

## Radical Roots (1920–1961)

The bestselling author Ruth Harrison did not emerge by chance. While the established narrative of a concerned citizen, who spontaneously wrote *Animal Machines*, is attractive, Harrison's success as a campaigner is far less surprising—though no less remarkable—when one studies her life prior to 1960. As Part I shows, Harrison grew up surrounded by radical Edwardian intellectuals, vegetarians, and pacifists. Although they never achieved the fame of friends like Isaac Rosenberg, her parents Clara Birnbaum and Samuel Weinstein (later Clare and Stephen Winsten) were active members of the Anglo-Jewish Whitechapel Boys and skilfully cultivated connections throughout Britain's cultural establishment. The Winstens' upward social mobility left a mark on their children, who became successful academics and artists themselves. In the case of Ruth, her parents' pacifist, vegetarian, and activist values provide an important context for her decision to convert to Quakerism around 1939. They also laid the foundations for Harrison's synthesist worldview of social and moral improvement that would motivate her to alleviate human suffering during the Second World War, protest against 1950s' nuclear armament, and later bear witness to farm animals' perceived plight. Well-educated, experienced in campaigning, and steeped in synthesist Edwardian values, Harrison was perfectly positioned to campaign for animal welfare reform against the dystopian backdrop of the factory farm.