

GLASS CEILING, PAPER WALLS: UNCOVERING THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN  
PERSONNEL AT THE TOKYO INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with  
Honours in History

Acadia University

April 2023

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This thesis by Katherine G. Jardine  
is accepted in its present form by the  
Department of History and Classics  
as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts with Honours

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## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. James Sedgwick, for his thoughtful and thorough comments that have helped me write a thesis that I am immensely proud of. Your enthusiasm for my project encouraged me to engage deeply with my topic and to get everything out of this process that I possibly could. I would also like to thank my second reader, Dr. Mariah Cooper. Your thorough and constructive feedback not only strengthened this thesis but will be incredibly valuable for any future work that I may pursue in this field. To all of my professors in the history department, thank you for constantly reminding me of why I love history, and for challenging and supporting me throughout my undergraduate studies. I could not have done this without all of your help.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my friends and family. Kaese and Rory, thank you for always being ready to lend a listening ear and for never failing to cheer me up when I need it. Stefan, thank you for being such a wonderful support. Alexander, thank you for being the best big brother and one of my biggest sources of motivation. I'm always trying to keep up with you. Aneka, thank you for keeping me entertained and distracting me with cup pong. Thank you to Gramma and Papa for your endless love and support. Last but never least, I want to thank my parents, who have always encouraged me to pursue the things I am passionate about, and who have always given me the tools to do so. You're the best!



## Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE IMTFE &amp; HISTORIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 HISTORICAL AND LEGAL PRECEDENT .....	3
1.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IMTFE & ROLES OF WOMEN.....	7
1.3 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	10
<b>CHAPTER 2: THE PROFESSIONAL DIMENSION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 WOMEN LAWYERS, INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTION SECTION.....	14
2.2 WOMEN OF THE SECRETARIAT .....	26
2.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	39
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE SOCIAL DIMENSION .....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 ELAINE FISCHER.....	46
3.2 WILLIANN ABRAMS .....	56
3.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	62
<b>CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>75</b>



## **Abstract**

Women employees of the Tokyo International Military Tribunal (Tokyo IMT) have been largely neglected by current scholarship. This thesis amends this deficit, exploring the diverse and significant roles occupied by women, and the unique challenges they faced in the hyper-masculine, patriarchal environment of the Tokyo IMT. Vulnerability, hope, and ambition defined the IMTFE atmosphere, shaped largely by the role of gender, which is explored throughout this thesis. It considers three prosecutors, Grace Kanode Llewellyn, Helen Grigware Lambert and Coomee Strooker-Dantra, as well as two secretaries, Willianna Abrams and Elaine B. Fischel. The professional and social experiences of these women are reconstructed using a selection of primary source materials, including IMTFE personnel files, personal correspondence, and written memoirs from private and public collections. Secondary research situates this history within its context and provides supporting evidence throughout the analysis. The institutional challenges imposed on women personnel are exposed, as well as challenges precipitated by the blurring of social and professional lines within the tribunal's closed circle. Ultimately, this thesis reveals the formidable tenacity of the women of the IMTFE and their lasting, meaningful contributions to the tribunal.



## List of Abbreviations

GHQ	General Headquarters (of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers)
IDS	International Defense Section
IMT	International Military Tribunal (e.g. Tokyo IMT, Nuremberg IMT)
IMTFE	International Military Tribunal for the Far East
IPS	International Prosecution Section
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers



## Chapter 1: Introducing the IMTFE & Historiography

*I feel my background is wasted. I'd love to get in and work with the men on the cases and the legal stuff cause [sic] then I'd get to take dictation and also learn some legal aspects and here I sit like an ornament.*

Elaine Fischel to mother, 15 May 1946, Fischel Papers (Elaine B. Fischel Papers, Private Collection).

In the wake of the Second World War, the desire for justice reverberated globally. The international response to Nazi war crimes is most prominent – the Nuremberg trials (1945-1946; alternatively known as the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal/IMT) are recognizable among academics and non-scholars alike. Yet, their close relative in Tokyo (the International Military Tribunal for the Far East/IMTFE, Tokyo IMT or Tokyo Tribunal) remains relatively obscured, unfamiliar even to some historians.<sup>1</sup> Hosoya, Ando, Onuma and Minear provide several possible reasons for this discrepancy: first, the defendants in Tokyo were far less notorious than those in Germany and had been charged with far less heinous acts than Nazi leaders – or at least no crime tantamount to the Holocaust. Secondly, the length of the trial. The proceedings in Tokyo took place over two and a half years, compared to ten months in Nuremberg. Interest is presumed to have waned due to the protracted nature of IMTFE proceedings. Finally, Hosoya posits a general global tendency to take more interest in matters pertaining to the so-called western world than to the East.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Marie Amann, “Glimpses of Women at the Tokyo Tribunal,” in *The Tokyo Tribunal: Perspectives on Law, History and Memory*, eds. Viviane E. Dittrich, Kerstin von Lingen, Philipp Osten and Jolana Makraiova (Brussels: Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, 2020), 103-104.

<sup>2</sup> Chihiro Hosoya, N. Ando, Y. Onuma and R. Minear, eds., preface to *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: An International Symposium* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1986), 7.

Regardless of its relative obscurity, the Tokyo Tribunal was – and is, still – a landmark exhibition of international justice. In terms of enduring consequences, the Tokyo proceedings are equally important to those in Nuremberg; in both content and scope, they may even be greater.<sup>3</sup> While the Tokyo IMT (1946-1948) has received increasing attention in recent years, many aspects remain relatively unexplored – including roles occupied by women in the establishment and unfolding of the trial. Considering the aforementioned obscurity of the Tokyo Tribunal this fact is hardly surprising. Most existing scholarship focuses on the in-court proceedings, where men took to centre-stage in visible roles: they made up the overwhelming majority of both the prosecution and defense counsels.<sup>4</sup> Thus, a focus on the direct unfolding of criminal justice unfortunately does not leave much room for the visibility of women, who primarily occupied administrative and clerical positions, operating behind-the-scenes.<sup>5</sup> Though hidden, these roles were vital in the planning and execution of criminal trials.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the IMTFE was entirely dependent on the Secretariat, yet its role in the tribunal has been ignored in most scholarship.<sup>7</sup> This thesis corrects this historiographical oversight by exploring the

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<sup>3</sup> John R. Pritchard and Sonia M. Zaide, eds., preface to *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: Index and Guide*, (New York: Garland Pub., 1981), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Lee Riley, “The International Military Tribunal for the Far East and the Law of the Tribunal as Revealed by the Judgment and the Concurring and Dissenting Opinions,” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1957), 61-67.

<sup>5</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 114.

<sup>6</sup> Even the Nuremberg historiography reflects significant gender blind-spots. Diane Marie Amann is working to expand this field. Previous work includes her article “Cecelia Goetz, Woman at Nuremberg,” *International Criminal Law Review* 11 (2011): 607-620., and a lecture given at the University of Georgia titled “Women at Nuremberg,” January 30, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> James Sedgwick has addressed the role of the Secretariat in works such as his PhD Dissertation, “The Trial Within: Negotiating Justice at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East,” however, the contributions of women within the secretariat are still underexplored.

contributions and interpersonal experiences of women IMTFE employees in Tokyo over the tribunal's duration. Before addressing the void, however, the historical context leading up to the establishment of the IMTFE will be discussed, to further justify the focus of this thesis. This historical context is vital to understanding the significance of the tribunal, and subsequently of the roles played by women in the enactment of international justice.

### 1.1 Historical and Legal Precedent

Before focusing on specific historiographical contributions, it is imperative to understand the global context which formed the backdrop for the IMTFE. Several works describe the historical and cultural backdrop of the IMTFE. Kerstin von Lingen's *Transcultural Justice at the Tokyo Tribunal*, an edited collection with contributions from multiple IMTFE scholars provides a comprehensive understanding of the context of the tribunal, while other works, including Chihiro Hosoya's edited collection *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, as well as Neil Boister and Robert Cryer's *The Tokyo International Military Tribunal: A Reappraisal* and their accompanying *Documents on the Tokyo International Military Tribunal: Charter, Indictment and Judgments* offer thorough overviews of the tribunal, recounting of the decades leading up to the tribunal.<sup>8</sup> The historical overviews included in these sources generally align with a narrative of premeditation and intent for Japanese aggression; a narrative which informed constituents of the Tokyo IMT. Hosoya, Boister and Cryer confirm that the tribunal's direct focus was on military actions in the immediate pre-war period and over the duration of the Second World

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<sup>8</sup> Other major works on the IMTFE include, among others, Arnold C. Brackman's *The Other Nuremberg: The Untold Story of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials*, Richard H. Minear's *Victors' Justice: Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, and Yuma Totani's *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: The Pursuit of Justice in the Wake of World War II and Justice in Asia and the Pacific Region, 1945-1952: Allied War Crimes Prosecutions*.

War.<sup>9</sup> Both books also trace the origins of the Japanese aggression to its longer history of imperialism. More precisely, Boister and Cryer put forth that the Meiji Restoration in Japan brought about a tactful expansion of military authority over civil politics.<sup>10</sup> The expansion of military influence was hastened in large part by an imperial ordinance which restricted the positions of war and navy ministers to officers on active duty.<sup>11</sup> Other structural flaws within Japan's leadership also contributed to the increasing overlap between politics and military affairs, namely the absolute power afforded to the emperor; Japanese ministers were able to sway the emperor in their favour – a feature which was often abused by military officers occupying ministerial positions.<sup>12</sup> As a result of this renewed military vigor, Japan set its sights outward, adopting a national spirit of imperialism and expansion of influence: Japan wished to establish itself among the leading global powers of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> Critically-minded historians have reason to question this purposive chronology of Japan's aggressive, however, it provided the global and historical backdrop for the court's operation. Undoubtedly, the resulting narrative of a prolonged conspiracy by Japan to commit a war of aggression informed IMTFE participants and planners. The court's indictment explicitly traced the official start of Japan's conspiracy to

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<sup>9</sup> Hosoya et al., *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, 7-8.; Neil Boister and Robert Cryer, introduction to *Documents on the Tokyo International Military Tribunal: Charter, Indictment and Judgments*, ed. Neil Boister and Robert Cryer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>10</sup> Boister and Cryer, *Introduction*, xxxiii.

<sup>11</sup> Boister and Cryer, xxxiii.; Kitaoka Shinichi, *The Political History of Modern Japan: Foreign Relations and Domestic Politics*, trans. Robert D. Eldridge and Graham Leonard (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 52.

<sup>12</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 421.

<sup>13</sup> Boister and Cryer, *Introduction*, xxxiii-xxxiv.

events in Manchuria in 1928, yet the proceedings themselves explored Japanese imperialism and militarist culture back into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>14</sup>

The actions undertaken by Japan in the early twentieth century correspond to this narrative. In line with Japan's imperialist objectives, this period was defined by a number of key expansionist pursuits. These events, described in the following pages, form the basis of the charges brought to trial at the Tokyo IMT. The first of these is the Manchurian incident. After acquiring sovereignty over large tracts of North-Eastern China from Russia in 1905, Japanese troops were staged along the South Manchurian Railway line. The impact of their residence culminated in 1931 when plotters from the Kwantung Army, a section of the Japanese Imperial Army, staged an attack via bombing in Mukden. The Japanese Army then pointed blame towards Chinese troops, seizing the pretext to fully occupy Manchuria and thereby establish the puppet state of Manchukuo.<sup>15</sup> However, in 1932, Japan's duplicity was revealed by the League of Nation's Lytton Report, transforming their political image thereafter – for the worse.<sup>16</sup>

In the years following, Japan continued in its expansionist course, launching several invasions in North China, and entering into full-scale conflict with Chinese forces for the duration of the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>17</sup> This period is marked by three separate invasions in Shanghai, in 1932, 1937 and 1941, respectively. While the first of these was ultimately

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<sup>14</sup> Narrative Description of Proceedings – Prosecution Case, 5 August 1946, E.H. Northcroft Papers – MB 1549, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, Box 5.; Hereafter “Northcroft Papers.”; Full Indictment, 1946, Tavenner Papers & IMTFE Official Records, Folder 2, Box 1, International Military Tribunal for the Far East: Digital Collection, University of Virginia Law Library, Charlottesville, VA. <http://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/collections/tavenner/1/2/full-indictment>. Hereafter “Tavenner Papers.”

<sup>15</sup> Boister and Cryer, *Introduction*, xxxiv.; Hosoya, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Boister and Cryer, xxxiv.; Hosoya, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Prosecution Case, 5 August 1946, Northcroft Papers, Box 5.

unsuccessful, the offensive launched in 1937 resulted in the expulsion of Chinese forces from the area demarcated by the regions of Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou.<sup>18</sup> The defining incident of this display of imperialism took place on July 7, 1937, at the Lugou Bridge near Beijing, when a Japanese soldier was declared missing after shots were fired between Japanese and Chinese troops.<sup>19</sup> The ensuing dispute ignited the Second Sino-Japanese War, which persisted for the duration of World War Two,<sup>20</sup> and provided the likely tipping point which inspired the Allied countries to engage with Japan and subsequently punish its leaders: as China had been supported by both United States and Britain, Japan sought out the allegiance of the Axis countries in 1940 through the Tripartite alliance, thus solidifying its adversarial position against the Allies.<sup>21</sup> This rivalry continued throughout the war, though the culminating events occurred in December 1941 – a series of coordinated attacks in Pearl Harbour, Kota Bahru, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Wake Island, Guam, and the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>22</sup> In fact, many scholars – and critics – of the IMTFE have argued that the Tokyo Trial was established as an attempt to enact revenge specifically for the attack on Pearl Harbour.<sup>23</sup> Following the path taken at the tribunal, Boister and Cryer argue a more tenable precedent: the breach of global policies which had been

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<sup>18</sup> Prosecution Case, 5 August 1946, Northcroft Papers, Box 5.

<sup>19</sup> Prosecution Case, 5 August 1946, Northcroft Papers, Box 5; Boister and Cryer, *Introduction*, xxxiv-xxxv.

<sup>20</sup> Boister and Cryer, *Introduction*, xxxiv-xxxv.

<sup>21</sup> Hosoya, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Hosoya, 9.; Beth Bailey and David Farber, eds., *Beyond Pearl Harbor: A Pacific History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 9-16.

<sup>23</sup> Bernard Victor Aloysius Röling and Antonio Cassese, *The Tokyo Trial and Beyond: Reflections of a Peacemonger* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 5.; Arnold C. Brackman, *The Other Nuremberg: The Untold Story of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, (New York: Morrow, 1987), 58.

established in an effort to prevent large-scale conflict. In particular, they reference the Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928, which had been ratified by Japan on July 24, 1929, thus adopting it into practice.<sup>24</sup> The Kellogg-Briand pact had the principal objective of renouncing war as a solution to international conflicts, as stated in its two operative articles:

1. The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.
2. The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.<sup>25</sup>

Japan's imperialist conflicts in Manchuria, North China and subsequent attacks on the West were thus a direct violation of their commitment to the Kellogg-Briand pact, forming the legal precedent for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

## 1.2 Establishment of the IMTFE & Roles of Women

The conception and establishment of the Tokyo tribunal has similarly been covered in major contributions to the IMTFE literature. The extensive multi-volume collection of trial documents put together by R. John Pritchard and Sonia M. Zaide contains an excellent overview of the IMTFE, complete with several documents pertaining to the establishment of the Tribunal – including SCAP directives such as the charter, rules of procedure and appointment of members to the IMTFE. Kerstin von Lingen's *Transcultural Justice* provides a brief overview of the

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<sup>24</sup> Boister and Cryer, xxxiv.

<sup>25</sup> John P. Grant, J. Craig Barker and Clive Parry, "General Treaty for the Renunciation of War," in *Parry and Grant Encyclopaedic Dictionary of International Law* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2009), 240.

establishment of the tribunal, explaining that the IMTFE emerged as a direct result of the Potsdam Declaration (26 July 1945), which guaranteed justice to be enacted against war criminals. After Japan's surrender on 2 September 1945, planning began for the inauguration of the Tokyo tribunal, with the Tokyo Charter proclaimed 19 January 1946. The Tokyo Charter outlined the composition and objectives of the tribunal: von Lingen summarizes its aims as punishing "crimes against peace," "aggression," and "war crimes."<sup>26</sup> In the months following Japan's surrender, judges were appointed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), General MacArthur, and arrangements were made for the organization of prosecution and defense teams.

Women occupied valuable roles at the IMTFE from the very beginning. In fact, nearly half of the initial investigative team were women, employed as secretaries for the International Prosecution Section (IPS),<sup>27</sup> yet current scholarship almost entirely neglects their contributions. Women are seldom mentioned in major works regarding the IMTFE. As stated previously, the men involved in the trial occupied the majority of visible roles, as lead prosecutors, defense attorneys and other legal staff, and therefore have likely been in the eyeline of most academic inquiry regarding the Tokyo trial *qua* trial.<sup>28</sup> This has left a large – and enticing – gap in the historical literature: while much less visible, women employees of the IMTFE nevertheless made vital contributions in planning, preparing, and executing the trial; working as secretaries,

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<sup>26</sup> Kerstin von Lingen, ed., introduction to *Transcultural Justice at the Tokyo Tribunal* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 3-6.

<sup>27</sup> Willianna Abrams' personal recollections reveal that the team was made up of twenty attorneys, an Army Colonel, an Army Lieutenant, and eighteen girls (Willianna Abrams, "General MacArthur's Promise to Me," Private Collection.) This represents a total of 40 people, though other sources claim the team consisted of 39 people (Brackman, *The Other Nuremberg*, 55.)

<sup>28</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 114.

historical analysts, and even as attorneys for the International Prosecution Section.<sup>29</sup> In essence, this is the focus of this thesis – introducing a much-needed lens of gender and diversity to the administrative dimension of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, both in and out of the office.

Gender as an analytical lens is a loaded concept, though necessary for this discussion. As a category of analysis, gender has been critiqued in feminist scholarship – in part due to the notion that ‘gender’ is a diminutive term describing solely the innate differences in the roles of differently sexed bodies. However, Joan Wallach Scott’s “Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?,” amends this understanding of gender and explains why it remains a valuable framework for historical study. According to Scott, gender transcends identity: it is a social structure, shaping power relations and cultural practices. Rather than gaining meaning from sex, gender is a system that gives meaning *to* sex by establishing differences between men and women. Gender, therefore, is a valuable tool for understanding and analysing social relationships.<sup>30</sup> In keeping with this theory, ‘gender’ will be considered throughout this thesis as a framework for understanding the complex social relationships and dynamics arising from and influencing the roles attributed to men and women.

While the roles of women at the IMTFE have been explored in a cursory manner, this topic has not yet received comprehensive scholarly attention. Diane Marie Amann’s “Glimpses of Women at the Tokyo Tribunal,” is one of few works breaching this topic – and self-identifies its purpose as encouraging further research, rather than serving as a rigorous, independent

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<sup>29</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 104.

<sup>30</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?,” *Diogenes* 225 (2010): 7-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192110369316>.

academic study.<sup>31</sup> Amann presents a brief overview of the positions occupied by women as well as short profiles of a number of key women: Elaine Fischel, Grace Kanode Llewellyn, Eleanor Jackson, among others who will feature heavily in my own investigation. “Glimpses of Women,” though brief, is thus an excellent introduction to the gendered history of the IMTFE which will take form throughout the following two chapters. Likewise, James Sedgwick’s doctoral thesis, “The Trial Within: Negotiating Justice at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1946-1948” also highlights the diverse roles occupied by women at the IMTFE, introducing several prominent women employees such as those mentioned above. However, the purpose of “The Trial Within” is, broadly, to explain the IMTFE through a holistic lens – the roles and experiences of women are a peripheral theme, not addressed specifically or in depth.<sup>32</sup> In short, though scholars over the past decade have contributed to a more complete picture of the Tokyo IMT as a legal and historical institution and event, the diverse and consequential role of women remains largely unexplored.

### 1.3 Chapter Outline

“Chapter 2: The Professional Dimension” explores the contributions of women to the IMTFE as well as their roles and experiences in the workplace. It considers the overall demographics of gender distribution within the IMTFE, though centering the professional experiences of women personnel is the chapter’s primary objective. This chapter presents women occupying both legal and administrative roles in two distinct sections, ‘Women Lawyers,

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<sup>31</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 105.

<sup>32</sup> James Burnham Sedgwick, “The Trial Within: Negotiating Justice at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1946-1948,” (PhD Diss., University of British Columbia, 2012), ii, 36. <https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0072876>.

International Prosecution Section,’ and ‘Women of the Secretariat,’ and highlights their accomplishments in their roles and the challenges of operating in a predominantly male-led space. ‘Women of the Associate Counsel’ presents three women, Grace Kanode Llewellyn, Helen Grigware Lambert and Coomee Strooker-Dantra, the only three women prosecutors involved in the Tokyo IMT. ‘Women of the Secretariat’ features Elaine B. Fischel and Willianna Abrams, whose written accounts of their time in Tokyo provide valuable insight into the lived experiences of women in the IMTFE workforce. These two women were selected as case studies as they each wrote extensive accounts of their time in Tokyo, providing a rare and valuable inside-look into the experiences of IMTFE women.<sup>33</sup>

“Chapter 3: The Social Dimension” explores the interpersonal experiences of women employees both within and outside of the workplace, focusing primarily on their social relationships and the roles they occupied within social circles. Excerpts of personal letters written by Elaine Fischel and a short memoir by Willianna Abrams form the foundation for this chapter, providing a glimpse into the lives of women IMTFE employees in Tokyo. In particular, this chapter reveals the masculine space navigated by these women, exploring the influence of gender on their experiences. The roles imposed on women affected not only the way they were received by their peers, but also the way they themselves navigated a rather challenging social space. As this chapter reveals, the women of the IMTFE were subject to harassment in both their professional and social lives, which worsened the already vulnerable environment of post-war

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<sup>33</sup> Although modern language has shifted dramatically since the post-war era, women working in administrative positions will be referred to as “secretaries” throughout this thesis, in accordance with their designation as such throughout the primary source material. All terms describing professional roles will therefore be the same as those included in the primary source material.

Japan. The interaction of these challenges and the related experiences of Fischel and Abrams are discussed, stressing the all-encompassing role of gender in the social sphere.

A concluding chapter ties together the professional and the social: reiterating the connection between the two spheres, revisiting important themes revealed by the prior chapters, and exploring opportunities for further research. The conclusion will further explore the resilience of the IMTFE women in overcoming the challenge of navigating a male-dominated space ripe with sexism, strict binary gender roles and unjust treatment of women, and will revisit the significance of their occupied roles in the historical context of the Tokyo tribunal.

## Chapter 2: The Professional Dimension

*On 7 December 1945, 37 Americans arrived in Tokyo for the purpose of carrying out this mission. Officers were set up in the Meiji Building. Included in this group were 15 secretaries, specialists in their various fields, chosen for their specific talents, all with years of experience in their profession.*

Memorandum for Mr. Joseph B. Keenan, 26 July 1946, M1663, Roll 25, IPS Staff Historical Files, National Archives and Records Administration – US.

Women played significant roles from the very beginning of the tribunal's preparatory phase. Nearly half of the initial cohort of International Prosecution Section (IPS) staff were women, and as the total number of personnel grew, so did the number of women (mostly not as lawyers, but as other important staff members). The IMTFE included four divisions: the IPS, the International Defense Section (IDS), the Secretariat and the Judiciary.<sup>34</sup> Each division relied heavily on the women of their staff, who occupied several invaluable roles. These ranged from clerical work as secretaries, stenographers, and translators to legal work as lawyers for the prosecution, and clerks or researchers for judges. However, this is not reflected in current IMTFE scholarship, which focuses much more often on the largely male-dominated space of the trial proceedings themselves, rather than exploring the dynamics behind-the-scenes where women played many more roles. Even when background work at the IMTFE has been explored, the gendered dimensions of such spaces have been ignored. To address this historiographical void, this chapter explores the professional sphere of women personnel's experiences in Tokyo. Specifically, it considers the roles occupied by women, explains their contributions as IMTFE employees, and describes the workplace dynamics within which they operated. To discuss these

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<sup>34</sup> The IPS was the first section to arrive in Tokyo in December 1945; the remaining sections were formed in the months leading up to the start of the tribunal (von Lingen, *Introduction*, 3-6.)

topics most effectively, this chapter has two subsections: the first focuses on women working as lawyers for the prosecution, and the second highlights contributions made by women personnel on the Secretariat, the court's administrative wing. Where possible, this chapter uses both official and personal documents to focus on professional responsibilities and workplace dynamics, specifically to determine if and how women personnel were treated differently than male colleagues. The chapter also complements its experiential analysis of female employment at the IMTFE by providing a quantitative assessment of the number of women working in Tokyo in order to substantiate the claims regarding the importance of women to the trial. This demographic assessment shows that almost one quarter of total employees were women, though the proportion was much higher in certain trial divisions. The IMTFE would not have functioned without their contributions.

## 2.1 Women Lawyers, International Prosecution Section

Each branch of the Tokyo IMT encompassed two distinct categories of employees: legal and secretarial/administrative. Precise counts of the personnel makeup of these two divisions are difficult to compile since they were in a constant state of flux. Personnel came and went over the duration of the tribunal; some changed within trial divisions, some found other work in the Occupation, some arrived or left Japan. It is therefore difficult, but not impossible, to establish a general understanding of workplace demographics through personnel lists from different points in time. Telephone directories for Tokyo General Headquarters and the International Prosecution Section (IPS) from June 1946 reveal that approximately eighty-five women in total worked at the

IMTFE at the time, fifty-five for the IPS alone<sup>35</sup> – a significant increase from the original fifteen IPS women who arrived in December 1945. Of these fifty-five women, three were employed as legal counsel: Grace Kanode Llewellyn (United States, IPS), Coomee Strooker-Dantra (Netherlands, IPS) and Helen Grigware Lambert (United States, IPS). Pritchard and Zaide’s comprehensive index of the trial transcripts lists these three lawyers as the only women serving as attorneys in any branch of the IMTFE.<sup>36</sup> No women worked as lawyers for the defense,<sup>37</sup> nor were there any women judges.<sup>38</sup> However, a number of women made other significant legal contributions. Members of the Secretariat like Virginia Bowman, Lucille Brunner, Bettie Renner and Eleanor Jackson each worked diligently in roles such as legal stenographers and analysts.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the IDS included devoted legal stenographers like Mary E. Cooke, Helen Dogul, Jeanne Dorfman, and Margaret P. Garvey.<sup>40</sup> During proceedings, Antoinette Duda, Daphne

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<sup>35</sup> Tokyo Telephone Directory, 6 June 1946, C.W.J. Phelps Collection, Box 1, First Phelps Scrapbook, The International Military Tribunal for the Far East: Digital Collection, University of Virginia Law Library, Charlottesville, VA. <https://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/collections/phelps/1/1/tokyo-telephone-directory>. Hereafter “C.W.J. Phelps Collection.”; IPS Telephone Directory, 19 June 1946, C.W.J. Phelps Collection, Box 2.

<sup>36</sup> John R. Pritchard and Sonia M. Zaide, eds., “Names and Subjects Index,” in *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: Index and Guide* (New York: Garland Pub., 1981), 424.

<sup>37</sup> See Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 115: “Women were not admitted to the Japanese bar until 1940, and none was permitted to serve as a judge or prosecutor until after World War II.” This likely influenced the lack of women prosecutors among the defense counsel, which was in part made up of Japanese attorneys (von Lingen, *Transcultural Justice*, 5.) However, the IDS included an American defense team which also did not include any women prosecutors (Pritchard and Zaide, *Names and Subjects*, 424.)

<sup>38</sup> Cheng, Zhaoqi, *A History of War Crimes Trials in Post 1945 Asia-Pacific* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 307-309, 313-319.

<sup>39</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> IDS Personnel Directory, n.d., Harold Evans Papers – Personal Holdings, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. Hereafter “Harold Evans Papers.”; Stenographer Assignments, 16 September 1947, G. Carrington Williams Papers, Box 1, Defense Counsel Memoranda, Letters 1946-1947, The International Military Tribunal for the Far East: Digital Collection,

Spratt, Elvira Whalen, and Lorraine Yelden worked as court reporters.<sup>41</sup> On the judiciary wing, Frances C. Morris, a clerk/research assistant in the IMTFE's Office of the President, co-authored several internal judiciary analyses, including a two-volume, over 400-page "Study on Prosecution's Phases on Japan's "Aggressive" War."<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the IPS was the only section to include women as practicing lawyers, though they were still underrepresented within the counsel, which totalled seventy-two staff under the supervision of lead prosecutor and Chief of Counsel Joseph B. Keenan over the course of the tribunal's duration.<sup>43</sup> The IMTFE Charter outlined the responsibilities of Chief Prosecutor Keenan's to include "the investigation and prosecution of charges against war criminals within the jurisdiction of this Tribunal," and the rendering of legal assistance to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur.<sup>44</sup> Associate Counsel supported the Chief of Counsel, though this job description does not adequately capture the responsibility conferred to the Associate Counsel, who helped to

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University of Virginia Law Library, Charlottesville, VA.

<https://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/collections/carrington-williams/1/1/stenographer-assignments>. Hereafter "G. Carrington Williams Papers."

<sup>41</sup> IMTFE Personnel Directory, April 1948, Harold Evans Papers.; Second Conference on Procedure Regarding Summation, 3 December 1947, Tavenner Papers, Box 6.; Trial Transcript, 9 August 1946, Roy L. Morgan Papers, Box 8, Folder 1, The International Military Tribunal for the Far East: Digital Collection, University of Virginia Law Library, Charlottesville, VA. <https://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/collections/morgan/8/1/trial-transcript-august-9-1946>. Hereafter "Roy L. Morgan Papers."

<sup>42</sup> Study on Prosecution's Phases on Japan's "Aggressive" War – Volume I, Northcroft Papers, Box 327; Study on Prosecution's Phases on Japan's "Aggressive" War – Volume II, Northcroft Papers, Box 328.

<sup>43</sup> Cheng, *A History of War Crimes Trials*, 312.

<sup>44</sup> Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 26 April 1946, RBSC-ARC-1135, Item 2, File 19-1, Administrative, Biographical and Background Records, International Military Tribunal for the Far East, David Conde Fonds, 1946-1977, University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, <https://rbsearchives.library.ubc.ca/rbrc-arc-1135-19-1-2-pdf>. Hereafter "David Conde Fonds."; The Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP) was the official Allied command over the Occupation of Japan under General Douglas MacArthur.

prepare and present each phase of the prosecution case. The inclusion of women as prosecutors speaks to their excellence, especially when considering the cases they worked on, not to mention the overtly male-dominated nature of the legal profession in that era,<sup>45</sup> and the magnitude of the trial underway. These elements will be featured in the following discussion, which centres the three women prosecutors and their contributions to the IMTFE.

The professional achievements of Llewellyn, Strooker-Dantra, and Lambert are extraordinary within both their historical context as well as from a modern perspective – despite the lack of recognition which has persisted in IMTFE scholarship and, to an extent, legal history. A 2008 edition of Gonzaga University School of Law’s bulletin names Lambert as the only woman prosecutor at the Tokyo IMT,<sup>46</sup> rightfully highlighting her achievements but erroneously erasing those of Llewellyn and Strooker-Dantra, who also played important roles as lawyers for the prosecution case. The following pages will attempt to rectify this gap in knowledge by exploring the achievements of these three exceptional lawyers, and their contributions to the unfolding of the Tokyo IMT. The smallness of their number reflects gender inequities of the era, but the magnitude of their contributions demonstrates their individual competence and the transgressive space of Occupied Japan.

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<sup>45</sup> In her article “The Geography of Gender: Place, Space, and Context,” *postScriptum: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Literary Studies* 7, no. 2 (July 2022): 182-187, <https://postscriptum.co.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/pS7.iiEditorial.pdf>, Pradipta Shyam Chowdhury explores the role of space and place in shaping gender. She argues that the physical environment defines the way gender is both constructed and experienced. In a high-stakes environment such as an International Military Tribunal, it follows that the mostly male entourage of judges and legal counsel would result in a hyper-masculine, virile space. The hyper-masculine energy likely intensified gender inequalities and contributed to a challenging environment for the women navigating this space.

<sup>46</sup> Earl Martin, “Message from the Dean,” *The Lawyer*, Gonzaga University School of Law (Spring/Summer 2008), 3. [https://www.zagsonline.org/s/829/images/editor\\_documents/lawyer%20content/08\\_spring\\_1.pdf?sessionid=6bc9bb07-86d1-4fb6-bf1c-25384e01218f&cc=1](https://www.zagsonline.org/s/829/images/editor_documents/lawyer%20content/08_spring_1.pdf?sessionid=6bc9bb07-86d1-4fb6-bf1c-25384e01218f&cc=1).

### 2.1.1 Grace Kanode Llewellyn

This investigation begins with lawyer Grace Kanode Llewellyn, the first woman to present a case at the Tokyo IMT.<sup>47</sup> A graduate from the National University School of Law in the United States in 1931, Llewellyn was already an established lawyer by the time she arrived in Tokyo, with over a decade of experience working in various highly esteemed offices, including those of Chief Justice Wheat of the District of Columbia and former Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Llewellyn was recruited to the Tokyo IMT in December of 1945, where she presented for the prosecution during phase III of their case: Japanese Military Aggression in Manchuria,<sup>48</sup> working alongside lawyers John Darsey, Walter I. McKenzie, Henry R. Sackett and Elton M. Hyder. Llewellyn's selection to this phase of the prosecution case speaks volumes about the esteem she earned behind the scenes. Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931 formed one of the cornerstones of the prosecution's case. In fact, proving Japanese criminal conspiracy to commit a war of aggression remained a primary objective of the tribunal, included under Section II, Article 5 of the IMTFE Charter:

a. Crimes against Peace: Namely, the planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a declared or undeclared war of aggression, or a war in violation of international law, treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Shana Tabak, "Grace Kanode Llewellyn: Local Portia at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal," *The George Washington University Law School International and Comparative Law Perspectives* (2013): 7. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2475116>.

<sup>48</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 119.; Tabak, *Grace Kanode Llewellyn*, 7.; John R. Pritchard and Sonia M. Zaide, eds., "A Brief Guide to the Trial," in *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: Index and Guide* (New York: Garland Pub., 1981).

<sup>49</sup> Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 26 April 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 19-1.

Manchuria, as an act of planned aggression, therefore represented a crucial pillar in the prosecution case and wider court aims.

Though she first spoke in court on 1 July 1946, Llewellyn had been recorded in attendance for the majority of the month of June prior. Her presence was officially documented in the court transcripts for the first time on June 3. Llewellyn was most likely present in court for each court session leading up to her presentation, as the transcripts document the members of the prosecution present as “same as before.”<sup>50</sup> During Llewellyn’s formal introduction to the court, her colleague John Darsey declared, “At this time I would like to present those who, from time to time, will participate in the presentation of this phase of the case: Mrs. Grace Kanode Llewellyn of the District of Columbia and the United States Supreme Court Bars.”<sup>51</sup> Llewellyn’s introduction prompted the following statement from the Australian President of the Tribunal Justice William Webb: “We welcome you cordially. You probably are the first woman to appear before an International Military Tribunal.”<sup>52</sup> While Justice Webb’s statement was erroneous – the Nuremberg IMT had already seen two appearances by women in December of 1945<sup>53</sup> – it captures the magnitude of Llewellyn’s contribution to international justice as one of the first female lawyers to speak before an IMT; she may well have been the first woman lawyer to actually present a case at IMT proceedings. Webb’s acknowledgement of her presence shows

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<sup>50</sup> “Transcripts of the Proceedings in Open Session,” *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: The Complete Transcripts of the Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Twenty-Two Volumes*, eds. John R. Pritchard, Sonia M. Zaide and Donald Cameron Watt (New York: Garland Pub., 1981), 1678-4406.

<sup>51</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, 1 July 1946, pp.1621-1720, 240747, International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), ICC Legal Tools Database, <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/b17eab/>, 1690. Hereafter “ICC Database”

<sup>52</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, 1 July 1946, ICC Database, 1690.

<sup>53</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 119.

that not only is her contribution notable through a modern lens, but also that it was registered at the time as something quite rare. Llewellyn was a trailblazer in her own right: her involvement in prosecution case is significant to the history of women in professional settings. As one of few women involved in the prosecution case as legal counsel, Llewellyn represents, in her own way, the nascent entry of women into male-dominated professional spheres on the world stage.

### 2.1.2 Helen Grigware Lambert

Like Llewellyn, Helen Grigware Lambert arrived in Tokyo having already curated an impressive resume in the United States. The first woman to graduate from Gonzaga University Law School in Washington State, Lambert received her degree in Law in 1936,<sup>54</sup> before practising as an attorney at the Federal Land Bank and later as a law clerk for a federal judge. As Associate Counsel in Tokyo, Lambert also made significant contributions to the prosecution case. Lambert was first introduced to court on the 24 February 1948, by her colleague Arthur S. Comyns Carr: “I now have the pleasure of presenting my colleague, Mrs. Lambert, a practicing attorney of the State of Washington, who has not yet appeared before the Tribunal. She will read the summation in the case of HOSHINO.”<sup>55</sup> Her summation of the case against Naoki Hoshino was significant – Hoshino was a key player in Japan’s Manchurian aggression.<sup>56</sup> His guilt, therefore, represented an important piece of the prosecutions “crimes against peace” and “conspiracy/common plan” cases. In other words, proving Hoshino’s culpability meant

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<sup>54</sup> “Law Graduates Pass Bar Test,” *The Spokesman Review*, 6 March 1952. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19520306&id=D3pWAAAIBAJ&sjid=5-UDAAAIBAJ&pg=7101,2093324>.

<sup>55</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, 24 February 1948, ICC Database, 40925.

<sup>56</sup> “Naoki Hoshino,” The International Military Tribunal for the Far East Digital Collection, University of Virginia Law Library, <https://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/contributors-175>.

something more than simply demonstrating his individual criminal activity. Additionally, by participating in the summation phases, Lambert became the only woman to participate in the final stages of the Tokyo IMT. Lambert's summation of the case against Hoshino was thorough and perspicuous, outlining the charges and evidence that had been reviewed during the earlier phases of the trial. Her careful presentation was met with approval by President Webb, a difficult to achieve feat given the Australian's gruff and overbearing demeanor. In fact, Justice Erima H. Northcroft described Webb as "brusque to the point of rudeness," continuing that "he is peremptory and ungracious in his treatment of counsel and witnesses."<sup>57</sup> Webb's explicit approval of Lambert's presentation ("That was a very clear presentation, Mrs. Lambert."),<sup>58</sup> is all the more meaningful knowing that it went against his notoriously curt demeanor. Notably, in line with Northcroft's appraisal of Webb as ungracious toward counsel, Lambert's male colleagues did not receive similar affirmations following their presentations during the summations phase.<sup>59</sup> Whether his compliment to Lambert is driven by her outstanding work in comparison to her colleagues, or whether it was specifically precipitated by Lambert's unique position as one of few women of the Associate Counsel is up for interpretation. Regardless, Lambert ably contributed to an important phase of the court's proceedings, and Webb took note.

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<sup>57</sup> E. H. Northcroft to A. D. McIntosh (2 July 1946), NZ Archives, EA2 1946-30B 106-3-22 Part 3.

<sup>58</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, 24 February 1948, ICC Database, 40925.

<sup>59</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, Summations by the Prosecution, 11 February 1948-2 March 1948, ICC Database, 38948-42076.

### 2.1.3 – Coomee Strooker-Dantra

The final woman working as Associate Counsel was Coomee Strooker-Dantra, a Cambridge-educated lawyer, from Rangoon, Burma (Yangon, Myanmar).<sup>60</sup> Following her marriage to a Dutch businessman in the 1930s, Strooker-Dantra began work for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to her employment by the International Prosecution Section, Netherlands Division, in Tokyo. Diane Marie Amann highlights Strooker-Dantra's achievements in Tokyo, crediting her with significant responsibility as the sole woman to take part in the prosecution's presentation on Japanese crimes in the Dutch East Indies during phase XII of the trial, "Relations with the Netherlands, the Netherlands East Indies & Portugal,"<sup>61</sup> as well as the only Dutch lawyer versed in Anglo-Saxon law.<sup>62</sup> Notably, Strooker-Dantra was in a unique position not only as one of the few women occupying a visible role in the trials, but also as the only woman of colour among the Associate Counsel. She broke through gender barriers as well as racial barriers. The influence of her intersectional identity in her role as a female prosecutor at the IMTFE would be a fascinating avenue for further discussion, though it is not within the scope of this thesis.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 124.

<sup>61</sup> Amann, *Glimpses of Women*, 123-125.; Pritchard and Zaide, *Index and Guide*, 298.; Pritchard and Zaide, *A Brief Guide to the Trial*.

<sup>62</sup> Lisette Schouten, "In the Footsteps of Grotius: The Netherlands and Its Representation at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1945-1948," in *Transcultural Justice at the Tokyo Tribunal: The Allied Struggle for Justice, 1946-48*, ed. Kerstin von Lingen (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 247-248.

<sup>63</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality is discussed in her article "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-1299, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.acadiau.ca:9443/10.2307/1229039>. Crenshaw highlights the importance of acknowledging the nuanced ways various identities intersect/interact with one another, writing for example that women of colour are marginalized for both

Strooker-Dantra is credited for assisting in the translation from Dutch to English of the investigation report prepared for the IMTFE by the Netherlands Division of the IPS.<sup>64</sup> It is possible that Strooker-Dantra's official role was primarily translating,<sup>65</sup> though she gained visibility through her participation in the presentation of the Netherland Division's prosecution case against Japanese Crimes in the Dutch East Indies. In the opening statement for this prosecution phase, Document 6912 detailing aggression against the Netherlands, Strooker-Dantra is named as an associate of Major General W. G. F. Borgerhoff Mulder, Associate Counsel for the Netherlands, alongside Mr. G. Osmond Hyde, Lieutenant Colonel J. S. Sinninghe Damste and Mr. A. T. Laverge.<sup>66</sup> Strooker-Dantra first appeared in court on 3 December 1946, when she entered numerous documents into evidence and presented the Dutch division's case. Like Llewellyn – and, later, Lambert – Strooker-Dantra earned rare commendation from President Webb: “Mrs. Strooker, my colleagues and I who have heard you assure you that we regard you as a distinct acquisition to the Bar of this Tribunal.”<sup>67</sup> Once again, President Webb's interactions with other members of the counsel were far less courteous, earning him his irascible reputation. Compliments were rare, but given when warranted.<sup>68</sup> It is interesting, then, that all three women of the prosecution counsel received Webb's compliments.

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their race *and* their gender, rather than one or the other. Crenshaw argues that an individual's multiple identities (sex, gender, race, class, etc.) cannot be addressed separately.

<sup>64</sup> Prepared Statement, December 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 28-5.

<sup>65</sup> Li Chen and Yi Li, “Seeking ‘A Fair Field’ for Women in the Legal Profession: Pioneering Women Lawyers from Burma of 1924-1935,” *Britain and the World* 14, no. 2 (2021): 111. <https://doi.org/10.3366/brw.2020.0356>.

<sup>66</sup> Opening Statement, November 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 28-5.

<sup>67</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, 3 December 1946, ICC Database, 11757.

<sup>68</sup> Sedgwick, “The Trial Within,” 86-88.

Perhaps Webb felt compelled to praise their work on account of their gender – women presenting at the Tokyo IMT were almost as rare as a compliment from Webb – or perhaps their work was of outstanding quality. Regardless of the intention – whether Webb felt compelled to compliment them due to their gender or whether he was truly impressed by their work – it was an acknowledgement that their work was at the very least of comparable quality to that of their male coworkers, or, perhaps, even better. Tentatively, the women of the counsel conceivably felt pressured to work harder than their male counterparts. Often, women were held to a different standard, more easily criticized due to the pervasive, erroneous, notion that women were not suitable for work in certain male-dominated professions.<sup>69</sup> The women prosecutors may have felt the need to ‘keep up’ with their coworkers, particularly in the high-stakes environment of an IMT, thus putting together particularly meticulous presentations. Their work and the compliments earned demonstrate that these women were equally as capable of occupying positions in traditionally male-dominated fields, even on a global stage.

Interestingly, despite being officially listed as Associate Counsel, a telephone directory dated 15 November 1946 designated Strooker-Dantra as an Assistant in the Netherlands Division.<sup>70</sup> The reason for this is unclear. It may indicate a change in responsibilities over the course of the trial, or the title of “assistant” may have been applied more broadly to employees across the IMTFE, encompassing a variety of different positions. If the latter is true, the specific

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<sup>69</sup> In feminist scholarship, Rosabeth Kanter’s *Tokenism* theory (1977) has been used to describe the challenges experienced by women working in male-dominated professions. As “token” professionals, women in male-dominated professions are placed under increased scrutiny on account of their “otherness.” Other factors like sexism and power differences also contribute to women’s organizational behaviour in the workplace. (Lynn Zimmer, “Tokenism and Women in the Workplace: The Limits of Gender-Neutral Theory,” *Social Problems* 35, no. 1 (February 1988): 64-77, <https://doi.org/10.2307/800667>.)

<sup>70</sup> IPS Telephone Directory, 15 November 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 19-1.

duties given to IMTFE employees likely fell through the cracks in official documentation, making it difficult to accurately track the work of specific employees. If Strooker-Dantra's position as Associate Counsel was subsumed by the title of Assistant, which other occupations may have been obscured by imprecise record-keeping? In fact, this is one of the difficulties in studying women's involvement in the Tokyo IMT: rarely are their job titles or descriptions adequately outlined in available sources. There appear to be no publicly available records which precisely detail the roles occupied by specific IMTFE employees, other than those occupying higher-status roles as lead prosecutors or judges.

#### 2.1.4 Women as Lawyers: Final Thoughts

The three Tokyo lawyers outlined above represent an impressive feat for women in the professional and legal spheres. Llewellyn, Lambert, and Strooker-Dantra each made crucial contributions to the prosecution's case, standing out from their peers, and even earning praise, however patronizing it may be, from the cantankerous Chief Justice Webb. The presentations made by each of these women were meticulous and well-researched, as should be expected for a trial of this magnitude, but it likely was their gender that influenced the comments made by Webb. Women lawyers at this time were still quite rare: in the 1950s, women made up only three to four percent of lawyers and judges in the United States.<sup>71</sup> As such, it is a truly impressive feat that these women not only worked for but occupied a highly visible role at the Tokyo IMT. Despite these women occupying only a relatively small role in the unfolding of the trial –

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<sup>71</sup> Sarah Anne Cutler, "Mrs. Ward Cleaver, Esq.: Women in the Legal Profession in the 1950s or How to Succeed in Law When You May Not Rock the Boat (and There is No Seat for You)," 2000, MSS.049 – Gender and Legal History in America Papers, Manuscripts, Georgetown Law Library, DigitalGeorgetown, <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/1051126>.

presenting for only one day each during the proceedings – their accomplishments tangibly demonstrate their aptitude and suitability to work in the professional, legal field.

## 2.2 Women of the Secretariat

In addition to the women working as prosecutors, a number of women occupied posts within the IMTFE Secretariat, which encompassed all clerical positions and administrative dimensions of the tribunal across its various branches. These include the General Secretary, assistant secretaries, clerks, interpreters, translators, court reporters, and others.<sup>72</sup> The role of the Secretariat is outlined in Section I, Article 3 of the IMTFE Charter:

### b. Secretariat.

(1) The Secretariat of the Tribunal Shall be composed of a General Secretary to be appointed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and such assistant secretaries, clerks, interpreters, and other personnel as may be necessary.

(2) The General Secretary shall organize and direct the work of the Secretariat.

(3) The Secretariat shall receive all documents addressed to the Tribunal, maintain the records of the Tribunal, provide necessary clerical services to the Tribunal and its members, and perform such other duties as may be designated by the Tribunal.<sup>73</sup>

Responding to the Charter and shifting demands of the tribunal in operation, roles within the Secretariat became both onerous and fluid. They ultimately formed the largest division of the Tribunal responsible for some of the most vital work - every aspect of the court depended on Secretariat assistance. In short, the IMTFE could not have functioned without its extensive staff. Unfortunately, the contributions made by the Secretariat to the Tokyo IMT are underrepresented

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<sup>72</sup> Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 26 April 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 19-1.

<sup>73</sup> Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 26 April 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 19-1.

in scholarship, none more obscure than those made by women, who formed a large proportion of the clerical staff. Given the scarcity of documentation, not to mention the fluidity of appointments and transience of personnel, it is difficult to ascertain the ratio of male to female Secretariat members as a fixed whole. Nevertheless, personnel records show that the number of women working for the Secretariat was significant. According to a Tokyo GHQ personnel directory from June 1946, for instance, out of a total of 336 total employees listed as IPS or IMTFE staff, eighty-five were women.<sup>74</sup> This reveals a roughly twenty-five percent female workforce. As noted earlier, only three women (Llewellyn, Lambert and Strooker-Dantra) were credited as legal counsel, all in the International Prosecution Section. The remaining eighty-two women functioned in largely clerical positions spread across the branches of the IMTFE. Fifty-two of these worked for the International Prosecution Section, but all reported to the Secretariat.<sup>75</sup>

Compared to other sections, the number of women in the IPS was slightly elevated. Although specific proportions shifted over the months of the tribunal, women made up roughly between twenty-five and forty percent of the IPS workforce: in December 1945, women formed around forty percent of IPS personnel. In June 1946, they formed twenty-six percent. In November 1946, they formed thirty-five percent of the IPS.<sup>76</sup> With the exception of the women

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<sup>74</sup> Tokyo Telephone Directory, 6 June 1946, C.W.J. Phelps Collection, Box 1.

<sup>75</sup> These numbers were obtained by cross-referencing the Tokyo General Headquarters Telephone Directory (June 6, 1946) with an IPS Telephone Directory (June 19, 1946). Errors in documentation, crossover of staff between departments or human error may have resulted in some discrepancies.

<sup>76</sup> Memorandum for Mr. Joseph B. Keenan, 26 July 1946, M1663, Roll 25, IPS Staff Historical Files, National Archives and Records Administration – US.; IPS Telephone Directory, 19 June 1946, C.W.J. Phelps Collection, Box 2.; IPS Telephone Directory, 15 November 1946, David Conde Fonds, File 19-1.

of the Associate Counsel, the majority of these women represented various clerical positions within the IPS under the auspices of the tribunal Secretariat.<sup>77</sup> The distribution of women was relatively similar for both the International Defense Section and the IMTFE. An undated personnel directory for the IDS reveals a roughly twenty-five percent female workforce,<sup>78</sup> while an IMTFE directory from April 1948 puts the tally at roughly twenty-three percent.<sup>79</sup> The specific proportionality shifted over the duration of the tribunal, as the strength of each branch grew, new employees joined while others were reallocated or resigned. The fluid nature of personnel rosters makes it difficult to offer a concrete proportional analysis, but overall, women made up around a quarter of the Tokyo IMT workforce.

The work completed by the women of the Secretariat is significant, but the question remains: how was this professional dimension experienced by these women? Luckily, a number of women diligently documented their time in Tokyo. Elaine Fischel (IDS) and Willianna Abrams (IPS) are two prominent examples. Fischel, a Secretary and Legal Stenographer primarily for the International Defense Section (IDS), documented her experience working for the IMT through a series of letters she wrote home almost daily during her time in Tokyo. In addition to updates on her personal life, Fischel's letters included details regarding her career, daily tasks, professional accomplishments, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Fischel later published a memoir detailing her experiences, *Death among the Cherry Blossoms*:

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<sup>77</sup> Miss M. N. Culverwell is listed as an assistant for the British Division, but it is unclear whether her responsibilities were distinct from the secretariat.

<sup>78</sup> IDS Personnel Directory, n.d., Harold Evans Papers.

<sup>79</sup> IMTFE Personnel Directory, April 1948, Harold Evans Papers.

*Memoirs of the World War II War Crimes Trials*,<sup>80</sup> however this thesis primarily makes use of her personal letters. Willianna Abrams wrote a short memoir recounting her experience as a secretary for the IPS, which details her journey to the IMT and her time in Tokyo. The following subsections explore the professional experiences as written by these women who worked tirelessly to enact justice on the global stage in Tokyo. Of course, every set of experiences is unique, but Fischel and Abrams' accounts provide insight to general working conditions at the IMTFE, specifically ways that gender played out in professional settings.

### 2.2.1 Elaine Fischel

“I’ve always said that no matter how favourable the surface may appear it doesn’t take the place of honest labor and that’s what I came for and that’s what I want.”<sup>81</sup> Although originally assigned to the Prosecution Section’s stenographer pool,<sup>82</sup> Elaine B. Fischel worked primarily as a stenographer and legal secretary for the International Defense Section (IDS) from 1946-1948,<sup>83</sup> during which time she became highly regarded by her colleagues and bosses as a reliable, diligent worker, earning her significant praise within her department.<sup>84</sup> She also built a wide and varied social network, forming close ties with everyone from enlisted soldiers, Occupation authorities, Japanese royalty, accused war criminals, to IMTFE judges and other

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<sup>80</sup> Elaine B. Fischel, *Death among the Cherry Blossoms: Memoirs of the World War II War Crimes Trials* (San Diego: CSN Books, 2008).

<sup>81</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 15 May 1946, Private Papers of Elaine B. Fischel, Los Angeles, California. Hereafter “Fischel Papers.”

<sup>82</sup> Fischel, *Death Among the Cherry Blossoms*, 44.

<sup>83</sup> “Elaine B. Fischel,” The International Military Tribunal for the Far East Digital Collection, University of Virginia Law Library, <http://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/contributors/elaine-b-fischel>.

<sup>84</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 1 June 1946, Fischel Papers.

administrative staff members. Over the course of her IDS tenure, Fischel worked directly under Captain Beverly Coleman, and following his resignation from the IMTFE, defense attorneys Mike Levin, William Logan, and John Brannon.<sup>85</sup> In her letters home, Fischel often discussed both specific work assignments and general office dynamics. Using Fischel's personal correspondence, the following pages demonstrate one account of a young secretary's experience in Tokyo, showing an inequitable and often uncomfortable working environment – while also illustrating the IMT's dependence on the prolific contributions of the Secretariat. Fischel's letters depict an environment in which her professionalism and dedication are met with unprofessional remarks and unsought affections.

As a stenographer and legal secretary, Fischel's daily responsibilities were extensive – though she occasionally felt unfulfilled and wanted to dig into the legal work rather than her typically more clerical tasks.<sup>86</sup> Fischel's letters reveal some of her responsibilities, such as preparing statements for the press, processing personnel files, taking dictation during meetings, and facilitating visitation between the defendants and their legal representation and defense attorneys.<sup>87</sup> This last role gave Fischel a situational influence more significant than her employment status on paper. As well as outlining her daily tasks, Fischel's letters also showcase her desire for high achievement as well as her professional successes. Fischel portrayed herself as a driven employee, and this is reflected in the reputation she curated for herself:

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<sup>85</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 26 June 1946, Fischel Papers.; Elaine Fischel to Mother, 2 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>86</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 15 May 1946, Fischel Papers.; Elaine Fischel to Mother, 21 May 1946, Fischel Papers.; Elaine Fischel to Mother, 22 May 1946, Fischel Papers.; Elaine Fischel to Mother, 29 May 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>87</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 15 June 1946, Fischel Papers.; Elaine Fischel to Mother, 17 June 1946, Fischel Papers.

Thursday morning at the office and the minute they walk in they go into conference and so far I haven't done much of anything except little personal details which I attempt to execute with dexterity and pleasantry as those things impress a boss. Another thing I'm dressing nicely so they notice that too and I want them to be proud of having me around.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to discussing her duties as a legal secretary, Fischel's letters reveal an interesting theme: Fischel often related her professional success not only with the work she produced, but also the way she presented herself – and how that, in turn, was perceived and received by males. She concerned herself with her professional appearance – she wished to be seen as both a good, hard-worker and an appealing colleague. Furthermore, she was acutely aware of the impact of her gender and sexuality on this image, as demonstrated in the above extract from a letter dated May 18, 1946. Through her concern for her physical persona – “I'm dressing nicely so they notice...” – Fischel linked professional reputation, at least partially, to her appearance. Her self-consciousness over her appearance clashes with modern notions of equity in the workplace, but they reflect her contemporary environment. Women were expected to adhere to an unwritten dress-code in order to conform to professional standards and expectations.<sup>89</sup> Not only did Fischel have to work hard for a high-stakes project, but she also had to look good while doing it.

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<sup>88</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 18 May 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>89</sup> Deborah L Rhode's research explores the concept of 'Appearance' as a feminist issue, exploring the cultural preoccupation with appearance and its consequences. Rhode discusses the connection between women's appearance and professional credibility, arguing that women are both expected to cater to particular beauty standards and disadvantaged for doing so. The assertion that appearance is considered an indicator of competence is also central to Rhode's argument. (Deborah L. Rhode, "Appearance as a Feminist Issue," *SMU Law Review* 69, no.4 (2016), <https://scholar.smu.edu/smulr/vol69/iss4/2>.; Deborah L. Rhode, "The Injustice of Appearance," *Stanford Law Review* 61, no. 5 (2009), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40379704>.) Kirsten Dellinger and Christine L. Williams' "Makeup at Work: Negotiating Appearance Rules in the Workplace," *Gender & Society* 11, no.2 (1997), <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124397011002002> also explores the role of women's appearance in the workplace, finding that women use makeup in the workplace in part due to institutionalized norms and expectations regarding appearance. The concepts explored in these articles corroborate Fischel's internalized pressure to adhere to cultural beauty standards in the workplace.

Above all, Fischel recognized the value of hard work and her dedication to her job is evident throughout her letters. Her efforts did not go unnoticed:

They really seem to like my work – the capt. Says I’ve got that magic touch & I’ve been offered all kinds of jobs when I get back to the states. John Guider – cousin of James Byrnes & good friend of Paul [McNutt?] – said a job will always be waiting for me in Washington & he told the captain in front of me that I was the best secretary he’d ever seen in an awfully long time. They even made a speech about me at their morning conference about how I’ve done all the work there practically single-handed & they refer to me as ‘the girl we can’t do without.’<sup>90</sup>

Fischel’s work as a legal secretary was clearly of a high caliber and appreciated by her colleagues. Yet, the excerpt above reveals another noteworthy issue. Regardless of Fischel’s personal desire to be seen first as a diligent colleague, her male supervisors intrinsically tied their view of Fischel to her gender – “‘The girl we can’t do without.’” Even the language used in that title is patronizing. Fischel was a woman in her mid-twenties, yet the term ‘girl’ infantilizes her. By calling her ‘the girl we can’t do without,’ Fischel’s supervisors and colleagues effectively designate her as their subordinate, while also framing her as an integral part of the team – a compliment that drips with condescension.

In the workplace, Fischel demonstrated marked professionalism, but her womanhood stood at the forefront of her image. Fischel was often the subject of less-than-professional interests and even sexual/romantic advances. Fischel was entirely aware of the male gaze, noting in her letters the attention she received around the office, from both peers and supervisors. As a young professional working an exciting albeit demanding job in a male-dominated society, Fischel at times even enjoyed the attention. Nevertheless, the sexualization of her presence reflects an additional challenge faced by women of the IMTFE. For instance, Fischel noted on

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<sup>90</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 1 June 1946, Fischel Papers.

multiple occasions that one of the lead IDS attorneys, Captain Beverly Coleman, had taken a personal – and unrequited – interest in her:

Thursday I'll have dinner with Captain Coleman but I'm sure not going to encourage him at all and this will be the next and last time I'll see him outside of the office as that just isn't healthy. Today he came in and I was talking to him and he gives me the old look with the blue eyes and tells me how tired he is and should he just collapse in my arms, adding 'I couldn't think of a more delightful place to collapse.' Well that's a lot of Baloney and I always act real shy around him as I don't want him having any ideas.<sup>91</sup>

In the above excerpt, Fischel communicated unequivocally that she was not interested in Coleman's advances, even modifying her own behaviour in an attempt to dissuade him. Though disguised by a politeness in her wording, Fischel made her disapproval of Coleman's behaviour quite clear:

If Coleman stays I'm set cause [sic] he really likes me - there's a personal feeling and as far as his liking me and vice versa from a personal viewpoint I can see he's so much of a gentleman that it wouldn't make much difference in the office as we're both still dignified people. I still wouldn't approve of dating him though and maybe what I'm trying to say isn't too clear but perhaps you see what I mean.<sup>92</sup>

Fischel framed Coleman's affection for her as a leg up in the workplace, but these short excerpts paint the image of a workplace in which boundaries are routinely crossed by her supervisor, a powerful man in a position of authority, at the time even responsible for her career. Fischel may have felt forced to tolerate Coleman's advances in order to protect her career.

Fischel also shared some interactions with Coleman in which he was overtly flirtatious, such as this entry from May 17, 1946: "I think the captain will be around. He came in this morning and gave me the old 1-2-3 with the eyes and said I look fresh and lovely this

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<sup>91</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 14 May 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>92</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 15 May 1946, Fischel Papers.

morning,”<sup>93</sup> and from June 1: “The Captain came in back of my desk & put his arm around me & said ‘There, there sugar, you stop worrying cause [sic] I want to take you with me.’ He really likes me.”<sup>94</sup> In these examples, Coleman was not just vocal about his interest in Fischel – his advances were physical as well. From his body language (‘the old 1-2-3’) to actual touch, Coleman created an uncomfortable environment for Fischel. Coleman’s willingness to show affection in this way within a professional context is noteworthy, though given the era, probably not surprising. He was clearly aware of Fischel’s professional capabilities, (as demonstrated by his frequent praise of the quality of her work). Yet, Coleman was also subject of his time and place. Whether because of workplace culture, internalized power or simple loneliness, Coleman’s harassment of Fischel complicated her IMTFE experience. This inequitable relationship between the two points to a wider issue: the fact that this was acceptable at all. Likely, Coleman’s willingness to act on his attraction and Fischel’s cautious tolerance reflect an environment where this behaviour was accepted in the workplace, likewise, an environment in which women were expected to be complaisant. It is probable, therefore, that Fischel was not the only IMTFE woman subject to this type of harassment.

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<sup>93</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 17 May 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>94</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 1 June 1946, Fischel Papers.

### 2.2.2 Willianna Abrams

Willianna Abrams (formerly Settle, at the time of the tribunal) arrived in Tokyo in 1945 as an experienced secretary, having worked during the war at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. for the Chief John Kelley of the War Frauds section.<sup>95</sup> Like Fischel, Abrams wrote an extensive recollection of her time as a secretary at the Tokyo IMT. One of the original fifteen secretaries for the International Prosecution Section, Abrams arrived in Tokyo in December 1945, right at the beginning of the preparatory phase for the prosecution case.<sup>96</sup> Abrams' recollections of the Tokyo IMT describe a changing attitude towards the work – initially, Abrams had been against going to Tokyo: “I was delighted that they [Japanese military leaders] would be brought to justice but I had no desire to participate in their arraignment and trial,”<sup>97</sup> she later remembered. Circumstances aligned for her to go regardless of reservations. One of the secretaries previously selected to go had backed out unexpectedly and arrangements were made for Abrams to take her place as she already possessed the necessary security clearance to be sent with short notice. Despite her initial fears, Abrams took a leap of faith and accepted the position, departing from Washington on 2 December 1945, and arriving in Tokyo on 7 December.<sup>98</sup>

Once in Tokyo, Abrams worked under Chief of Counsel Joseph B. Keenan. She recalled the dynamic of these early days with the IPS as being particularly work-oriented: “As time

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<sup>95</sup> Willianna Abrams, “General MacArthur’s Promise to Me,” 3 June 1964 (Private Collection), 1. Hereafter “Abrams, *Recollections*.”

<sup>96</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 4-5.; Memorandum for Mr. Joseph B. Keenan, 26 July 1946, M1663, Roll 25, IPS Staff Historical Files, National Archives and Records Administration – US.

<sup>97</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 1.

<sup>98</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 3-4.

passed there were many who came to Japan seeking adventure or for other personal reasons, but with that original group it was different. We had a job to do; moreover, we believed in what we were doing.”<sup>99</sup> To Abrams, and many other participants, the trial was expected to set a precedent for the future of international law; it was a project that they were proud to be a part of. Idealism shaped the *zeitgeist* of the IMTFE – James Sedgwick writes: “a shared understanding that the tribunal would shape the future as much as rectify the past unified nearly all IMTFE personnel.”<sup>100</sup> Abrams’ account of the tribunal’s final day reflected on the experience’s transformative nature, reiterating the sense of fulfilment and of idealism that only grew stronger during her stay in Tokyo:

Finally, on November 12, 1948, Sir William Webb, President of the Tribunal, read the verdicts. [...] As I listened to the verdicts being read I realized over the years my attitude had changed. [...] In the hushed stillness of the courtroom I was aware that instead of harboring hatred toward Japan, I felt only love and pity, and an earnest and feverent [sic] hope that the trial in which I participated would help to forestall any future wars between countries of the world.<sup>101</sup>

Her appreciation for her position at the IPS is reflected in the length of her employment – Abrams was the only member of the IPS to remain in Tokyo for the entire duration of the trial: “Of the original forty people who left Washington, D. C. on December 2, 1945, my name was the ONLY one on the final IPS payroll. [...] and because I had stayed I was able to return to the States a better Christian – and a better citizen.”<sup>102</sup> For Abrams, her work for the Tokyo IMT represented a reciprocal exchange. She believed that her work was important and would leave a

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<sup>99</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 5.

<sup>100</sup> Sedgwick, “The Trial Within,” 217.

<sup>101</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 7.

<sup>102</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 7.

lasting impact on the world. Likewise, she felt that her time with the IPS made her a better person.

Though her feelings towards the work itself appear to have been rather positive, Abrams did take note of some perhaps unfair treatment of the women employees. Abrams described the women's housing situation as rather disappointing – there was no water and no electricity; while the attorneys were housed either in a spacious house or at the nearby Dai Iti hotel. Abrams noted that the “girls” would sometimes bathe in the attorneys’ rooms at the Dai Iti hotel while the attorneys waited in the lobby.<sup>103</sup> As well, Abrams’ recollections of the journey to Tokyo mention that the women had to be signed out and in – “like a library book,”<sup>104</sup> if they were to accompany an Officer or enlisted man outside of their accommodations.<sup>105</sup> It is unclear whether this was exclusively during the travels, or if this was a practice that continued for the duration of their stay in Tokyo. Nonetheless, the practice both objectifies and infantilizes the women involved – women who, considering their already-established careers and qualifications, were legal adults. Like the harassment Fischel endured, the second-class diminution described by Abrams reflected wider societal and professional expectations and inequities. Men were protectors. Women needed protection, especially in the hyper – exaggerated – paranoia regarding espionage, security, and resistance that typified early years of the Occupation.<sup>106</sup> In retrospect, at least, Abrams characterised the patronising over-protectiveness as inordinate. Despite having been selected to work at one of the largest, high-stakes international criminal trials hitherto and

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<sup>103</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 4.

<sup>104</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 3.

<sup>105</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 3.

<sup>106</sup> Sedgwick, “The Trial Within,” 327.

consequently afforded a massive responsibility, the women of the Tokyo IMT, especially secretarial and clerical staff, were still at the mercy of their male colleagues. Fortunately, this was not the defining experience for Abrams, who above all else valued the opportunity to contribute to the Tokyo Trial.

Indeed, Abrams' recollections paint her experience working for the Tokyo IMT as overwhelmingly positive. This positivity was fuelled largely by a sense of importance in the work she was doing, not only in the immediate context of bringing war criminals to justice, but in a much larger temporal context. Abrams truly believed that the IMTFE could help prevent future global conflicts. For her, working in Tokyo became the defining feature of her experience, though her recollections also offer insight into the unjust treatment of the women employees in comparison with their male colleagues. In addition to the work, of course, her sojourn was largely shaped by her social and personal experiences, which will be explored in the following chapter, "The Social Dimension."

### 2.2.3 – Women of the Secretariat: Final Thoughts

The narratives offered by Elaine Fischel and Willianna Abrams differ in form and in temporality – Fischel's private correspondence provides a contemporary account of experiences. Abrams' deferred reflection on her time in Tokyo shed retrospective light on events and experiences. Each account, therefore, reveals unique perspectives. Through Fischel's letters, her exact thoughts and feelings at the time of writing can be deciphered. Her thoughts, unaltered by time, provide a nuanced perspective regarding professional experiences in Tokyo. She clearly felt that her work was important, though she also felt her skills were occasionally underused. Fischel's letters also include details on specific remarks or actions made by her colleagues in the office, which can provide a sense of the interpersonal dynamics within the workplace. In

contrast, Willianna Abrams' recollections were written much later in 1964, and thus offer a somewhat different view. While the minute details blurred or were forgotten over time, Abrams' account shows what experiences and feelings stuck out as the most important, those which left the most impact. For Abrams, the principal feeling attached to her time in Tokyo was pride in the work she did and in her contribution to international justice. However, she also recalled the poor conditions of the facilities and the unjust treatment of the women. This stuck with her enough to make its way into her written recollections, indicating its importance.

### 2.3 Chapter Conclusion

While the professional dimension encompasses different experiences for legal and clerical staff, one thing is clear: for the women of the Tokyo IMT, the most important factor was the work itself. The experiences of the lawyers discussed in Section 2.1 and the members of the Secretariat discussed in Section 2.2 reinforce the significance of this work, not only for those involved but also on a global and temporal scale. While there are unfortunately no sources available which speak to the personal experiences of the women lawyers of the IMTFE, their contributions to the trial, and the related interactions recorded in the court transcripts, for example, demonstrate the enormity of their achievements. The entry of women into the international legal arena is a huge feat – and lawyers such as Llewellyn, Lambert, and Strooker-Dantra are all models for this accomplishment. However, the contributions of the women of the Secretariat are likewise important, arguably more consequential to the overall operation of the court. Though obscured by the separation of the courtroom and the IMTFE offices, the work done by women such as Fischel and Abrams and dozens of other clerical and administrative workers proved vital to the successful progression of the proceedings. Few, if any, published

sources highlight the accomplishments of women working for the Secretariat, but sources from the era show the scope and significance. The letters written by Fischel, for example, highlight the perceived importance of her work at the time. Often the recipient of praise from her employers, Fischel's work was evidently highly appreciated. Likewise, though details are spared in Abrams' account, it is evident that she felt a level of importance attached to her work. Each of these women, therefore, were integral to the Tokyo IMT.

In addition to the work output, the perceptions of the professional dynamic highlighted in Fischel and Abrams' writings stand out. Both shed light on the role of gender in the workplace. More specifically, both sources reveal that gender *did* play a role. Fischel, for example, often noticed that she was the recipient of unprofessional attention from her colleagues and – most notably – from her boss. While in her letters she does not appear to harbour any negative feelings towards Captain Coleman (in fact, she greatly respects and adores him),<sup>107</sup> Fischel's letters indicated on numerous occasions her disinterest and discomfort with his advances. Abrams, on the other hand, revealed the unjust treatment received more generally by the women of her section, though it is yet undiscovered whether this treatment was exclusively fuelled by gender, or if there was a question of seniority at play – it is worth considering whether, in addition to gender, the Secretariat may have been undervalued more generally as the nature of their work is inconspicuous in comparison to the visible and estimable roles of the lawyers involved in the trial.

The experiences of the women discussed in the above pages did not end in the workplace – the months spent in Tokyo were much more than professionally fulfilling, they were filled with

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<sup>107</sup> Fischel to Mother, 4 June 1946, Fischel Papers.; Fischel to Mother, 7 June 1946, Fischel Papers.

social and cultural experiences which defined much of the time spent by these women while working at the Tokyo IMT. The next chapter delves into this social dimension, attempting to uncover the personal experiences of the women of the IMTFE both in and outside of the workplace, with particular regard to the ways in which gender may have influenced or factored into this chapter of their lives.



### Chapter 3: The Social Dimension

*My first six months in Tokyo saw me constantly socializing. I was surrounded with men in uniform and out of uniform. Since the Prosecution was putting on its case and I did not have to work 16 hours per day, I had some time to play. I could not believe the number of men who approached me for dates. Suddenly, I found myself with a “full dance card.”*

Elaine B. Fischel, *Death Among the Cherry Blossoms*, 141.

In addition to the professional experiences, much of the time spent by IMTFE women in Tokyo was defined by the social aspect: the time spent outside of work, the relationships and connections fostered with one another, and the intimidating experience of finding oneself immersed in a new, foreign country, and culture. This social aspect became incredibly meaningful for all IMTFE employees, encompassing them and permeating into their professional and personal lives. This social dimension informed the thoughts, sentiments, and actions of those involved, shaping their experiences as much as – or even more so than – their professional contributions to the tribunal. Facing head-on the fallout of previously intangible atrocities, engaging with the perpetrators and navigating a country unrecovered from total war proved jarring. There was no longer a degree of separation between the IMTFE participants and the aftermath of the war.<sup>108</sup> They were forced to grapple with an entirely new reality. The result was a fascinating, complex, and sometimes morally confusing environment in both professional and social spaces. The world navigated by IMTFE employees in Tokyo proved quite difficult to maneuver and their experiences out of court proved formative. Few scholars have unpacked the

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<sup>108</sup> James Burnham Sedgwick, “A People’s Court: Emotion, Participant Experiences, and the Shaping of Postwar Justice at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1946-1948,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 22, no. 3 (2011): 483-485. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2011.599651>

richness of this social-professional nexus. James Sedgwick's works come the closest. In his piece "Jurists as Tourists in Postwar Tokyo," Sedgwick explores the role of a tight-knit professional community in forming social alliances and networks among the IMTFE participants: "demanding collaborative working conditions forged strong bonds. In the least, it created very human social spaces."<sup>109</sup> The community of Allied occupants in Tokyo was relatively isolated from Japanese society and most IMTFE participants' social lives operated within this closed circle.<sup>110</sup> Sedgwick's work breaks historiographical ground by looking behind the scenes in Tokyo, but he does not explicitly address the distinct set of challenges and experiences faced by IMTFE women in their social milieu. The connection between work and play meant professional hierarchies carried over into the social sphere: a male-dominated workplace created a male-dominated social landscape. Women who occupied 'lower rung' professional positions found themselves in a social environment mirroring that of their professional world. Because gender informs all societal spaces, women of the IMTFE navigated different, and in many cases more difficult, social contingencies. This chapter tells that – and their – stories.

Confronting unprecedented circumstances forces historical actors to reevaluate and innovate; it widens perspective and requires an ability to adopt a holistic worldview, setting aside preconceptions. Elaine Fischel's letters bring to life the IMTFE's transformative and complex social and experiential backdrop. They capture and record her experiences in Tokyo as an employee, as a person, and as a woman. For instance, Fischel's musings reveal personal turmoil as Fischel confronted the difficult task of navigating new moral territory and eventually deconstructing wartime preconceptions about Japanese barbarity. Her personal interactions with

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<sup>109</sup> James Burnham Sedgwick, "Jurists as Tourists in Postwar Tokyo," *Legal Sightseeing* (blog), 19 July 2021, <https://legalsightseeing.org/2021/07/19/longread-jurists-as-tourists-in-postwar-tokyo/>.

<sup>110</sup> Sedgwick, "Jurists as Tourists."

Japanese culture and people *after* the war subverted her original wartime thoughts regarding the Japanese.<sup>111</sup> These changing perspectives and dynamics are vital in understanding moments in history and the complex feelings involved in negotiating such difficult and trying circumstances. By exploring these changing dynamics through Fischel's words, this chapter establishes a broader, more complete narrative of the experience of a young woman navigating such a unique episode of history.

Exploring the social dimension invariably sheds light on the gendered experience in Tokyo, revealing the prevalence and manifestation of gender roles both in and outside of the workplace. For example, Fischel's navigation of social liaisons with her coworkers and her feelings towards these connections reveal hitherto unexplored dimensions of the IMTFE experience. Her letters explore the themes of personal value and persona, often tying the two together. Her letters reveal how sense of self was tied to outside factors, maybe especially male approval. In a similar vein, Willianna Abrams' recollections also speak to the pressures of feeling accepted, pointing to a prescribed need as a woman to perform or to present oneself a certain way in order to succeed.<sup>112</sup> Thus, this chapter explores a distinctly gendered social dimension primarily through the letters written by Elaine Fischel and the recollections of Willianna Abrams. In so doing, it draws out patterns of behaviour that shaped the personal and social experiences of other IMTFE women. This chapter begins with a discussion of Fischel's social experiences, including first her relationships with the defendants and her changing perspectives towards the Japanese, and secondly, the interpersonal relationships with her

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<sup>111</sup> Fischel to Mother, 2 July 1946, Fischel Papers; Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers; Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>112</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 1-7.

colleagues. The chapter then discusses Abrams' recollections with regard to her experience arriving in Tokyo including a sense of vulnerability. Unfortunately, the sources available on the women prosecutors discussed in the previous chapter do not include information on their personal experiences. Thus, Llewellyn, Lambert and Strooker-Dantra are not specifically featured in this chapter, though the themes explored aim to shed light on the overall workplace and socio-cultural dynamics throughout the Tokyo IMT. Hopefully, as IMTFE scholarship continues to expand, more information will come to light in order to reconstruct the personal lives of the women IMTFE lawyers.

Because professional and personal spaces blurred in postwar Tokyo, this chapter touches on both social and workplace relationships. It is impossible to entirely separate life in the office from life outside of the office: the social interactions in both settings leached into and grew off one another. Thus, while this chapter focuses on the social dimension, rather than the professional, it includes experiences within professional settings. The lives and experiences of these women – of everyone – were multifaceted; they did not exist in isolation from one another. On the whole, however, the chapter consciously elevates social interactions in its analysis. It likewise centers the lived, gendered experiences of the women of the IMTFE.

### 3.1 Elaine Fischel

This exploration first returns to Elaine Fischel, whose letters to her mother not only describe her time spent in the office but focus in large part on her life outside of professional responsibilities. Primarily, this section explores the interpersonal relationships formed by Elaine Fischel with her peers. Her letters reveal two fascinating paths of inquiry: first, her relationships formed with IMTFE defendants through professional duties and secondly, the interactions and social behaviours exhibited with her colleagues outside of the workplace. The first of these

avenues demonstrates an inner turmoil felt by Fischel as she navigated new moral territory. The second relates to the pressures she faced as one of few young women in her surroundings, specifically a certain discomfort – yet willingness to comply – with the treatment she received from her colleagues and professional superiors in more casual settings outside of the workplace. Fischel’s letters evoke a sense of contention; her words convey conflict between her desire to be respected and her disapproval of certain behaviours, particularly unwanted sexual advances. These two conflicting dimensions are dissected in the following subsections, beginning with a look into her relationships formed with the defendants and continuing into her liaisons with her colleagues and broader social circle. Finally, a third area of interest will be considered throughout this discussion: Fischel’s personal evolution as her worldview was changed by and adapted to her new surroundings. Naturally, having suddenly found herself in an altered reality, Fischel’s time in Tokyo provided a meaningful learning experience. It broadened her worldview. Her capacity to consider life from new and differing perspectives grew tenfold, evidenced by her letters. Together, these three areas appear to define Fischel’s experience, which be explored in the following pages.

### 3.1.2 – Familiarity with the Defendants

A prominent point of interest revealed by Fischel’s letters is the relationships that she developed with IMTFE defendants. As a secretary of the International Defense Section, Fischel was often responsible for facilitating meetings between defendants and their attorneys, leading attorneys to the holding area where the defendants were held.<sup>113</sup> Often, this implied interacting with the defendants, over time even fostering relationships with them and members of their

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<sup>113</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

families. Despite the context of the workplace, these relationships are considered in this chapter as belonging to the social dimension: Fischel, though an employee of the defense section, appears to have no official professional responsibility to converse with or to humor the accused.<sup>114</sup> In this sense, the relationships she built with the defendants are her own, maintained of her own volition and on her own terms. In fact, Fischel even maintained correspondence with the families of the defendants, a definite departure from the expectations of her job.

Most interesting is the evidence of her almost dialectic beliefs and principles regarding the defendants: Fischel repeatedly stressed a continued belief that the accused deserve punishment, stating even “Of course I hope they’re all hung.”<sup>115</sup> Fischel clearly held the defendants culpable, believing that they are deserving of punishment, yet she also appeared to develop a certain affection for the defendants – a fondness which appears to have been mutual. “I know most of the defendants now by name so I just ask who their attorney is if I don’t already know. The minute I walk in the room they come right up to me and that’s how me and Tojo got together. I see him every day and I’ve spoken to him 3 times...,”<sup>116</sup> This represents a stunning reversal in a short time: comfort with, possibly even affection for former Prime Minister Hideki Tōjō, who was understood to be Japan’s most infamous war criminal.<sup>117</sup> “I guess I’m the only girl who knows all the defendants and they all know me...”<sup>118</sup> Fischel’s brief descriptions of her interactions with the defendants are fascinating. It is difficult to pinpoint her true feelings as she

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<sup>114</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>115</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>116</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>117</sup> Fischel, *Death Among the Cherry Blossoms*, xviii, 32.

<sup>118</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

often expressed conflicting statements - balancing between neutrality and the desire to have the defendants fully prosecuted. Likely, her own feelings fluctuated and shifted. Either way, Fischel's confessions to her mother also reveal that the defendants took a liking to her. Unfortunately, we cannot know for certain why defendants felt drawn to Fischel. Whether Fischel was especially charming, or they tried to manipulate any connection possible or she was simply one of few people allowed access to the defendants – one of few options for human interaction – is not known. In any case, her bond with the defendants was unique, and offers a more humanized perspective of defendants and other tribunal participants alike.

Interestingly, Fischel's letters also point to a developing relationship between herself and the families of the defendants. An example of this relationship can be seen in a letter from 1 July 1946: "I told you Gen. Koiso's wife sent me some silk and I went in and thanked him in Japanese – some guy wrote down for me what to say so the Gen. liked it."<sup>119</sup> However, Fischel quickly followed by downplaying the relationship – and stressing the futility of making nice: "I guess it's not important cause [sic] they'll probably all be swinging one of these days."<sup>120</sup> These examples highlight the way Fischel grappled with her personal feelings towards the defendants. While her entries often point to developing friendships (or friendly acquaintances), she repeatedly reassured her mother of her disapproval of the crimes perpetrated by the Japanese. Conceivably, Fischel felt self-conscious of her amicable relationships with the defendants, for fear of judgement from her mother, or even uncertainty of her own feelings. Her view of 'right and wrong' instilled by her upbringing and western background was muddled by an intimate personal confrontation with the 'enemy.' The humanized versions of the defendants that she

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<sup>119</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

<sup>120</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

came to know were an affront to the caricature of Japanese barbarism that was entrenched in Allied rhetoric.<sup>121</sup> Fischel may not have known how to come to terms with her changing perspective and may have worried about what her mother would think of her for adopting a potentially ‘treacherous’ (to her family, or her country) opinion. Although it is impossible to truly understand the feelings that Fischel held towards the Tokyo defendants, her time working with the defense clearly humanized them in her mind. In an interview with journalist Hollie McKay in 2016, Fischel once credited the turning point for her changing views to an encounter with the then-fifteen-year-old daughter of one of the defendants, who had asked to see her father. From then, Fischel reportedly began to view the defendants as multi-faceted, complicated people – fathers, husbands, sons – rather than the embodiment of pure evil.<sup>122</sup>

It is rather fascinating to consider how Fischel’s relationships with the defendants developed. When did she transition from an employee of their representation to a friend, close enough to be the recipient of gifts from the families of the defendants, to take riding lessons with Tōjō’s personal horse, or to play tennis alongside Prince Takamatsu, brother of the Emperor Hirohito?<sup>123</sup> For Fischel, her experience in this regard was undoubtedly tied to her womanhood – McKay reports that Fischel considered her gender as an advantage during her time in Tokyo, stating that there were so few women working the trials that she felt she stood out among the

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<sup>121</sup> Sedgwick, “The Trial Within,” 104-105.

<sup>122</sup> Hollie McKay, “Elaine Fischel, Lawyer for the Defense at the Japanese War Criminal Trials,” *DISPATCH* (podcast), *The World of War, Crimes + Crises with Hollie McKay*, 8 May 2022, <https://holliesmckay.substack.com/p/dispatch-elaine-fischel-lawyer-for>

<sup>123</sup> McKay, Elaine Fischel, 8 May 2022; Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

crowd:<sup>124</sup> “I always saw being a woman as an advantage, it made you stand out.”<sup>125</sup> Perhaps, with this in mind, it is not too far a leap to posit that her gender is what made Fischel appear sympathetic to the defendants and their families. Of course, it is worth bearing in mind that qualities such as approachability, compassion, or empathy have often been associated with ideal femininity – perhaps this influenced the defendants’ perceptions of Fischel, allowing them to form an attachment to her that was rather different from the bonds formed with their male attorneys. Or, perhaps it was her role as a secretary that made her a sympathetic character in their eyes: not directly responsible for their respective fates, Fischel may have simply been a breath of fresh air for the defendants, a friendly face to distract from their current circumstances. Regardless of the specific explanation, Fischel’s bond with defendants and their families proved lasting, and demonstrates the complex layers of the IMTFE’s social world.

### 3.1.3 – Connections with Colleagues and Relationships Outside of the Workplace

In addition to developing relationships with the defendants, a fascinating component of Fischel’s social existence in Tokyo happened outside of the office. Her letters include numerous details regarding social life, which was often filled with dates with fellow trial employees, excursions to the surrounding cities, weekly riding lessons, Japanese classes, and Sake parties. On one particular occasion, Fischel described attending a dinner party hosted by Mr. Hayashi,

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<sup>124</sup> McKay, Elaine Fischel, 8 May 2022

<sup>125</sup> Martha Neil, “Retired Lawyer, 95, Worked at ‘Tokyo Trials’ as Legal Secretary after WWII, Knew Japanese Leaders,” *ABA Journal*, 5 April 2016, [https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/retired\\_attorney\\_95\\_recalls\\_tokyo\\_trials\\_after\\_wwii\\_and\\_japanese\\_lea](https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/retired_attorney_95_recalls_tokyo_trials_after_wwii_and_japanese_lea)

who she wrote was president of the United Bar Association of Tokyo.<sup>126</sup> Joining her in attendance was Commander Harris, whose behaviour toward Fischel appears rather inappropriate. Fischel wrote: “Commander Harris scares the hell out of me cause he’s always staring at me and was trying to play toesies under the table,”<sup>127</sup> – and he was not the only one. “Major Warren was sitting next to me and playing with my other toes.”<sup>128</sup> Luckily, Fischel did not appear overly fazed by this at the time, describing the party as rather exciting.<sup>129</sup> Her willingness and determination to overcome such harassment demonstrates an incredible fortitude and resilience. Strength of character aside, the harassment she endured provides a telling window into the male-dominated world IMTFE women had to endure. Despite Fischel’s relative unconcern towards the situation, her treatment indicated disrespect and discourtesy toward her – neither Harris nor Warren was accompanying her as a date. Rather, they were colleagues and associates attending an event together in a group.<sup>130</sup> Norms of that era and environment empowered these men to feel entitled to objectify Fischel and transgress on her body and in her space. Moreover, Fischel wrote that Harris said to her that if she was a “good girl,” he would take her to more events.<sup>131</sup> This language is infantilizing, denoting an unequal power dynamic. Whether Harris was Fischel’s superior in occupation, rank, or sex, it clearly indicates entrenched imbalance and inequality between the two, in which Harris viewed Fischel as a subordinate

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<sup>126</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.; The exact date of this source is unknown, but its position in the collection suggests a date between May and June 1946.

<sup>127</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>128</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>129</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>130</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>131</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

person. If she behaves, he will reward her. Harris' behaviour towards Fischel is an example of men holding undue license over women: Fischel's experience both in and outside of the workplace was largely defined by her gender.

In fact, Fischel's letters reveal that this was the case for many women in Tokyo: "The real point I want to bring out is that it's common talk that all the girls no matter how ugly they are, are terribly spoiled in Tokyo because there are so many men here."<sup>132</sup> According to Fischel, the unequal ratio of men to women in Tokyo encouraged an environment in which all of the women present were commodified for their sex; they were more desirable because they were fewer in number. Moreover, Fischel acknowledges that this has likely influenced her own popularity. She wrote: "if anything I've underestimated my personality entering in the picture and have attributed my popularity to the shortage of women."<sup>133</sup> If anything, the IMTFE women had to work even harder to surmount this added challenge; though their gender may have made them popular, they may have felt pressured to 'prove' their worth as highly qualified professionals.

Interestingly, though, Fischel appears to pass more judgement on the women for encouraging this attention, than on the men for seeking them out. Several passages from this same letter are rather disparaging:

I know the reputation girls have that are overseas and I don't intend to be like them or even act like them in the remotest way. If anything I've gained in my morals [sic] standard because I have seen the way some girls act and the last thing I would ever want to do is disgrace you.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>133</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

<sup>134</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

I believe I already wrote you about the comment an officer at the 5<sup>th</sup> Cav [club] made to my escort, Lt. Campbell [...] I know the officer who made the comment and he's very highly thought of out there and he said to Campbell as I've told you "That of the girls he's seen overseas in this theatre (and this is a pretty big theatre) that I was the only one he'd seen who conducted herself as a lady throughout every minute of the evening and every time I've ever been out there." I don't drink and I don't get rowdy and I have a good time and I don't think I would be treated the way I am treated if people thought otherwise of me.<sup>135</sup>

In these excerpts, it appears that Fischel saw the other women in her cohort under a rather negative light, disapproving of their behaviour, even going so far as to call it disgraceful. Fischel painted the other women's behaviour – drinking, getting 'rowdy' – as untoward and unladylike. Again, though, her apparent disdain for this 'unladylike' behaviour stems from a concern over gaining the approval of those around her – particularly of the men surrounding her or her family back home. Her effort to highlight the aforementioned officer's reputation indicates a sense of authority attached to him, once again demonstrating concern over her own reputation and a sense of validation from these external sources. It almost seems that Fischel was afraid of pushing the boundaries of her prescribed role and losing the respect of these men. This fear of damaging her reputation highlights a social pressure to act and appear a certain way, demonstrating an internalization of the expectations of those around her, both near and far. Her letters show great concern for what her mother might think and read as though she was trying to assuage her mother's fears by confirming that she was behaving herself. Compounded by the pressure of seeking validation from her supervisors, it is quite clear that Fischel felt especially vulnerable as a woman in this unfamiliar, even competitive environment. Her disapproval of the so-called unladylike behaviours of the other women reflected an environment in which women's behaviour was heavily policed and defined on an abstract moral code. The standards to which

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<sup>135</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers.

Fischel upheld herself and the women around her likely stem from a fundamental inequality between the women and men both within her own social circle and in the broader society of the late 1940s. Although, sadly, unsurprising, women at the IMTFE had to live through entrenched patriarchy and invasive sexualization on top of the already disruptive and high stakes existence as occupiers in an unfamiliar and recently murderous society.

Overall, Fischel's letters expose an intense social pressure imposed both within and outside of the IMTFE for women, especially young women, to present themselves in a particular way. Her amicable and empathetic demeanour likely appealed to the defendants of the tribunal, who grew quite fond of her, yet her experience getting to know the defendants provoked a deeply personal quandary. Their budding friendships forced her to re-evaluate her beliefs; the inner turmoil connected to her relationships with the defendants revealed a self-consciousness regarding her acceptability in the eyes of others. She felt obliged to justify her acquaintance with the accused by reiterating her disapproval and hatred towards them.<sup>136</sup> In addition, her letters reveal the intense normative pressure experience by women in a predominantly male environment. She and other IMTFE women were expected to maintain a womanly/ladylike character. Outside of the workplace, this theme appears even more prominently – Fischel placed great emphasis on ladylike behaviour, insinuating that her poise was largely responsible for her reputation, at the same time condemning 'unladylike' behaviour of the other women around her. This high standard for women exposes a social environment in which women were expected to be palatable for the benefit of men, who presumed power to decide who is, and who is not,

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<sup>136</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d., Fischel Papers; Fischel to Sister, 25 June 1946, Fischel Papers; Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers.

reputable. Finally, Fischel's letters also reveal the entitlement of her male colleagues, who often behaved inappropriately towards Fischel – and likely to the other women of the IMTFE. Fischel highlights the ease of gaining male attention due to the unbalanced ratio of men to women. Despite Fischel's occasional hints of discomfort, she largely accepted or chose to look past poor behaviour, perhaps afraid to incite a rift in the workplace. In sum, the social experience as revealed by Fischel's letters is riddled with gender-based inequalities, assigned roles, and trying social pressures.

### 3.2 Willianna Abrams

Willianna Abrams' recollections provide a similarly assiduous account of the social dimension of life in Tokyo for the women of the IMTFE. Abrams' account is particularly interesting for its description of the early days of IPS work. Unlike Fischel, who joined the IMTFE workforce much closer to the start of the trial, Abrams was among the first Allied civilian personnel to arrive in Japan. Her experiences extended from the beginning to the end of the trial, offering therefore a complete and holistic window into her own life in Tokyo, illustrating the change of her beliefs and feelings over time. Insight into the broader experience of IMTFE women is also featured, with comments on the circumstances in which 'the girls' found themselves. A directionality/duality of gendered experience emerges from Abrams' account: highlighting gender as a concept that is both internalized and imposed. Gender largely defined how she interpreted her own experiences, but also how she was received and treated by other people. Gender formed both an identity and a label. Lastly, Abrams' experience of arriving and living in a country recently devastated by war intensified her feelings of vulnerability, especially as a woman in a male-dominated space.

### 3.2.1 Dual Experience of Gender

Like Fischel, Abrams' social experiences reveal the influence and perception of gender in Tokyo for the women of the IMTFE. In particular, her recollections shed light on a dual experience of gender, comprising both externally and internally driven factors. This refers first to the way her gender influenced others' perceptions and treatment of her and secondly, to the way that her identity as a woman influenced her actions, feelings and thoughts relating to her social experience. Of course, these roles are closely related – they function in tandem, collaborating to shape the lives and experiences of each person.<sup>137</sup> This dual pressure and the intersection of the external and internal factors are woven throughout Abrams' writing, but a few examples stand out.

Abrams' experiences travelling to Tokyo exposed the externally driven pressure and role of gender. During a stopover in Guam, Abrams reported having felt as though she were on parade.<sup>138</sup> She wrote that the service men in Guam had seldom seen American women in recent years – and felt as though she, and the other women on this journey, stood out.<sup>139</sup> While this is a rather acute example, it points to a much larger theme common to the women of the IMTFE: the degree of separation between the women and men. This theme is further evidenced by the

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<sup>137</sup> Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity is such that gender is socially constructed, rather than a biologically determined identity. As such, cultural and social norms contribute to notions of appropriate masculine/feminine gender traits and behaviours. Butler's theory also posits that the identity-aspect of gender is socially determined; the internalization of prescribed gender norms and ideals forms gender-related identity, rather than innate biological determinants. Gender performativity theory explains the idea of this "dual experience" of gender proposed in this section – the pressure to typify femininity is both externally driven, through social norms and expectations, and internally driven, through the internalized need to "perform" gender. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990.); Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2004.)

<sup>138</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 3.

<sup>139</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 3.

requirement to be “signed out” of their residence when leaving with an enlisted man or an officer.<sup>140</sup> While concerns over security were universal, the guardianship of women by men implies an inherently unbalanced, paternalist relationship. Women were – throughout the tribunal – a distinct entity; subject to different rules, roles and expectations than the men.

The internally driven pressure, the way that Abrams’ personal identity as a woman influenced her experiences, is equally as notable. In Abrams’ account, she described a lack of amenities in the former YMCA, the official residence of all Allied women personnel in Tokyo. Her description of the living conditions is striking. Abrams reported having no water, instead having to drink grapefruit juice, and no electricity or heat. Meanwhile, most of the male attorneys and higher officials were housed in the nearby Dai Iti hotel or in Japanese mansions.<sup>141</sup> Ironically, the institutional accommodations for women probably reflected a patronizing, over-protectiveness of the women as women. In effect, in trying to protect them, Occupation authorities further reduced IMTFE women (and other contributors to the wider Occupation project) to second class citizens. Amidst her account of the poor facilities, Abrams’ focus on the lack of mirrors is striking. She wrote: “There was no closet space and there was not a mirror in the entire building. Somewhere en route I had lost my compact so I had to go without make-up.”<sup>142</sup> Like with other women attached to the IMTFE, presentation formed a big part of Abrams’ identity. Social and professional gender norms compelled Abrams and all women of the era to center appearance in their sense of self and place in the community and workforce. She recalled receiving a mirror from General MacArthur as a gift of thanks, making her the “envy of

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<sup>140</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 4.

<sup>142</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 4.

all the other girls.”<sup>143</sup> Appearance was a deeply important consideration for the women of the IMTFE: a curated appearance has been tied to professionalism, regardless of gender, and for women in particular it may have been an expectation to curate a professional, put-together appearance. An inability to present oneself as desired could undermine personal identity and professional appearance. There is not much explicitly referenced in Abrams’ memoir to elucidate or explain her specific concerns about appearance. However, when interpreted through the era’s gender norms, the social mores of the immediate context, and her peer Elaine Fischel’s articulations, Abrams’ delight in gaining access to a mirror provides yet another example of the difficulties experienced by women at the IMTFE: and their ability to thrive in the face of imbalanced restrictions.

### 3.2.2 Post-War Tokyo

Along with her experiences relating directly to the IPS, Abrams’ writings also provide some insight into her experience of Tokyo itself. When the initial IPS team landed in December 1945, a short three months after the end of the Pacific war, Japan had not yet recovered:

Our plane landed at Atsugi Airfield in Japan early on the morning of December 7, 1945, and a bus was waiting to transport us to Tokyo. As we traveled over the rough, unkept road, which was full of deep ruts and holes, it was necessary to hold on tightly or we would have been thrown from our seats. Ruins were everywhere. WHAT DEVASTATION !! I had not known that Japan would look like this.<sup>144</sup>

Abrams recalled feeling frightened along with the other girls working for the IPS. The conditions in Japan were poorer than expected, with frequent earthquakes and insufficient provisions, and

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<sup>143</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 4.

<sup>144</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 4.

they often bore witness to the horrors of post-war living, including many starving, unhoused people and women giving birth without access to medical care. She wrote that the women would lock themselves in their rooms for fear of rioting,<sup>145</sup> and even described a frightening encounter she had had during the winter of 1945. Abrams and a friend had been walking outside near their billet to watch a fireworks display, when a group of men ran up to them and attempted to push them into the river. They were rescued by Military Police and escorted back to their billet, but Abrams recalled feeling terrified during the encounter.<sup>146</sup> Among other things, Abrams' memoir serves as an important reminder of the actual precarity of life in war-torn Tokyo, maybe especially for women, or at least for women in a society constructed around their assumed vulnerability.

While Abrams believed that this encounter was the unfortunate result of post-traumatic stress, the noise of explosions bringing the perpetrators back to their time in battle,<sup>147</sup> it does show a certain vulnerability experienced by IMTFE women. Of course, this was not exclusive to women living in post-war Tokyo, yet Abrams' account drives home the difficult social and professional spaces women inhabited as international representatives in a foreign and destitute country at such a difficult time. Women are frequently seen as easy targets for violence, they occupy precarious positions, especially in patriarchal structures. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that the women of the IMTFE felt particularly uneasy during those first few months in Tokyo. In persevering, focusing on work, Abrams and others like her demonstrated marked

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<sup>145</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 6.

<sup>146</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 6.

<sup>147</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 6.

resilience, and fear eventually turned into fondness. She wrote in her recollections that by the end of the trial, she no longer worried for her safety.

Interestingly, she claimed that her feeling of safety hinged on a promise of protection made to her and her colleagues by General MacArthur.<sup>148</sup> Clearly, she felt as though this promise was kept. This particular promise is worth digging in to – MacArthur said, as Abrams wrote, “I shall cherish you, protect you, and work you.”<sup>149</sup> From an equalitarian perspective, MacArthur’s phrasings drip with assumptive and gendered condescension. Yet, to a young woman of the era and context, his words felt valuable. As Abrams explained, they brought comfort to the girls: “What a wonderful promise to make a frightened, homesick girl in a strange foreign land! Nothing he could have said would have been more comforting.”<sup>150</sup> Abrams’ feelings of insecurity regarding her arrival in Tokyo are justified; moving to a foreign country – particularly in the wake of global conflict – would naturally be an intimidating endeavour for anyone. The promise was therefore valuable as it helped to put the women of the IMTFE at ease, but also because it demonstrated a commitment to the safety of this cohort of employees. While their physical comfort may have been sacrificed, with regard to their accommodations, their safety appears to have been a priority. This is not only illustrated through MacArthur’s words, but also Abrams’ account of her frightening encounter which was promptly resolved by MacArthur’s men.<sup>151</sup> Risks real and imagined were inherently gendered, adding other layers to the difference experienced by IMTFE women in Tokyo.

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<sup>148</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 7.

<sup>149</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 1.

<sup>150</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 1.

<sup>151</sup> Abrams, *Recollections*, 6.

In sum, Abrams' account documents personal experiences in Tokyo, while also shedding light on the shared experiences of the women of the IMTFE. In particular, her recollections provide a snapshot of the cultural shock experienced by the IMTFE employees and their subsequent navigation of life in post-war Tokyo – the good, the bad and the ugly. First, Abrams' experience provides a clear snapshot of gender as both an external and internal device, influencing her experience both through the treatment other people subjected onto her, as well as the way she carried and presented herself. Secondly, her recollections reveal a shortcoming in the provision of basic amenities for the women of the IMTFE. In contrast, however, Abrams shows that the safety of these women, and other IMTFE employees, was perhaps a priority of the SCAP, as shown by MacArthur's promise of protection and subsequent exhibit of his commitment – Abrams herself had been protected by MacArthur's Military Police. Abrams' experience therefore points to a central revelation: gender as an identity does not occupy one singular role, nor does it affect only one aspect of one's lived experience.<sup>152</sup> It influences one's own perspectives and values, and the perspectives and values of others around you. This comprehensive nature of gender permeates throughout the experiences of the women of the IMTFE – illustrating the complexity of the roles given to and occupied by them.

### 3.3 Chapter Conclusion

The experiences as told by both Elaine Fischel and Willianna Abrams reveal fascinating insight into the role played by gender both within the IMTFE specifically, and more broadly, their experiences navigating post-war Tokyo. The relationships between the women and men of the IMTFE are of particular interest. Made clear by both Fischel and Abrams' written accounts,

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<sup>152</sup> Scott, *Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?*, 13.

there is an obvious power imbalance at play. For Fischel, this manifested through the social relationships formed with her male colleagues, whose overt flirtatious demeanors often crossed lines to workplace harassment and were inappropriate for the professional setting.

Understandably, these experiences resulted in personal discomfort for Fischel. While these relationships were also discussed in “Chapter 2: The Professional Dimension,” “Chapter 3: The Social Dimension” revealed that this dynamic extended outside of the workplace – infiltrating her personal life. Some of this power imbalance reflected professional roles. As demonstrated last chapter, very few women occupied positions of authority at the IMTFE. Most worked in the ‘lower’ rungs of the institution, particularly in clerical and administrative roles. Men, therefore, normally held positional power over women. Of course, societal gender biases underpin the positional imbalances. Gendered assumptions also elevated men to positions of domination even when they shared similar rank within the tribunal’s structures. In casual and social settings, therefore, male participants adopted and assumed authority over female colleagues whether professional peers or otherwise. In addition, the letters examined in this chapter revealed that Fischel’s gender became a defining factor of her social experiences during her time in Tokyo. As a young woman, she was the object of several men’s affections within and related to the workplace, fostering an often-uncomfortable environment for Fischel, whose main priority was job performance.<sup>153</sup>

Alongside the relationships with her coworkers, a defining feature of Fischel’s experience became her ability to connect with the defendants and their families, partially as the result of her specific duties, though more than likely this was also predicated on her persona and, by extension, her gender. Her ability to connect with the defendants – despite considering them

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<sup>153</sup> Fischel to Mother, 15 May 1946.

guilty (at least in a general sense) – was often a source of conflicting feelings for Fischel, who felt compelled to justify her social relationships with the defendants.<sup>154</sup> She hated their crimes but came to like and defend their selves. It appears as though Fischel felt an immense amount of pressure to prove herself and her morals, despite these relationships being formed in the context of her employment. She admired the defense attorneys’ commitment to maintaining professionalism and neutrality toward the defendants.<sup>155</sup> Yet, Fischel held herself to a different standard, appearing to internalize a sense of guilt or culpability over her associations with the accused. Possibly, Fischel felt an added pressure as a young woman to be more palatable to her peers. Maybe she wanted to reassure her family members back home. Whatever the specific motivation, Fischel’s letters often convey the sense that she was very concerned with other peoples’ perceptions of her.

Willianna Abrams’ recollections brought to light a different duality in the way that gender and social roles intersected and interacted with one another. It revealed two distinct functions of gender: the internal, a more personal experience of gender and the way it affects one’s composure and self-perception, and the external, an experience characterized by the perceptions assigned by others on the basis of one’s gender. This dual role of gender is of course interwoven in society, and was experienced by Elaine Fischel as well, not to mention all other IMTFE women. Nevertheless, Abrams’ recollections provide a succinct and overt example. Additionally, Abrams’ experience speaks to the vulnerability which was likely felt by all of the women travelling to Tokyo, particularly as they were first faced with the physical devastation left by the war.

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<sup>154</sup> Fischel to Mother, 01 July 1946, Fischel Papers; Fischel to Mother, n.d. Fischel Papers.

<sup>155</sup> Fischel to Mother, n.d. Fischel Papers.

The themes and dynamics examined in this chapter form the Social Dimension of the IMTFE women's time in Tokyo. Relationships formed between colleagues, unlikely friendships, flirtations, and harassment became defining features of their experiences. All of these relationships demonstrated that gender permeated all aspects of their lived experiences, including both the professional and social spheres. Without clearly defined roles such as those established by a traditional professional hierarchy, life outside of work came with its own set of pressures and expectations. The intense, transitional, and closed circles of Occupied Japan blurred lines between social and professional spheres. Thus, gendered dynamics of work and play and everything in between came to define the experiences of the IMTFE women. This interconnectivity between the personal and professional, and the complexity of these interactions largely defined the experiences of the women of the IMTFE, who were subject to unique challenges and vulnerabilities throughout all aspects of their lives in Tokyo.



## Chapter 4: Conclusion

*Having been an eyewitness to the destructive aftermath of the war, I finish my story remembering the beauty of Japan, the perfection of cherry blossoms and the kindnesses and appreciations shown by so many people from so many different cultures to a young American girl who was given the privilege to experience a piece of such a lasting historical moment in history.*

Elaine B. Fischel, *Death Among the Cherry Blossoms*, 386.

Current research pertaining to the Tokyo IMT has regrettably overlooked the significant roles played by women in the establishment and execution of the trial. This thesis represents a first step in redressing this historiographical void. It does not provide a comprehensive survey of all contributions by women in Tokyo. Instead, it focuses on several representative women to trace patterns in the IMTFE experience. In so doing, this thesis reveals the intensively gendered nature of professional and social spaces that form the backdrop of international justice. “Chapter 2: The Professional Dimension” shows how women participated in both visible and behind-the-scenes roles to deliver justice in the wake of the Pacific War. Specifically, the chapter highlights the work of lawyers Grace Kanode Llewellyn, Helen Grigware Lambert and Coomee Strooker-Dantra, and secretaries Elaine B. Fischel and Willianna Abrams. Even while these women made waves in the international legal world, they were subject to office sexism, power imbalances, and inappropriate attention – all while attempting to navigate life in a foreign country still recovering from the devastation brought on by the Second World War. “Chapter 3: The Social Dimension” looks beyond court life to consider Occupied Japan’s social world, specifically how these dynamics came to be and how they were experienced by the women of the IMTFE. This concluding chapter ties together these two dimensions – the professional and the social – to consider the overall environment in which these women found themselves in postwar Tokyo. This conclusion also identifies opportunities for further research in the field.

“Chapter 2: The Professional Dimension” highlights the accomplishments of several women contributors to the Tokyo IMT who, until now, have been largely concealed by a lack of consolidated source material and historical interest. Lawyers Grace Kanode Llewellyn, Helen Grigware Lambert, and Coomee Strooker-Dantra each occupied visible positions among the prosecution counsel, though current scholarship has effectively ignored them. As this thesis reveals, however, these women made significant contributions to the prosecution case, earning praise in court from the notoriously hard to impress Chief Justice Webb. In addition to the women working as lawyers for the prosecution, a significant proportion of the overall IMTFE workforce fell under the auspices of the Secretariat, an administrative division dominated by women who worked diligently as secretaries, stenographers, translators, and more. In many ways, the Secretariat formed the backbone of the IMTFE – without it and its workforce, the trial would not have functioned. Thus, though lower in the professional hierarchy in Tokyo, the work done by women in the Secretariat arguably proved as critical to the entire endeavour as the more front-facing legal roles. Women in the tribunal’s administrative wing certainly felt conscious of their work’s importance. They understood they made valuable contributions to an historic proceedings. Willianna Abrams noted her belief that this trial would prevent future global conflicts. Elaine Fischel, likewise, often discussed the sense of importance she felt while working for the defense. Both of these women felt committed to the IMTFE as a history changing judicial process and understood that their contributions made a difference; unfortunately, most IMTFE scholars have overlooked both their work and its importance.

Concurrently, though, these women also navigate a challenging work environment riddled with office sexism, infantilization, and other gendered expectations imposed upon them. Elaine Fischel’s experiences show a workplace in which her gender and sexuality largely

determined how she was received by others, despite the high quality of her actual work. Fischel, aware of this, often noted her discomfort with the situation, though she felt obliged to tolerate it. Willianna Abrams' recollections reveal a similar theme, where she felt objectified, even patronized, by certain policies imposed on the women of her cohort. Her memoir describes poor living conditions in the women's billet, while she notes – and external documentation corroborates – that many of the men involved in the trial lived in much nicer accommodations. Her recollections, as well as Fischel's letters, clearly demonstrate an imbalance of power between the male and female employees. Unsurprisingly, the power imbalance contributed to other forms of inequality, even harassment.

This motif is further explored in “Chapter 3: The Social Dimension”, which unpacks the interpersonal relationships that extend beyond the professional sphere, infiltrating the personal lives of the IMTFE women and rounding off their overall experiences in Tokyo. Notably, this chapter explores gender through both its external pressures, encompassing the roles and attributes prescribed on the basis of gender, and its internal pressures to conform to a particular image (physical or behavioural). The chapter shows that the experiences of the IMTFE women as they pertain to their gender identity were not solely defined by their environment; in fact, a defining feature of their time in Tokyo became the way internalized gender roles influenced their social behaviours. In accordance with contemporary societal expectations, both Fischel and Abrams' accounts reveal an assumed correlation between appearance and professionalism. Abrams demonstrated this notion particularly well, as it becomes clear that physical presentability (through makeup, clothes) formed a priority for herself and the girls of her billet; the inability to present oneself adequately was suffered as an indignity. Fischel demonstrated a similar, gender-imposed, self-consciousness in both personal and professional settings. At times

flattered, at times unsettled, normative pressures left Fischel acutely aware of the male gaze in all facets of her Tokyo life.

In addition to the prescribed roles for women, the harassment exposed by Fischel reveals a toxic environment, ripe with unjust expectations, and a sense of entitlement possessed by the men in the wider Tokyo IMT social and professional circles. This harassment manifested primarily as a product of the power imbalance between Fischel and the men in her entourage, but her letters home reveal gendered discomfort from interactions with male professional peers as well. Fischel's experience was tainted by the indecorous behaviour of not only her supervisors, who abused their positions of authority by consistently, gratuitously, courting their young employee, but that of the men in her social circle as well. Both in and outside of the workplace, Fischel was the subject to unwanted male attention, which became a defining feature of her experiences in Tokyo. This unsettling social environment was further exacerbated by the physical environment. The culture shock alone of moving to a new country can be rather difficult to come to terms with, let alone a country recently devastated by total war. Their experiences, therefore, are centred in a milieu of enhanced vulnerability, which Abrams in particular described as quite frightening for herself and other female peers. Abrams, Fischel, and other IMTFE women lived in a patriarchal era. Even under normal circumstances, women in their time confronted gendered and discriminating experiences in life. Employment at an international military tribunal in war-torn Japan was a far cry from 'normal'. The nature of life and work in Tokyo intensified the already multifaceted challenge of being professional women in a gender-imbalanced milieu.

Overall, the women of the IMTFE navigated complex and challenging professional and social environments, which defined their experiences as employees on a global stage. The

experiences as described by Elaine Fischel reveal constant harassment and unsolicited male attention, which distracted from her main purpose – professional advancement – and fostered an uncomfortable environment. Likewise, Willianna Abrams’ recollections succinctly present the pressures faced by the IMTFE women to adhere to prescribed gender roles. Source limitations mean we do not know for certain whether or not Grace Kanode Llewellyn, Helen Grigware Lambert, Coomee Strooker-Dantra, and other IMTFE women shared experiences like Abrams and Fischel. Given prevailing societal pressures, however, it seems likely that gender complicated their social and professional spaces. Importantly, Abrams, Fischel and their other women colleagues overcame these challenges. Fischel’s continued professionalism and high quality of work did not go unnoticed by her supervisors, who often praised her as a hard worker and even dubbed her “the girl we can’t do without.”<sup>156</sup> Abrams, too, successfully navigated this complicated environment: her stint in the IPS lasted longer than any of her peers: two and a half years. By the end of the trial, her name was the only name remaining on the IPS payroll out of her original cohort. Although there are no sources available which speak to the social/personal experiences of the lawyers discussed in Chapter 2, Llewellyn, Lambert and Strooker-Dantra’s professional accomplishments speak for themselves. These three women made valuable contributions to the Tokyo IMT and, more broadly, international justice at a time when women were not as readily welcomed into the legal field as men. Like Fischel and Abrams, these lawyers overcame the barriers of gender roles in the professional world. All of these women serve as examples of strength and resilience in the face of hostile work and social environments that routinely disadvantaged them.

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<sup>156</sup> Elaine Fischel to Mother, 1 June 1946, Fischel Papers.

In an appreciable manner, these women represented the burgeoning presence of women in professional spaces, transgressing conventions that dictated who is capable of undertaking particular careers and subverting the image of traditionally female careers as ‘low-skilled’ or inconsequential. The contributions made to the trial by the women featured in this thesis were massive: the Secretariat, where most IMTFE women were employed, was responsible for preparatory work for the trial, assembling evidence, distributing documents throughout the IMT branches, translating, transcribing, and more. Without their efforts, the IMTFE would have been an impossible task. Llewellyn, Lambert and Strooker-Dantra each received praise for their contributions in court from the Chief Justice, who acknowledged the novelty of women presenting at an IMT at that time. Yet, these women have been consistently sidelined in histories of the Tokyo trial, overshadowed by elements – precedent, proceedings, fall-out – presumed to be more historically important, and which naturally focus on people occupying visible roles of influence and import. The women of the IMTFE have therefore faced two related existential challenges: navigating the unsympathetic social and professional milieus during their time in Tokyo *and* experiencing unjust erasure at the hands of historians and other scholars. In spite of this, the women of the IMTFE and their contributions remained resilient, occupying a key role in the history of international justice, on which this thesis begins to shed a light.

Still, this thesis has only scratched the surface of this gendered history of the IMTFE. Due to the scarcity of available source material, only a handful of women were brought to the spotlight, despite representing only a small sample of the women personnel involved in the Tokyo IMT. A more exhaustive study of the women personnel and their specific contributions to the trial would certainly enrich the discussion, and potentially shed light on the work of other women whose efforts have thus far been overlooked. Additionally, the work of the lawyers

featured in this thesis could be more substantially unpacked, through rigid analysis of their presentations in court and further archival research to uncover their own experiences behind-the-scenes. Additional studies could endeavour to reveal more details regarding the social milieu, including any social or cultural activities, or even explore the lasting connections made by the women of the IMTFE with each other, with their peers and with the locals in Japan. Finally, it would be fascinating to consider the IMTFE as an opportunity: examining if and how the IMTFE and the connections made potentially furthered the careers of its women employees. An added lens of intersectionality would complement any further study on the IMTFE women. While the focus of this thesis has been largely temporal – a snapshot in time – the reverberations of the women’s work and experiences in Tokyo extend beyond the margins of this investigation. In spite of the challenges they faced, the women’s experiences at the Tokyo IMT proved professionally and personally meaningful, everlasting in impact and in memory.



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