



# Guide to the Charlotte Despard Letters, 1903-1934

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

Charlotte Despard letters, 1903-1934

**Creator:**

Despard, C. (Charlotte), 1844-1939

**Abstract:**

Charlotte Despard (1844-1939) was a noted English suffragist. She was founder and president of The Women's Freedom League.

**Extent:**

0.1 Linear Feet (4 items)

**Language:**

English

**Language:**

Materials in English

**Collection ID:**

RL.11476

**Permalink:**

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/despardcharlotte/>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Charlotte Despard Letters, 1903-1934, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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## Background

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**Scope and Content**

Collection contains four letters. Three are written in Depard's hand and signed. A Postcard to C.H. Grinling speaks of canvassing (7 March 1903). A letter of condolence addressed to Mr. Webb Smith (3 February 1911). A letter to Mr. Grinling reacting to statements made by Mr. Asquith in May of 1911. Despard hopes that Asquith's remarks would incite women to "draw all the societies together in common action - our watchword being 'On the same terms as

men.” (14 November 1911). A printed invitation to visit Mrs. Despard at home on the occasion of her 90th birthday (27 June 1934)

## **Biographical/Historical**

Charlotte Despard (1844-1939) was the author of ten novels and a noted suffragist. In 1890, widowed after 20 years of marriage, Despard dedicated her life to helping the poor. She funded and staffed a health clinic and soup kitchen. In 1907, Despard and other members of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) created The Women’s Freedom League. They left the WSPU over disagreements about the leadership and use of vandalism. The Women’s Freedom League constitution states the main objective was to “secure for Women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men.” They advocated refusal to pay taxes, refusal to fill out the 1911 census forms, and they objected to the War in 1914. The organization grew rapidly and had 60 branches across Britain and 4,000 members. Its newspaper, *The Vote*, was produced by Charlotte Despard and Teresa Billington-Greig. Living in Dublin during the Irish War of Independence, Despard supported the Irish republican movement. In 1930, Despard joined the Communist Party of Great Britain.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Statement**

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### **Acquisition Information**

The Charlotte Despard letters were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase in 2015.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by Lucy VanderKamp, May 2017.

Accessions described in this collection guide: 2015-0050-LUBMSS173, 2015-0050-LUBMSS174, 2015-0050-LUBMSS175, and 2015-0050-LUBMSS176.

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## **Names and Subjects**

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- Women's rights -- Great Britain -- History
- Women -- Suffrage -- Great Britain

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## **Collection Inventory**

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Letters

Folder 1