



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Office of Communications and Public Relations

Press Release

January 26, 2016

Contact: Angela Daidone

201-684-7477

adaidon1@ramapo.edu

Eminent Historian to Discuss Role of Women in Postwar Effort to Aid Displaced Persons

MAHWAH, N.J. – Dr. Ellen Ross, Emerita Professor of History and Women’s Studies at Ramapo College of New Jersey, will discuss “Food and Shelter for Seven Million: The Women of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) 1945-1947” on Thursday, February 25 at noon in the Robert A. Scott Student Center (SC157-158). The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will sponsor this event.

Professor Ross will look at some of the encounters the women of UNRRA had with the occupying armies and with the displaced persons who became their responsibility within days of the war’s end. Like their male colleagues, they were faced with a massive human catastrophe: millions of workers whom the Germans had enslaved during the war were liberated and on their own, the death toll of the concentration camps as small groups of Jewish survivors returned, and larger numbers of Jews who drifted into the U.S. and British zones to escape from the virulent anti-Semitism in their countries of origin.

UNRRA, the international government-funded organization that the Allies formed to repair the human and physical destruction of the Second World War, hired nearly as many women as men for its staff of ten thousand. The largest female contingent was American, the second-largest British. The salary was the highest most of the women had ever earned and their mandate was daunting.

Prior to her retirement from Ramapo College in December 2014, Professor Ross co-chaired the women’s studies program and taught courses in Women’s Studies and in British and European history. She holds a B. A. and Ph. D. from the University of Chicago and an M.A. from Columbia University. She has held a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships for College Teachers, a Leverhulme visiting professorship at London Metropolitan University, and a fellowship at the National Humanities Center.

Her previous research has focused on London women’s history: *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London* (1993); and the anthology *Slum Journeys: Lady Explorers "In Darkest London"* (2007). Other published research deals with missions and missionaries in central London in the late 19th century. Her current research is on the transformation of female philanthropy in the inter-war period: *Girls Club Leader to "Mother of Millions:" from Social Work to Global Humanitarianism in Britain, 1914-1950*.

###

Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fifth in the Best Regional Public Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,000 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers eight graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.