

2019GorrellFaith-abstract

Abstract

Did women really play an important role in the political theater of the Cold War? In short, yes. This thesis explores not only the question of whether women impacted the politics of the Cold War, but also how they did so and to what extent their activities were able to fundamentally alter the tensions and relations between countries in the West and in the East. Rather than act as a general study of the impacts women across the world had during the Cold War, this thesis studies the lives and contributions of five individual women—Margaret Thatcher, Nancy Reagan, Yekaterina Furtseva, Ethel Gee, and Samantha Smith. These women served in a variety of roles and capacities during the Cold War; from venerated politicians to supportive wives/lovers, to spies, and even ambassadors of goodwill; both for the Democratic West and the Communist East. As a conclusion to the five mini-histories for each woman, their individual stories are synthesized together to compare and contrast their actions and their abilities to enact lasting historical change.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306