued was relevant to all. Following her observation that the names of the fiercest adversaries of the 'aristocracy of colour' were also among the 'first collective protest against the aristocracy of sex', the editors explained:

It was not just to the democracy of America that this reclamation of women of their political and civil equality had been addressed; their pressing appeal was also addressed to the radicals and chartists of the United Kingdom, and to the democrats of Europe who demanded universal suffrage as an inherent right, of which the privation is unjust and tyrannical. Yet with what degree of truth or reason can one say suffrage is universal when one half of the human race is excluded? ('Convention' 1851, 17)⁵²

Deroin did not just bring these historical and analogical arguments founded on antislavery to her own readership – she also added an extra cosmopolitan dimension by pointing out the connections beyond the transatlantic frame.

⁵⁰ The article originally appeared under John Stuart Mill's name but is now usually attributed to his wife and close collaborator.

⁵¹ The article also circulated among Garrisonian abolitionists. Miller, 2022, n.p.

⁵² 'Ce n'est pas seulement à la démocratie de l'Amérique que s'adresse cette réclamation des femmes demandant l'égalité politique et civile, mais leur pressant appel s'adresse également aux radicaux et aux chartistes du Royaume-Uni, et aux démocrates de l'Europe qui demandent le suffrage universel comme un droit inhérent dont la privation est injuste et tyrannique. En effet, jusqu'à quel degré de vérité ou de raison pourrait-on dire que le suffrage est *universel* si on en exclut la moitié de la race humaine?' ('Convention' 1851, 17).

There are further brief invocations to the history of abolition throughout the almanacs, as well as comparisons between women's subjection and conditions of slavery. In his 'Toast a courage morale' in the first almanac, for instance, Eugène Stourm sought to comfort readers by reminding them that progressive reformers are often mocked: 'People have laughed at those who believed in the equality between the races [...] people have laughed at those who have proclaimed that slavery is a crime against humanity [...] and at this moment, people still laugh at socialists' ('Toast' 1851, 186–187),⁵³ while Jean Macé suggested that 'when people realise women have a soul, no more nor less than the Negro, they will give, one day, what they have given to the negro, for the reason that he too has a soul, just like them, and that this soul comes with rights attached' ('5e Lettre' 1851, 94; see also 'Votre feuilleton' 1851).⁵⁴ Combining with the longer articles, these references stitched together a transnational horizon of moral reform and invited readers to see different injustices as inextricably interlaced in a single vision of universal emancipation. Moreover, Derooin's circle of contributors drew, repeatedly and to powerful effect, on the power of the 'abolitionist imagination' of the lone visionary whose vision of justice has yet to be vindicated.

Although little is known about her activities after 1854, when the last volume of the *Almanach des femmes* appeared, it is clear that Derooin kept broadcasting her vision of universal emancipation.⁵⁵ In 1857, she again tried to convince fellow socialists in London to support women's political equality, taking the floor to remind them that 'while the revolution had liberated slaves, it had forgotten women' (Kunka 2016, 59). The almanacs, especially, were a key undertaking to keep dissenting spirits alive and they attest to the transnational collaborations and cosmopolitan imagination that underpinned hopes of woman suffrage in the mid-nineteenth century.

⁵³ 'On a ri de ceux qui ont cru à la fraternité des races, [...]; on a ri de ceux qui ont proclamé que l'esclavage est un crime de lèse-humanité; [...] en ce moment, on rit encore des socialistes' ('Toast' 1851, 186–187).

⁵⁴ '[P]uisqu'ils conviennent que la femme a une âme, ni plus ni moins que le nègre, ils lui donneront bien, un jour, ce qu'ils ont donné au nègre, par la raison que, lui aussi, avait une âme, tout comme eux, et qu'à cette âme, étaient attachés des droits' ('5e Lettre', 1851, 94).

⁵⁵ In a retrospective, Derooin's contemporary Jenny d'Héricourt reported she had ultimately needed to give up the *Almanach* because of an ideological rift with the collaborators on whom she had depended. D'Héricourt 1869.

Knight also worked on the memory of antislavery and the meaning of abolition to the cause of women over the course of decades. While she initially framed it as a success that validated the importance of women's public voice, she soon came instead to use it as a negative example of inefficiency and frustration and to highlight the importance of female suffrage, rather than only female influence. Her defence of Garrisonian-style advocacy, however, remained a constant. Overall, Knight's most lasting legacy was her seemingly untiring effort to make the history of antislavery part of the usable past of the women's movement not just in the UK, but also in France and beyond. She collected many materials on the topic and sought to circulate these at every opportunity, be it through correspondence, the periodical press, or from the workbag on her hip.⁵⁶ She invested time and effort to convince prominent movement figures transnationally of the historical connections between the campaigns against slavery and for women's rights. In doing so, she framed abolition as a transnational memory in a shared history of the struggle for universal emancipation.

Knight's collaborations with Jeanne Deroin emboldened her to engage in public advocacy. They also allowed her ideas to ultimately reach a considerable circle of readers, particularly in Deroin's almanacs, which were revisited for decades. Despite reservations about their Quixotic approach, suffragists, American feminist-abolitionists, and socialists kept their work alive. Sarah Grimké discussed the almanacs in *The Lily* in 1856 (Lerner 1998, 116–119) and Paulina Wright Davis in the *Una* (Anderson 2000, 193). In her 1902 history, Helen Blackburn proclaimed Knight a pioneer of woman suffrage and, in 1906, Leeds socialist and feminists Isabella Fords republished Deroin and Roland's letter to the Sheffield Association in the *Labour Leader* (Rowbotham 1992, 198). The decades of work Knight and Deroin had made between them to incorporate memories of antislavery into the usable past of the women's rights community in the end made a durable intervention in feminist internationalist culture, with their original modes of action and rhetorical framings serving both as a model and as a foil. Their ideas became part of the cauldron of early nineteenth-century feminist thought, espoused by some of its most vocal defenders and circulated among the ranks, drawing productive lines of contention which would be continued in the decades to come.

⁵⁶ See also the *Englishwoman's Review* (January 1889) discussion of her, quoted in Mason 1912, 27.

Knight and Deroin's painstakingly assembled cosmopolitan orientation towards universal emancipation allowed them to keep 1848 hopes alive when the Republican government eventually let them down. Both kept up their involvement with advocacy, and only the last entry in Knight's political notebook, a note underneath a transcription of the 1848 'Address au Président du Club du Peuple' suggests an eventual loss of faith: 'Transcribed this 22/8.62 it is 14 years ago and where are we now? Still heaving our agonizing chests under the cauchemar of military despotism / Still dragged at the chariot wheels of the sons of Belial – how long Lord? How long? Will thou not avenge? a nation like France & England' ('Notebook', 1862, n.p.). As the next chapter explores, she wrote this on the cusp of major developments which she did not live to see. As the Woman Question became part of structural, international debate, the connections between the movements she advocated came not only to be widely discussed among women reformers, but even found their way into the rhetoric of some influential men.