



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Lilian Helen Montagu Papers
Manuscript Collection No. 282**



Collection Summary

Title	Lilian Helen Montagu Papers
Dates	1913-1961
Collection Number	MS-282
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Montagu, Lilian Helen, 1873-1963
Extent	2.8 linear feet (7 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English and German

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch Lilian (Lily) Helen Montagu was born on December 22, 1873 in London, England. She was the sixth of ten children born to British banker and philanthropist, Samuel Montagu (1832-1911).

Lily was educated at a private school and raised in a strict Orthodox home. By age fifteen she discovered that Orthodoxy did not agree with her personal interpretation of Jewish teaching. At seventeen she and her sister Marian began to run evening classes for working girls and conducted Sabbath services for children. Lily was nineteen when she founded, with her cousin Beatrice, the West Central Club, an educational club for working girls. The club developed into the West Central Jewish Day Settlement with Lily remaining director into the 1960s.

When Lily was 25, she was influenced by the writings of the Jewish scholar, Dr. Claude Montefiore. Lily became a pioneer in the cause of Liberal Judaism and joined the small group, including Montefiore, that established Liberal Judaism in England. In 1902 Lily was one of the founders of the Jewish Religious Union, which led to a separate religious movement represented by the Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

The first rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, Israel L. Mattuck, espoused the radical Reform Judaism then popular in the United States. Lily agreed with that viewpoint and supported Rabbi Mattuck. Lily was a regular preacher at services of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and also ministered to affiliated synagogues, one of which was her own synagogue, the West Central Liberal Synagogue. She officiated there every week and preached regularly. In her zeal to promote Liberal Judaism Lily became the first Jewish woman to serve as a lay minister, giving her first sermon in 1918.

Lily was a founder of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues which, in 1926 when the movement became world-wide, was renamed the World Union for Progressive Judaism. The WUPJ's headquarters were for a time located in her home and she was its honorary secretary until her death.

During her life, Lily was a pioneer of the Youth Club Movement, founder of the National Organization of Girls' Clubs, and was one of the first women in England to become a magistrate. She fought for decent conditions in sweat shops and helped open the way for the appointment of factory inspectors. During the Hitler regime Lily helped refugees to escape Europe by securing entry permits.

During her lifetime Lily wrote numerous letters, articles, and pamphlets. She also published fourteen books, most on religious subjects, as well as three novels.

Lily H. Montagu died in London on January 22, 1963 at age 89. She remained active until the end of her life and during her last days continued to visit the elderly and other persons in need.

Scope and Content The Lily H. Montagu Papers describe the career of Lily H. Montagu as lay minister, social worker, and co-founder of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. The collection consists predominantly of sermons delivered by Montagu at London's Liberal Jewish Synagogue and West Central Jewish Congregation, as well as other places. The collection also contains German writings, religious home worship curriculum materials, and short stories authored by Montagu.

The sermons, most of which are typescript, reflect the broad range of Lily's interests and concerns, ranging from Jewish identity and observance, to social issues and matters of contemporary interest. The home worship curriculum materials were part of a planned four year series sponsored by the Jewish Religious Union designed for instruction on worship in the home. This initiative reflects Lily's interest in merging religious with domestic and women's concerns, specifically the maintenance of Jewish identity and observance with the responsibilities and demands of family life.

Arrangement The papers are divided into four (4) series: A. Sermons and Addresses; B. German Writings; C. Jewish Religious Union [Home Worship Curriculum]; D. Short Stories.

Terms of Access The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Lilian Helen Montagu Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:
[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-282. Lilian Helen Montagu Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance Received from the West London Liberal Synagogue, London, England, 1985.

Processing Information Processed by Kevin Proffitt and Eleanor M. Lawhorn, January 1998.

Index Terms

Subjects Jewish women / Jews -- England -- London / Worship (Judaism)
Personal Names Montagu, Lilian Helen, 1873-1963
Corporate Names West Central Liberal Synagogue / World Union for Progressive Judaism
Media Sermons / Short stories

Series A. Sermons and Addresses, 1913-1961

Extent 2.4 linear feet (6 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of sermons, speeches, and lectures. The first two folders in the series contain alphabetical and chronological indexes of Montagu's sermons. Please note that the sermons listed in the indexes may not all be present in the collection.

Arrangement The series is arranged alphabetically by title.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. Index of sermons and addresses (alphabetical order).

Box 1. Folder 2. Index of sermons and addresses (chronological order), 1925-1960, undated

Box 1. Folder 3. Sermons and addresses, A.

Box 1. Folder 4. Sermons and addresses, B.

Box 1. Folder 5. Sermons and addresses, Ca-Ci.

Box 1. Folder 6. Sermons and addresses, Cl-Cr.

Box 1. Folder 7. Sermons and addresses, Da-De.

Box 1. Folder 8. Sermons and addresses, Di-Dr.

Box 1. Folder 9. Sermons and addresses, E.

Box 2. Folder 1. Sermons and addresses, Fa-Fe.

Box 2. Folder 2. Sermons and addresses, Fi-Fu.

Box 2. Folder 3. Sermons and addresses, Ge-Gi.

Box 2. Folder 4. Sermons and addresses, Gl-Gr.

Box 2. Folder 5. Sermons and addresses, Ha-Hom.

Box 2. Folder 6. Sermons and addresses, Hon-Hu.

Box 2. Folder 7. Sermons and addresses, I-In.

Box 3. Folder 1. Sermons and addresses, Inc-Is.
Box 3. Folder 2. Sermons and addresses, J.
Box 3. Folder 3. Sermons and addresses, K.
Box 3. Folder 4. Sermons and addresses, L.
Box 3. Folder 5. Sermons and addresses, Ma.
Box 3. Folder 6. Sermons and addresses, Me-Mi.
Box 3. Folder 7. Sermons and addresses, Mo-My.
Box 3. Folder 8. Sermons and addresses, N.
Box 4. Folder 1. Sermons and addresses, O.
Box 4. Folder 2. Sermons and addresses, Pa-Pe.
Box 4. Folder 3. Sermons and addresses, Pi-Po.
Box 4. Folder 4. Sermons and addresses, Pr-Q.
Box 4. Folder 5. Sermons and addresses, R.
Box 4. Folder 6. Sermons and addresses, Sa-Se.
Box 5. Folder 1. Sermons and addresses, Sh-Son.
Box 5. Folder 2. Sermons and addresses, Sou-Sp.
Box 5. Folder 3. Sermons and addresses, St-Sw.
Box 5. Folder 4. Sermons and addresses, Ta-Te.
Box 5. Folder 5. Sermons and addresses, Th.
Box 5. Folder 6. Sermons and addresses, To-Ty.
Box 5. Folder 7. Sermons and addresses, U-V.
Box 5. Folder 8. Sermons and addresses, Wa-We.
Box 6. Folder 1. Sermons and addresses, What A-What D.
Box 6. Folder 2. Sermons and addresses, What H-What W.
Box 6. Folder 3. Sermons and addresses, Whe-Why.
Box 6. Folder 4. Sermons and addresses, Wi-Wo.
Box 6. Folder 5. Sermons and addresses, Y.
Box 6. Folder 6. Sermons and addresses [untitled and miscellaneous], 1916-1960, undated

Series B. German Writings, 1928-1932

Scope and Content Note Consists of one folder containing speeches or articles in the German language. The subjects of the writings concern Liberal Judaism.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 7. Folder 1. German writings, 1928-1932

Series C. Jewish Religious Union [Home Worship Curriculum], undated

Extent 0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of a four year series designed for worship in the home.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 7. Folder 2. Home worship curriculum - 1st year, undated

Box 7. Folder 3. Home worship curriculum - 2nd year, undated

Box 7. Folder 4. Home worship curriculum - 3rd year, undated

Box 7. Folder 5. Home worship curriculum - 4th year, undated

Series D. Short Stories, 1925, 1933, undated

Box and Folder Listing

Box 7. Folder 6. Short stories, 1925, 1933, undated