UMI Number: 3309934

Copyright 2008 by
Olsen, Margaret Nunnelley

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI

UMI Microform 3309934
Copyright 2008 by ProQuest LLC.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 E. Eisenhower Parkway
PO Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346
ABSTRACT

One Nation, One World:

American Clubwomen and the Politics of Internationalism, 1945–1961

by

Margaret Nunnelley Olsen

Between 1945 and 1961, U.S. clubwomen launched a series of civic campaigns to educate Americans about the United Nations. Drawing on their older traditions of domesticating politics, conservative and liberal clubwomen from around the nation became community-level foreign affairs interpreters. This project explores the ways the foreign affairs activism of four organizations—the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, the Daughters of the American Revolution, Women United for the United Nations, and the Minute Women of the U.S.A.—contributed to the popular resonance of foreign affairs in the postwar period and nurtured a growing political divide among American clubwomen. Postwar clubwomen across the political spectrum promoted the idea that women could shape their nation’s foreign policy by learning about international affairs. In the process, these women developed competing visions for America’s relationship to the world, which they advocated in their community education campaigns. These rival campaigns injected the UN into the everyday lives of American citizens and pitted clubwomen against one another, training a generation of club activists.
Beginning with clubwomen’s initial support for the United Nations, this project traces the changes in their foreign affairs perspectives and programs over the postwar period. Confronted with the Cold War and the anticolonial movement, conservative clubwomen increasingly billed the UN as a threat to America and sought to police the boundary between the domestic and the foreign, while liberal clubwomen embraced the connection between the two and labeled the UN an agent of both American foreign policy and global peace. Changes in American society, especially the civil rights movement, bled into discussions of foreign affairs, encouraging conservative women to blame internationalism for what they viewed as unwelcome shifts in the status quo and liberal clubs to segregate their foreign affairs work increasingly from controversial domestic reform campaigns. Ultimately, some clubwomen adopted a centrist liberal perspective and some joined a conservative political counterculture. In both cases, foreign affairs work served as postwar clubwomen’s political training ground. By positing international awareness as a viable civic project, American women’s clubs made the United Nations central to postwar political culture and to their own political identities.
Acknowledgments

Without funding from numerous sources, this project would never have been completed. First and foremost, my sincere appreciation to Rice University for their Presidential Fellowship and to the Rice University History Department for their continued financial support through five years of graduate study. The P.E.O. Sisterhood’s 2005 Scholar Award and the General Federation of Women’s Clubs’ 2005 Women’s History and Resource Center Fellowship also provided much-appreciated funding for the research phase of this project.

A very large thank you is due to the staffs of all my archival repositories, especially those at the Schlesinger Library; the Houston Metropolitan Research Center; the Manuscript and Archives Section of the New York Public Library; the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University; the Women’s History and Resource Center of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs; and the Daughters of the American Revolution’s Office of the Historian General. Particular thanks go to Suzanne Gould at the WHRC and to Tracy Robinson and Alisa Johnson at the DAR Office of the Historian General, for their guidance and pleasant company while I navigated dauntingly extensive women’s club convention minutes.

This project was blessed with a talented and generous committee of professors whose diligent efforts carved the best possible product from the raw material I gave them. Many thanks to my director, Alex Lichtenstein, for believing in this idea and for his unfailingly constructive and always remarkably timely feedback on every piece of writing, no matter how long and unwieldy. Thanks also to Allison Sneider, whose women’s history seminar inspired the paper that grew into this dissertation and whose
critiques are always challenging and have made this a better piece of scholarship by far. My appreciation to Allen Matusow for his patience with my unusual topic and for always asking me—and reminding me to ask myself—why women were the focus of my work. Thanks to Elizabeth Long for taking in a wandering history graduate student and for bringing her perspective to my project. Much gratitude is also due to John Boles, for being a terrific advisor for two years of coursework and a terrific boss for one year of editing Journal of Southern History book reviews. His intellectual guidance, good spirits, and steady advice, along with his wife Nancy's home cooking, were welcome on many occasions. Thanks to the staff of the Journal of Southern History, especially Randal Hall and Patricia Burgess, for being wonderful companions during my year-long editing vacation from graduate school and for their encouragement to keep working on the dissertation anyway. Outside my home institution, Michele Gillespie deserves significant credit for this work, since she convinced a wavering undergraduate to major in History instead of English, guided me through my first piece of historical writing, suggested I apply to Rice, and has been an amazing mentor and good friend throughout my academic career. Thanks also to Kathleen Laughlin for her long memory and continued interest in my work, and to Michelle Nickerson for encouraging me, in a low moment, to continue pursuing my search for sources on conservative women.

Thanks to all my current and former fellow graduate students in the Rice University History Department, especially Gale Kenny, Molly Moore Khalil, David Davis, Ben Wise, Connie Moon Sehat, David Sehat, Scott Marler, and Greg Eow—for uncounted hours of moral support, intellectual camaraderie, and editorial guidance. In that same category, special appreciation goes to Ann Ziker, who was that rare
combination of easy friend and tough critic, who took me in when I was homeless, who
sent me invaluable tidbits of research found on her own diligent archival wanderings, and
without whom both I and my project would be less coherent. Thanks, too, to a variety of
graduate students from other institutions whose paths I have crossed at meetings and in
archives, especially Robin Morris, whose terrific work led me to Kathryn Fink Dunaway.

A special thank you to the faculty of the History Department at the United States
Military Academy, who have welcomed an unexpected scholar/spouse into their midst
and shown interest and support throughout the last two years of this process. Particular
thanks go to Beth Behn for regular and refreshing discussions of all things women’s
history–related. Thanks also to the staff of the USMA library, for their adept handling of
all sorts of obscure requests for material and their tolerance of my continual and
protracted raiding of their history collection.

Hearty thanks are also due to those people in the non-academic world who made
this task smoother, easier, and less like solitary confinement. Thanks to my terrific in-
laws, Betsy and Norman, for providing much-needed housing, food, and conversation on
several research trips to Washington, D.C. Thanks to Jennifer Matheiu Blessington for
keeping me connected and getting me out of my study cave on many a Houston evening.
Thanks to all the West Point ladies, especially Shannon Chalfont, Eun Ha Chung, Rita
Jana Bull, and Margaret Moten, for rooting from the sidelines. Thanks to my beloved old
and faithful support network, especially Jill, Sand, Liz, Kate, Buffy, Susan, Jesanna, and
Corey from Indian Springs; and Laura and Val from Agnes Scott. Without all of you, I
would not remember where I came from and what matters most. I hope you all remember
what I look like. My parents, Bill and Carol, who support me and put up with me always,
who taught me to write, and who gave me the fascination with place and past that led me
to study history, will always have my immeasurable love and gratitude for everything
they do for me, dissertation-related and not. Thanks also to Bennet, for constant
interruptions and reminders that a little play is often the key to getting work done.

Finally, and most importantly, thanks to my husband Mark, who met me in the
middle of this process and married me anyway, who has read every word, who keeps me
laughing, who tolerates my pesky internationalist tendencies, whose intellect and patience
have saved this work more than once, and who will always be home to me, wherever we
are.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................................................ vi

Introduction: Foreign Affairs and Domestic Citizens .............................................................................. 1

Chapter 1: A Call to Action: Foreign Affairs Activism, 1945–1948 ..................................................... 30


Chapter 3: The One Worlders and Their Crew: The Persistence of Internationalism, 1953–1954 ............. 177

Chapter 4: The UN Works for You: Liberal Clubwomen and Political Engagement, 1955–1957 .......... 244

Chapter 5: Battle of Convictions: Conservative Clubwomen and Political Alienation, 1955–1957 ...... 294


Conclusion: Please Don't Send Me a UNICEF Card: Foreign Affairs and the Feminist Movement .......... 415

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................................... 454
Introduction
Foreign Affairs and Domestic Citizens

Nationalism and internationalism, when understood as meaning recognition of the value and the rights of the nations, and of the dependence of the nation on the world, represent essential parts of the mental and spiritual equipment of all responsible men in our time. Everybody today, with part of his being, belongs to one country, with its specific traditions and problems, while with another part he has become a citizen of a world which no longer permits national isolation. See in this light there could not be any conflict between nationalism and internationalism, between the nation and the world.

—United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld

In a September 1950 booklet entitled “Our Foreign Policy,” prepared at the behest of the Truman administration, the U.S. State Department reported to the American public that there was “no longer any real distinction between ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’ affairs.”

While some Americans agreed wholeheartedly, others reacted with disgust and alarm. With this pronouncement, State Department officials unintentionally identified a fracture in postwar American political culture. In the age of the atomic bomb, civil defense, the Cold War and an accompanying red scare, no one could deny that foreign affairs had the power to affect the lives of American citizens. To some, then, the pairing of the foreign and domestic in American policymaking seemed a necessity. Yet to others, this linkage threatened the sovereignty of the nation and the safety of its citizens. In the postwar period, the merger of the foreign and the domestic became the ground on which many American citizens fought their political battles. While some Americans mobilized to defend the nation by policing the boundary between the foreign and the domestic, others sought to actively merge the two, encouraging all Americans to embrace global interdependence and to bring the international into their local communities.

---


Middle-class American clubwomen played a crucial part in this domestic negotiation of America's postwar internationalist goals. Having long highlighted their position as protectors of home and community to explain their interest in public affairs, clubwomen in organizations as diverse as the progressive Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the aggressively nationalist Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) made similar arguments to justify their investment in postwar foreign relations. Club leaders repeatedly emphasized the connection between foreign affairs and the everyday lives of their members. They argued that, because of America's growing importance on the world stage, the parallel significance of the world for Americans, and the new salience of civil society to American foreign policy, average Americans must be better informed about foreign affairs than ever before. Drawing on their culturally sanctioned connection to homes, families, and, by extension, communities, and on their experience with international reform, these women then identified themselves as natural interpreters of foreign policy at the local level. Like the State Department, they recognized the connection of the foreign to the domestic. They firmly believed that responsibility for the success or failure of global stability rested, not just with policy makers, but also with average Americans—and average American women particularly. By developing their foreign policy expertise and using it to educate their families and communities, American clubwomen contended, they could employ traditional forms of community activism to shape a better world order. This project will examine the foreign affairs activism of four women's clubs in the fifteen years following World War II. With their campaigns for and against internationalism, these women cultivated their own understanding of foreign affairs and took responsibility as couriers, bringing their vision
for international relations to Americans everywhere. In so doing, American clubwomen became key envoys for postwar foreign policy to a domestic audience.

Much of this attention to foreign affairs centered on the United Nations (UN). Originally conceived by the Roosevelt administration and its allies to facilitate global stability in the wake of the Second World War, the UN also became the arena where many Americans debated their disparate visions of America’s role in a postwar world riven by superpower conflict and shaken by the collapse of the prewar colonial order. The organization captured both the hopes of supporters of international organizing and the hostility of those Americans suspicious of international entanglements. American clubwomen figured prominently in both camps. Those women who supported the vision of UN-sponsored global stability took on the task of building grassroots support for the international organization. Those who opposed the international obligations necessitated by UN membership, meanwhile, mobilized to educate Americans about what they saw as a threat to national sovereignty. As the most prominent postwar international organization with the broadest membership, the UN emerged in postwar American political culture as a geopolitical flashpoint representing both America’s responsibility to the world and the world’s power to influence America. In their pro- and anti-UN campaigns, American clubwomen used the language of internationalism to articulate their vision of how the domestic should relate to the foreign and how national interests should relate to the global power.

UN activism thus represented more than just another community education campaign for American clubwomen. Both supporters and opponents of international organizing in American women’s clubs used their community education on foreign
affairs to encourage their members' involvement in American politics. Because the United Nations was made up of just that—nations—national politics became inextricably enmeshed in international organizing. Leading clubwomen easily illustrated to club members that engagement with foreign policy necessitated an engagement with domestic politics. One affected the other, and clubwomen could use gendered domestic political activism—educating their neighbors, writing their representatives, lobbying Congress, and voting—to shape the foreign policies of their nation. Different women's clubs sought different ends, to be sure. Internationalist clubwomen promoted support for the UN and global interdependence, while anti-internationalist clubwomen hoped to limit the effect of international politics on the American polity. Yet neither cohort denied the broader melding of foreign and domestic concerns, and both drew on a tradition of female political reform efforts. For clubwomen, foreign affairs could affect domestic life and foreign policy could affect domestic politics, so clearly the converse was true; domestic activism could shape foreign policy and, thereby, foreign affairs. Spreading their competing visions of international relations to other women and to the American public at large became one distinctive way postwar-era clubwomen participated in their nation's political culture. Moreover, this engagement with national politics through international relations ultimately differentiated liberal women's organizations from their conservative counterparts in the postwar years more profoundly than issues like the ERA and birth control, on which later debates would be centered.

\[3\] In his essay collection *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, Thomas Bender argues for an integration of American history with other histories of group solidarities, both larger and smaller than nation, in an effort to transcend nation as a rigid category of analysis. Though this project is fundamentally a story about nation, I also hope to highlight the mutually constitutive qualities of the national and the international, thereby enriching the history of nation by demonstrating how international questions work themselves into the process of defining nation and participating in national citizenship. See particularly Thomas Bender, "Historians, the Nation, and the Plenitude of Narratives," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, edited by Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 1–21.
Postwar political culture was unique in its integration of foreign and domestic issues. American participation in the Second World War launched the United States into the international arena as a world power in an unprecedented way. Just as the attack on Pearl Harbor ended perceptions of American independence from international conflict, so postwar collective security structures were rooted in a recognition of the interdependence of American interests and those of the world. Multilateral international bodies, such as the UN and the World Bank, created at the end of World War II relied on unprecedented American involvement. The war also forced the American public to consider the connection between the U.S. and the world. Prominent internationalists across the political spectrum joined in the debate in speeches and in the national media. One of the best-known supporters of America's entrance into the war was media mogul Henry Luce, whose famous February 1941 essay, "The American Century," argued for a specifically American internationalism based on the universal appeal of America's democratic values, culture, and capitalist economy. Joining national self-interest with global circumstances, Luce argued that the path to peace and prosperity was to Americanize the world. Well-known politicians such as then-vice president Henry Wallace and former presidential candidate Wendell Willkie also advocated different versions of global interdependence during the war, Wallace's based on the triumph of "the common man" around the world, and Willkie's secured by a world federation of nations dedicated to peace. A 1942 Gallup

---

poll showed that 73 percent of those Americans surveyed supported U.S. participation in a “postwar League of Nations,” and a 1943 poll indicated that 76 percent believed the U.S. should “take an active part in world affairs” after the war. That Gallup did these polls at all suggests the particular salience of America’s new global role. As Paul Boyer has shown, the explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945 further spurred this impulse toward international organization to regulate nuclear weaponry. By the end of the war, many Americans considered some form of American participation in international affairs axiomatic. Yet the specifics of this participation remained open to debate.

As Americans negotiated their new role in the world, a broader movement for human rights that posited intrinsic human freedoms independent of national political systems gained strength. Elizabeth Borgwardt has emphasized the importance of the language in the 1941 Atlantic Charter enshrining governmental protection of these rights, which she argues represented the expansion of distinctly American, New Deal conceptions of social welfare on a global scale. Certainly the American participants developing postwar collective security instruments viewed the human rights declarations they incorporated through the lens of the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt’s much-touted “Four Freedoms.” Legal scholar Mary Ann Glendon highlights the broader international roots of the human rights movement, maintaining that the vision of human rights eventually espoused by the United Nations was a distinct synthesis of Anglo-

American understandings of political and civil rights with European concepts of social and economic rights. As both scholars suggest, however, human rights language forged a direct connection between individuals within nations and international organizations, implicitly merging foreign and domestic by positing international solutions to national problems. This merger later facilitated calls for UN intervention from populations resisting colonial domination and from African Americans. Carol Anderson has chronicled these efforts, though she contends they ultimately failed due to the inability of the very New Deal liberals who crafted the UN Charter to live up to its high ideals. Nevertheless, as the international human rights movement demonstrates, American involvement in the creation of new global organizations served to join foreign and domestic interests in sometimes unanticipated ways, with implications for national, as well as global, politics.  

The advent of the Cold War complicated these wartime visions for postwar international organizing. While scholars continue to disagree on its causes, the reality of hostile competition with the Soviet Union for global power saturated American politics and diplomacy in the postwar years. Historian Melvyn Leffler, for example, has argued that a post–World War II desire to protect America’s “core values”—specifically its physical security, democratic traditions, and free enterprise economy—motivated an increased willingness among U.S. policy makers to assume responsibilities for stabilizing

---

6 On the importance of human rights in the postwar period, see Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Random House, 2001); Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge, Eng., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*. Borgwardt also argues that American experiences during the Great Depression and the trust in institutional solutions engendered by New Deal programs also made American citizens far more receptive to concepts of international organizing than they had been after the First World War. For the basic outlines of her argument, see pp. 3–11. On viewing the postwar security apparatus through the lens of the New Deal, see also Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 190–93.
the international sphere. John Lewis Gaddis contends that U.S. willingness to pursue a policy of containment resulted more exclusively from aggressive Soviet expansionism. Other scholars—William Appleman Williams, Barton J. Bernstein, and Thomas McCormick among them—have highlighted American desire for global economic hegemony as the primary rationale for Cold War political battles. Regardless of their disagreements, all these historians demonstrate that concerns about Soviet power shaped American foreign policy in the postwar years. Yet, as Leffler also implicitly suggests, these diplomatic developments cannot be viewed in isolation from American domestic politics. Recent studies by Mary Dudziak, Brenda Gayle Plummer, Penny Von Eschen, and Thomas Borstelmann illustrate the importance of American race relations to the formation of American foreign policy during the Cold War, particularly as American leaders competed with the Soviet Union for the loyalty of newly independent Third World nations. John Fousek has argued more broadly that average Americans participated in a foreign policy discourse in the early years of the Cold War that privileged "nationalist globalism," or the expansion of American values across the globe.

---


By labeling it a discourse, Fousek indicates that this nationalism did not merely emerge from the Truman administration’s packaging of policy; the rising nationalism of the American public also helped shape the ways the Truman administration waged the Cold War.\(^9\)

Concerns about Soviet power were not limited to the formal diplomatic and political spheres, however. The Cold War also required cultural mobilization. Peter Kuznick and James Gilbert have argued that the bomb and fear of the Soviet Union intersected with more longstanding trends in American society, including campaigns for African American and women’s political advancement, suburbanization, anticommunism, and religious awakening, to create a distinctive Cold War political culture.\(^10\) In simple terms, this culture encouraged Americans to filter nearly every aspect of their daily lives through the lens of combating Soviet threats to American society. As Richard Fried has proposed, fears about communist infiltration of American society necessitated mobilization not just against subversive individuals but also against subversive ideas. Community efforts to purge socialistic material from the American educational system represent one manifestation of this kind of work; elaborate campaigns for loyalty oaths, communist control laws, and investigating committees also proliferated, sometimes with disastrous results for the individuals they targeted. Simultaneously, domestic politicians—most famously Joseph McCarthy—made their careers promoting a vigorous and broad-ranging anticommunist crusade. In addition, as Lizabeth Cohen has suggested,


America's postwar devotion to consumer culture served a Cold War purpose as well, with the prosperous American capitalist economy standing in stark opposition to the privation of communism.\(^{11}\)

While scholars have long emphasized the degree to which this postwar anticommlunist fervor compromised American reform movements, some recent studies have complicated the narrative by exposing the attempts of reformers to harness the power of this cultural imprimatur. Historians of race relations, such as Brenda Gayle Plummer and Carol Anderson, have chronicled the varied efforts of African American leaders to play on Cold War diplomacy in order to encourage domestic racial reform.\(^{12}\) Laura McEnaney's recent examination of civil defense maintains that African American, women's, and labor organizations attempted to use their participation in official civil defense campaigns to focus governmental attention on other reform issues.\(^{13}\) Thus, the Cold War governmental focus on domestic mobilization to combat foreign threats was


occasionally turned on its head, as Americans claimed additional civic authority from their newfound roles as representatives of foreign policy.

As McEnaney suggests by examining the family-centered vision of civil defense promulgated by government planners, postwar cultural mobilization also took on specifically gendered forms. Amy Kaplan has pointed out, in her analysis of American empire, that elements of the foreign regularly pervaded women’s domestic space in the nineteenth century. Cold War culture similarly imbued the home and the family with particular foreign policy significance. Building in part on the demographic evidence of the baby boom, as well as the postwar mythology of the feminine mystique, Elaine Tyler May argues that public policy and political culture in the postwar years elevated the domestic ideal, the nuclear family, to new heights of significance. The nuclear family became the bulwark of democracy, stabilizing American social tensions and thus serving as the domestic (in both senses of the word) corollary to containment foreign policy. Though, as McEnaney’s study in part illustrates, May’s contention that domestic containment effectively rendered America’s postwar middle class apolitical is flawed, May does effectively reveal the centrality of the domestic sphere, meaning homes and families, to America’s Cold War culture.¹⁴

American political culture in the postwar years thus demonstrated a profound integration of foreign affairs and domestic concerns. America as a nation was more invested in international relations than ever before, participating in the founding of international organizations and the containment of the Soviet Union. Americans

---

perceived in foreign affairs a new and potentially deadly ability to affect American life, in the form of Soviet communism, the growth of international obligations, and even the atomic bomb. American domestic conditions also affected the success of American foreign policy, as African American reform campaigns and public policy promoting domestic containment demonstrate. American clubwomen's postwar debates about internationalism took place in this cultural environment, where the foreign and the domestic were inextricably linked. These debates were part and parcel of the Cold War foreign policy discourse to which John Fousek alludes and drew on all of these particular postwar circumstances. Like McEnaney's civil defense activists, foreign affairs activists in American women's clubs not only recognized their new significance, as citizens, to foreign relations; they claimed it as a responsibility. Suggesting that an engaged citizenry was essential in helping policy makers navigate this brave new world, clubwomen took it upon themselves to play the role of community educators, and in so doing, involved the middle-class women who sustained their organizations in the political culture of the day.

Yet these women drew on more than just their Cold War cultural environs. For middle-class American clubwomen, the domestic realm had long been charged with political significance. The women's club movement gained steam in the nineteenth century with the application of women's traditional domestic duties to the community at large and, subsequently, to the nation and the world. As historians have chronicled, middle-class female reformers of all stripes used the gendered understanding of women as caregivers both to motivate and to justify an expanded public and, in some cases, political role for American women. Labeled "municipal housekeeping," portions of this women's movement contributed to the creation of libraries and child care centers,
mobilized public health campaigns, shaped the Progressive movement, and contributed to
the formation of the welfare state. As Karen Blair and Anne Firor Scott have argued,
these public reform efforts also served to bring more moderate women into the suffrage
movement. Though never exclusively devoted to gaining political rights for women,
diverse women’s clubs developed a broad social reform agenda that gave women’s
household duties and family responsibilities civic significance and made acquiring formal
political rights more relevant to a larger number of American women.\(^{15}\)

Like the postwar efforts at the center of this project, much of this earlier women’s
club work focused particularly on education, first of women themselves and, later, of
children and community members. The women’s literary and culture clubs that
inaugurated the women’s club movement in many places were primarily focused on
providing their members with an opportunity for self-improvement through education.
Later, women’s efforts to establish public libraries and adult education programs in cities
and towns around the country broadened this emphasis on self-improvement to
incorporate community betterment. Children’s education also received significant

\(^{15}\) Numerous books have chronicled this portion of the American women’s movement. On the use
of motherhood specifically in women’s political discourse, see Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic:
Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina
Press, 1980); on the basic development of the women’s club movement, see for example Paula Baker, “The
Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780–1920,” *American Historical
Redefined, 1868–1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980); Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies:
Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); and Louise W.
Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago and London: University of
Chicago Press, 2005); on the welfare state in particular, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the
Nation’s Work: The Rise of Women’s Political Culture, 1830–1900* (New Haven and London: Yale
University Press, 1995); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social
Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Seth Koven
and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare State*
(New York and London: Routledge, 1993); on the role of broader public reform movements in bringing
women to suffrage, see also Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and
Reform in Galveston, 1880–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Elna C. Green *Southern
Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill and London: University of
attention from women’s clubs, as women’s culturally prescribed responsibility for childrearing encouraged clubwomen to work to improve local schools, as well as education laws. These educational campaigns sometimes crossed class boundaries, as was the case with such settlement house endeavors as Hull House. Women also occasionally put them to nationalistic ends, as with the Daughters of the American Revolution’s Progressive-era work to Americanize immigrants.\textsuperscript{16}

Middle-class women’s expansion of their domestic responsibilities into public reform moved beyond the boundaries of nation, as well. Scholars have demonstrated that the club movement bridged into international work early in its development, through missionary efforts and temperance campaigns in particular. Ian Tyrrell’s work on the World Woman’s Christian Temperance Union suggests that, as early as the 1870s and 1880s, temperance women viewed their overseas work as a dual opportunity to spread Christian values and to emancipate women around the globe. Tyrrell argues that their efforts promoted a broader “Anglo-American internationalism” that sought the global expansion of American values and culture.\textsuperscript{17} Suffrage campaigns also forged international connections among women and contributed to the formation of several international women’s organizations, including the International Council of Women (ICW) in 1888 and the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in 1904. Though initially


formed by suffragists expressly for the promotion of woman suffrage, the ICW in particular sought to make connections among women in support of a broader reform agenda that focused on such issues as public health, child welfare, international traffic in women, immigration, and disarmament.\footnote{On the formation of these two women’s organizations, see Leila Rupp, Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women’s Movement (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), esp. pp. 14–26.} Women’s peace organizations formed a third branch of women’s international organizing, represented most prominently by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Though WILPF was not founded until 1915, groups like it also emphasized women’s interest in motherhood and childrearing to explain their particular support for peace and, consequently, for women’s active participation in politics.\footnote{On the broader women’s peace movement, see Harriet Hyman Alonso, Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1993); and Rupp, Worlds of Women.} While the postwar activists in this project focused much of their work within the nation, their interest in international issues had deep roots in the women’s movement.

In the wake of suffrage, women’s organizations continued to press a host of social and political reform campaigns. Ranging from the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) advocacy of the National Women’s Party to the protective labor legislation campaigns of the National Consumer’s League, from the antiradical campaigns of the Daughters of the American Revolution to the peace activism of WILPF, these campaigns embraced a broad range of political opinions and priorities.\footnote{On women’s diverse post-suffrage reform campaigns, see, for example, Nancy Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987); Candice Lewis Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship (Berkeley and other cities: University of California Press, 1998); Landon R. Y. Stors, Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers’ League, Women’s Activism, and Labor Standards in the New Deal Era (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Rupp, Worlds of Women; Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America.} In combination with their new access to
voting rights, many women’s organizations continued to use gradualist techniques, such as lobbying, petitioning, and letter-writing, to influence the political power structure. Though not all of these campaigns focused on women’s particular responsibility for family, home, and community—ERA activism certainly eschewed claims of women’s distinctive qualities—many middle-class women’s groups also continued to formulate a female-centered style of activism that relied on community organizing and invoked the historic role of women as community caretakers. Yet they also turned these campaigns toward justifying a more direct relationship between women and the state. As Candice Bredbenner has argued, the married women’s nationality campaigns of this period, which sought to give women independent citizenship and in which a broad sampling of women’s organizations participated, incorporated female activists who espoused two visions of women’s citizenship, one liberal, emphasizing women’s individual rights, and one republican, emphasizing women’s duties to community.21 The growth of the welfare state reinforced the power of community activism for some clubwomen. The establishment of the Children’s Bureau of the Department of Labor in 1912 and the

---

21 Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, esp. pp. 251–56. This nationality rights campaign is notable also for its use of the expanding machinery of international organizations to achieve national goals. Some women working for nationality rights in the U.S., particularly those who also supported the ERA, pressed both the Pan American Union, in 1928, and the League of Nations, in 1930, to craft equal nationality treaties governing women’s citizenship. Their campaigns were not entirely successful; though the Pan American Union passed an equal nationality treaty, which the U.S. signed, in 1933, the League of Nations 1930 draft nationality treaty failed to incorporate women’s nationality rights. The international campaign also exposed the rift between those women who supported blanket legal equalization for women, in the form of the ERA and the treaty, and those women who feared such equalization would undermine protective labor legislation. Yet, as Bredbenner demonstrates, these international campaigns, and the lobbying by American women’s organizations to shape U.S. representatives’ responses to them, spurred the passage of American laws equalizing women’s citizenship rights. Women’s organizations effectively used international law to shape national law and define women’s citizenship. While some women’s organizations rejected the specifics of the international legislation, few questioned the premise of involving women in the work of international organizations to influence domestic conditions. See Bredbenner, chap. 6. On women’s continued use of pressure group politics, see also Cott, Grounding of Modern Feminism, 96–97, 255–60.
Women’s Bureau in 1920 institutionalized women’s community campaigns within the national state, thereby giving leading clubwomen positions in government and transforming the traditional work of women’s clubs into national policy.\textsuperscript{22}

In spite of its frequent association with progressive, and even leftist, reform movements, women’s activism of this type sometimes took on a conservative, nationalistic tint. Kathleen Kennedy chronicles the work of women’s preparedness organizations active during World War I, which, she argues, deployed a vision of “patriotic motherhood” that emphasized the production of patriotic citizens who would defend the nation as the particular political duty of women. Yet Kennedy notes that women’s work in support of these national defense campaigns paradoxically encouraged them to participate more actively in national politics, organizing other women and lobbying Congress.\textsuperscript{23} The increasingly antiradical Daughters of the American Revolution employed a parallel tactic in the interwar years, claiming a role in national defense. By rejecting the international authority of the World Court, as well as policing schools, churches, and other women’s organizations for leftist influences, the Daughters identified themselves as the protectors of both the American nation and the American home. Though Francesca Morgan has called the Daughters’ position “male-centered,” for their support of the male-dominated “security state” and their attacks on such progressive reforms as the Sheppard-Towner maternal and infant health care legislation, she also


\textsuperscript{23} See Kennedy, Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 1.
acknowledges that these campaigns against socialistic influences constituted an attempt to claim a role for female citizens in defining national policy and defending national culture.24

Thus, by the postwar period, middle-class women’s organizations of all political persuasions had a long history of activism, both national and international, that used a vision of female responsibility for home and community to claim a public role and a political identity for women. These campaigns by no means represent the totality of women’s activism, either in the nineteenth or the twentieth century. Moreover, these campaigns were not unified; they occasionally undermined one another, and some relied more exclusively on maternalism, while others focused on a broader conception of women’s civic duty. Yet as a whole, middle-class women had a particular organizing heritage that incorporated a merging of domestic and communal responsibilities with public, political campaigns. Because postwar political culture actively paired foreign affairs with both the domestic realm and national politics, women readily used this heritage to explain their interest in foreign affairs. In acting as community-level foreign affairs emissaries, postwar-era clubwomen drew both on the peculiar Cold War culture that merged foreign and domestic concerns and on their longer traditions of domesticating politics. Examining these efforts will therefore deepen our understanding of the ways middle-class women’s organizations adapted their activist strategies to the realities of postwar American politics. This examination will also illustrate the prime mechanism by which foreign affairs were popularized in postwar political culture, as well

as the rationale for deepening divisions between liberal and conservative clubwomen during these years.

Historically, scholars have downplayed both the volume and the significance of American women’s political activism in the years between the end of World War II and the “second wave” of the feminist movement. Persuaded by Betty Friedan’s enormously popular *Feminine Mystique* that the rehabilitation of the family ideal and growing suburbanization in the postwar period isolated women in their homes, scholars like Elaine Tyler May have argued that women, particularly middle-class women, displayed no political consciousness during this period.\(^{25}\) Studies such as Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor’s *Survival in the Doldrums* undermined this contention for women’s rights activists in particular, but failed to capture the variety of political issues that interested the very clubwomen on which they focused.\(^{26}\)

Building on such groundbreaking collections as Joanne Meyerowitz’s *Not June Cleaver*, historians have more recently exposed the scope of issues that motivated women’s activism in the postwar period and the multiple organizations through which they participated in American politics. Harriet Hyman Alonso’s work on female pacifists reveals the importance of the peace movement for American women’s politics even in the postwar years. Susan Lynn’s work on progressive women’s clubs at the national level, as well as Sylvie Murray’s work on progressive housewives and community-level activism, emphasizes the vibrancy of progressive women’s reform campaigns in the postwar

---


period. Work on black women's contributions to the early phases of the civil rights movement also broadens this narrative. Catherine Rymph's study of women within the Republican Party and Michele Nickerson's dissertation on postwar conservative women in Los Angeles incorporate the stories of conservative women's activism. In addition, scholars have expanded on the growth of union women's activism in the postwar years, and Kathleen Laughlin has argued that the Women's Bureau served as a bridge between these working-class female activists and their middle-class peers.27 As this body of work suggests, all kinds of postwar women participated in all kinds of public activism. The foreign affairs campaigns of middle-class clubwomen existed in a much wider context of postwar women's organizing.

To explore the significance of these campaigns both for the popular salience of foreign affairs in the postwar period and for the growing political divide among American clubwomen, this project will examine the foreign affairs activism of four postwar women's organizations: the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Women United for the United Nations (WUUN), and the Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. Though they represented diverse

interests and ranged across the political spectrum from center-left to far right, the members and leaders of these four organizations shared some common characteristics. They were almost exclusively middle- to upper-class, white, educated women. As such, they mirrored the demographics of the white club movement since its inception. Though some members were younger, the majority of the leaders in these organizations were older women, born in the late nineteenth century. As a result, their club careers bridged progressive-era women’s work and these postwar campaigns. The memberships of the groups overlapped, with members of the General Federation represented in both Women United and the DAR, and members of the DAR represented in both the General Federation and the Minute Women. Very few of these women could be considered leftists, and most were moderate in their explicit espousal of feminism as well. Yet they shared a firm belief in the importance of women’s civic and political engagement.

Though some attempted to mobilize women overtly and some more obliquely, all agreed that women must participate in shaping American political culture.

In an effort to reflect the variety of organizations available to postwar women, I have chosen to examine two longstanding women’s organizations and two groups founded in the postwar period. The General Federation and the DAR were both established in 1890, the Federation to unite women’s clubs throughout the country and

the DAR in response to the Sons of the American Revolution’s expulsion of its female members.29 Both Women United and the Minute Women, on the other hand, were formed during the postwar period, Women United in 1946 to bring together the United Nations observers of numerous women’s organizations to support the UN and the Minute Women in 1949 to bring women together to counter “collectivism” in American society.30 Though all four groups worked with men on occasion, they represented exclusively female constituencies. By choosing a sampling of such organizations, I emphasize a specifically female vision for postwar foreign affairs activism, one that incorporated traditional women’s club work and a new geopolitical situation to forge a distinct postwar commitment on the part of middle-class American women to popularizing their perceptions of international relations.

I have also chosen to focus on two conservative women’s organizations and two liberal women’s organizations, in order to highlight women’s participation in the full range of the postwar foreign affairs discourse. Some discussion of terminology is necessary. Throughout this process, I frequently identify the women I discuss as internationalist and anti-internationalist, specifically referring to their support for or opposition to the foreign engagement that forms the center of my analysis. I avoid the term “isolationist” as much as possible, in an effort to distinguish the postwar opponents

29 On the founding of the General Federation, see Blair, Clubwoman as Feminist, chap. 6; and Scott, Natural Allies, 126–27; on the founding of the DAR, see Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America, 42–44.

30 On the founding of Women United, see “Getting Started,” Official History of the W.U.U.N., Carton 1, Folder 1, Women United for the United Nations Collection, Collection No. 70-70—78-M200, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as WUUN Collection); “Minutes of Meeting of November 22, 1946,” Box 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection; and Dion, “Challenges to Cold War Orthodoxy,” 80–81; on founding of the Minute Women, see “Minute Women of the United States of America, Inc., R.F.D. North Windham, Connecticut,” pamphlet in Ralph S. O’Leary Papers, Box 5, Folder 1, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas (hereafter cited as HMRC).
of internationalism from their interwar counterparts. Although these movements overlapped, postwar anti-internationalist women regularly acknowledged that America must involve itself in international politics on occasion. Yet they disagreed profoundly with their internationalist peers on the specifics of that involvement. The women in these four organizations also avowed a broad array of domestic political positions that informed their foreign affairs perspectives. More specifically, the anti-internationalist women here represented also displayed some combination of the anticommunist, Christian evangelical, anti-statist, and segregationist views that characterized postwar conservatism. The internationalist women, meanwhile, also exhibited some degree of pacifism and Cold War liberalism, which incorporated anticommunism with broader interventionist views and some tolerance for the growing civil rights movement. Because this project is based primarily on a discussion of national organizations, a variety of opinion inevitably exists within each organization. My labels simply reflect the general consensus as suggested by each group’s national policy.

On the liberal end of the spectrum were the WUUN and the General Federation. Women United’s members, all accredited UN observers for national women’s organizations, represented a broad array of women’s groups ranging from the Association of Junior Leagues of America to the YWCA to WILPF. As a result, they found it difficult to agree on domestic political questions, such as the Equal Rights Amendment or the civil rights movement, and were certainly bipartisan. They were quietly progressive; the UN observer for the National Council of Negro Women was among the group’s founding members. Generally, however, WUUN members avoided discussing domestic politics that they deemed beyond the scope of foreign relations. Their support for the UN and
their maintenance of close ties with U.S. State Department suggests broad agreement with a Cold War internationalist perspective that advocated containing Communism and supporting national self-determination in the interest of global stability and American security. Most fundamentally, however, this group of women existed to promote the idealized internationalist vision expressed in the United Nations Charter.\textsuperscript{31}

The General Federation was more moderate in its internationalism and consistently displayed more investment in domestic politics than Women United. Unifying women from diverse clubs in cities and towns around the country, the Federation had always been a bipartisan organization. Former Federation president Sarah Whitehurst became women's affairs coordinator in Truman's Federal Civil Defense Administration in 1951, and two former Federation presidents also received appointments in the Eisenhower administration, suggesting that both political parties relied on prominent Federation clubwomen to fill vacancies.\textsuperscript{32} The Federation had historically been judicious in its support of international campaigns for peace—in response to the explosion of pacifism during the interwar years, for example, the Federation joined Carrie Chapman Catt's moderate group, the National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, rather than participating in more radical global efforts.\textsuperscript{33} Similarly, their vision for the UN's role reflected the American internationalism of Henry Luce or the "nationalistic

\textsuperscript{31} For a general account of the WUUN's postwar work in the context of women's pacifist organizing, see Dion, "Challenges to Cold War Orthodoxy."


\textsuperscript{33} See Cott, \textit{Grounding of Modern Feminism}, 94–95, 257–60.
globalism” identified by John Fousek as a characteristic of Cold War political culture. Federation members, broadly construed, were centrist Cold War liberals, who paired support for American traditions with their support for international organizing.

The conservative side of the postwar discourse is represented by the Minute Women and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Like the General Federation, the Daughters also had a historic position on internationalism: they rejected it. Founded as a nationalistic organization, the DAR devoted their political efforts primarily to domestic causes. Yet this did not prevent them from expressing opinions on international questions. Though they had long engaged in efforts to “Americanize” immigrants, the DAR became progressively more anticommunist and invested in national security in the wake of World War I and even targeted the General Federation, along with other women’s organizations working for peace, for supposedly promoting leftist views. As previously indicated, they also opposed American involvement in the World Court during the interwar years. Thus, although the DAR initially supported the United Nations, their suspicion of international organizing and its connection to communism derived from a long history of antiradicalism. Francesca Morgan has suggested that the DAR also had a long history of bipartisan support for the national state, sometimes equated with the federal government. During the postwar period, these two historic positions came into conflict, and in the face of growing exclusion from the center of political power, the DAR expressed more specific support for southern Democrats and conservative Republicans in

---

34 On DAR’s post–World War I rightward turn and red-baiting of General Federation and other women’s groups, see Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America, 131–42; and Cott, Grounding of Modern Feminism, 93–94, 255–60.

35 See Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America, 11 and passim.
Congress—in other words, for antagonists of growing federal power who found themselves increasingly on the defensive during these years.

The most universally conservative of the four groups that appear in this project, the Minute Women formed explicitly in response to what they viewed as threats of “collectivism” in American society. They were one of many right-wing anticommunist women’s organizations to emerge in the early years of the Cold War that drew on women’s civic activism for the purpose of combating subversion. The Minute Women echoed the DAR’s support for southern Democrats and conservative Republicans in Congress, and the partisan breakdown of their membership depended in part on region. As Michele Nickerson has noted, Republican women’s clubs contributed significant members to the California chapters of the Minute Women, and their southern members, including those from the prominent Houston, Texas, chapter, explicitly supported states’ rights candidates as well. Their aggressive stance against socialism and communism, as well as their suspicion of federal intervention, made the United Nations a target for these right-wing women, who believed this international organization to be a conduit for all of these “collectivist” trends.

These four groups, then, reflect the broad array of middle-class clubwomen involved in debating foreign policy during the postwar years. These organizations by no means encapsulate the totality of activist women at work in American society after World War II. As the expanding historiography suggests, postwar women of all classes and races organized during these years to support numerous causes. In addition, these four organizations were not the only postwar groups working on foreign affairs; a vast array of women and men, some of whom will appear in this story, formed alliances on both sides.

---

36 Nickerson, “Domestic Threats,” 128.
of the debate. By highlighting four specific women’s groups, I do not intend to downplay the significance of these other campaigns. Rather, I seek to focus on the investment of middle-class clubwomen in foreign relations during the postwar period, precisely because the pairing of foreign and domestic that characterized postwar foreign affairs had particular significance for middle-class clubwomen’s organizing traditions. Building on this convergence, these women argued that they were acutely suited to serve as foreign relations emissaries to American communities and explicitly joined this foreign affairs work with their efforts to mobilize women politically. This coupling of foreign affairs and domestic politics became the ground on which postwar clubwomen battled one another to define the role of their nation in the world and the role of women as citizens.

Ultimately, this investment in political culture shaped the path of these American women’s organizations in the postwar period. As women adapted their strategies to the changing foreign policy context of Cold War American politics, patterns emerged that dictated different courses for conservative and liberal clubwomen. In the fifteen years after World War II, women in both groups experienced the decline of a gradualist approach that had long typified clubwomen’s activism. Many of the moderate internationalist clubwomen discussed here questioned the confrontational forms of activism popularized by the civil rights, New Left, and feminist movements, particularly as manifested in the early efforts of Women Strike for Peace. They continued to support the UN as an institutional solution to world problems, but liberal internationalist clubwomen avoided more radical activism, preferring instead to influence communities through education programs and governmental representatives through official channels. Ironically, though the nation’s foreign policy increasingly mirrored their moderate
internationalist vision, these women found their UN programs marginalized in the broader political culture as American society and the tactics of its activists changed around them. Still, their work sustained the investment of American women in United Nations relief efforts, as well as in such organs as the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). By later pressing for an International Women’s Year and the UN Decade for Women, the CSW served as an organizing apparatus for both American feminists and women’s rights activists around the world.37

Anti-internationalist women, meanwhile, faced another kind of marginalization. Though they were less averse to confrontational activism, their inability to conform governmental policy to their vision over the course of fifteen years of expanding investment in foreign affairs nurtured a profound sense of alienation among conservative women. This absence of political voice fed broad conspiracy theories about the expanding power of international agencies and the federal government. Yet it also had a radicalizing effect, nurturing a conservative movement of political outsiders, including activists like Phyllis Schlafly, who emerged as a powerful political force later in the twentieth century. Drawn together in part by their foreign policy work, these women helped to unify a coalition of New Deal opponents, conservative Cold War anticommunists, and southern segregationists that would eventually surface as a strong conservative voice in American politics.

This project seeks to capture a moment when the United Nations mattered enormously in American political culture. By examining the foreign affairs activism of four middle-class women’s organizations in the fifteen years after World War II, I will

demonstrate that the postwar clubwomen who devoted considerable attention to foreign affairs both reflected and contributed to America’s postwar foreign policy discourse by helping to develop its ideological foundations and by spreading these ideas to the American public. In so doing, these women also divided the club movement into two camps, one supportive of the Cold War liberal vision and one determined to undermine it. This is simultaneously a history of the Cold War in the United States and a history of American women’s political organizing. Most fundamentally, it is a history of a foreign policy culture in which clubwomen played a central role. By filtering their political activism through the lens of the United Nations, these women used international affairs to participate in their own nation’s politics. In so doing, these postwar clubwomen engaged in their own merger of the foreign and the domestic.
Chapter One
A Call to Action: Foreign Affairs Activism, 1945–1948

“A Woman’s Prayer”
I, a woman, do pledge myself before my God
To share with all women, in implementing Peace.
I shall not allow terror and greed, cruelty and oppression
To invade my domestic tranquility.
I shall encircle my hearth and my home
With the warmth of human affection.
I shall strive to give my children and my children’s children
A world that’s free and secure.
I shall teach them to love and lend aid to their fellowmen
As I shall do.
And above all, I shall clasp the hand of my neighbors
From sea to sea in lasting friendship.

Amen.
—by Carol Norton, read to open each session of the United Women’s Conference, San Francisco, California, May 19, 1945

On May 19, 1945, a group of women assembled at the studios of NBC in San Francisco, California, to discuss their role in building the peace at the end of the Second World War. All were attending the United Nations founding conference, either as official governmental representatives or as consultants for civic organizations, and they gathered to take part in what one participant proudly called the “first International Women’s Conference of the United Nations.” Female advisors to delegations from Mexico, Norway, China, Brazil, Great Britain, and Venezuela joined American women from the Association of American University Women (AAUW), the Foreign Policy Association, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW), and the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC) to consider women’s particular responsibilities in advancing global stability as the war came to a close. Speakers addressed the group on a variety of causes that demanded postwar attention: world trade, international cooperation, human rights, all would require women’s labors. Yet women’s most important duty, reiterated by conference participants again and again, would be to educate themselves,

their children, and their neighbors, in order to build support for the international organization in the making. As U.S. delegate and Barnard College dean Virginia Gildersleeve declared in her talk, “[w]omen must also work as citizens of the different countries—they must acquire knowledge of international affairs and they must see to it that their representatives in our government are qualified to understand and to deal with international affairs . . . . They must have knowledge, experience, and training in order to influence their children as they grow up. Then as teachers they can build that public opinion of the future without which no peaceful international machinery is going to work.” The responsibility of American women’s organizations after the war, according to this gathering, would be to use their traditional education and community improvement work to shape their nation’s interactions with the world at large.²

This meeting encapsulated the rationale behind the American women’s club movement’s postwar foreign affairs activism. Multinational though these conference participants may have been, they encouraged each other and other women to work within their own nations, even within their own communities and homes, to promote international stability. In the wake of the United Nations founding conference, American clubwomen took this agenda to heart. Responding to the failure of the League of Nations; to the mobilization of all Americans in support of an international war effort; and to the rhetoric of postwar planners enshrining the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of individual citizens, American clubwomen adopted the cause of global stability as their own civic duty. By informing themselves on foreign affairs and spreading this knowledge to their children and neighbors, these women believed they could help shape the policies

their government pursued and, thereby, the international political landscape. Over the three years immediately following the establishment of the United Nations, American clubwomen set about building the structures that would support this foreign affairs activism. Yet, as they confronted the challenges of global diplomacy and developed their own visions for postwar international relations, differences emerged. While some women remained absolutely committed to American involvement in international organizing, others began to worry about the mechanics of merging national interests with international politics. In the first years of the UN’s existence, American women’s organizations, liberal and conservative alike, displayed a commitment to supporting the international organization through foreign affairs education. Tracing the initial development of this foreign affairs activism will demonstrate how the club programs these women crafted in this early period led them to conceive divergent visions for America’s role in the world.

*****

The United Nations conference in which these clubwomen participated emerged from a much longer history of international organizing to forestall conflicts between nations. The League of Nations, created after the First World War, was the UN’s most immediate predecessor, and the League’s successes and, more importantly, its failures had profound implications for the structure of the United Nations and for the perspectives of UN founders and supporters. Drafted by the five victorious powers in World War I—Britain, France, the United States, Italy, and Japan—the Covenant of the League of Nations was primarily designed by Woodrow Wilson and his advisors, along with British and South African representatives. This international treaty established the structure of
and procedural rules for the League, and allowed any sovereign nation to apply for membership and participate in League deliberations. In return, member nations promised to support the League and to seek peaceful settlement of future disputes. Though this inclusive structure appealed to the egalitarian vision of some smaller nations, in reality the most powerful nations in the League, the five World War I victors, were intended to dominate the League’s political and diplomatic business. Yet, in a now infamous battle with League opponents in the United States Senate led chiefly by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Woodrow Wilson failed to win approval for U.S. participation in the international organization, a circumstance which many have argued hamstrung the League from the beginning. Left with weakened and bickering European powers providing many of the resources for League action, the League failed to respond effectively to the geopolitical and economic challenges it faced in the interwar years and, ultimately, to prevent another global conflict.³

Women’s organizations involved themselves with the League of Nations early on, seeking a role in the 1919 Versailles conference where the League Covenant was drafted. Suffragists from the Allied nations gathered in Paris in 1919 to pressure delegates to the Peace Conference to create a special commission to consider and report on women’s issues. When this effort failed, these women formed their own commission to lobby for the inclusion of women’s issues in the Covenant. Pressing national representatives to

incorporate equal suffrage, equal nationality rights, and the suppression of traffic in women and children into the League’s founding document, transnational women’s organizations also successfully urged the opening of all League positions to female candidates. Though the League failed to live up to its promises in this regard, many transnational women’s organizations subsequently established offices in Geneva, where the League was based, and lobbied League officials regularly on a variety of issues, including protective labor legislation and international treaties establishing equal rights and independent citizenship for married women. Even the strictly anti-war Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) attempted to use the League to promote its vision for global order, in spite of their opposition to the more bellicose provisions in the Covenant.⁴

American supporters of international organizing, women included, also focused a good deal of attention on the League of Nations throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Internationalists dismayed at the failure of the League in the U.S. formed several organizations to promote American involvement, including the American Association for a League of Nations and the League of Nations Non-Partisan Association. Prominent statesmen like Elihu Root and other leaders of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, together with elite groups such as the Foreign Policy Association and the Council on Foreign Relations, established education programs to encourage “world-mindedness” among American citizens and frequently enlisted the support of American civic organizations. Some middle-class women’s organizations emerged as prominent League

supporters during this period. Both the AAUW and the League of Women Voters held discussion groups on League issues and published informational pieces in their group publications. Women also formed their own associations, such as the Women’s Pro-League Council, to support the League explicitly. Even suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt’s moderate National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War (NCCCW), founded in 1925 to educate women about international relations and peace, worked cautiously to promote support for the League in the U.S. Of course, some women fell on the other side of the League debate; though they initially favored American involvement in the League and the World Court, after the early 1920s the DAR lobbied against American participation in both. More generally speaking, League support had a narrower base among middle-class women’s clubs during this period than did support for the United Nations later. Still, women’s groups formed an important part of the internationalist community in the United States between the world wars, and the idea that the League could and should address women’s issues laid the foundation for the involvement of women from all nations in the business of the United Nations.

When the League failed to prevent the hostilities that escalated into the Second World War, the international organization ceased formal operations, though it did not officially disband until 1946. Undaunted, American internationalists of all stripes debated the viability of a postwar international body to preserve peace even before America entered the war effort. In addition to the better known advocates of international organizing like Wendell Willkie and Henry Luce, less well-known internationalists who had long lobbied for American involvement in the League formed new groups, like the

---

Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, to develop suggestions for the global body they hoped would emerge from the conflict. The Roosevelt administration, too, worked to draft proposals for a postwar international order, even as Americans debated the advisability of entering the global conflict. When Franklin Roosevelt met with Winston Churchill to draft the brief statement of postwar aims subsequently dubbed the “Atlantic Charter” in August 1941, Roosevelt’s vision for a postwar collective security apparatus included substantial American involvement in whatever organization emerged from the conflict. Moreover, polling indicated that by 1942 a majority of Americans shared the hope that their nation would participate in some type of international body in the wake of the war.⁶

Though the four-hundred-word Atlantic Charter contained the seeds of the principles that would be elaborated upon in the United Nations Charter document—specifically, self-determination of peoples, free trade, collective security, and arms control, as well as the assurance that people of all nations would be free from “fear and want”—representatives of the United States, China, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union first devised the basic blueprint for the international organization between August and early October 1944, when they met at the Dumbarton Oaks estate in northwest Washington, D.C. Advertised by the U.S. State Department as an informal meeting, the Dumbarton Oaks gathering was in fact a primary planning session for the structures that would be proposed to delegates at the United Nations’ official founding conference the following year. When press accounts leaked the true purposes of the meeting, public attention in the U.S. and around the world focused on the event. A small group of

isolationist protesters, led by the Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith, gathered outside the estate to protest American involvement in any global body, while other Americans, particularly African American activists like W. E. B. DuBois and Walter White, decried the total absence of a more expansive human rights program from the meeting's agenda. When the State Department released the Dumbarton Oaks proposals to the public in October 1944, responses were similarly varied. Some American internationalists expressed enthusiasm for the proposals, in spite of their omission of details on topics as varied as the voting procedures in the Security Council and the protocol for domestic approval of American obligations to the international body. Other Americans, including DuBois, criticized the Dumbarton Oaks plans for failing to deal with colonialism and human rights abuses effectively. Representatives of other nations, including Latin American members of the Pan-American Union, complained that adequate provisions had not been made to represent the interests of smaller states. On the whole, the controversy generated by the Dumbarton Oaks proposals prefigured the debate that would rage throughout the postwar period about the purposes and actions of the United Nations, both among Americans and in the global community the international body was designed to represent.

American women's clubs tracked the progress of the Dumbarton Oaks meeting closely. The national offices of the General Federation of Women's Clubs mailed out voluminous amounts of informational material about the gathering to their member clubs. Federation president Lucy Jennings Dickinson estimated that Federation leaders "had

---

sent out some 40,000 pieces of literature concerning Dumbarton Oaks, in an effort to educate our membership regarding provisions that would form the basis of a great world organization for peace. . . .” One such document, an International Relations bulletin titled “A Call to Action,” captured the vision driving the Federation’s information campaign. “The time has come—NOW,” wrote the Federation’s International Relations chairman Constance A. Sporborg, “for our General Federation to prove to its own members and to the nation its concerted will to harness its womanpower in an all-out support of . . . the full participation of the United States in an International Security Organization planned to minimize the chances of future wars.” The Federation’s “womanpower” would be most effective, Sporborg went on to suggest, if all Federation women mobilized locally to encourage community awareness of the United Nations project. The bulletin recommended establishing a leader or leadership committee in each local club dedicated exclusively to promoting support for the international organization in the making. The ultimate goal, according to Sporborg, must be “[t]o impress upon the consciousness of EVERY clubwoman her individual stake and that of her family in a world planned on the basis of human rights; economic and social security; political expansion; and ethical and spiritual instruments with which to fortify a gradually integrated world destined for the uninterrupted advancement of the human family.” The domestic metaphor aptly served to connect the familial and local interests of Federation clubwomen to the international body for which Sporborg sought support. In Sporborg’s rendering, advancing the cause of the United Nations would benefit the individual families of Federation women as well as the global family of nations.  

---

8 Memo titled “A Call to Action,” from Mrs. William Dick Sporborg to State Presidents and Chairmen of International Relations, Program Records, Dickinson (1944–1947), Box 2, Folder 1, pp. 1–2, Women’s
Though the Federation leaders who coordinated the Dumbarton Oaks campaign responded to the political imperatives of the moment, their peculiar vision for foreign affairs activism also grew out of the General Federation’s longstanding organizing traditions. Founded in 1890 to unify local women’s literary clubs around the country, the Federation initially consisted of only sixty-one clubs from seventeen states including California, New York, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Colorado. The organization’s founders envisioned not just a national but an international organization, and they also assigned delegates at their founding conference to England, France, and India, all of which were known to have women’s literary associations. Yet the group’s primary focus for much of its history was on American women’s clubs. The Federation’s membership expanded quickly, as state federations of women’s clubs, some of which had formed independently, joined the national group. The organization also broadened its membership rolls by incorporating women’s clubs that were not strictly literary societies. After twelve years in action, New York’s state federation included women’s legal, medical, business, and alumnae associations, as well as household economics, motherhood, and needlepoint clubs. By 1910, the Federation claimed a membership of one million women. A majority of Federation leaders were wealthy, and the organization maintained a primarily middle- and upper-class membership throughout its history. The structure of the Federation mirrored its development, with national officers setting national policy, which was then transmitted to local clubs via state federations. Some local autonomy persisted, but as the organization grew national leaders increasingly

helped set the agenda for local clubs through a variety of committees focused on issues such as legislation, public health, civics, and conservation.9

As these committees suggest, the General Federation moved rapidly from more traditional literary and social functions to civic activism. Federation founder Jane Cunningham Croly—a New York journalist and creator of one of the nation’s oldest women’s literary societies, Sorosis—believed that unifying women’s clubs around the country would both prevent duplication of efforts on national problems and give these individual clubs a stronger collective voice to influence legislators at the national level. Many of the Federation’s early civic efforts took the form of community improvement and reform work, including the sponsorship of tuberculosis sanatoriums, the creation of public parks, and the establishment of sewage and garbage collection services. Federation clubs also joined with other women’s groups, such as the DAR, the National Consumer’s League, and the Association of American University Women, to promote everything from historic preservation to protective labor legislation to scholarships for women seeking higher education. In the face of public criticism of their efforts, Federation members regularly invoked their duty as domestic caregivers to justify their expanded civic roles. Yet this work increasingly nurtured political consciousness among club members. In 1914, the Federation voted enthusiastically to endorse woman suffrage, and after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, the group joined the Women’s Joint

---

Congressional Committee and helped lobby both for the Sheppard-Towner maternal and infant health care act and independent citizenship for married women.\(^{10}\)

In keeping with its founders’ interest in internationalizing their organization, the Federation displayed a growing interest in foreign affairs after the First World War. Mirroring broader public opinion during the Great War, the Federation was initially committed to peace but began working actively to support the war effort when the United States entered the conflict in 1917. Their war work, which included supporting the Red Cross, selling Liberty Bonds, and encouraging food conservation, led the Federation to establish permanent offices in Washington, D.C., with the goal of maintaining closer ties with federal agencies.\(^{11}\) In the wake of the war, the Federation rededicated its membership to judicious peace activism. In 1925, the group joined with Carrie Chapman Catt and a host of other women’s organizations to form the National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, which educated women about international issues and supported the League of Nations. Though the work of the National Conference was moderate when compared with the efforts of more radically pacifist groups like the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the Federation nevertheless found itself under attack by organizations like the DAR for its membership in this supposedly left-leaning organization. These attacks encouraged some retreat from activist pacifism on the part of Federation leaders, but the group’s attention to foreign affairs persisted.\(^{12}\)


Throughout the 1930s, the Federation developed strong ties to Latin American countries, offering scholarships for students to study in the United States and encouraging Pan-American consciousness among its members. In 1932, newly-elected Federation president Grace Morrison Poole also held formal sessions at the group’s annual meeting on several topics never before presented to club members, including U.S. foreign policy and the Equal Rights Amendment.\footnote{Houde, \textit{Reaching Out}, 201–17.} Federation members’ interest in international organizing, therefore, derived from a long history of expanding involvement with politics and, more specifically, foreign relations. As their establishment of Washington offices during World War I demonstrates, Federation leaders frequently paired this involvement with attempts to form fruitful connections with national politicians and governmental agencies. Grace Poole’s simultaneous introduction of foreign policy and Equal Rights Amendment education campaigns also indicates that Federation leaders increasingly maintained a dual commitment to domestic political advancement for women and international political awareness.

These trends continued during the Second World War. When the U.S. entered the war in 1941, Federation leaders implemented a broadly-conceived national defense program, which newly installed president Sarah Whitehurst argued must replace the Federation’s prior work for peace. National defense efforts included campaigns to teach women scientific farming, aviation, and industrial skills, so they could take the place of male workers when necessary; to encourage female consumers to stay alert for unwarranted price raising and hoarding; and to urge local clubs to maintain library services so that citizens in their communities could stay informed on the war. Federation clubs instituted the “Buy A Bomber” campaign, whereby club members could purchase
bonds toward the construction of aircraft for the war effort; suggesting the relative wealth of Federation women, this campaign raised over one million dollars and contributed to the construction of a number of planes bearing the names of Federation clubs. Federation officers turned the library at their Washington, D.C., headquarters into a wartime information center, filled with mimeographed speeches and books, and mailed out kits of informational materials to local clubs. Federation representatives also participated in a prestigious series of national defense conferences with governmental officials and military leaders at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, while Federation president Whitehurst served on a number of governmental advisory committees. Beneficial as it was to sustaining the war effort, all of this varied war work also prompted Federation leaders to broaden their claims to civic and political authority. Whitehurst complained about the paucity of women on the committees she joined and encouraged Federation members to work harder to inform themselves on public affairs. During this same period, the organization passed resolutions pushing for the appointment of women to policymaking positions in government. Notably, the Federation also changed its historic position against the Equal Rights Amendment, voting as a national organization to advocate the amendment in 1944 and sending representatives to both political parties to urge their support.14

In addition to their national defense campaigns, Federation officers also instituted a postwar planning program that directed the attention of clubwomen to the challenges the United States and the world at large would face at the conclusion of global hostilities.

14 Houde, Reaching Out, 239–56; on the work of women’s clubs more generally to capitalize on war work in the interest of promoting women’s public activism and political participation, see Susan M. Hartmann, The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 143–61.
Though the organization, like many other national civic groups, was forced to suspend two of its annual conventions during the war years, its national leadership continued to provide guidance to local clubs. As the end of the war neared, the Federation’s Postwar Planning Department circulated a pamphlet of suggested programs for women’s clubs, which Postwar Planning Chairman Mrs. Thurston Roberts contended would be central to solving “the problems of the post-war era” because “[t]his task must have its beginning at the community level.” According to Roberts, Federation clubwomen had a particular responsibility to lead these community campaigns. “Women have long been active in community service,” Roberts declared, “On them will rest the task of seeing that standards of health, morale and social well-being are established and maintained in all our communities great and small.” Roberts’s elaborate plans for the Federation’s local membership included an education campaign to familiarize clubwomen with the national discussion of postwar issues, as well as support for vocational schools for returning veterans with disabilities, scholarships for the children of soldiers, and slum clearance. Among other responsibilities, Federation women were to help mediate between labor and capital during the reconversion of industry, inform the public of community problems, and generally promote community cooperation. Notably, they were also to “give full cooperation to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.” Concluding the list, Roberts enjoined her readers, “Each clubwoman is urged to become more interested in national affairs and to assume her responsibility in making democracy

15 Mrs. Thurston Roberts, “Foreword,” Post-War Planning Department Program No. 1, Program Records, Dickinson (1944–1947), Box 2, Folder 5, WHRC.
work.” Clubwomen could accomplish this by actively making use of their representatives in Congress “without any feeling of hesitancy or apology.”\textsuperscript{16}

These postwar planning programs demonstrate two consistent threads in the organizing vision of Federation leaders: first, the pairing of women’s longstanding role as community activists with a concerted attempt to mobilize women politically; and second, the inclusion of support for international initiatives among women’s local community responsibilities. This joining of local, national, and international activism remained a foundational part of the Federation’s programs throughout the postwar period and shaped the group’s understanding of foreign affairs, the United Nations, and their connection to the role of women’s organizations and of female citizens in American society. In a letter to the Federation’s state chairmen of international relations, International Relations chairman Constance Sporborg explained the connection more explicitly, “The foreign policy of the United States touches every American Home in times of war and of peace. . . the 16,500 clubs and the two and a half million women in our General Federation, self informed and articulate, could and should channel an effective portion of our national public opinion. That is YOUR job!”\textsuperscript{17} As Sporborg suggested, many Federation women had been intimately involved in mobilizing American communities to support war work of one kind or another. When policymakers began discussing plans for a postwar international organization for peace, Federation leaders simply adapted their existing mobilization tactics to encourage their members to support these efforts. By the time of the Dumbarton Oaks meeting, the Federation had declared itself a primary arbiter of the

\textsuperscript{16} Roberts, “Procedure,” Post-War Planning Department Program No. 1.

\textsuperscript{17} Letter from Constance A. Sporborg to State Chairmen of International Relations, Program Records, Dickinson (1944–1947), Box 1, Folder 25, WHRC.
role American clubwomen would play in American society after the war. The group’s elaborate informational campaign on the meeting was a natural outgrowth of its larger mobilization program for clubwomen around the nation; Federation leaders hoped women would be represented at all levels of policymaking after the war—local, national, and international. Like their transnational predecessors during the founding of the League of Nations, Federation leaders were determined to involve American women in the planning stages for any postwar collective security apparatus and to claim the civic authority that came with such involvement. To the end, they worked not just to do their part to support the war effort, but also to equip clubwomen with a basic understanding of postwar geopolitical planning, which they hoped would justify the role they claimed for women in bringing this understanding to American communities.

In the wake of the Dumbarton Oaks gathering, American civic organizations of all varieties pressured the U.S. State Department to include their representatives in the formal deliberations planned for the following year. W. E. B. DuBois, for example, lobbied hard for the involvement of representatives from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as advocates for both African Americans and other Africans living under European colonial control, and labor organizations pressed for representation as well. State Department officials proved receptive to these requests, primarily because they hoped the nominal inclusion of civic organizations would aid the U.S. government in promoting public support for the United Nations and thereby avoiding the public suspicion that they believed had hampered American acceptance of the League of Nations. In addition to delegates from fifty nations, the State Department invited forty-two American organizations to send official “consultants” to be present at the United
Nations founding conference. The invitees included groups across the political spectrum, from the NAACP to the Congress of Industrial Organizations to the National Association of Manufacturers. Given the General Federation’s preexisting campaigns to encourage support among clubwomen for the international organization, the group was an obvious candidate for inclusion and received an invitation to send a representative. The State Department also asked four other women’s organizations—the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, the American Association of University Women, the League of Women Voters, and the Women’s Action Committee for Victory and Lasting Peace—to take part as consultants. Participants chosen to represent civic groups at the San Francisco conference ranged from well-known national figures, such as W. E. B. DuBois and Walter White for the NAACP, to less familiar officers of organizations. The AAUW sent their international relations chairman, political scientist Dr. Helen Dwight Reid, while the BPW sent their president, Margaret Hickey, as well as their international relations chairman Josephine Schain. Representing the General Federation were Federation president Lucy Dickinson, the Federation’s international relations chairman Constance Sporborg, and California State Federation president Muriel Shoesmith.\(^\text{18}\)

Though less familiar to the public at large, the clubwomen present at the UN conference were the leading activist voices in the club movement at that time. Constance Sporborg, who would become the General Federation’s most prominent internationalist, had a typically lengthy career as a clubwoman and women’s rights advocate. Born in

---

1880 in Cincinnati, Ohio, Sporborg became active in the settlement house movement at
the age of twelve, when she invited a group of children from a local settlement house to
her birthday party and subsequently began volunteering at the house. After three years of
study, Sporborg received a degree in languages from the University of Cincinnati. She
moved with her family to New York at the age of twenty, where she continued her
settlement house work and also headed the first junior auxiliary of the National Council
of Jewish Women. Sporborg campaigned actively for suffrage and claimed Carrie
Chapman Catt as a close friend, labeling Catt second only to her mother as an influence
in her life. After her marriage to William Sporborg, a lawyer, in 1902, Sporborg began
working with a local Federation club in Port Chester, New York, and rose through the
ranks to become president of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs and to
hold national office as the Federation's International Relations chairman. She also served
terms as president of the National Council of Jewish Women and the League of Women
Voters. Determined and outspoken, Sporborg declared in 1918 that "the only way to get
into a real fight is with a full head of steam on." Following World War II, Sporborg held
a total of fifteen official posts, but devoted a majority of her time until her death in 1961
to promoting American involvement in the United Nations.19

The UN founding conference took place in San Francisco between April 26 and
June 26, 1945. The event was unwieldy, with national delegates divided into four main
commissions and twelve technical committees considering 547 amendments to proposals
created almost a year earlier at Dumbarton Oaks. The deliberations were fraught with

19 For Sporborg's biographical information, see "Mrs. William Sporborg, 81, Dies; Leading Clubwoman 30
disagreements over such issues as the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the relative power of the “Great Powers” and smaller nations within the organization. Yet, in the end, delegates managed to agree on the broad structure of the United Nations and articulated this structure in the organization’s official Charter. The first article of the UN Charter listed three primary goals for the global body: “to maintain international peace and security”; “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for . . . equal rights and self-determination of peoples”; and to solve “international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character” by “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” The document went on to delineate six major bodies that made up the United Nations organization: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Council, and the Trusteeship Council. The Charter also called for the incorporation of a number of Specialized Agencies focused on issues of particular importance to the United Nations. These eventually included the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).20

Though the national delegates focused their attention on security issues first, provisions relating to human rights mattered most to many of the American consultants participating in the conference. NAACP representatives in particular attempted to use their consulting status to force the inclusion of human rights language, as well as an aggressive anticolonial mechanism, in the Charter document. Many of the other

---

consultants supported these efforts, Federation representative Constance Sporborg among them. At a much-touted meeting with Secretary of State Edward Stettinius at the Fairmont Hotel on May 2, 1945, DuBois, White, and other American consultants argued that to deny peoples under colonial rule some means of bringing their requests for liberation before the UN was to repudiate the goals of the organization, while to refuse to establish official UN support for human rights would undermine the reasons for which the Second World War had been fought. As a Jewish woman long active in Jewish lay organizations, Sporborg must have been particularly swayed by the latter rationale, that American involvement in World War II spelled an end to tyrannical domination of one people by another. American officials feared that any overt attempt to facilitate independence for nations under colonial control would jeopardize America’s relationship with its western Allies, particularly the British and the French. Given growing hostility with the Soviet Union, U.S. delegates determined that freedom for colonies was simply not worth this risk. The Trusteeship Council was their compromised answer to the consultants’ anticolonial lobbying. In spite of considerable pressure from NAACP representatives, other NGO consultants, and even African American State Department official Ralph Bunche, the structure of this Council as expressed in the UN Charter in the end reflected national security concerns and the paternalist perspective most palatable to American allies and the American Congress. Pressure for more general human rights language proved successful, however, and the nongovernmental organizations proudly claimed responsibility for the extent to which the final Charter document incorporated protection for human rights.  

21 John Foster Dulles placated opponents of human rights provisions by incorporating another infamous clause in the Charter: the so-called “domestic jurisdiction” clause, which precluded the Charter from
Just as the NAACP hoped that human rights language could be used to spur racial reform, some American women’s organizations sought to employ human rights provisions to lay the foundation for the advancement of women’s rights. Though not invited as an official consultant, National Women’s Party and NAACP member Edith Goode met with Walter White before the conference to encourage him to promote the prohibition of sex discrimination along with his efforts against racial discrimination. In their consultant meetings at the conference, Federation representatives also worked for the inclusion of some expression of women’s equality in the Charter. In an article for the Federation’s monthly magazine, Federation president Dickinson noted how women’s organizations came together to make certain that women were not forgotten. “We asked our American Delegates, especially Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve, to see that in the Charter women were given a place,” Dickinson wrote, “Six times the Charter mentions ‘without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.’” The presence of the female Barnard College dean as an American delegate engendered particular pride among the Federation representatives, though Gildersleeve proved resistant to suggestions by the female representatives of several Latin American nations that a specific UN commission to study women’s issues be established. Gildersleeve argued that more general human rights provisions incorporated women. Nevertheless, as previously noted, Gildersleeve

authorizing “intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the State concerned.” Some proponents of human rights argued that this clause undermined the ability of the UN to prevent such atrocities as the Holocaust, but the clause did enable acceptance of the broader human rights provisions sought by consulting organizations. On debates about human rights, the role of the Trusteeship Council, and colonialism at Dumbarton Oaks and the UN founding conference, see Anderson, Eyes Off the Prize, 35–57; Kennedy, The Parliament of Man, 41–42; and Borgwardt, New Deal for the World, 186–91.
also participated in the May 19 United Women's Conference, articulating a specific role for women in promoting public support for the United Nations after its creation.22

The women's conference was a lengthy one-day event that included three sessions—morning, afternoon, and evening—with upwards of fifteen speakers. NBC broadcast a portion of the meeting as a radio program, and speakers included official UN delegates, male and female, as well as representatives of women's civic groups. Speeches emphasized both the necessity of international organizing and the need for broad public support of such work, and speakers called specifically for the involvement of women in the UN's efforts. Esther Brunauer and Ruth Bryan Rhode, who represented the U.S. State Department at the event, stressed the importance of an informed citizenry to the success of international organizing for world peace. The United Nations would not succeed in an environment of "cynical distrust," they argued, and, as Rhode put it, "the women of the world must see to it that there is a climate of thinking in which these institutions can survive." Minerva Bernardino and Bertha Lutz, representing the Dominican Republic and Brazil respectively, reiterated the importance of women's involvement with international organizing, urging the strengthening of existing women's organizations and their collective support for global peace and reconstruction efforts. Lucy Dickinson of the

22 Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 162; Dickinson, "A Priceless Opportunity," 2; Margaret E. Galey, "Forerunners in Women's Quest for Partnership," in *Women, Politics, and the United Nations*, edited by Anne Winslow (Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 1995), 1–8; Shoesmith, "United Women's Conference," 10–11; Gildersleeve explained in her memoir that she felt strongly that the establishment of a specific women's commission risked allowing men to exclude women from "the other commission and groups, saying that [women] had plenty of scope in their own organization." This, she felt, would be contrary to the promotion of full equality for women. Gildersleeve also feared that the long speeches by such feminists as Bertha Lutz of Brazil alienated more male delegates than they persuaded. "[A]t this stage in the advancement of women," Gildersleeve explained in her memoir, "the best policy for them is not to talk much about the abstract principles of women's rights but to do good work in any job they get, better work if possible than their male colleagues." For Gildersleeve's account of her experiences at the San Francisco conference, see Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve, *Many A Good Crusade* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), 315–57, quotes on pp. 352, 353.
General Federation similarly argued for unity among women, American and foreign, in support of global understanding. "One of the greatest things for our organizations of the future is that we should learn to work with the women of the world," Dickinson insisted. Conference participants thus envisioned the work of promoting the UN as a project that would encourage activist women around the world to join together.\(^{23}\)

Yet conference participants also contended that women's concrete work in support of the UN would necessarily take place on a smaller scale. Like Virginia Gildersleeve, many speakers highlighted women's traditional educational, social, and cultural work as the most effective means of building an informed citizenry within the nations of the world. AAUW representative Helen Reid argued that because of pressure brought to bear by the consultant organizations, the Charter included provisions addressing not only collective security but "the social and economic problems that make war possible." These areas in particular should interest women, she suggested. Constance Sporborg similarly highlighted the Charter's human rights provisions and argued that "[t]he chief job that we women have to do when we leave San Francisco is to dedicate ourselves to a complete education of our children so that they" would have a full understanding of the need for peace in "the human family." Gildersleeve herself stated that "the worst peril hanging over mankind during these next difficult years springs from ignorance and misunderstanding," and declared that women's work with the cultural

\(^{23}\) Shoesmith, "United Women's Conference," 9–11, 18–19; both Lutz and Bernardino were active members of the Inter-American Commission of Women, an organization of women from North and South American states created by the Pan American Union in 1928 to consider women's issues. The Commission aggressively lobbied both the Pan American Union and the League of Nations for equal rights and equal nationality treaties for women, with some success. For more information on the Commission, see Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own, 199–242, and Rupp, Worlds of Women, 146–47, 221. Lutz was so persistent in her demands for a UN Women's Commission during her time in San Francisco that some delegates to the founding conference nicknamed her "Lutzwaffe." See Gildersleeve, Many A Good Crusade, 353.
exchange programs provided for by the Charter, as well as their attention to the work of the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) addressing “the great problems . . . affect[ing] the home and the well-being of children,” would help counteract these threats. In each of these cases, speakers pressed women to work for the sustenance of global stability by educating their families, promoting cultural awareness, and protecting children.  

This concerted attempt to direct women’s attention to the economic, social, and cultural mission of the United Nations derived in part from the structure and role of the Economic and Social Council within the United Nations organization. The responsibilities apportioned to ECOSOC in the UN Charter included the promotion of “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress,” as well as “international cultural and educational cooperation,” and “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” These areas dovetailed nicely with many of the historic global reform efforts of women’s organizations. The Council also managed numerous subsidiary standing committees of interest to women’s groups, including the UN Commission on Human Rights and, later, the Commission on the Status of Women. In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could be granted consultative status with the Council, notionally allowing these organizations to participate in the Council’s work. The struggle women’s groups faced in their attempts to be represented at the League of Nations meant that the prospect of a direct linkage with the international machinery of the UN appealed to these organizations, many of which chose officers to serves as official ECOSOC consultants. Thus, the issues addressed by

ECOSOC reflected the areas in which many middle-class women’s groups had focused previous activism, and the mechanics of this committee allowed women direct representation at the United Nations. These factors drew the attention of women’s organizations to the Council from the start. Later, when the UN became more politically charged, American women supporting the international organization would rely on this economic, social, and cultural focus in their attempts to shift public attention away from the political battles surrounding UN actions.25

In addition to this somewhat pragmatic interest in ECOSOC, American women’s clubs’ attention to social and cultural work derived from a more fundamental understanding among clubwomen of their own role in American society. The vision expressed by the female participants in the UN women’s conference demonstrates the dual tactics of women’s clubs that persisted throughout the postwar period: the promotion of women’s civil and political authority and the simultaneous invocation of women’s distinctive domestic and communal responsibilities. Both were to be used in support of international organizing, according to conference participants. While American clubwomen advocated the Charter’s general prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, they did not abandon their understanding of women’s distinctive duties to home and community. Rather, they argued that one could facilitate the other; women could work in their homes and communities in support of an international organization that would, in turn, facilitate women’s advancement in national and international society. This vision,

25 The idea for creating ECOSOC actually originated in the League of Nations, on the eve of the Second World War, when delegates proposed that a powerful independent commission be established to expand the social and economic work of the League. War prevented the execution of the plan, but participants in the San Francisco Conference incorporated the idea into the United Nations Charter. On ECOSOC, see Kennedy, Parliament of Man, 143–205, 215–39; Simons, United Nations, 54–68; and Deborah Stienstra, Women’s Movements and International Organizations (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1994), 81.
which might be characterized—using historian Karen Offen’s terminology—as
“relational feminism,” formed the foundation of progressive women’s clubs work in
support of the United Nations in the postwar period. Domesticated United Nations
activism would employ women’s capacity as family and community caretakers both to
contribute to global stability and to involve women in the political culture of the day. In
so doing, this work would educate American women about politics and enable their
increased participation in the centers of political power in American society. It was a
distinctly white and middle-class vision, with little to offer toward addressing class or
racial inequalities. Nevertheless, these middle-class clubwomen believed, by adopting the
role of community foreign affairs educators, they could shape world politics and advance
their own claims to national political authority.26

Representatives of consulting women’s clubs thus made the most of their position
at the UN’s founding conference. The General Federation’s California president Muriel
Shoesmith remained in San Francisco for the whole two months of the conference,
producing reports for circulation to Federation clubs. Constance Sporborg and Lucy
Dickinson stayed four weeks and, when they departed, Dickinson reported that the two
“could not get a taxi to take us over the Oakland Bridge to our train” because of their
vastly expanded luggage, “which included a heavy case of daily papers.”27 Yet other
women’s organizations that were not invited as official consultants also sent
representatives to attend sessions at the conference. Among these observers was Florence

26 On United Women’s Conference, see Shoesmith, “United Women’s Conference,” 9–11, 18–19; on
“relational feminism,” see Karen Offen, “Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach,” Signs,

27 Eventually the women prevailed upon State Department representatives, who provided them with an
H. Becker, national chairman of national defense for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Becker later recalled her visit as "a rare experience, one in a lifetime." "The committee meetings were stimulative," she remembered, "for the discussions of the problems were thought-provoking." Becker's presence at the conference suggests the breadth of interest in the United Nations among American women's organizations. The DAR's historic position on international organizing made the group a somewhat unlikely participant in the UN's founding congress. Yet DAR members demonstrated a lively interest in the deliberations surrounding the founding of the international organization. They too believed that they had the power, and the responsibility, to contribute to the global order in the making.\footnote{Proceedings, 54\textsuperscript{th} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1945), pp. 232–33, DAR Archive, Daughters of the American Revolution National Headquarters, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as DAR Archive); and Florence H. Becker, "Report of National Defense Committee," Proceedings, 55\textsuperscript{th} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1946), pp. 307–8, DAR Archive.}

Prior to the conference, the Daughters were uneasy about the implications of world organizing. In a report mailed to members in 1945, when the DAR's annual congress did not meet, Becker reported that DAR chapters across the country, like General Federation clubwomen, had conducted studies of the "world reorganization plans" presented in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. "We work for a righteous Peace," Becker explained, "but are unwilling to give up our sovereign possessions; meaning defense of Home, School, Church; [and] defense of the Constitution of the United States. . . ."\footnote{Proceedings, 54\textsuperscript{th} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1945), pp. 232–33, DAR Archive.} The particular language chosen reflects both the DAR's history as a patriotic organization and the fact that the DAR's national defense department sponsored the group's foreign policy program. The DAR, like the General Federation, was founded in
1890, in response to the Sons of the American Revolution’s relegation of its female members to “honorary” status. The group’s founders, like its later members, were elite white women who could prove through genealogical research some direct familial connection to soldiers, sailors, or other supporters of the American Revolution. The Daughters also actively recruited the wives of prominent politicians, both Republican and Democrat, and of military leaders, thereby cementing the elite status of the group. Historian Francesca Morgan argues that the DAR emerged primarily as a result of the Civil War and represented an attempt to unify Americans into a figurative nation based on “white supremacy and elite class status.” The Daughters excluded black women from their membership rolls from the group’s inception, first informally and, after 1894, officially. In its early years, the DAR focused its activism on glorifying the national state by preserving and celebrating its history. The establishment of historic house museums, celebrations of Revolutionary heroes like George Washington, and efforts against flag desecration typified the DAR’s early work. In keeping with its commitment to national reconciliation, the DAR did not dwell on the tension between national patriotism and states’ rights in these early years. Rather, these two coexisted quietly, as the Daughters focused on safeguarding America’s Revolutionary heritage. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the DAR itself was a centralized organization, with a good deal of authority vested in its national officers.\(^3^0\)

In addition to early preservation work, the Daughters vocally supported American empire as the spreading of white Christian civilization for the benefit of the world. In the wake of the Spanish American War, the Daughters established chapters in Hawaii,

---

Alaska, Cuba, the Philippines, the Panama Canal Zone, and Puerto Rico, populated primarily by wives of military leaders and diplomats, as well as missionary women. DAR members also involved themselves in progressive reform in the early twentieth century. Though much of this work centered on Americanizing immigrants, the Daughters supported some broader reform campaigns; DAR chapters campaigned against child labor along with the National Consumer’s League and worked to support the women’s nationality rights campaign. Suffrage proved such a divisive issue among DAR members that the Daughters did not officially endorse the measure until 1920. Yet they did support women’s consistent involvement with political issues, regularly advancing maternalist arguments about the centrality of the home to the American nation. During World War I, the Daughters joined a variety of women’s organizations to support military preparedness and national defense, and in the early years after the war, the DAR supported U.S. involvement with the League of Nations and the World Court. Yet the First World War, the pacifist activism that followed it, and the consolidation of Communist power in Russia also fueled the DAR’s longstanding antiradical tendencies, leading to a rise in prominence of conservative leaders within the group.31

The growing conservatism of the DAR prompted a reversal of a majority of the organization’s progressive positions beginning in the mid-1920s. The national DAR officers abandoned their prior support of the Sheppard-Towner Act and began attacking not only labor leaders (whom they had frequently opposed) but women’s pacifist organizations such as WILPF and any group belonging to Carrie Chapman Catt’s moderate National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War. The Daughters National

Defense Committee was also founded during this period, in 1925, in response to "the wave of pacifism and entrance of foreign ideologies into . . . American life . . . ." As Florence Becker later explained, "it was vital to awaken our members to the dangers within our gates—dangers which threatened to overthrow our system of government." These dangers included "total disarmament and the inculcation of new and false doctrines into the minds of our people, especially youth." This committee became the DAR's best funded program, in part because the group levied a small annual fee on its members in support of national defense work. Among other efforts, the National Defense Committee compiled lists of subversive publications, organizations, and individuals, and worked to prevent public appearances by any speaker they deemed too radical. Notably, the Daughters also reversed their position on American involvement in the World Court in 1930, voting to oppose all "entangling alliances which could operate to limit full liberty of decision in international affairs" (this position did not inhibit their support of American involvement overseas, particularly in the Western Hemisphere). Though the Daughters briefly supported Franklin Roosevelt's 1933 emergency measures in response to the Depression, the Daughters remained a profoundly conservative organization up through the Second World War.32

Though the purpose of the DAR's National Defense Committee—to prevent the penetration of radical international thinking into the minds of American citizens—made this committee an odd and ill-suited repository for UN support, the committee had historically developed the Daughters' official positions on foreign affairs questions. As a result, it was National Defense Chairman Florence Becker who represented the

organization at the United Nations Charter conference. When the United Nations Charter was approved by a majority of participating nations, including the United States, on October 24, 1945, the DAR was among the national civic organizations that expressed tentative support for the international body.\textsuperscript{33} DAR leaders encouraged local chapters to study the Charter's language and to familiarize themselves with the agencies it founded, particularly the Economic and Social Council. Becker explained one rationale for this attention in an address at the DAR's 1946 Continental Congress. "[I]f we are not alert and on the beam as to the daily happenings in national and world affairs, we may lose all those things we hold dear . . . our homes, churches, and schools."\textsuperscript{34} Predictably, Becker's language was more ominous and defensive than any endorsement of international awareness propounded by progressive women's organizations. Nevertheless, the connection she forged between local affairs and national and international politics mirrored the structure proposed by General Federation leaders. DAR members had both a patriotic and a domestic responsibility to track the course of foreign affairs closely, Becker suggested, and their organization would develop programs to provide them with the means to perform this duty.

In the wake of the UN Charter's approval, the General Federation's leaders also dedicated themselves to promoting United Nations awareness among their member clubs. Consultants Dickinson and Sporborg returned to their national offices with particular ideas on how the Federation could mobilize its membership in support of the UN's goals. Sporborg almost immediately integrated foreign policy work into all the Federation's


\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Proceedings, 55\textsuperscript{th} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution} (1946), pp. 306–8, DAR Archive.
program areas, with particular focus on educating clubwomen about foreign nations, foreign policy, and the UN, and on supporting "legislation designed to increase international cooperation." She explained her rationale to the Federation's membership in an article describing her experience at the San Francisco conference. "This very recognition of our organization [by the State Department] brings its resultant exhortation to us who are members," Sporborg declared, "to continue our own education and evaluation of the close range and the long range developments in international cooperation; to condition ourselves and those whose paths we may daily cross in our respective communities to our role in spurring our representatives in Congress to vote the will of the people into our foreign policy." Sporborg's vision connected the General Federation's tradition of community activism directly to the creation of foreign policy by the American state. In so doing, Sporborg, together with the Federation's leadership, fashioned a peculiar course for their local clubs. Clubwomen across the country were to use their connections within their home towns to promote the agenda of the United Nations at the level of national politics, thereby ensuring the international organization's success. As one 1945 editorial in the General Federation Clubwoman put it, "No self-respecting woman citizen, in these anxious days of fateful decisions, can afford to indulge in a single moment of disinterest or inactivity in her own local community. No community is so small or so far away as to be unimportant to the new world in the making. Communities are composed of people . . . . It is the people who must unite for

35 "International Program of the General Federation of Women's Clubs" Memo, Program Records, Dickinson (1944–1947), Box 1, Folder 23, WHRC.

world peace.”37 This connection of the local to the national and then to the international constituted a kind of civic internationalism that urged Federation members to use an investment in global politics and foreign policy to expand their participation in domestic, American civic culture.

The Federation’s 1946 national convention, the first in three years, reflected both the group’s increased focus on international affairs and the sense that this focus could serve the clubwomen’s domestic agenda. The convention took place in June, at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. Opening the meeting on the morning of June 18, President Lucy Dickinson welcomed her audience with another call to action. “We are very happy to meet again after our military victory to plan for our active part in a world of united nations,” she affirmed, “It is not an exaggeration to say there must be no diminishing of effort and that the tremendous woman power which contributed so much during war years must continue in the interests of peace.”38 Women’s work in the postwar years would merely continue the work they had done during the war itself. This call to service mobilized the cultural approval of women’s war work and deployed it on behalf of another kind of activism.

Among the early business of the day was the approval of a long list of resolutions that had accumulated during the Federation’s wartime hiatus. The first of these was a resolution in support of the United Nations. The text of the resolution read,

Resolved: That the General Federation of Women’s Clubs . . . reaffirms its endorsement of full participation by the United States in the United Nation Organization and in specialized agencies for international cooperation in fields including education, science, health, relief, and trade; and further

---


38 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, p. 4, WHRC.
the General Federation urges prompt ratification by the United States of: 1. Constitutions of such international organizations as may be established by the United Nations; 2. Adequate financial support for all such agencies; 3. Active participation in their work.\textsuperscript{39}

The Federation urged unconditional support of the UN by the United States government, politically and financially, and the resolution was adopted without controversy. Over the course of the convention, the Federation also approved continued support for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, support for a United Nations commission on atomic energy, and Congressional acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice under the auspices of the UN.\textsuperscript{40} In addition to approving UN structures, the foreign policy education of Federation representatives included an evening of speeches from representatives of Security Council countries, including the Honorable Herschel B. Johnson, the deputy representative of the United States on the UN Security Council, and Mrs. Antonina Koltsova, the USSR’s embassy secretary.\textsuperscript{41}

Members attending the conference also heard from Captain Harold Stassen, a member of the American delegation at the UN Charter Conference. During the question and answer session following the address, Federation members expressed concern over the veto power of Security Council members and asked if the UN could successfully control atomic power according to the Baruch Plan. The Baruch Plan had been presented to the atomic energy commission on June 14, less than ten days earlier.\textsuperscript{42} Clearly, Federation representatives kept a close watch on UN-related foreign policy questions.

\textsuperscript{39} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, pp. 13–15, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{40} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, pp. 86, 194–96, 577–80, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{41} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, pp. 673–708, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{42} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, pp. 66, 71, WHRC. The Baruch Plan was a proposal introduced at an early meeting of the UN Atomic Energy Commission by US representative
Reports by state presidents on the 1946 work of clubs in their home states indicated that the encouragement of Federation leaders was also bearing fruit at the grassroots. Connecticut clubwomen, for example, had divided the world into "spheres of influence" and assigned different spheres to women in different counties around the state. These women then informed themselves on the economic, social, and political conditions in their assigned sphere, in preparation to present the information at the state Federation's convention. The clubs' Fine Arts Departments even provided "authentically designed costumes" for the women presenting.\textsuperscript{43} Indiana reported the use of "study groups, state and local forums, public discussion groups, [and] publicity" in their effort to create "the public sentiment necessary to the success of the United Nations." Nebraska's representative explained that "world peace and security begins with an informed and enlightened citizenry at home," calling it "imperative" for local communities to launch "educational program[s] that will prepare each citizen to be a global citizen by cultivating a world state of mind." New York's representative echoed this sentiment, declaring, "[o]ur home town life can no longer be considered provincial. At this time in history we are the vital part of the national and of the international world . . . ." Pennsylvania state president Mrs. Paul Koenig even paired the language of domesticity with the language of foreign policy, asserting "Home need not make a domestic isolationist of woman. Today's world sees her in a federated club where adult education programs can be enjoyed, where fellowship prevails and where new horizons of all kinds await her.

---

Bernard Baruch. The plan suggested the establishment of an International Atomic Development Authority that would control the development of atomic energy worldwide. Intended to forestall a nuclear arms race, the plan eventually failed, in part because of the Soviet Union's refusal to endorse international control of nuclear power. Simons, _The United Nations_, 89–90.

\textsuperscript{43} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, p. 513, WHRC.
pleasure.” All of these club programs attempted to bring foreign affairs into local communities in concrete ways, cultivating world awareness through educational programs, publicity, even handicrafts. Federation women enthusiastically adopted the role of foreign affairs experts, using their traditional club programs to inform themselves and their neighbors about international issues. Rather than domestic isolationists, Federation clubwomen were domestic internationalists, merging the global with the local.44

Federation leaders at the conference acknowledged this local activism in a number of ways. In her address to the convened members, Second Vice-President Dorothy Houghton represented foreign affairs activism as simply one more step in the Federation’s expanding tradition of women’s civic and political involvement. “I think this Century of Progress which the women have taken upon themselves in the last hundred years could well be given in the outline 1846—females, 1896—ladies, 1946—women,” Houghton explained. After reminding her audience that the first paper at the Federation’s first conference discussed “Our Common Enemy—Dust,” Houghton continued, “You can see the way we laugh at those days . . . [in] the present days when clubwomen, with the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment and the doing away of discriminations, will have equal privileges with men and the citizenship that is rightfully ours.” Houghton then explained that she envisioned clubwomen justifying their expanded role in American society by submitting the money in their dormant scholarship funds to subsidize scholarships for children of the nations most important to United States foreign policy.

“The peace of the world depends on how the United States and Soviet Russia get along,”

Houghton concluded, “To get along, we have to understand each other, and what better way than through the students coming to our universities . . .”\textsuperscript{45} Here again, Federation members could directly affect American foreign policy with local activism in international affairs. They could use their longstanding scholarship programs in a new way, to promote the success of America’s relationships with its allies.

Membership Chairman Mrs. Preston L. Wettaw, meanwhile, credited the Federation’s growing membership to the group’s understanding of the particular postwar demands on women. “These demands are individual, community, national and international, all greater than ever before,” Wettaw contended, “Affiliation with the General Federation is one answer to the need of today for better informed women. . . . Women are awake to the fact that as individuals they are homemakers and citizens.”\textsuperscript{46} The Federation’s program, Wettaw suggested, allowed women to be both. In fact, by employing home life to promote international understanding, the Federation merged these two roles, crafting a civic internationalism that was particularly appealing to postwar women. The civic education the General Federation provided its members in their local, national, and international responsibilities encouraged increasing numbers of women to turn to the organization, Wettaw asserted. Supporting the UN was not only good for America and the world; it was good for the Federation’s membership rolls as well.

Even as the General Federation solidified its support of the United Nations, the international organization confronted its earliest, and what would become its most significant and persistent, stumbling blocks. In early February, Stalin announced that

\textsuperscript{45} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, pp. 33–35, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{46} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1946, Box 18, pp. 81–82, WHRC.
armament would be the primary focus of the Soviet Union’s government over the next five years, prompting the U.S. State Department to send a barrage of questions to George Kennan, then a mid-level Foreign Service officer at the Moscow embassy. Kennan responded on February 22, 1946, with his famous 8,000-word telegram that became the basis for the United States’ strategy of containment during the Cold War. Kennan’s assurance of continuing Soviet intransigence fueled conflicts in the budding United Nations. In January 1946, Iran’s ambassador accused the Soviet Union of interference in Iranian internal affairs. The Soviet troops that had occupied Iran during the Second World War had not been withdrawn and were encouraging secessionist Azerbaijanis in the north of the country. The ambassador insisted that the UN investigate, and, with American encouragement, the Security Council agreed to discuss it. When the issue came before the Council on February 16, Soviet ambassador Andrey Vyshinsky used the first veto ever to quash the resolution. Though Soviet representatives assured the UN that negotiations with Iran for withdrawal were proceeding, Iran persisted in asking the Security Council to consider their complaint. The Soviets then walked out of a March 27 Security Council meeting because the Council would not postpone their Iran discussions. Though the troops were withdrawn not long after, the Iran crisis tarnished the UN’s reputation and inaugurated a long series of Cold War battles between the Soviets and the Americans within, and outside of, the international body.


48 Meisler, United Nations, 28–31; Gaddis, Cold War, 28. No doubt this incident prompted the General Federation’s questions on veto power during Harold Stassen’s address at their convention.
These conflicts within the UN did not go unnoticed among the women’s organizations that had attended the UN’s founding conference. The Daughters of the American Revolution held their 1946 convention in April of that year, just a month after the Iran crisis. At this meeting, the Daughters considered their first official resolution supporting the United Nations project. The careful wording of the resolution reflects the Daughters’ very nuanced reading of the UN’s role in the world and of America’s relationship to the UN. The text stated:

Whereas, Fifty-one nations have declared their intention to cooperate in efforts toward international understanding and permanent world peace, and have solemnly agreed to abide by the rules laid down in the Charter of the United Nations; and Whereas, This Charter offers for the first time in the history of the world practical and peaceful methods of settling international disputes by way of investigation, arbitration, conciliation, judicial review and, as a last resort only, application of enforcement measures; Resolved, That the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution give hearty cooperation and support to the United Nations program for justice and peace throughout the world. Resolved, That the Society continue its constructive campaign of education to prevent the confusion of this plan of world responsibility with any plan for World Government involving world citizenship, universal currency, free trade, and dominance of the United States by the peoples of other nations.49

Thus, although DAR members pledged to cooperate with the United Nations to further its goals, they built into that support a fundamental distinction between world arbitration to prevent war and any compromise of America’s interests abroad. The Daughters were willing to go only so far; becoming “world citizens” did not appeal. Yet the Daughters also included in their resolution a continuation of their foreign affairs educational campaign for and by their members in American communities. These educational efforts focused, not exclusively on promoting the United Nations (as the Federation’s campaigns did), but on more thoroughly developing the public’s understanding of the Daughters’

particular vision for world cooperation. This vision rejected notions of global
interdependence in favor of more absolute promotion of American interests. Still, at this
juncture, the DAR’s careful attention to foreign policy resembled that of other middle-
class women’s organizations in the postwar period, and the group’s leaders sought to
mobilize women in their local chapters to similar levels of geopolitical awareness.50

In spite of brewing controversy, Federation leaders expanded their campaign to
educate clubwomen across the country about international relations, and particularly the
UN, as part of the group’s larger program of citizenship training. As one editorial in the
*Federation Clubwoman* explained, Federation leaders hoped “the many thousands of
women living in hundreds of cities, towns, villages, and on the farms of these United
States” would do their part to aid the U.S. in making the “greatest possible contribution to
general world order.”51 The choice of New York as the UN’s first temporary meeting
location confirmed the sense of American commitment to the international body among
Federation clubwomen and other Americans. The Security Council held many of its
earliest meetings, including those during the Iran episode, in the gymnasium of Hunter
College in New York City, and observers of all kinds flocked to get tickets to watch the
new organization in action. Women’s groups joined other non-governmental
organizations in sending official observers to monitor UN activities, and Constance
Sporborg became the accredited UN observer for the General Federation.52

---


51 A.C.W., “Who Are We?” *General Federation Clubwoman*, 26 (October 1946), 11.

Together with this sense of ownership, Federation leaders paired a commitment to advancing their larger women’s rights agenda, which they hoped their organization’s dedication to promoting the UN would further. To this end, the Federation carefully tracked the progress of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Controversy plagued the development of the CSW. As previously noted, representatives at the UN’s founding conference were divided on the question of establishing such a commission; Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz argued aggressively in favor of a women’s commission, while U.S. delegate Virginia Gildersleeve voted against the measure. In the end, UN organizers determined that ECOSOC’s Commission on Human Rights would be responsible for any work to improve the status of women internationally. At its first meeting in 1946, in response to pressure from a number of prominent women’s organizations, the Economic and Social Council created a Sub-Commission on the Status of Women that would report to the Human Rights Commission, then chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. At this point, the General Federation joined with a larger group of women’s organizations working through the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Labor and the State Department to submit suggestions to the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women. Not satisfied with their indirect connection to ECOSOC and frustrated by Roosevelt’s opposition to their first attempt to introduce an equal rights resolution to the General Assembly, members of the Sub-Commission pressed immediately for full Commission status. Though Roosevelt and several other women in UN positions opposed this move, women’s organizations lobbied successfully for the change, which occurred in June 1946. When the Sub-Commission became the full Commission on the Status of Women on June 21, 1946, Federation president Lucy Dickinson expressed the hope that the
Federation’s involvement with the CSW would have domestic ramifications, as well. “Today, for the first time in history, the women of the world are represented on an international body solely devoted to achieving complete equality for them,” she wrote triumphantly, “I think this is a very thrilling thing and one which should inspire us to increase our efforts to secure such rights first of all for the women of our own country through the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.” As this demonstrates, Federation leaders connected even their early UN activism directly to their domestic political agenda.

Like the General Federation, other women’s organizations felt they had a particular stake in the doings of this new international body. Among these organizations was the National Council of Women (NCW). Founded in 1888, the NCW emerged from a conference sponsored by the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention. The NWSA intended the organization, along with its international counterpart, the International Council of Women, to be a clearinghouse for women’s groups that supported suffrage, temperance, and a host of other causes. Though originally conceived to spread suffrage activism, in practice the NCW’s mission was unfocused, and the group’s constitution committed women only to work for the “overthrow all forms of ignorance and injustice” and to apply “the Golden Rule to society, custom, and law.” Membership in the Council

---

was open to women of all races and religions, and the National Association of Colored Women joined, as did the Women's Relief Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Though NCW members worked to support women's nationality rights, for example, by the 1920s the organization served primarily as the United States chapter of the international organization. The group was nevertheless subjected to attacks by the Daughters of the American Revolution because WILPF was an active member. Capitulating to this criticism, NCW leaders pressured WILPF into withdrawing, and the group continued their moderate stance on peace activism throughout this period. By the 1940s, the Council's membership was declining and the remaining groups could not agree on an activist program. In response to this deterioration, in 1946, the Council's president, Lucy Milligan, suggested to the group's United Nations observer, Rose Peabody Parsons, that Parsons help conceive a plan to reinvigorate the organization.\footnote{Scott, Natural Allies, 127–28; Blair, Clubwoman as Feminist, 93–95; Bredbenner, Nationality of Her Own, 71; Cott, Grounding of Modern Feminism, 255–57; Rupp and Taylor, Survival in the Doldrums, 47; and Rose Parsons, "National Council of Women: Past—Present—Future," (1955), p. 1, in Series 1: General and Historical Materials, Fiche 005 (Box 1, Folder 5), National Council of Women of the United States Records, 1888–1976, Manuscripts and Archives Section, New York Humanities and Social Sciences Library, New York, New York (hereafter cited as NCW Records).}

Like many of her club counterparts, Parsons had a long volunteer career. Born in 1892, she worked with the Red Cross during both World Wars. She spent three years with a mobile hospital unit at the front during World War I, and the experience of helping treat badly wounded soldiers nurtured a desire to work for world peace. Though clearly a moderate peace activist, as suggested by her continued membership in the NCW, Parsons supported American involvement in international organizing even after the failure of the League of Nations. As she explained in an unpublished 1944 article, she felt that after the First World War, Americans had "failed to carry out the ideals for which millions of men
had died.” “We shut ourselves up in our own country,” Parsons wrote, “telling the rest of the world that we had saved their necks, now they could settle the mess they had made. We were not interested in helping the peace to endure and succeed, nor in ‘entangling alliances.’” This abdication of responsibility led to the Second World War, Parsons contended, and at its conclusion, Americans must not “go back to the same indifference, the same selfish interests.” The United Nations offered an alternative and, when the UN Charter was approved, Parsons became the UN observer for the NCW. When Milligan approached her for help in charting a new course for the NCW, Parsons concluded that investment in the United Nations offered the best chance to save the organization and grow its membership.55

On November 15, 1946, Parsons orchestrated a meeting of the UN observers of several women’s organizations at the Women’s City Club of New York. In addition to four representatives of the NCW, women from the Junior League, the American Women’s Voluntary Services, the Campfire Girls, the Girl Scouts, and the Pan-Pacific Women’s Association attended. At the informal two-hour session, the women discussed ways they could “help each other... by pooling our ideas and by finding some way of getting simple UN information to the grass roots, possibly by setting up some form of clearing house [of] information.” Though all six groups provided their members with some information on the UN already, the women felt their efforts could be more

55 Rose Parsons, “What Is Your Answer?” unpublished draft article, Series 9: Non-NCW Files, Rose Parsons Papers, Fiche 964 (Box 26 Folder 7), NCW Records, quotes on pp. 4, 5. Parsons submitted the article to numerous magazines, including the Atlantic Monthly, but failed to have it published. See rejection letters, Series 9: Non-NCW Files, Rose Parsons Papers, Fiche 965 (Box 26, Folder 8), NCW Records; for Parsons’ biographical information, see also “Rose Peabody Parsons” obituary, New York Times, April 6, 1985.
systematized and more influential if they were coordinated. Parsons set up a second meeting for November 22, 1946, and UN observers from eleven women’s organizations joined Parsons at this gathering, including members of the Country Women’s Council of the U.S., the United Council of Church Women, the League of Women Voters, and the National Council of Negro Women. Each woman reported on the make-up and size of her organization, what her group was doing already to promote the United Nations, and the ways in which the group’s infrastructure might be used to help support the UN. Most volunteered their group publications as a means of bringing information to communities across the country, and many suggested that the information circulated on the United Nations be made more comprehensible to the average American.

After some discussion, the women decided that “a program of action, not a publication, was most desirable,” and Eunice Carter, of the National Council of Negro Women, suggested that the group “might interest a newspaper chain in running a syndicated column each week which would catch the imagination and interest of readers.” The idea of an informational “clearing house” was also mentioned again. Fundamentally, the women felt that it was most important “to register the fact that 30 million women . . . with 30 million votes to back them up, believe in the UN and are supporting it . . . .” The meeting closed with the formation of a Steering Committee that included Eunice Carter of the National Council of Negro Women, Rose Parsons and

---

56 "Minutes of Meeting of November 15—Women's City Club," Series 9: Non-NCW Files, Rose Parsons Papers, Fiche 965 (Box 26, Folder 8), NCW Records; "Getting Started," Official History of the W.U.U.N., Carton 1, Folder 1, Women United for the United Nations Collection, Collection No. 70-70-78-M200, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as WUUN Collection); "Minutes of Meeting of November 22, 1946," Box 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection.

57 "Minutes of Meeting of November 22, 1946," Box 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection.
Helenka Pantaleoni of the NCW, Mrs. James Dawson of the Junior League, and Charlotte Boudreau of the Country Women's Council of the U.S. The women also unanimously agreed to invite all the UN observers for women's organizations to attend the next meeting, which would take place in two weeks. Thus, Women United for the United Nations (WUUN) was born, though that name was not chosen for the organization until January 1947.58

While the early plans of Women United to "publicize the 'one world' idea" were vague, membership in the group expanded rapidly. UN observers from close to thirty women's organizations joined over the group's next few meetings, including Constance Sporborg of the General Federation. The majority of WUUN members lived at Manhattan addresses, reflecting the middle- and upper-class make-up of the organizations that participated. Member groups ranged across the political spectrum from the Women's National Republic Club to WILPF, but the National Council of Women's moderate stance dominated the organization's perspective on activism. The group's discussions focused typically on "the necessity of reaching the average person with full information on the United Nations." At Women United's fourth meeting, Dorothy Lewis of the National Association of Women Broadcasters suggested the use of radio programs as a means of reaching women, and "it was agreed by all that the best way of getting across information, especially to women, was through human interest stories." The WUUN thus supported the idea that American women had a particular interest in the United Nations, and that they were the audience most worthy of a UN education. This focus on attracting the interest of women by publicizing so-called "human interest stories"—stories that

58 "Minutes of Meeting of November 22, 1946," Box 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection; on choice of name, see Mrs. Lloyd K. Garrison, "Brief History of Women United for the United Nations to 1956," Box 1, Folder 1, WUUN Collection.
filtered the purpose of the United Nations through the domesticated lens of human and family relations—typified Women United’s programs. The UN observers consistently focused their energies on highlighting the social and cultural aspects of the United Nations mission, initially because they felt (as Lewis suggested) that this was the message most accessible to their female supporters and later because they hoped their emphasis on society and culture would help them avoid the pitfalls surrounding the more “political” aspects of international organizing.\(^59\)

Lewis’s proposed radio program turned out to be Women United’s first official venture. In March 1947, the WUUN cooperated with Lewis’s organization and the United Nations Radio Division to launch “UN News for Women Broadcasters,” a bulletin written by WUUN members and published by the UN’s Department of Public Information, with whom the WUUN frequently worked. Though the bulletin initially went to only 300 broadcasters, by 1956 circulation had risen to 3,000.\(^60\) Women United members took full advantage of the opportunity to write for a wide American audience. Leah White Horwitz, UN observer for the National Women’s Conference of the American Ethical Union, remembered her satisfaction at seeing her work in print. “What do you do when you are asked to cover an important event for the UNITED NATIONS NEWS FOR WOMEN BROADCASTERS?” Horwitz wrote in an account of her involvement with the WUUN, “I will tell you. You hug [AAUW observer and project coordinator] Janet Robb for joy, and try to hide your pride when your story appears word

---

\(^59\) Meeting Minutes, December 6, 1946, Carton 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection; Meeting Minutes, December 20, 1946, Carton 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection; for Manhattan addresses of WUUN members, see membership lists in “Who’s Who” section, Carton 1, Folder 2, WUUN Collection; for a general account of the WUUN’s broad membership, see Susan Frances Dion, “Challenges to Cold War Orthodoxy: Women and Peace, 1945–1963,” Ph. D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1991, esp. pp. 80–85.

\(^60\) Garrison, “Brief History,” Box 1, Folder 1, WUUN Collection.
for word as you had written it.” Women United thus began a tradition of using the skills and connections of their female members to reach other women across the nation, all in the name of promoting the United Nations. In the process, they solidified a network of women committed to shaping American foreign policy by molding public opinion at home.

In another early campaign, Women United sought to mobilize support for the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, or UNICEF. On a visit to the UN with an acquaintance in September 1946, NCW member Helenka Pantaleoni encountered a future UNICEF board member, who told the two visitors about the plan to create an emergency fund for children. Pantaleoni was immediately enthusiastic. When Rose Parsons asked her at the next WUUN meeting to chair a committee, Pantaleoni instead volunteered to serve as the liaison between Women United and the Children’s Fund, when it was up and running. “I had faith in the international potential of such a fund . . .” she recalled, “and . . . I felt almost like a midwife at its birth!” Pantaleoni energized Women United members, and the organizations they represented, to help ensure the donation of a substantial amount of funding to UNICEF by the United States government. “[T]o the greatest extent possible we mobilized the thirty-odd national women’s organizations which were associated . . . with the WUUN, and who had access to many millions of our fellow citizenesses, to make heard their voices in the halls of our elected representatives in Congress,” Pantaleoni explained, “[T]he efforts of Women United made a significant contribution in the early ‘crisis’ days of UNICEF.”

61 Leah Horwitz, “WHAT DO YOU DO . . . ?” Carton 1, Folder 6, WUUN Collection.
supporting work for children, Women United's UNICEF campaign tapped into the longer traditions of child welfare activism on which many women's clubs had cut their activist teeth. In asking women to access the political power structure by contacting their Congressional representatives, Women United paired citizenship education for women with UN organizing. This familiar pattern, invoking women's domestic activism to support international organizing, would continue as Women United relied on their network of women's clubs to promote other UN causes.

While the WUUN was getting off the ground, turmoil persisted in the UN. In 1947, in response to a British request, the General Assembly created a Special Committee on Palestine charged with considering the future governance of the region. In its report, presented in September, the group recommended that British control be terminated, that Palestine be partitioned into sovereign Jewish and Arab states, and that Jerusalem be internationalized. The General Assembly approved these recommendations, but when the British quickly began relinquishing control of the region, fighting broke out between Arab and Jewish populations. The longstanding conflict over the state of Israel had begun.\(^\text{63}\) That same year, the Cold War escalated. In December 1946, Greece requested UN assistance in dealing with the Communist states of Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, which Greek representatives alleged were meddling in Greek politics. A UN Commission investigated and substantiated the charges. Then, on March 12, 1947, President Truman asked Congress for funds to aid the governments of Greece and Turkey, using as justification the argument that would become known as the Truman

---

\(^\text{63}\) The British had been given a League of Nations mandate to govern Palestine but were eager to relinquish it due to turmoil in the region. This carryover of League conflict into the United Nations is significant; certainly this reinforced the connection between these two international organizations, one of which had failed, in the minds all American citizens. Simons, *United Nations*, 106–9; Meisler, *United Nations*, 39–43.
Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine held that the U.S. would support foreign nations, both economically and militarily, in resisting Communism. UN representatives received this announcement with hostility, since it seemed to circumvent UN authority. Truman’s plan also fueled the growing hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union, which continued to hamper UN diplomacy.\textsuperscript{64}

Controversy within the United Nations seemed only to cement the dedication of the WUUN and its member organizations to fostering American support. In May 1947, for example, the WUUN invited State Department Public Liaison Doris Cochrane and New York Times reporter Virginia Blood to a meeting to discuss press coverage of the UN across the nation. Women United members complained that the coverage was “inadequate” and that “most of whatever news is published is either negative in approach or too complicated in presentation.” When the discussion touched on the problem of negative and “sensational” headlines mentioning foreign nations, and particularly Russia, however, WUUN members proved that they were not immune to brewing Cold War controversy. One member suggested “that the group stick to matters directly involving the UN and avoid any ‘pressure’ tactics.” Significantly, this meeting also provided WUUN members an opportunity to confront a State Department representative about the makeup of the committee formed to discuss UNESCO; despite the preponderance of women in the field of teaching, one WUUN member noted, “not one woman participated in the discussion.” The group then evaluated “opportunities for women in State Department and UN service,” concluding that “women should be encouraged to qualify

\textsuperscript{64} Gaddis, \textit{Cold War}, 95; Simons, \textit{United Nations}, 89–90.
themselves for such jobs on intermediate and top levels.\textsuperscript{65} This discussion suggests one rationale for the WUUN’s steady commitment to UN work; this work offered these representatives of American women’s organizations a continued and direct connection the offices of American political administration and an opportunity to promote women’s involvement therein.

The General Federation, too, remained committed to UN activism as a means of forging connections among local action, national politics, and international affairs. Federation leaders expanded their UN programs for local clubs. Informational pieces about women from other nations and about new UN programs appeared in the monthly club magazine.\textsuperscript{66} Federation president Lucy Dickinson also reminded Federation members to participate politically. “No longer can we lean on our family or our town or city fathers, or the President of the United States, or Congress, or the United Nations,” she instructed her readers in one editorial, “It behooves each one of us in the vast membership of our General Federation of Women’s Clubs to behave as though the responsibility of the world were on the shoulders of us individually.”\textsuperscript{67} The Federation’s 1947 conference, held in late June in New York, featured a number of events debating the ways women could most effectively participate in postwar politics, both national and international. One roundtable discussion, broadcast on the radio, considered the topic “Are Women Failing to Use Their Power to Prevent War?”\textsuperscript{68} This conference also

\textsuperscript{65} Meeting Minutes, May 2, 1947, Carton 1, Folder 7, WUUN Collection.


\textsuperscript{68} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1947, Box 19, pp. 84–110, WHRC.
featured keynote addresses by two luminaries of internationalism and women’s activism in the United States: Eleanor Roosevelt and Pearl S. Buck. Both Buck and Roosevelt directed Federation clubwomen to focus on international activism with a domestic twist.

Roosevelt resonated with postwar Federation clubwomen particularly, both because of her prominence as an internationalist and because her own activist roots were in the club movement. She had been a member of the DAR, the League of Women Voters, and the Women’s City Club of New York, and beginning particularly in the 1920s, had been involved in a host of women’s reform campaigns. Among these campaigns, Roosevelt lobbied hard for U.S. involvement in the World Court, even after America’s failure to enter the League of Nations. Roosevelt’s participation in these efforts mirrored the backgrounds of many Federation leaders, and she maintained an association with the General Federation throughout her tenure as First Lady. When Roosevelt cemented her internationalist credentials by taking a prominent posting as the American representative to the UN’s Commission on Human Rights, General Federation leaders began inviting her to speak to their members about international organizing, and Roosevelt appeared at several of the group’s annual meetings in the postwar years.\(^6^9\) In 1947, Roosevelt spoke very generally on her work with the United Nations. Encouraging her audience to bear with the UN through controversies, Roosevelt delineated a specific, and local, role for women. “I want you to remember that it is machinery that you are working with . . . and that you make it work often not by working directly with the United Nations,” Roosevelt explained, “You make it work by what you do in your own

---

communities, by the things you build there which spread out through your representatives into your national government.” Roosevelt also encouraged particular focus on the work of the Economic and Social Council and of the Minorities and Discrimination Sub-Committee. In response to a question about what “instrument” women had that they might use most effectively in politics, Roosevelt cited “[t]heir ability to influence their own families in thought and action and to carry that out into their communities.”

Pearl S. Buck also lectured at the Federation’s 1947 convention. The daughter of two Presbyterian missionaries to China, Buck was by 1947 a well-known author and pacifist. A member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Buck had also campaigned for women’s rights, civil rights for African Americans, the rights of mentally retarded children, and to promote Asian-American cultural understanding over the course of her long career. Along with W. E. B. Du Bois, Buck had been a loud critic of the failure of both the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and the United Nations Charter to counter European colonialism; in one article, Buck labeled the UN “a poultice put on a cancer.” Nevertheless, she had long been an advocate of international cooperation and women’s rights, and it was in this capacity that she spoke to the Federation audience in 1947. In spite of her established support for the ERA, Buck often paired women’s maternal responsibilities with her advocacy for women’s equality, arguing that women could raise their children to eschew sex discrimination. Buck’s 1947 Federation address similarly focused on women’s distinctly gendered responsibility for the promotion of world peace. Buck declared in her address that “only women can make the world one” because their commonality as women transcended any national boundaries that might divide them. As the world was “one great household,” Buck believed women should use

---

their domestic skills to foster international harmony. "[T]he troubles that unsettle the world today are primarily ones which lie within the sphere of woman's business," Buck argued, "They are matters of housekeeping, teaching, and health. . . . The time has come now for woman, for you and for me, to consider the world her home and to plan her housekeeping on a world scale." Women must also keep their "problem sons," future male leaders, from disrupting the peace. In order to accomplish all of these goals, women should reject "passivity" and step into their roles as world housekeepers, both by using their women's organizations to "increase support for [international] agencies and put pressure upon them for results" and by "act[ing] as official members of these agencies with men." This use of domestic imagery to encourage national and international political "housekeeping" harkened back to the Federation's roots in settlement and local community work. Rhetoric of this type, employed repeatedly by Federation leaders as well, encouraged the sense among members that the local and the international, the foreign and the domestic, were intimately connected. Work in one realm could directly affect conditions in the other.

Notwithstanding their protestations of loyalty to UN work, debates at this same 1947 conference revealed that there were limits to the Federation's promotion of internationalism in local communities. When a resolution supporting required foreign language and history education for high school students came before the assembly, a heated debate ensued. Federation members expressed concern that "rural boys and girls" would have little use for foreign language skills and would struggle to pass the required

---

courses, thereby compromising their education. One member also questioned the utility of “these courses in history and economics and culture of foreign nations” that were sometimes taught “before we have any history of the United States.” The resolution eventually passed, but only with an amendment removing the provision that the foreign language and history courses be “required.”

More fundamental divides compromised a resolution encouraging the broadening of immigration quotas to admit America’s fair share of displaced persons from Europe. Florida clubwoman Paquita Rabell expressed concern that admitting Europeans who were “broken in health, mentally ill, [and] embittered” would be detrimental to American citizenship and would undermine the ability of veterans to find employment. Though a number of clubwomen present, including one from Denmark, defended the resolution, those rejecting “the excess of unwanted populations from Europe” won out, and the resolution was defeated. Several days later, after the decision was reported in the media and derided by Pearl Buck in her address, a member from Illinois moved that the Federation reconsider their decision. New Jersey state president Mrs. R. W. Cornelson spoke for the internationalists in the group when she explained, “I feel that our General Federation lost considerable prestige by its vote of the other morning . . . and that we now have an opportunity to reassume our leadership in world thinking.” Debate again ensued, and after considerable wrangling, Federation members voted to reverse their original decision and support the admission of displaced persons. Nevertheless, the resolution’s initial failure revealed some fissures in the Federation’s support for “one world.” The fact that the loss of public “prestige” seems to have motivated the reconsideration reflects

---

one of the Federation’s reasons for supporting internationalism: the status it lent their
orGANIZATION on the national stage.

These suspicious rumblings among General Federation members found more
overt expression among the Daughters of the American Revolution. Though the
Daughters had early on expressed an albeit careful commitment to international
organizing for peace, DAR members began studiously modulating their support of the
work of the United Nations as early as 1947. At the group’s national convention that
year, DAR leaders’ efforts to encourage foreign affairs awareness among their members
had clearly borne fruit. Several state regents described extensive participation by local
chapters in these political education campaigns. Tennessee Daughters had formed study
groups on the United Nations and sent letters and telegrams to their representatives in
Congress on relevant legislation. Mississippi, Maine, and Minnesota clubs had also
studied the UN, while the studies of Rhode Island chapters had focused more specifically
on the world organization/world government distinction.\(^7\) The report of the National
Defense committee at this conference reflected a shift in organizational focus toward
foreign policy and international affairs. “During the past three years . . . National Defense
has assumed larger proportions, overwhelming in its scope and significance,” Florence
Becker proclaimed in her last address as National Defense chairman, “During the past
two years the United Nations has been born. This organization gave to the world the
machinery for maintaining the peace. . . . The action taken by your representatives affects
you and your children. This work has come into the field of National Defense.” With
these remarks, Becker simultaneously claimed an expanded role for the National Defense

\(^7\) *Proceedings, 56th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution* (1947),
committee as the interpreters of foreign policy questions and connected these questions directly to the domestic life of DAR members. Having educated themselves on the United Nations over the preceding year, DAR delegates voted on a number of resolutions establishing their position on international affairs at this 1947 congress. The fourth resolution presented at the convention spelled out in more specific language the DAR’s take on “World Organization vs. World Government,” endorsing the United Nations as facilitator of cooperation among nations but denouncing any attempt to create “a superstate . . . which would abrogate national sovereignty.”

In keeping with their established privileging of white Christian civilization, the DAR also passed resolutions “recommending the reading of a prayer before each meeting of the United Nations” and opposing any loosening of existing immigration laws.

By 1948, the Daughters’ suspicion of the one world rhetoric of UN supporters had grown. The fourth day of the group’s annual convention in April of that year focused largely on foreign affairs. Having just approved a resolution urging “comprehension of our foreign policy” on all DAR members, the assembly listened as Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, Mrs. Roy V. Shrewder, laid out a more specific agenda.

“Whereas, It has become clear that there can be no lasting world peace unless, and until there be international cooperation among the peoples of the world;” Shrewder began, “and Whereas, There is a movement promoted by various groups to set up a super-state, or World Government; Resolved, That the National Society, Daughters of the American

---


76 Proceedings, 56th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1947), pp. 112, 412, DAR Archive. This second resolution presumably rejected the admission of any displaced persons over and above the nation’s usual immigration quotas; apparently public perception did not constrain the DAR to quite the extent it did the General Federation.
Revolution declare itself unreservedly in favor of a World Organization of free nations; such as is being developed under the Charter of the United Nations. Resolved, That the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution record its opposition to a World Government, and urge its members to inform themselves on the vital difference between World Organization and World Government.” The distinction was not lost on the attentive crowd. One member rose from the floor to counsel her fellow Daughters on the seriousness of the issue. “I do wish that you would all go home and study this question of World Government . . . .” she warned, “Many, many women are not understanding it and are believing it means peace. It does not.” More specifically, she cautioned that “if we believe in it and take everything that is said, we will find ourselves in a horrible network of World Government in which we ourselves have little voice.” “[D]o not be misled,” she concluded ominously. The Daughters voted to approve the resolution.77

Ironically, this growing DAR hostility focused on the very domestic efforts that UN supporters like Women United touted as the best hope for UN success: domestic educational campaigns. “We are besieged on all sides by ideas foreign to our own philosophy of life,” new Chairman of National Defense Rosalind Ewing Martin cried in her first conference address in 1948, “our homes, our churches, and our schools are being invaded by those who would ridicule or discredit the essentials of thought and action on which the greatness of America has been built.” This defensive posture, which smacked of later red scare rhetoric, marks the beginning of the Daughters’ increasing conflation of internationalism and Communism. Attempting to educate children to be world-minded offended the Daughters established understanding of the role of education in American

society, namely to craft loyal and patriotic *American* citizens. In order to address this situation, DAR leaders relied on the local activism of their members. Over the preceding year, the National Defense Committee had mailed out informational letters on "world events" to state regents for distribution to local clubs and also sent their National Defense newsletter to state representatives, libraries, and schools. As proof of the effectiveness of their public campaigns, Martin noted that she and other national DAR representatives had been invited to attend numerous conferences with representatives from "the Departments of State, Army, Labor, and Justice." "The increasing number of these occasions . . . shows that we hold a recognized position in the forward march of organizations," Martin proudly declared.\(^78\)

Unfortunately, this recognition by the political power structure did not mean the Daughters were winning the public relations battle against world government proponents. Just a month after the Daughters 1948 conference, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) considered that very issue on the fourth day of their national convention in Portland, Oregon. Resolutions Chairman Mrs. Jefferson D. Atwood presented the matter among the emergency resolutions. "Whereas World peace is essential to the survival of civilization," Atwood opened, "and Whereas World order, like order in our state and national communities, must be founded upon law, and Whereas, Law in any jurisdiction requires government for its enactment, interpretation and enforcement, therefore be it RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs in convention assembled May, 1948, does hereby endorse the principle of World Federation and requests the Government of the United States, at the earliest propitious moment, to

---

initiate the procedure necessary to transform the United Nations, by implementing Article 109 of the United Nations Charter, into a world law-making body with power to prevent war and to enforce justice upon individuals.” With no discussion at all, the General Federation members adopted the resolution and thereby supported the creation of the very world government that so terrified the Daughters a month earlier. An unconcerned and pragmatic President Dorothea Buck enthused, “We are coming along beautifully and we are still within time.”

In addition to voting support for world government, General Federation delegates enthusiastically encouraged all sorts of internationalist measures. Members passed resolutions supporting the formation of an international police force, urging Congress to authorize U.S. participation in the International Trade Organization, accepting “responsibility both for helping to develop an informed public opinion and for disseminating information to promote international understanding,” and commending the National Association of Broadcasters for their decision to provide more radio coverage of UN activities. Notably, members also voted to encourage the appointment of women to government posts. Speakers at the convention included Vice-President of the United World Federalists, Robert Lee Humber; China’s representative to the Security Council, Dr. Tin Fu-Tsiang; and Secretary of State George C. Marshall. Federation members also viewed a performance by the United Nations Festival, a group dedicated to “spread[ing]

---


the message of the United Nations through music, dance, and allied arts." Local clubs reported continuing efforts to promote international thinking. Clubwomen in Wayne, Nebraska, for example, hosted a panel of ten foreign-born residents of their community to learn about their religious, educational, and marriage traditions, while club members in Vinango, Nebraska, initiated correspondence with women from a variety of other nations. New York clubs held model Security Council meetings, while Texas clubwomen sponsored a panel of students from Egypt, Iraq, India, Argentina, Austria, and Guatemala at their state convention.\(^{82}\) Incoming president Dorothea Buck dedicated the work of “all of the programs of our departments, divisions, and committees to contribute either directly or indirectly toward the building of a peaceful world.” To facilitate this, Federation leaders mailed out pamphlets containing informational posters on UN structure, as well as instructions for holding model meetings of the Economic and Social Council, for use by local clubs.\(^{83}\)

That clubwomen were debating the appropriate level of American engagement with international affairs in 1948 is hardly surprising. The United Nations faced considerable challenges that year. The Palestinian conflict that had begun in 1947 became vastly more complicated. On May 14, 1948, the Provisional State Council in Tel Aviv proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel. The United States, quickly followed by the Soviet Union, recognized Israel, thereby undermining the work of U.S. delegates to the United Nations, who had been arguing for international rule. The sudden change in

---

\(^{81}\) Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1948, Box 20, pp. 113–32, 672, 677–89, 705–18, WHRC.


the American position angered other UN representatives, some of whom threatened to withdraw from the UN. Egypt then invaded Palestine in defiance of UN wishes, inaugurating the first Arab-Israeli war. The UN attempted peace mediation, but when UN-appointed mediator Count Folke Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem in September, full scale fighting began again.

Meanwhile, tensions in Korea grew. The nation had been under the dual control of the United States and the Soviet Union since the end of World War II. In 1947, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution providing for UN-supervised elections in the northern and southern portions of the divided country for the purpose of electing a united national assembly. Though North Korea refused to participate, U.S.-controlled South Korea elected Syngman Rhee and his slate in 1948; some doubted that the results of the elections reflected the actual will of the South Korean people, but the UN Commission on Korea certified the results. At the same time, in the north region of the peninsula, the Soviet Union installed a Communist government headed by Kim Il Sung. Both superpowers subsequently removed their troops, but representatives of the UN Commission on Korea remained on the thirty-eighth parallel, between the two hostile governments.84 The tension both reflected and exacerbated the strain between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Though not directly related to United Nations diplomacy, Stalin's 1948 blockade of Berlin and the successful airlift by the western allies to sustain their sectors of the divided city also helped solidify the rift and captured the imagination of many Americans.85

84 Meisler, United Nations, 47–57; Simons, United Nations, 109–10; Gaddis, Cold War, 40–41.
Americans were also in the midst of a presidential election in which questions of international politics played a prominent role. Escalating Cold War concerns saturated the 1948 campaign. Former vice president Henry Wallace's Progressive Party candidacy not only split the Democratic Party into three wings (including supporters of centrist liberal Harry Truman and segregationist Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond) but also put a prominent internationalist on the national political stage in a new Cold War context. During his tenure as vice president, Wallace had been a vocal advocate both for progressive New Deal policies and for international organization based on the triumph of "the common man" around the world. Statements like this, in combination with Wallace's refusal to denounce the Soviet Union, his advocacy of free trade with Eastern Europe, and his affiliation with racial liberals—not to mention the Communist Party's ardent backing of his campaign—encouraged claims in 1948 that Wallace was a communist dupe. Truman liberally red-baited Wallace, calling him "soft" on foreign policy questions. Truman marketed himself, on the other hand, as a liberal Cold warrior, loyal to the Democratic Party's New Deal heritage but strong on national defense and committed to combating communism. Americans for Democratic Action, a group of well-known New Deal liberals including Eleanor Roosevelt, endorsed Truman's candidacy precisely because of his foreign policy positions, and thereby helped erode support for Wallace and his more accommodationist stance. All of this campaigning helped put foreign affairs at the forefront of the minds of American citizens and also forced supporters of internationalism to choose between Wallace's vision for American engagement with the world and Truman's. Though the majority of clubwomen shared Truman's anticomunist internationalism, the efforts against Wallace tarred internationalist ideals more generally
with the brush of communism, an association that Americans suspicious of the United Nations were already beginning to make.\textsuperscript{86}

Women United confronted the repercussions of this association as they expanded their efforts to promote the United Nations. As the 1948 campaign raged and the Cold War escalated, Women United focused primarily on launching a United Nations Center on Fifth Avenue in New York. The purpose of the Center, which opened January 21, 1948, was to provide the public with an official repository of information on all aspects of the United Nations. WUUN volunteers staffed the Center from 10 AM to 5 PM Mondays through Saturdays. In addition to providing books, pamphlets, and film strips, two volunteers per shift attempted to answer visitor questions, no matter how obscure. The Center also sold UN novelties such as flags, games, stationary, and drinking glasses, to bring in revenue. Special events and window displays brought large numbers of visitors to the Center in its early days. Particularly popular events included visits by movie stars to hand out UN buttons; Ingrid Bergman, Raymond Massie, Joan Caulfield, and Jessica Tandy volunteered their services on various occasions. Notwithstanding its prominent supporters, the Center suffered from the developing association of internationalism with communism. The first visitor after the Center opened its doors that January “caused quite a shock,” remembered Center director Katherine Bryan, “when he

opened the door and shouted ‘Communists’ and quickly closed the door before we could reply.” This inauspicious beginning presaged conflicts to come; Bryan herself was brought to court by an individual she called “Flag Man,” who contended that her United Nations displays of world flags did not correctly position the American flag higher than the flags of other nations. Dorothy Kenyon successfully defended Bryan, but the incident reflected growing hostility to the UN in certain quarters. Negative reactions aside, at the end of the year the WUUN women considered founding UN centers in California, Connecticut, Missouri, and Ohio, places where “there has already been a coordinated effort by various groups.”

As the dueling 1948 world government resolutions of the DAR and the General Federation and Women United’s committed promotional campaigns demonstrate, the pressures of an increasingly polarized Cold War environment encouraged clubwomen to solidify their positions on international organizing. In spite of some questions, the leaders of the General Federation, and many members, believed firmly that achieving understanding of foreign affairs and building a direct relationship with the larger international community would lead to global stability. In their local clubs and communities, Federation clubwomen would strive to be world citizens, and to make world citizens of their neighbors. Their efforts represented exactly the type of local UN activism that the WUUN sought to promote among its member organizations and through

---

87 Mrs. Davenport Bryan, "Information Center for the United Nations," Carton 1, Folder 3, WUUN Collection; photographs of movie stars included in Information Center Scrapbook, Carton 1, Folder 17, WUUN Collection.

88 Meeting Minutes, December 17, 1948, WUUN Collection; Garrison, "Brief History of Women United for the United Nations," Box 1, Folder 1, WUUN Collection; Meeting Minutes, April 23, 1948, WUUN Collection. This same year, Women United also received a grant of $3,000 from the Carnegie Endowment to fund a hospitality center at UN headquarters. WUUN volunteers staffed this Center as well, until the UN took it over in 1949.
the American press. Support for the United Nations, in the eyes of these observers for women's organizations, would bolster international organizing, ensure the success of the project, and secure a place for women in the political process along the way. On the other hand, though the Daughters believed the United Nations could serve some purpose as an arbitrator of conflicts outside the borders of the United States, they rejected the idea that the organization served any purpose within the nation. Their defensive posture at the suggestion that American citizens bore any responsibility to adapt their interests and traditions to those of other nations made the whole project of international organizing suspect. This discomfort became more fundamental over time, with the spread of communism in the decolonizing world and the deepening of the Cold War. The Daughters' work in local clubs was to educate women about politics, to be sure, but with the specific injunction that they avoid being duped into world citizenship.

Though their education programs were still in their infancy, women's clubs were beginning to develop the foreign affairs perspectives that would shape their community activism for the next fifteen years. These perspectives grew out of a belief, emergent after the Second World War, that it was women's duty to take the knowledge of international politics absorbed from extensive study of the United Nations and transmit this knowledge to their fellow clubwomen, their friends, their neighbors, and their families. By so doing, postwar clubwomen could use their historic position as community caretakers to create the informed American citizenry that would make for an enlightened and effective American foreign policy. This, in turn, would foster global stability and advance American interests, if not necessarily in that order. In these early years of the UN's existence, leading American clubwomen claimed for their organizations the responsibility
of interpreting the international body's actions, and its significance, for the broader American public. Even before representatives of their organizations attended the UN Charter Conference, club leaders in both the General Federation and the DAR tracked the progress of the Dumbarton Oaks meeting and educated their members about the proposals that emerged from that gathering. At the founding conference, club leaders simply articulated a vision for women's role as foreign affairs emissaries that women's clubs were already developing. This vision directed women's domestic responsibilities to new global ends; clubwomen would ensure the success of the United Nations through foreign affairs education at the local level. Broadly speaking, club leaders began this process believing in the United Nations as a force for global peace. Yet as they nailed down the specifics of their domestic educational campaigns, women's organizations developed different understandings of the role of the UN. Would it be, as progressive organizations at the founding conference hoped, an organization to promote international understanding and cultural exchange, with its ultimate goal the forging of a larger world federation? Or would it be, rather, an international mediator of disputes without infringing on national interests or domestic culture? These questions would drive American women's clubs further and further apart in the ways they interpreted the United Nations and in the ends to which they directed their educational campaigns.

These differences reflected the divergent perspective of female activists on American politics at least as much as they reflected their views on geopolitical questions. As women's clubs began the process of educating their members about the United Nations, their efforts inevitably touched on broader issues relating to foreign affairs and American politics. Questions about immigration, the spread of communism, national
sovereignty, federalism, and even prayer filtered into clubwomen’s discussions of international relations, shaping their interpretations of the United Nations. This merging of international with domestic political questions would persist in American clubwomen’s discussions of foreign affairs throughout the postwar period. As the 1948 election suggests, the domestic ramifications of foreign policies and international politics could not be ignored, and clubwomen of all stripes would be forced to contend with these thorny issues whether they wanted to or not. This bridging of international and domestic politics highlights another duality in women’s organizations’ attention to the United Nations in the postwar period. Club leaders made both gendered and pragmatic arguments to support their vision of clubwomen as foreign affairs emissaries; women’s natural comprehension of human relations and their responsibility for the education of children, as well as the position of their clubs as prominent community institutions, all suited clubwomen particularly for this task. In reality, clubwomen joined these two identities—domestic and political—more explicitly. By playing their domestic role, women were acting as good citizens, and, as such, could qualify themselves for expanded representation in American government, at all levels. To this end, women’s clubs would increasingly use their foreign affairs education to encourage their members’ participation in American politics, and to encourage American leaders to recognize the political significance of their organizations.

In spite of conflicts surfacing during the UN’s early years, then, women’s organizations continued to believe the organization an important part of their organizational mission and to foster local UN-related activism. This disconnect between the turmoil in the international community supposedly regulated by the United Nations
and the support of women's clubs for the organization itself suggests that the ideal of the UN in American culture had taken on a life of its own. Women's clubs were primary agents of this cultural resonance. Though certainly no one could deny the faltering diplomacy and global hostilities that hampered international peace, middle-class women's organizations remained convinced that the United Nations was worthy of close attention. Even the DAR, though increasingly skeptical, steadfastly maintained the distinction between world organization as embodied by the UN, which they supported, and world government, which came closer in their rhetoric to Communist domination and which they adamantly opposed. As a result, the United Nations, and related foreign affairs issues, remained on the agendas of women's organizations. This dedication among women's clubs derived from the motives beyond the desire for international peace that energized the commitment of female activists to UN work. UN activism also allowed women's organizations to promote women's political education, to reach larger audiences, and to access the state through contact with government departments and representatives. In short, UN work facilitated the other political and civic work of women's clubs during the postwar years. Because it mattered so much to Americans at the conclusion of the Second World War, women's clubs resolved to adopt the United Nations as their own. Their educational efforts would sustain this American interest in the UN through the postwar years. Yet as the forties came to an end, denying the conflicts surrounding the United Nations became more difficult. By 1949, the Cold War had manifested itself in American culture in the form of a red scare, thereby changing the ways all American women's organizations promoted attention to foreign policy and the United Nations. In response, another group of UN agitators, called the Minute Women of
the U.S.A., Inc., would inaugurate a new kind of UN activism and mobilize a new group of women on behalf of foreign policy.
Chapter Two
Cauldron of International Chaos:
Foreign Threats and Domestic Responses, 1949–1952

In the fall of 1949, prompted by what she perceived as growing threats to her adoptive homeland, Belgian immigrant and sculptor Suzanne Silvercruys Stevenson gathered together 127 women from her Connecticut neighborhood for a meeting. Declaring themselves opposed to “Communism, Socialism, Fascism, and Collectivism in any form,” the women decided to mobilize, as they put it, “to preserve the Constitution of the United States of America and to protect the freedoms it guarantees to individual citizens.” On September 22, 1949, Stevenson filed incorporation papers for the new organization in Norwalk, Connecticut. Dubbing the group the Minute Women of Connecticut, Stevenson launched a recruiting effort that would eventually expand her local effort across the nation. The Minute Women were but one of a growing cadre of women’s anticommmunist organizations emerging in the early years of the Cold War. Conservative women across the nation joined forces to address the threat posed by the expansion of communism internationally and the parallel trends toward socialism, collectivism, and outright communism they saw domestically. Like the General Federation, the DAR, and Women United, these conservative activists believed in local action as a concrete means to address national and international issues and focused their campaigns on their local communities and schools. Yet these women gave postwar community education a Cold War anticommmunist twist; they attempted to use this

---

activism to save the American polity from itself by correcting the flawed New Deal impetus toward national, and international, socialization.²

The emergence of groups like the Minute Women reflects the polarization of the world situation as the 1950s dawned. In place of the hopeful dedication to international organizing that had attended the founding of the United Nations, Americans increasingly expressed concerns about global politics as the diplomatic standoff between the Soviet Union and the United States intensified. Suspicion of the United Nations grew along with these concerns. These early years of the Cold War challenged the image of the UN as a force to promote both world peace and American interests. As Cold War competition for power and influence on the world stage escalated, the Soviet presence as a United Nations member and the power that international organization afforded America’s geopolitical enemy seemed increasingly dangerous to some Americans. In addition, the United Nations began crafting broad-ranging international treaties, such as the International Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention, and Americans confronted the possibility that these treaties had the power to affect American legal, social, and most importantly, racial practices. Finally, by placing American soldiers at least nominally under UN control, U.S. involvement in the Korean War exposed just how

far American policymakers were willing to go to sustain United Nations campaigns for
global stability. Each of these situations—the escalating Cold War, the drafting of broad-
ranging UN treaties, and the Korean War—revealed to Americans, clubwomen included,
the intimate connection international organizing had forged between their nation and the
world.

Though club leaders’ early education campaigns had emphasized to club members
that domestic activism could help shape foreign affairs, these developments on the
international stage confronted clubwomen with the reality that foreign affairs could also
affect the everyday lives of Americans, sometimes in unwelcome ways. Conservative
clubwomen, like those in the DAR who had long been suspicious of international
organizing, saw in these events a shift in the significance of the United Nations for
American society. No longer did the organization exclusively advance American goals;
instead, these women came to believe, the UN served as a platform for America’s Soviet
enemy and its proxies, entangled America in potentially disastrous military conflicts, and
all the while threatened national sovereignty by making American citizens subject to
international treaty law. Their community education campaigns mirrored this shift in
perspective, increasingly underscoring to club members and community leaders the
threats posed by foreign entanglements. New women’s anticommunist groups like the
Minute Women joined this campaign enthusiastically, adding the United Nations, and
internationalism more generally, to their list of “isms” that threatened the American way
of life. In the face of this growing suspicion, UN supporters struggled to refocus the
discussion by continuing to emphasize the UN’s role as a force for peace and American
interests. Yet as the international situation deteriorated, selling the UN at the community
level became more challenging, particularly when conservative clubwomen used the same techniques to question the organization's legitimacy. The divergent perspective that emerged among conservative American clubwomen in response to these changing international circumstances helped fuel support for Eisenhower in the 1952 election. The contest that developed between internationalist clubwomen and their anti-internationalist peers during this period would also shape the foreign affairs activism of clubwomen for the remainder of the postwar years.

**Cold War Escalation and Communist Infiltration**

Born in 1898, Suzanne Stevenson was the daughter of Baron Frantz Silvercruys, once chief justice of the Belgian Supreme Court, and sister to then-Belgian ambassador to the United States, Robert Silvercruys. After fleeing Belgium during the First World War, Stevenson became an American citizen in 1922 and married Army Reserve colonel Edward Ford Stevenson, with whom she resided on a farm in Connecticut. A devout Catholic, Stevenson graduated from the Yale School of Fine Arts and traveled extensively as a sculptor and lecturer. During her lectures, Stevenson discussed both the prominent individuals she had sculpted and the meaning of art, all the while crafting a clay bust of one audience member. Her artistic credits included busts of numerous well-known political and military leaders, including General George S. Patton, Jr., Senators Robert Taft and Joseph McCarthy, and Jiang Jieshi.³

---

Stevenson and her Connecticut neighbors were not alone in their concern about threats to the American way of life; a confluence of events at home and abroad in 1949 convinced many Americans that Soviet Communism menaced American interests on all sides. Throughout the year, the two perjury trials of former State Department employee Alger Hiss, for denying under oath his role as a Soviet agent in the late thirties and early forties, proceeded. In March 1949, the FBI arrested Justice Department employee Judith Coplon during her meeting with a Soviet official; Coplon had been convicted of espionage on two previous occasions but had the damning wiretap evidence thrown out on appeal. In August, the State Department released a report revealing that Mao Zedong’s Communist forces were on the verge of victory in China. Shortly thereafter, on August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic bomb in the deserts of Kazakhstan. President Truman publicly confirmed the existence of a Soviet bomb on September 23, 1949, one day after the filing of the Minute Women’s incorporation papers. A week later, Mao Zedong announced the formation of the People’s Republic of China, signaling his victory over Chinese Nationalists and cementing Communist control over the most populous nation in the world.⁴

The Hiss trial in particular resonated with those attentive to the United Nations. After rising through the ranks of the Roosevelt administration, Hiss supervised the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference, where Allied officials formalized plans for the UN, and later presided over the 1945 San Francisco Charter conference. Upon retiring from public service in 1947, Hiss became president of the Carnegie Endowment for International

Peace. He was thus inextricably tied to the internationalist ideals that forged the UN and to the concrete terms of its Charter document. Americans suspicious of the United Nations project watched the Hiss trial closely. The Communist victory in China also caused problems for the UN. Following Mao Zedong's victory, a debate developed about which Chinese government, the Nationalist or the Communist, should represent that nation on the UN Security Council. Soviet representatives pushed hard for the ouster of Nationalist representative Dr. Tin Fu Tsiang (who had spoken at the General Federation's conference the previous year) and eventually began boycotting Council meetings in protest.

Though the Minute Women's list of principles included support of "a courageous and enlightened foreign policy," Suzanne Stevenson initially aimed her activism at more than just foreign affairs. The Minute Women declared themselves to be "a non-partisan organization, united to combat Communism, Socialism, Fascism, or Collectivism in any form." Members paid yearly dues of $2, for which they eventually received a pin sporting the Minute Women's slogan, "Guarding the Land We Love," as well as a copy of the group's monthly newsletter, first published in 1951. Seeking to increase membership rapidly, the group's founders decreed that members could not achieve "full-fledged" Minute Woman status until they convinced five other women to join. Founders also opened the organization to women "of all races and all creeds" and officially declared the group "non-sectarian." "If you are an American woman who loves her country and the traditions which have made it great, you will want to be a Minute Woman," one pamphlet

---


declared, "If you are concerned for the future of your children and your homes, you will want to be a Minute Woman." Within months of the first meeting, the Minute Women of Connecticut had incorporated enough members outside the state of Connecticut to rename themselves the Minute Women of the U.S.A.\textsuperscript{7}

As the preceding quotation reveals, the Minute Women frequently directed their appeals not just to women, but particularly to housewives and mothers. The group’s literature suggested that these women, and all women, had a particular role to play in combating the subversive forces that assailed American society. In order to advance their causes, which included clean politics, free enterprise, "fairer" taxes, and a free press, Minute Women pledged "To Vote at Every Election, Town, State, and National, for candidates who will promote our principles." Stevenson’s organization sought explicitly to encourage women to participate in politics, both local and national. Emphasizing engagement at the local level, one pamphlet explained that Minute Women should "take an active part in our Ward and Precinct politics—for that is where the good work must begin." Another decried the lack of female participation in the previous year’s presidential election. "It is appalling to realize that only 47% of the women entrusted with the responsibility of voting exercised that privilege in 1948," lamented the author. Minute Women, therefore, were to layer their political activism, focusing on local circumstances as well as national leadership. Members heard this call loud and clear. One former Minute Woman from Houston, Texas, recalled that she joined the group after meeting Suzanne Stevenson because she "thought, here is a woman, now, a woman,\

finally, not a man, who is going to do what should have been done long ago and that is to get women aroused as to the role they should play in governmental affairs.\footnote{The Minute Women of the United States of America, Inc., R.F.D. North Windham, Connecticut, O’Leary Papers, HMRC; “The Minute Women of the United States of America, Inc., Station Street, Southport, Connecticut,” pamphlet in O’Leary Papers, HMRC; Dallas Dyer MacGregor, interview by Don Carleton and L. Marchiafava, tape recording, August 1 and 22, 1974, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas, held at HMRC. For an excellent discussion of how women and domesticity shaped Cold War conservatism, see Michelle Nickerson, “Domestic Threats: Women, Gender, and Conservatism in Cold War Los Angeles, 1945–1966,” Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2003.}

To discourage communist infiltration of her organization, Suzanne Stevenson conceived a rigid structure for the group. National leaders appointed state chairmen, who in turn appointed county leaders, who appointed district captains, who at last appointed local chapter leaders. The monthly newsletter from the national leadership of the Minute Women kept members across the country aware of the group’s progress and directed the attention of local chapters to issues that demanded action. Containing “simple and direct explanation of pending legislation, and other matters upon which action should be taken,” the newsletter also provided “[t]he forms to be used and the proper persons to address.” In spite of all this instruction, however, members were to abide by one absolute dictum: “[A]t no time should the membership as a whole act as a pressure group, or sign themselves as Minute Women, realizing that our personal pride in our own individual freedom prompts us to action as individual American citizens.” Though Stevenson located the rationale for this rule in her group’s principled individualism, the tactic also benefited the women’s lobbying efforts. As one Houston journalist cynically theorized, “[s]uppose 500 women in a Minute Women telephone chain were instructed to make individual phone calls of protest to a government agency, public body, or business concern. Five hundred calls from individuals would have tremendously more effect than
a similar number of calls as an organization." Notwithstanding Stevenson’s structured vision, infighting plagued the Minute Women early on, and one leader, Vivien Kellems, resigned from the organization after she was accused of using the group for “partisan political purposes.” Yet recruiting remained successful, due to growing fear of domestic communism and the unstable international situation, and the Minute Women would soon hone their activism in the realm of foreign affairs.

Expanding anxiety at the apparent setbacks in America’s Cold War agenda afflicted women in more established organizations as well, and their concerns led to debates about how best to address the growing problems. The DAR’s April 1949 convention highlighted the combustible nature of the issues at hand. Many DAR members placed the blame for the expanding threat of communism directly on the shoulders of the United Nations, which they contended was failing in its efforts to mitigate international conflict and foster peace. Instead, UN programs increasingly encouraged the very collectivism that led to communism, while the UN itself served as a haven for communist operatives, and its advocates assigned excessive power to international authorities instead of national ones. These threats manifested themselves domestically in a series of resolutions by state legislatures nominally supporting world government. These resolutions worried DAR leaders across the country, who saw them as part of a larger scheme by world government proponents to lead the U.S. into an alliance that would “relinquish the major part of its sovereign rights” and wherein America would “on the basis of proportional representation . . . have a woeful minority of voting


10 Kellems went on to found a rival women’s patriotic group, the Liberty Belles. Gordon D. Hall, “Hucksters of Hate,” The Progressive (August 1953), 5–8, quote on p. 7.
powers.” To address this issue, the DAR resolved in 1949 “that states and chapters be urged to study this un-American movement; to use every effort to counteract the influence of propagandists in their communities; to watch their State Legislatures and to fight against the adoption of resolutions, and those already adopted . . . .”11 DAR chapters should apply their new understanding of UN foreign policy to the defense of their home communities from those who sought to pervert the international organization’s purposes.

Representatives at this 1949 national meeting assaulted new United Nations programs more directly in response to the proposed International Trade Organization (ITO), which had come before Congress for approval. The General Federation had endorsed the ITO at their 1948 national convention and urged Congressional approval. DAR members, on the other hand, largely perceived in the ITO a threat to free labor and an attempt to locate “control of investment, markets, prices, production, and the creation of new industries” in an international authority “in which the United States would have but one vote of the combined votes of at least thirty-nine other nations.” This collectivist hazard was “not only . . . contrary to the principles of our Constitutional Republic,” the DAR’s resolution contended, “but also would wreck our mass production industry and eventually our national defense.” The resolution thus tied free labor to national defense, and suggested that the UN program undermined both.12

The spirit behind the resolution was in line with the DAR commitment to traditional American principles, but the debate that ensued after resolutions chairman


Mrs. Roy Shrewder read the proposed text on the third day of the national convention revealed some divisions in the DAR membership with regard to their more direct investment in foreign affairs issues. Honorary President General from New Jersey, Florence Becker, who had attended the UN founding conference for the Daughters four years earlier, opened the discussion with an appeal to the DAR’s desire for respect from national politicians. “It has been my privilege to be in close contact with several distinguished senators and congressmen . . . and each one has said, ‘Oh, stay away from all these controversial questions,’” she recalled. The DAR’s “resolution dealing with free enterprise and World Government, which is based on a fundamental principle, takes care of these details,” Becker contended, cautioning members “I think we are treading on very dangerous ground, and . . . should remain steady and adhere to a fundamental principle, lest our National Society be severely criticized. . . .” Becker essentially argued for avoiding specific political issues; by ruling on “fundamental principles,” the organization could maintain a position without embroiling itself in any concrete political battles. Several members echoed her concerns. But other Daughters envisioned a more active role for their patriotic organization. “I submit that . . . unless you are just going to be a genealogical and historical society,” argued one delegate, “[the DAR] should take a leading part in saving the Constitution [and] the private enterprise system . . . and to recognize the creeping steps of socialism which is the Trojan horse of communism.” Another delegate from Texas commented “It has a strange sound . . . to the ears of a Daughter of the American Revolution to keep saying we are afraid of anything that attacks our Constitution . . . Let us support the resolution and prove to the world that we are worthy of our heritage.” “We are not afraid . . . of anything,” she concluded “except
something that will take away the private interest, the personal independence, and the respect of the world for our country." Clearly, some members of the DAR believed the more active role the society had taken by offering concrete positions on issues before Congress was a natural extension of their organizational heritage. In order to defend America, to be patriotic in the Cold War world, the Daughters must take on the UN when it overstepped its bounds. The way to do this was to send a clear message to political leaders.13

As a result of all this debate, the ITO resolution was tabled until the afternoon session, to give members time to consider. Yet the next resolution on the agenda only intensified the discussion. Entitled "Opposing Ratification of the International Labor Organization 'Freedom to Organize Convention'," this resolution contended that the "individual liberty ... guaranteed to every American worker under the Bill of Rights" was "seriously threatened" by the provisions of the Freedom to Organize convention recently adopted by the ILO, "a subsidiary of the United Nations." The convention "would turn complete control of wages, hours and working conditions in all countries over to a central world committee in which the United States would have but one vote" and "would also give such a world committee complete control over our national defense industries, through its control of workers in such industries." Again, UN control threatened American national defense, national sovereignty, and individual liberty.

13 Proceedings, 58th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1949), pp. 89–91, DAR Archive; Still a third concern was voiced in the discussion. One lone delegate suggested that the Daughters had "not given sufficient thought to the implications of such a resolution." Because the United States was committed as a nation to European recovery, and because the ITO "will foster the trade" that would feed that recovery, the Daughters should think long and hard before opposing it. "Further study should be given to it" she recommended, to some applause. Though her support for the UN project was timid at best, it indicates that some DAR members were uncomfortable with the group's growing hostility to international organizing. See Proceedings, 58th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1949), p. 90, DAR Archive.
Florence Becker again spoke out. In approving such a resolution, the Daughters were "wandering away from the policy and the principle upon which we have stood for so many years," Becker argued. "It is not that we are weak, it is not that we are cowards," she continued "but your resolution on World Government takes care of the principle involving all these various details. . . . Never before have we gone into the labor situation, or the trade situation, or the race situation . . . because we have felt safe in dealing with a fundamental principle about which there has been no question." Not all the Daughters present felt that the group's traditional restraint on controversial political issues was sufficient to meet the new threat of collectivism. "[A]re you sure this takes care of the other?" demanded the organization's vice-president. "If they do not have World Government, may they still have these international councils? Won't that just be one way of building up toward a World Government? That is what we do not want." In the face of such disagreement, DAR delegates again tabled the resolution until the afternoon session.¹⁴

The controversy had not disappeared that April afternoon, though the resolutions committee attempted to defuse the situation by presenting watered down versions of both resolutions that called only for "serious study" of the issues by local chapters. The advocates of an expanded political role for the DAR in regulating the threat posed by the UN had sharpened their rhetoric. Supporting the DAR attack on the Freedom to Organize Convention, one member declared that the DAR had opened the door to political activism "when we adopted the fight on communism in 1925." By thus invoking the founding of the Daughters' National Defense Department, this member suggested that their interest in

international politics had also launched the DAR irrevocably into domestic politics. "We women are voters and taxpayers, and everything that pertains to the good of America, the Daughters of the American Revolution should shout from the housetops and stand behind it until we reach it," she asserted. Deriding the Daughters' more traditional patriotic and commemorative work, she then urged DAR members to refocus their efforts on political concerns. "We can omit tea parties and lectures on old clothes and Colonial affairs in our chapters from henceforth, and study the problems that are facing this country," she declared. A Georgia delegate echoed the call by invoking Lincoln; "To sin by silence when we should protest these actions will make cowards of women, too," she averred. In the minds of these women, the DAR had a responsibility to engage directly with these foreign policy issues. The United Nations had made it the DAR's business by attempting to subject Americans to international control.¹⁵

Notably, the DAR's attention to UN education over the preceding three years had created a small group of UN supporters in the organization, who made an effort to halt the momentum against international organizing that fueled the two resolutions. "I have conducted a seminar on the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and I have spoken and studied all during the year," began Mrs. George Vietheer from Maryland. "The substitute motion asks only that you go home and study so that we will know on what we are voting. How many people are there in this room who know what that convention says? . . . I do not believe in World Government . . . but the International Labor Organization is not a proponent of World Government." Another delegate argued that "if the chapters are urged to study this question, they will know more about the entire

¹⁵ Proceedings, 58th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1949), pp. 308–14, DAR Archive; on the creation of the DAR's National Defense Department, see Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America, 131–42.
set-up of the United Nations, which they have endorsed." Yet in the end, the DAR’s conservative activists won out. The Daughters approved both resolutions in their original form, opposing the ITO and the ILO’s Freedom to Organize Convention. As one enthusiastic Daughter explained, “We want America kept free and independent. We do not want other countries telling us what to do in our factories, in our homes, or anywhere.” In defending their nation from UN interventions, this woman suggested, the Daughters were also protecting the domestic sphere, the household, from foreign control. Preventing the merger of foreign and domestic thus energized the Daughters intervention in American politics.16

This convention marked a departure in the DAR’s position on the United Nations. Though frequently defensive in their foreign policy posture, before 1949 the Daughters had been careful to distinguish between world government, which they detested, and the UN, which they supported. With these resolutions, the DAR began the process of conflating the two by suggesting that the subsidiary organizations of the UN were a back door path to world government. Moreover, the escalating Cold War led to an increased focus on the Soviet Union’s presence in the United Nations. Though the Daughters stopped short of calling the UN a communist organization, Soviet influence in an organization with any authority over U.S. concerns proved worrisome. As one article appearing after the convention suggested, “[o]n paper [the UN] is a beautiful setup but over our heads again the threat of war is hanging suspended by a thread. In fact, many believe that even now we are experiencing deadly attacks from an enemy who is safely within the fold of the United Nations organization.” This emphasis on the Soviet

involvement in the UN grew as the Cold War intensified and fed the notion that internationalism and communism had at least a symbiotic connection.\textsuperscript{17}

This shift in perspective stimulated another significant shift, in the DAR’s position on overt political activism. Threatened by communism and collectivism on all sides and even within an organization in which their nation voluntarily participated, the Daughters began to believe America faced a dire emergency. Patriotism necessitated action, the Daughters felt, and they would not shrink from their responsibilities. Invoking federalism in particular, one DAR member suggested in the club magazine that Daughters should focus their fight against any domestic interventions by the UN at the local and state level, since “[l]ocal self-government and its extension, states rights is the political safeguard of a democratic Republic.” Members should also make their position on specific issues known to their national representatives in no uncertain terms. “When every member of the Daughters of the American Revolution . . . stands courageously by her convictions,” her article asserted, “we can hope to make our city, our county, our state and our nation safe and secure.” The Daughters’ layered perspective on political engagement tied their local activism to the broader protection of the nation; by acting in their individual communities, DAR members could effectively influence American politics and counter international threats.\textsuperscript{18}

While the DAR’s concerns about the UN encouraged them to revisit their position on political activism, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs focused their attention elsewhere. Having endorsed the ITO a year earlier, General Federation representatives


appeared consistently less troubled by United Nations programs than their DAR peers, though they remained equally engaged. In the January 1949 edition of the *Clubwoman* magazine, UN observer Constance Sporborg reported on the recent “achievements” of the General Assembly, which included passing the International Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention. Federation leaders continued to encourage members to forge a direct connection between their lives at home and affairs abroad. An article announcing the Federation’s 1949 program for community improvement reminded members that “[Y]our community, is a faithful force, felt round the world. Its notions are reflected in the laws of Congress; its ideas help to shape American foreign policy.”¹⁹ In this case, the connection between the foreign and the domestic was a positive political force, good for women, for America, and for the world. The Federation’s annual convention, held three days after the close of the DAR’s, also featured numerous UN-related events. Opening the meeting on April 25, 1949, First Vice-President Dorothy Houghton declared “that the women of America who carry the torch for the women of the world will be in the vanguard” of internationalism. She urged Federation clubwomen both to “study the North Atlantic Pact and see that America leads all of the western democracies in this regional group” and to “study the UN Charter, stand behind it and know that it is a bulwark of all of our civilization and for everlasting peace.” As Houghton’s statements suggest, Federation leaders sustained their belief in the power of international organizations of all kinds to advance both American interests and world peace.

Reports from state leaders suggested that Federation clubwomen regularly incorporated international education into their local club activities. New York state clubwomen announced that the theme for their forthcoming year of club programs would be “Responsibilities for World Citizenship.” “Because citizenship is the same on whatever level it is practiced,” explained the New York state president, “we must learn to do our parts as world citizens just as we do in our nation and in our communities as local citizens.” To accomplish this, New York club programs would endeavor to help local women study “social justice for the underprivileged, improved public welfare, [and] appreciation of cultural values of all nations . . .” Nebraska clubs, meanwhile, organized panels of international students and corresponded with women in thirty-one different countries. Kentucky clubs also invited international students and exchange teachers, as well as “foreign brides,” to speak to local clubwomen and “formed UNESCO groups among high school students,” while Florida’s state federation sponsored adult education courses and discussion groups on UNESCO. Many Federation clubwomen remained convinced, in spite of international turmoil, that the United Nations and the internationalist thinking that underpinned its programs deserved promotion in American communities.20

Unfortunately for UN supporters in the General Federation and elsewhere, the association of communism with internationalism only grew as the 1950s dawned, and clubwomen’s efforts to promote the UN in American culture frequently confronted this reality. As had their New York Information Center, Women United’s other publicity work proved a tempting target for UN critics. In the summer of 1951, the WUUN

observers undertook an unusual effort in support of UNICEF. Gilbert Redfern, public
information director of UNICEF, had been approached with the idea of producing
Christmas cards that could be sold to benefit the Fund. Redfern asked several members of
Women United, including Information Center coordinator Katherine Bryan, Helenka
Pantaleoni, and Zelia Reubhausen, if the WUUN could take the lead in distributing the
catalog and thereby publicizing the effort. The women agreed, and League of Women
Voters representative Reubhausen spent the summer mobilizing all WUUN member
organizations to volunteer addressograph machines and to furnish their members’
addresses to augment the mailing list for the catalogs. Her successful efforts launched the
UNICEF greeting card program, and Women United continued to coordinate promotional
efforts in the U.S. until 1959, when the U.S. Committee for UNICEF took over. Yet
WUUN member Helenka Pantaleoni recalled in a 1977 interview that even this
seemingly innocuous promotional effort received criticism. “Some very conservative
friend of [UNICEF executive director] Maurice Pate called him up and asked why the
cards were imprinted in red, when red was a Communist color,” Pantaleoni explained.
The call prompted Pate to halt production of the cards temporarily. “Our volunteers were
almost crazed, too,” reported Pantaleoni, “because they were told to stop the
addressographs! We finally had to say, well, Maurice, Santa Claus’s suit is red.
Absolutely bizarre.” 21 Women United members were hardly amused by the situation in
1951, however, and accusations of communism encouraged the group’s members to
exercise extreme caution with their affiliations. Observers discussed “doubtful”

---

21 Grace Pantaleoni, “UNICEF—WUUN,” Folder 4, WUUN Papers; and Helenka Pantaleoni, interview by
Office, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
organizations who had petitioned for membership thoroughly before admitting them and became hesitant to allow any international groups to join.\textsuperscript{22}

Federation leaders were not immune to brewing fears of communist infiltration—one resolution, passed after some discussion at their 1949 convention, supported the continuation of the House Un-American Activities Committee—but they failed to form the same connection between the UN, internationalism, and domestic communism that women in the DAR had begun to make. Instead, Federation administrators billed international organizing as the key to peace and to countering Soviet threats. Their vision of combating communism abroad concurred with the Truman administration’s: it required international organization, in the form of a North Atlantic Pact. Discussing their resolution urging Congress to ratify NATO and to provide “adequate means for implementation,” International Relations Chairman Mrs. Ambrose Diehl exhorted Congress to provide for not just military but “psychological, economic, political, or any other necessary action . . . to preserve peace.” Making a typical Federation analogy to local circumstances, Diehl joked with her listeners “You cannot imagine one of our community projects saying, ‘Well, we need greater fire protection,’ and then building a fire house and not putting in the implements, the fire engines and so forth, to put out the fire.” Clearly, Federation leaders maintained their faith in international alliances and used domestic analogies to persuade their members to follow suit. Yet this pairing was more than rhetorically expedient; Federation leaders assumed local circumstances to be analogous to international circumstances. If clubwomen could comprehend and exercise

\textsuperscript{22} Meeting Minutes, October 5, 1951, and November 16, 1951, both in Folder 9, WUUN Papers.
authority at the community level, they could do the same for the national and the international.\textsuperscript{23}

**Human Rights, Genocide, and National Sovereignty**

The most contentious issue facing both internationalists and anti-internationalists between 1949 and 1952 was the question of how international treaties related to the United States Constitution. Though they disagreed on the extent which the UN augmented the threat posed by international Communism, the vast majority of clubwomen in the General Federation, Women United, the DAR, and the Minute Women were solid anticommunists. Their perspectives on international treatymaking diverged far more significantly. While liberal supporters of the United Nations believed the international treaties such as the Genocide Convention and the International Declaration of Human Rights to be important mechanisms in the UN's mission to create global stability, conservatives viewed these treaties with suspicion. The possibility that an international agreement made in the United Nations could shape any part of American law or society seemed dangerous to conservative clubwomen, both because of the threat it posed to the nation's ability to make its own laws and because of the more specific connection of human rights and genocide to American racial practices. International treaties therefore became, for anti-internationalist women and their compatriots, a second set of international threats facilitated by American involvement in the United Nations. Meanwhile, liberal clubwomen became increasingly alarmed by the opposition to the UN emerging among conservatives in response to these so-called "threats" and stepped up UN education campaigns.

\textsuperscript{23} For resolution supporting HUAC, see Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1949, Box 21, pp. 76–82, WHRC. For North Atlantic Pact resolution, see Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1949, Box 21, pp. 550–56, WHRC.
To further bolster their vision of clubwomen providing foreign affairs leadership, the General Federation invited Eleanor Roosevelt to speak at their 1949 convention on her role in drafting the International Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, and the UN Commission on Human Rights that designed it, had been particularly contentious pieces of the UN’s early work. Though American think tanks discussed the prospect of an international bill of rights even during the war years, at the Dumbarton Oaks conference, American representatives struggled against British and Soviet resistance to work any reference to human rights into the plans for the UN Charter. Consultants from American civic organizations, including W.E.B. DuBois and Constance Sporborg, campaigned hard for the inclusion of human rights provisions in the UN Charter, and American Secretary of State Edward Stettinius eventually pushed through the creation of a Commission on Human Rights (CHR) at the San Francisco founding conference. Yet the State Department would come to regret its insistence on having a Commission. In a move that was controversial domestically, President Truman appointed Roosevelt as the U.S. representative on the newly created Commission. Voices from some quarters decried the decision, including John Foster Dulles, who feared Roosevelt’s liberal politics, and Frank Holman, soon-to-be president of the American Bar Association, who disliked Roosevelt both for her New Deal politics and for her lack of legal training. Some in the State Department, on the other hand, endorsed Roosevelt’s involvement, since they believed she would be an effective mouthpiece for American interests. At its first session in 1946, the General Assembly assigned the task of drafting an international bill of rights to the CHR, which quickly elected Roosevelt as chairman.24

Roosevelt proved adept at chairing the Commission, but the task set for the group turned out to be extraordinarily complex. Determining what constituted basic human rights and on whose religious or political belief system these rights would be based was only the first layer of difficulty. Soviet representatives waged the most tenacious campaign against the American vision for the Declaration, vigorously arguing for the exclusion of phrases suggesting that humans had any rights apart from those granted by the state. In addition, Commission members struggled to agree on whether the Declaration would be merely a statement of principles, or a convention with the power to enforce its regulations. American domestic politics here intervened. The State Department pressured Roosevelt to make certain the Declaration did not become a convention, since petitions condemning the treatment of southern blacks would embarrass the U.S. internationally and ensure the opposition of southern Senators when the Declaration came up for Congressional approval. The prospect of appealing to a UN Commission on Human Rights for the redress of wrongs indeed encouraged hope in a variety of quarters, particularly among African American activists in organizations like the National Negro Congress (NNC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Seeking to bring international, and thereby national, attention to the plight of blacks in the South, both the NNC (in 1946) and the NAACP (in 1947) petitioned the Commission to deal with southern oppression of African Americans.

The Commission refused to consider both petitions, but not before their presentation had made the American and international news and encouraged Soviet critiques of the U.S.\textsuperscript{25}

A draft of the Declaration containing twenty-eight provisions but no force for implementation was ratified by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948, though the Soviet bloc abstained. Opposition in the U.S. had already coalesced. The ABA, then led by Frank Holman as president, passed a resolution condemning the Declaration. Conservatives like Holman distrusted assurances provided by Roosevelt and her State Department advisors that the Declaration did not have the force of law. To counter such promises, conservatives cited court cases like \textit{Perez v. Sharp}, wherein a mixed race couple in California sued to compel the county clerk to issue them a marriage license, challenging the validity of California’s anti-miscegenation laws. The couple was successful, and one concurring judge in the case, J. Carter, cited the UN Charter’s equal rights and human rights clauses to bolster his argument. Holman and others contended that this kind of legal conflation of national and international policy would persist if the U.S. supported UN creations like the Declaration.\textsuperscript{26}

In the wake of all this controversy, Roosevelt addressed the Federation’s 1949 convention on her experiences while drafting the Declaration. Before the speech, Federation UN observer and WUUN member Constance Sporborg took the opportunity to secure Federation commitment to consider the Declaration. “In order that the program for the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms undertaken by the

\textsuperscript{25} Berger, \textit{A New Deal for the World}, 67–74; Anderson, \textit{Eyes Off the Prize}, 78–112; and Borgwardt, \textit{A New Deal for the World}, 264.

United Nations through the Human Rights Commission may be better understood and evaluated,” she explained, and so that “the General Federation of Women’s Clubs and its members may form sound conclusions with respect to the merits of the proposed Covenant on Human Rights, I move that the General Federation of Women’s Clubs undertake a program of study and education of the International Declaration of Human Rights during the coming year.” Federation representatives approved the program of study without discussion. One rationale for this commitment in the face of so much controversy became clear when Federation president Dorothea Buck introduced Roosevelt later in the convention. Citing Roosevelt’s history of UN service, Buck concluded “We have all followed with admiration her major role in the drafting of an International Declaration of Human Rights, which, after two years of almost continuous work, has been approved by the General Assembly.”

Seemingly, the appeal of Roosevelt’s role as a prominent woman in international politics temporarily trumped the pesky details of any political controversy. In addition, the Federation continued to focus heavily on educating women about the United Nations as a means of supporting internationalism; even Roosevelt’s speech worked primarily to inform Federation representatives about the inner workings of the UN rather than to lobby for Congressional approval for the Declaration. The Federation’s devotion to UN projects thus retained the dual goal of promoting attention to internationalism and educating women on the mechanics of politics. Yet the domestic political implications of the Human Rights Declaration would haunt UN supporters across the nation for years to come and foster some of the most vociferous opposition to the international organization. Federation representatives merely postponed the storm.

---

Apparently, the broader American public had not been so successful. At Women United’s first 1949 meeting, Zelia Reubhausen, the League of Women Voters observer, reported to her compatriots that League delegates found the public “disillusioned” with the UN. Further, average Americans “did not understand what [the UN] could and could not do.” In response, the League had embarked on a UN promotional campaign that Reubhausen thought other Women United member organizations would do well to emulate. Their efforts included printing educational material on the UN, training League women to lead discussion groups, and publicizing films about the UN. Yet the League also sought to bring the UN directly into local communities. League leaders encouraged their members to put up library and window displays and to work with Boy and Girl Scout troops in their home communities. League chapters also focused on schools, inaugurating United Nations essay contests and distributing pamphlets to teachers. That this League campaign emphasized children’s education, something women’s organizations had long supported, was no accident. In this instance, League leaders used the traditional work of women’s clubs to integrate foreign affairs more completely into community life. Doing so both positioned women as foreign affairs leaders and educated the public about the UN, which the League hoped would lead to more support for it.

Though some Women United members expressed enthusiasm for Reubhausen’s suggestions, others questioned the viability of such sweeping endorsement of the UN. One member asked if there was “any lee-way for people who might not support the action of the U.N. on everything?” Reubhausen replied that the League members were
free to act as they saw fit, provided they did not hold a League office. Yet the fact that WUUN members felt obligated to clarify this point suggests that opposition to the United Nations was making some headway even in women’s organizations with accredited UN observers. In fact, Women United’s efforts focused increasingly on answering the accusations of UN critics. In response to public opposition to world government, Women United collected and copied statements from leading statesmen, including John Foster Dulles, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Warren Austin, and Eleanor Roosevelt emphasizing their support for some form of international engagement. Though some WUUN members worried that carrying these statements in their UN Center in New York might encourage criticism of the Center, Center director Katherine Bryan replied, “We already have the controversy.” The Center had been distributing a pamphlet on world government for some time, and visitors to the Center regularly attempted to debate the issue. Bryan wanted copies of the opinion pieces at the Center so she could “hand them statements,” since she had “no time to argue.”

Developing domestic controversy also created some tension within Women United about the purposes of the organization. In May 1949, the General Federation’s UN observer Constance Sporborg moved that the WUUN “try to organize public opinion to have Genocide brought up for the agenda of the 81st Congress.” The UN General Assembly had ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in December 1948. Originally coined by Nuremberg prosecution advisor

---


29 Meeting Minutes, February 18, 1949, WUUN Collection; Meeting Minutes, March 18, 1949, WUUN Collection.
Raphael Lemkin, the term “genocide” traced its origins to the extermination of Jews and other minority groups by the Nazis during the Second World War. In 1946, the UN General Assembly officially defined genocide to be “a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings.” The General Assembly declared genocide to be against “moral law” as well as “the spirit and aims of the United Nations,” and the 1948 Convention was adopted unanimously. The Convention specified five actions, any of which would be considered genocide if “committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” These acts were “killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” The Convention was to be submitted to UN member nations for ratification as a treaty, and the text indicated that member states should pass legislation “in accordance with their respective Constitutions” to enforce the Convention. Individuals charged with genocide under the Convention would be tried either in the country where the genocide had taken place or by an international court if such a solution was acceptable to both parties.30

Like the Human Rights Declaration, the Genocide Convention engendered immediate controversy. Frank Holman and the American Bar Association passed a resolution in February 1949 that discouraged Congress from ratifying the Genocide Convention until the legal effects of the document were clarified. Opponents complained

---

that ideas like “mental harm” were amorphous and easily manipulated and rejected the
prospect of making private American citizens subject to international law. Holman
notoriously suggested that a white driver who accidentally killed a black child in Harlem
could be tried by a foreign court for genocide, according to the Convention. This negative
response derived in large part from fears that the Genocide Convention would make
American racial discrimination fair game for foreign intervention or, at the very least,
fuel domestic civil rights activism. Opponents also argued persuasively that the
Convention expanded the authority granted to international law, and many Americans
expressed discomfort with this change.31 Like the Human Rights Declaration, the
Genocide Convention threatened to bring the foreign into the domestic in a punitive and
legal way, an intervention conservatives in organizations like the DAR could not support.

Given her history of activism in the National Council of Jewish Women and her
work for human rights, Constance Sporborg undoubtedly felt aggressive support for the
Genocide Convention to be axiomatic. Still, her proposal would have placed Women
United squarely in one controversial political camp, campaigning actively for the
ratification of the Convention. And while the organization worked with its member
groups to educate American women about politics and the United Nations, and even to
counter negative press, WUUN leaders deemed some issues too hot to touch. Rose
Parsons accordingly squelched the proposal, reminding the assembled women that “we
cannot take action, we can only recommend to the organizations.” In response to Parsons’
equivocating, Federation clubwoman Esther Hymer then urged WUUN members to press
their organizations to act quickly in support of the Convention, citing a letter from

31 Tananbaum, Bricker Amendment Controversy, 12-13.
Secretary of State Dean Acheson that promised “the bill on genocide would be introduced as soon as the State Department knew there was support to get it passed.”

This tension between recommending and acting in support of the UN tended to crop up whenever the WUUN negotiated controversial issues, and the UN observers confronted more and more of these as 1949 wore on. Seeking to retain the “untarnished goodwill not only of the U.N. but of the U.S. State Department, of the national organizations and of their individual members,” which the WUUN counted among its particular strengths, proved a difficult balancing act. Overt activism made some members uncomfortable, while others believed more aggressive identification with UN principles to be the responsibility of the group. Therefore, Women United walked an odd middle ground. At the same October meeting, the observers approved a letter-writing campaign in response to a *Saturday Evening Post* piece opposing the Human Rights Declaration, and simultaneously agreed that “Human Rights should always be put in an international context, never in reference to a particular country” and that “the difference between Human and Civil Rights must be made clear, and also the difference between the Declaration [*sic*] and the Covenant.” While seeking to promote domestic activism in support of UN programs, Women United also attempted to downplay any connection between the domestic and the foreign that might be used to support racial equality. Though certain of their member organizations, such as the YWCA and the National Council of Negro Women, openly promoted racial equality, other women’s organizations were less comfortable with this issue, and some overtly opposed it. Women United thus sought to promote UN interests without drawing negative attention that they feared might compromise the prestige and unity of their organization. Women United’s hesitation to

---

32 Meeting Minutes, May 20, 1949, WUUN Collection.
admit the UN observer for the Congress of American Women, a communist organization, without first checking with their UN connections to see if this “would be detrimental to what we are trying to accomplish,” reflects this same cautious position in response to domestic political exigencies.33

Cold War pressures intensified as a new decade dawned. On January 21, 1950, a jury convicted Alger Hiss of perjury, thus confirming in the minds of many the espionage accusations against him and striking a blow to America’s UN establishment. Secretary of State Dean Acheson defended Hiss, fueling criticism of the State Department. When, on January 24, British officials announced that German scientist Klaus Fuchs had admitted spying for the Russians while working on the Manhattan Project, many Americans began to suspect that espionage had contributed to the unexpectedly rapid Soviet development of nuclear technology. On February 9, Joseph McCarthy traveled to Wheeling, West Virginia, to give a speech to the Ohio County Republican Women’s Club. Though some historians have called this an “improbable” venue for McCarthy’s notorious speech, McCarthy clearly knew his audience. His speech, modeled closely on an address Richard Nixon had given in the House, drew on fears already present in the minds of female conservative activists, like those in the DAR and the Minute Women, that communist infiltration threatened America. Diplomacy itself compromised American interests, and the State Department presented an obvious target. Hence, McCarthy’s declaration that he had “a list of names that were known to the Secretary of State and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department” represented merely one more example of growing concerns about America’s relationship with the larger world.

33 Meeting Minutes, June 17, 1949; Meeting Minutes, October 21, 1949; and Meeting Minutes, November 18, 1949, all in WUUN Collection.
McCarthy continued to harp on the theme during his speaking tour, and the media quickly spread the story across the nation. On February 20, McCarthy presented his developing accusations of communist infiltration to a bewildered Senate and launched his career as the "perfectly reckless" anticommunist politician who would come to represent the decade.34

Like many other constituencies, women’s organizations shifted their strategies to negotiate the changing terms of Cold War politics and the escalating red scare, and prior commitment to the United Nations dictated to some extent the reaction of these women’s groups. When the DAR met for its national convention in April 1950, the Daughters reaffirmed their anticommunist position by resolving to limit the degree to which the United Nations, and its member countries, infringed upon the lives of American citizens. One resolution officially opposed any attempt to shift power in the UN from the Security Council (where the U.S. had veto power) to the General Assembly (where U.S. policy would be subject to the whims of unknown foreign nations). Another resolution, titled "International Agreements," responding to growing suspicion of the Human Rights Declaration and the Genocide Convention by opposing "United States participation, by treaty or otherwise, in any international agreements that necessarily permit totalitarian interference with United States domestic affairs and the personal safety and welfare of United States citizens . . . ." The Daughters also resolved again to combat all plans for world government, and National Defense Chairman Rosalind Martin lauded the work already accomplished in this vein by local chapters. In the spirit of the League of Women

Voters, DAR chapters in Illinois had sponsored state-wide high school essay contests discussing "Why Our Republic Should Not Be A Member of A World Government."

Georgia Daughters, meanwhile, had been successful in their state campaign to repeal one of the infamous world government resolutions.

In the wake of the convention, the National Defense Committee’s UN reports grew ominous and hostile. They emphasized the platform the UN provided for Soviet criticism of the U.S. They also highlighted instances of foreign interference in matters the Daughters viewed to be strictly domestic. One particularly evocative example was California district court justice Emmett Wilson's ruling that the UN Charter superseded state law in his decision invalidating California's Alien Land Law. This law, which prohibited Japanese residents of the state from owning land, had been repeatedly challenged in California courts. After Wilson's decision, the case would go on to the state Supreme Court, where the justices ruled that the Charter could not be used as the legal basis for the decision nullifying the land law. Ultimately, they decided against the law without the UN justification.\(^{35}\)

The DAR felt the damage was done, however. The legal reliance on international agreements demonstrated in Wilson's original decision represented just the kind of application of international law to state circumstances that conservative women, particularly those who supported segregation, feared. If international agreements could serve as the foundation for challenging state and federal laws, DAR critics contended, clearly national sovereignty was at issue.

---

Thus, the connection forged between the domestic and the international for the Daughters had become a threatening one; international control threatened individual liberty. Women's organizations that had supported the UN appeared momentarily thrown off balance by public suspicion of the international organization. Concerned WUUN activists held one meeting, not long after McCarthy's Wheeling speech, to understand more fully "the present apprehension which we all feel," but the UN observers seemed at a loss on how to deal with complex questions of national sovereignty, espionage, and communism, and their initial silence on these difficult issues is resounding.\textsuperscript{36} General Federation clubwomen reacted more boldly. In her keynote address at the Federation's May 1950 national convention, outgoing president Dorothea Buck took on UN critics directly. She granted that "the cold war between the East and the West, instead of gradually evaporating with the aid of the United Nations... has been growing steadily worse." The resulting fear, she explained, had caused "a strange hysteria," which in the U.S. had encouraged "a return to isolationism." "Fear, or perhaps superficial thinking is paralyzing the minds of some of our citizens as well as some of our legislators," she lamented, "They seem... more concerned over the possible discovery of a single disloyal citizen in our State Department... than over the extremely dangerous infiltration of Communists into countries that are looking to us for protection." In order to save the internationalism they had all worked so hard to foster, Buck declared that "citizens in this country must retain their equilibrium" and "must see clearly that isolationism is as dangerous to the welfare of this country as it was before World War II." Only by maintaining contact with the world would the United States win the Cold War,

\textsuperscript{36} Meeting Minutes, February 17, 1950, WUUN Collection.
she contended.\textsuperscript{37} Buck’s speech prompted a standing ovation. Clearly, the Federation
representatives remained staunchly in the American internationalist camp. Their approval
of Truman’s Four Point Program in a resolution later in the convention confirmed this
commitment; the United States should remain globally engaged.\textsuperscript{38}

The DAR did not agree. Spurred by opponents like Frank Holman and the
American Bar Association, the Daughters became increasingly hostile to the Genocide
Convention and the Human Rights Declaration. Articles in the \textit{DAR Magazine} warned
that the Genocide Convention would stifle free speech “from fear of being tried for
genocide, of being accused of causing ‘mental harm,’ and so brought to trial—possibly
before an international tribunal of aliens.” The Human Rights Declaration, meanwhile,
would guarantee “everybody, everywhere” social security, would encourage the
abandonment of immigration restrictions, and would forbid “laws regulating marriage.”
“If either of these measures is adopted,” one piece declared, “our Constitution will be of
very little, if any, value.” The opposition expressed by DAR members was twofold; it
included a general and longstanding conservative hostility to New Deal–style social
programs, like social security, which DAR leaders felt had inspired the UN Charter’s
social provisions, as well as a more specific fear of foreign intervention in America’s
domestic business, both legal and racial. Decisions like the one rendered in California’s
\textit{Perez v. Sharp} case, citing the UN Charter as the foundation for doing away with anti-
miscegenation laws, as well as fears that the American South’s racial order could inspire

\textsuperscript{37} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1950, Box 22, pp. 65–76, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{38} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1950, Box 22, pp. 65–76, 108–15, WHRC. Some
members did express concern that guaranteeing the safety of investment in foreign countries was a risky
proposal, since underdeveloped nations had the potential for political instability, and two members
mentioned the potential cost of the initiative, but none questioned the basic principle of international
engagement. One member even suggested that the program might be better administered by the United
Nations.
international intervention under the Genocide Convention, encouraged the sense that the
new international order the UN represented sought to alter the white, capitalist, Christian
country that the DAR had long supported. In the Daughters’ rendering, UN conventions
thus represented international threats to the American economic, legal, and social order,
and American involvement in the UN a growing threat to national sovereignty.39

Several resolutions presented at the DAR’s April 1951 convention denounced
these two UN creations and the internationalist ideals behind them. Two individual
resolutions explicitly condemned the Genocide Convention and the Human Rights
Declaration, respectively. In addition, the Daughters passed resolutions opposing any
reform of strict immigration quotas, demanding that Congress provide for the deportation
of illegal aliens, and pressing Congress to require displaced persons residing in the U.S.
to register every change of address with their original port of entry. Though not overtly
directed at the United Nations, these three resolutions reflected the Daughters’
apprehension that internationalists would find methods of loosening existing immigration
restrictions, thereby introducing larger numbers of foreigners into the American body
politic. Finally, the Daughters passed a more general resolution entitled “Limiting Treaty
Powers.” This resolution spoke directly to the issue that most distressed DAR members.
Because the Constitution declared treaties to be the supreme law of the land, the
resolution argued, “Global agreements, conventions and treaties have been drafted under
the United Nations which impose duties on the States not imposed by the Constitution.”
Therefore, the Daughters resolved to “petition the Congress . . . to initiate legislation

Magazine, 85 (March 1951), 214–15; for details on California Perez decision, see Perez v. Sharp, 32 Cal. 2d 711, 198 P2d 17 (1948); for details on DAR’s earlier support of white, capitalist, Christian nation, see
Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America, 62–70, 82–90.
necessary to insure the supremacy of our State and National laws.” As with the International Trade Organization and the Freedom to Organize Convention, the Daughters feared most of all any direct application of international authority to domestic circumstances. This was essentially an issue of international federalism; the Daughters perceived that the United Nations was encroaching on national and states’ rights. Their resolution set about defending the boundaries of both nation and state and claimed a role for their members shaping American foreign policy.  

Meanwhile, local DAR chapters maintained their efforts to educate people in their communities about global politics, always with a distinctly defensive posture. Chapters in California sent over a thousand letters to congressmen opposing world government and also “warned friends and neighbors.” Colorado chapters held “evening meetings—open to the public” to discuss world government, while in Mississippi, “most chapters studied world government and the Genocide Convention.” Texas Daughters reported that 65 percent of their local programs focused on either world government or the United Nations, and Utah Daughters “distributed literature to legislators, schools, etc.” discussing these same two topics. The Connecticut Daughters proudly reported that, in addition to publicizing the risks of world government, three of their members served in the state legislature. “Fine idea!” enthused National Defense Chairman Katherine Reynolds.  

Translating community campaigns into active political leadership served to

---

40 Proceedings, 60th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1951), pp. 108–11, 212, 214, DAR Archive; the Daughters had a long history of work both to Americanize immigrants and to oppose unfettered immigration. See Morgan, Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America, 82–84, 88–89, 111, 132.

increase the Daughters' influence and the chance that their campaigns would shape governmental policy.

DAR criticism of the UN developed a distinct structure during this period that would shape the remainder of their foreign policy activism in the postwar period. Originally, Katherine Reynolds explained in one representative letter to the membership, the United Nations had been created "as a union of sovereign nations whose purpose [was] to work together, as sovereign nations, to promote conditions of peace." The DAR supported this vision of international organizing. By 1951, however, "the Internationalists, working through the United Nations agencies," attempted "to convert the United Nations into some form of World Government." "The Genocide Convention and the Human Rights Convention," Reynolds argued, "are attempts to have us surrender our freedom, completely, through the means of adopting treaties." Because of this threat, DAR chapters should be very careful when promoting the United Nations. Organizations like the American Association for the United Nations might seem innocuous but in fact supported "world federation."⁴² Even President Truman had fallen victim to the schemes of the internationalists. Though the country must face the threat of communism together, Reynolds stated in another article, "we will not have the necessary unity if the President continues to let this mysterious coterie of Internationalists influence his demands. We will not be able to mobilize for military might and at the same time assume the costs of increased socialization." Responsibility for halting this drift toward irresponsible collectivism fell to the nation's Congressional representatives. "Congress can render no better service to the American people than to expose these internationalists," declared

Reynolds, "When this is done, confidence will be restored to our citizens." And while "America cooperating with like-minded nations" was important, Reynolds concluded, "the preservation of our Republic and its Constitution, of our personal freedom are much dearer, much more important." If these two things could not be reconciled, the Reynolds suggested, "then the United States should withdraw" from the United Nations, "and request that the United Nations headquarters be removed to some other country."43 Reynolds thus encouraged Daughters across the country to privilege national sovereignty over peace, and domestic concerns over foreign obligations. With this argument, the Daughters abandoned any pretense of shared perspective with their peers in the General Federation and other Women United organizations. Though both perceived the connection between domestic and foreign affairs, groups like the General Federation sought to promote dual loyalty to national and international authorities, while the Daughters and their peers sought to prevent this confusion of allegiances.

Campaigns by conservative activists like the Daughters shook the foundations of UN support across the country. Even the General Federation moderated their stance slightly in response. After members in Washington and California complained that the Federation's 1948 world government resolution had caused them "a great deal of trouble" and prompted several clubs to withdraw from the Federation, delegates at the Federation's 1951 convention voted to rescind this now infamous resolution. Though they avowed a "deep conviction that world cooperation is necessary to continuing peace" and a "belief that a strong United Nations constitutes the best hope for an effective world cooperative effort," the Federation simply could not afford the negative press that attacks

on their supposed support for world government caused. \(^{44}\) In September 1951, conservative criticisms of the UN reached the United States Senate, when Republican Senator John Bricker, of Ohio, proposed an amendment to the Constitution to prevent treaties from superseding Constitutional provisions and national laws. Bricker would repeatedly propose different versions of this amendment for many years and become a thorn in the side of both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Yet his proposed amendment also garnered support from conservatives across the country and fed accusations against the United Nations.\(^{45}\)

Alarmed at the growth of opposition to the United Nations, Women United members stepped up their community campaigns to promote what they viewed as the positive aspects of the international organization. Identifying “a dangerous slump in interest in the U.N.” as well as “disillusionment in schools and colleges about the U.N. and collective action,” the observers blamed particularly “irresponsible commentators and the yellow press” for creating negative “foreign policy sentiment.” Constance Sporborg also drew attention to the work of “the DAR and some Bar Associations” who “had paid lobbies against Human Rights.”\(^{46}\) To counter this destructive activism, Women United sought to promote the United Nations information centers, patterned on theirs in New York City, that had emerged all over the country. Some, such as those in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and New Britain, Connecticut, were administered by women’s

\(^{44}\) Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1951, Box 23, pp. 748–50, WHRC.

\(^{45}\) For a complete account of Bricker’s campaign, see Tananbaum, *Bricker Amendment Controversy*. See also Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*, 218–38; and Borgwardt, *New Deal for the World*, 267–68. For descriptions of growing conservative activism in California particularly, see Nickerson, *Domestic Threats*.

\(^{46}\) Meeting Minutes, January 19, 1951, Folder 8, WUUN Papers; and Meeting Minutes, December 21, 1951, Folder 9, WUUN Papers.
organizations like the League of Women Voters and the YWCA. Others, including those in Boston, Baltimore, and Rochester, had the support of the American Association of the United Nations. WUUN member Pearl Richardson, observer for the United Presbyterian Church, even managed to locate an information center at the Staten Island terminal for the Staten Island Ferry. In spite of Women United’s determination, they struggled to offset the suspicions emerging in the minds of some Americans, particularly as their campaigns came up against another, more direct UN intervention in American life that increasingly preoccupied American citizens during the early 1950s.

The Korean War

On June 24, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. Americans did not expect this event, nor were they absolutely certain of its significance in the immediate aftermath. Nevertheless, the invasion had sizeable repercussions for the UN and its image in the U.S. The two Korean governments had been threatening each other with invasion since 1948, with UN representatives watching the hostilities on the 38th parallel. Initially, neither side received the support required to launch an invasion, but the success of Chinese communists changed the equation, and in early 1950, Stalin promised backing to North Korean leader Kim Il Sung. UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie viewed the invasion as an act of war against the UN itself, and the first real test of the international organization’s ability to respond. The Truman administration was also committed to a rapid response, for multiple reasons. Convinced of Soviet involvement, Truman felt America must respond or appear weak. Further, the total defiance of UN mediators threatened the structure established to maintain postwar security. Finally, Truman advisors knew strong action against a communist nation that had attacked a non-

---

47 Meeting Minutes, March 16, 1951, Folder 8, WUUN Papers.
communist nation had the potential to silence critics, like McCarthy, who called the administration "soft" on communism. On June 25, UN Ambassador Warren Austin sponsored an initial Security Council resolution condemning the invasion; the Soviet Union's representatives had been boycotting Security Council meetings due to the UN's refusal to seat China's communist government and, thus, could not veto the action. On June 26, the Security Council approved UN military action to aid the South Koreans. Without consulting Congress, Truman then sent American ground troops to South Korea, under the charge of American General Douglas MacArthur, who was named UN commander.48

Initially, the North Koreans pushed almost to the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. With a now-famous landing at Incheon, MacArthur eventually succeeded in trapping the North Korean troops. Then, with UN General Assembly approval, MacArthur advanced American forces across the 38th parallel into North Korea. As MacArthur's forces neared the Chinese border, the Chinese government decided they had to respond to this threat. In October 1950, Chinese forces began crossing into North Korea, and by the end of November, the Chinese were attacking American troops.49

The early reactions of clubwomen to these events again fell largely in line with their preexisting opinions on the United Nations. The General Federation's newly elected president, Dorothy Houghton, incorporated the Korean conflict into the Federation's vision of their interconnected citizenship responsibilities. Drawing on a layered vision


that linked home to world, Houghton reminded Federation members that by "do[ing] our
day-to-day part as the good citizen and meet[ing] our responsibilities to serve, to vote, to
think through our convictions," they could "make much stronger contributions to those . . .
. Citadels of Freedom in which we also live and work—our family, our community, our
nation, and now the United Nations . . ." Considering those "concentric relationships,"
Houghton argued, should encourage Federation clubwomen to continue promoting
international engagement. "[T]o hold study groups about the UN, or to organize new
relief projects for Korea as that broken nation is liberated by the UN forces, of which our
own troops are the 'backbone'—these are no longer isolated 'do good' endeavors," she
concluded, "they become an immediate part of our own daily lives, for we live in a world
community, and we must learn to be good neighbors."50 Houghton suggested that the
Korean War only increased the imperative of bringing international affairs to local
audiences. In so doing, clubwomen both fulfilled a responsibility for community
improvement and contributed to global order.

To foster this "good neighbor" policy, Federation publications encouraged local
chapters to celebrate United Nations Day on October 24 and to focus particular attention
on the UN flag. As one October Clubwoman article explained, "Since June 27, 1950, the
flag of the United Nations has taken on a new significance for the peoples of the free
world. Borne into battle by the troops fighting aggression in Korea, it has become a vital
symbol of hope for the ultimate peace based on international law and order inherent in
the UN Charter." To further promote understanding of the flag's significance, Federation
leaders encouraged local clubs to participate in a new National Citizens Committee for

50 Mrs. Hiram Cole Houghton, "Building Citadels of Freedom in This Changing World," General
Federation Clubwoman, 30 (September 1950), 2–4.
United Nations Day project of making UN flags at home. For fifty cents, the Committee provided kits and instructions, and clubwomen would find only “ordinary sewing ability” required to reproduce the UN flag in their home communities. According to Federation leaders, the flag should be flown “alongside our [U.S.] flag on United Nations Day . . . and on other occasions, on courthouses, community buildings, schools, and in other places.” The UN flag served not only to remind the community of the righteousness of the Korean conflict, but also “to provide a means for women and girls to express in a tangible way their patriotic desire to serve the United Nations and the United States” as well as “to encourage better and more unified understanding by local groups and individuals of the United Nations . . . .”\(^51\) By thus emphasizing the UN flag, General Federation officers took a traditional patriotic symbol and claimed it for internationalism. Women’s patriotic organizations had a long history of promoting the United States flag, but the Federation’s pairing of the UN and American flags at traditional sites of community authority like schools and courthouses suggested a dual loyalty to nation and world. By asking women and girls to use their domestic handicrafting skills to produce UN flags, moreover, Federation leaders tapped specifically feminine skills to create these symbols of international authority at home. This layered merging of domestic skills with national and international symbology at the community level reveals the complex ways, both cultural and political, that the Federation’s UN activism joined foreign with domestic.\(^52\)


\(^{52}\) The DAR was a pioneering women’s organization in flag commemoration. On patriotic women’s organizations and the American flag, see for example Morgan, \textit{Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America}, 51, 63, 107, 143–44.
The Korean conflict provoked a very different response from the Daughters of the American Revolution. In September 1950, DAR National Defense Secretary Frances Lucas circulated a transcript of an editorial from a New Hampshire paper to state officers. The piece described an event attended by UN Ambassador Warren Austin. "At the swank Waldorf-Astoria recently, under a rain of vodka, Warren Austin . . . sat down with Russian representative of the Kremlin killers, Jacob Malik, and had a dinner party," the story began, "That same evening American boys died in the ditches and rice paddies of Korea." The author went on to ridicule America’s continued tolerance of Russian insults in Security Council meetings and to laud the UN representatives of Ecuador and Cuba for their absence from the event. The piece concluded by demanding pointedly, "How angry would you be if you saw a Russian-made Joseph Stalin tank bearing down on you, and you knew while you were there facing the spitting death for the sake of your country, your country’s representative . . . was exchanging gay little toasts with the representative of the killers who made that tank? Shame on America, Mr. Austin, for letting our boys down in that fashion!" By sending this article to their members, DAR national defense officers sought to indict the UN diplomacy they viewed as a betrayal of America’s responsibility to its citizens. That same September, the National Society commissioned Wisconsin congressman Lawrence Smith to read a prepared statement to the House condemning any form of world government.


By January 1951, the DAR’s National Defense Committee was leading its section in the *DAR Magazine* with a count of casualties in Korea. They blamed these American deaths on a conglomeration of forces, led primarily by internationalists. “Having adopted a plan presented by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, the United Nations General Assembly may now overrule a veto of the United States and ‘direct’ our forces to ‘Police’ the world,” the Committee reported, “Having discovered the people and the state legislatures are too intelligent to be duped, the internationalists are now concentrating their efforts to develop the UN into a world-ruling body.” American diplomats had recklessly consigned American soldiers to UN control, thereby prioritizing this international body over the Constitution and American security. “[O]ther nations do not know what to think of Americans who so glibly state they are willing to scrap the Constitution . . . for an ephemeral, impossible project,” another article declared, “Where are the men . . . from the other 53 nations who unanimously voted for the action in Korea? They are at home protecting their own land while we are left unprotected . . . .”

UN authority had thus undermined national loyalty and duty to country, the Daughters argued, in a way that endangered both America’s international standing and its citizens.

In addition to cataloging the betrayals of American diplomats and UN supporters, DAR administrators also lauded local chapters for the good work they did in opposing these forces in their individual communities. One piece, entitled “Take It Down!” focused on a familiar object: the United Nations flag. While the General Federation found the flag inspiring, DAR members directed their ire at this symbol of UN authority. “The objection made by Claverack Chapter, D.A.R., to flying the UN flag alongside of Old Glory in

---

Allwood's School No. 9 is well taken" the piece affirmed, "Flying the U.N. flag is part of a high-powered publicity scheme to sell this international organization to the American people. . . . We hope the U.N. will someday be able to preserve peace . . . . When that happy day comes, its banner will be entitled to respect. But at the moment, it's nothing to be proud of . . . ." Numerous other DAR chapters also protested the appearance of UN flags at public schools and public buildings, and at the DAR's national convention, the Daughters passed a resolution encouraging Congress to prohibit "any national or international flag being displayed over or in place of the Flag of the United States of America." The DAR had a long history of efforts of this kind. As early as 1896, DAR members had worked to discourage partisan use of the American flag in presidential campaigns, as well as excessive marketing of the flag as a commodity, and the Daughters were also instrumental in formulating the American Flag Code in 1923.\textsuperscript{56} DAR leaders rejected efforts like those of the General Federation to imbue the UN flag with authority by pairing it with traditional symbols of the American state. For similar reasons, the Daughters also approved a resolution pressing local chapters to police their communities for efforts to substitute a Universal Pledge of Allegiance and the United Nations Anthem for their American counterparts.\textsuperscript{57} The dual loyalty to national and international authority

\textsuperscript{56} Morgan, \textit{Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America}, 51, 143–44.

these efforts reflected joined foreign and domestic in a way the Daughters could not accept.

Korea also brought the burgeoning Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc., into the national discussion about the validity of international engagement. Like the DAR, the Minute Women expressed early suspicion of the administration's handling of the Korean conflict. Their initial complaints focused in particular on Truman's decision to deploy American troops without Congressional approval. In early 1951, Minute Women placed an advertisement in seven newspapers across the country with the heading "Mothers, save our Country . . . save our Boys." Having thus invoked maternal responsibility to protect both children and nation, the brief missive ordered women to "Sit right down now and write or telegraph your Senator and Congressman. Say 'Do not let the president send another American boy across the ocean without the consent of Congress. No More Koreas.'" The fact that Congressional representatives had been present at the meeting wherein Truman decided to assist South Korea aside, Minute Women felt that Truman's actions had prioritized the UN Charter over the Constitutional authority afforded to Congress to declare war and that American women, particularly mothers, must do something about it. The group's first national newsletter, published in February 1951, explained further that sending American soldiers to Korea "was done . . . on the President's sole decision based on the approval by Congress of the United Nations Charter." Echoing the DAR's concerns about the effect of international obligations on the American polity, the article closed by declaring "[w]e must decide in the future whether the fate of large numbers of American boys can be dictated by the President alone in support of decisions by U.N. representatives of many countries with varied interests . . .
The Minute Women thus included the international forum of the United Nations in
their list of threats to the "American Way of Life" and tapped the power of American
womanhood to counter this threat.

Leading Minute Women believed that this position on the Korean conflict would
recruit more women to their crusade. The group's inaugural newsletter reported that the
"Mothers" ad "brought a flood of approving letters from women wanting to join our
ranks" because "the majority of women do not approve of sending American men to fight
without the approval of Congress." The Minute Women thus claimed to represent a
unified and distinctly female position on foreign affairs and domestic policy. True
women, they contended, would not abide the sacrifice of the latter to the former.

Domestic metaphors and appeals to motherhood persisted in the Minute Women's
rhetoric relating to the Korean War, as well as other issues. One 1951 newsletter
condemned the Atlantic Pact nations for their refusal to freeze prices on tin during the
Korean conflict and lauded the American decision to cease purchasing tin from these
nations. "It might have been," the article theorized, "that the Government finally took an
example from those American housewives, who by refusing to buy such commodities as
butter... have brought down the prices to all consumers." This pairing of international
concerns with domestic imagery typified the motivational literature produced by the

---

58 "What About Our Boys?" The Minute Women of America, Inc. (February 1951), 4, in Dr. George S. Ebev
Collection, Box 3, Folder 4, HMRC; for reference to Congressional participation in Truman's decision to
send military aid to South Korea, see McCullough, Truman, 780–81, 789. Appointed Truman's advisor on
war emergency problems early in the conflict, Averell Harriman urged Truman to seek a belated war
resolution from Congress, but Truman listened instead to the advice of Dean Acheson, who counseled that
the process of obtaining such a resolution could be taxing and undermine the ability of future presidents to
respond to national emergencies. Acheson encouraged Truman to rely on his Constitution-sanctioned role
as Commander-in-Chief to justify the decision. See McCullough, 789.

59 "What About Our Boys?", The Minute Women of America, Inc. (February 1951), 2–3, in Ebey
Collection, Box 3, Folder 4, HMRC.
Minute Women. "We must put our own house in order," this same piece argued, "for not until then can we command the respect of other nations . . . ."\(^{60}\)

The Minute Women's domestic and defensive posture clearly had some appeal to American women. The inaugural newsletter also reported that the infant group now had "active units in California, Florida, Maryland, New York, and Ohio," as well as fledgling chapters in "Alabama, the Carolinas, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Nebraska, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming." Though the absence of formal organizational records makes these reports difficult to verify, by 1951, Suzanne Stevenson's brainchild had certainly grown beyond expectations. The newsletter included the founding stories of various chapters, including a reference to Mrs. William F. Buckley of Sharon, Connecticut, who was one of "three wonderful Minute Women" to hold "large meetings in their homes." Stevenson used her first newsletter to cement the purposes of the group, including the commitment of every member to vote in every election. "Most of us women are not politicians, or statesmen, or economists," she wrote, "but we know what is right and what is wrong . . . and we know what kind of country we want for our children."\(^{61}\) Stevenson thus tied the political aims of the organization to a gendered reading of female identity; women would mobilize to shape their nation, not as traditionally masculine authority figures, but as maternal ones.

In spite of their hostility to the way America went to war, the Minute Women approved of the project of vanquishing communism, even by military means. This made them avid supporters of UN commander Douglas MacArthur, who had made it clear

\(^{60}\) "What You Can Do," *The Minute Women of America, Inc.* (March 1951), 1, in Ebey Collection, Box 3, Folder 4, HMRC.

\(^{61}\) "What About Our Boys?", "What Some Groups Have Done," and "Personal Message from Me to You," *The Minute Women of America, Inc.* (February 1951), 2–3, in Ebey Collection, Box 3, Folder 4, HMRC.
during his command that he saw Korea as the key to defeating communism in Asia, and Asia as the key to defeating communism globally. The Truman administration did not agree. MacArthur frequently clashed with and even defied the President on the prosecution of the war. He preemptively announced a UN-approved ceasefire offer to the Chinese on one occasion, and he suggested that the U.S. drop atomic bombs on Manchuria. The final straw came in the form of an indiscreet letter to House Minority Leader Joe Martin, in which MacArthur criticized the Truman administration’s policy in Korea and agreed with Martin’s call for a clear victory. Martin read this letter on the floor of the House on April 5, 1951. By April 11, MacArthur had been relieved of command. The Minute Women registered their dismay in the form of a petition condemning the “Acheson-Atlee plan for Asia” that, in their rendering, featured “a negotiated peace in Korea” that would abandon that nation to communist control and thereby compromise American interests globally. “After Stalin consolidates in Asia,” the petition warned, “he can sweep across the plains of Europe with an army of 6 million men by April of 1952.” MacArthur’s vision would prevent all this, the Minute Women argued, and he should be heard by the Senate and the American people.⁶²

The Minute Women were not alone in their anger at MacArthur’s fate; according to one Gallup poll, 69 percent of the country supported MacArthur. This sympathy derived in part from the nation’s discomfort with the ideas behind the Korean conflict. Rather than a war for victory, this had been an amorphous “police action” nominally under the control of an international authority, but with the vast majority of the military burden (and hence, the casualties) shouldered by South Korea and the United States.

⁶² “Statement,” April 11, 1952, Reel 77, M53, Iowa Right Wing Collection; “Acheson” referred, of course, to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and “Atlee” to British Prime Minister Clement Atlee. On MacArthur’s insubordination, see McCullough, Truman, 831–52.
MacArthur, on the other hand, billed the war as an all-out battle against communism that America could not afford to lose. This picture appealed to people, like the members of the DAR and the Minute Women, for whom international organizing had become suspect; MacArthur’s version made Korea an American, rather than a UN, war. Truman’s firing of MacArthur therefore became a victory for internationalists who favored appeasing communists and relying on international diplomacy. As one DAR article in support of MacArthur explained, “The definition of Nationalism is: Devotion to the nation as a whole; patriotism. Yet the very word has become almost an epithet when used by suave internationalists who with an overbearing mien look down their noses at the true patriot as if he were of an inferior breed . . . .” Instead, according to the Daughters, MacArthur was “an AMERICAN—with the safety of his country first and foremost in his every thought and deed.” And as for Korea after MacArthur’s departure, the Daughters felt betrayed. “When President Truman ordered American troops into Korea the American people were told the aim was a free Republic of Korea. We believed that. Are we now to bow our heads and accept ‘peace at any price’?” one editorial demanded.

Even the General Federation could not deny the heartbreak of Korea as the war progressed. Yet their reading of its meaning differed profoundly from that of their conservative peers. Leaders acknowledged that the hardship of the war bred

---


65 Katherine G. Reynolds and Frances B. Lucas, “Appeasement,” *DAR Magazine*, 85 (October 1951), 787; The Daughters showed their support of MacArthur in spectacular fashion by hosting a reception of six thousand of their members following his April 19, 1951, address of Congress, which happened to coincide with their national convention. See Offner, *Another Such Victory*, 405.
disagreements among their members. "We all want peace," International Relations Chairman Vera Beggs acknowledged early in 1951, "But when we come to the steps that must be taken to attain our goal, the same differences are apparent that exist in the pronouncements of our political leaders." In the face of these differences, Beggs pushed hard for the Federation’s longstanding commitment to internationalism. "We must remember that diplomacy is our first line of defense," she declared, condemning the "highly negative trends" of "isolationism or anti-foreignism" that plagued American thinking, as well as the "effort to fix the blame for the present world situation on some individual or institution." Contending particularly that "war with China would serve only Soviet Russia’s ends," Beggs argued that "working with the United Nations" was still the best means of fighting communism.6

At the Federation’s 1951 convention in Houston, Texas, Constance Sporborg briefly addressed the Korean conflict during her informational speech as the group’s UN observer. "I am not here to discuss the Korean situation and the grim tragedy which faces the world," she began, "but I do hope we will remember that Korea is a symbol, not a little piece of real estate, and the principle which led us to collective action there, despite the misery and the tragedy that has ensued, ... is still good because it proves the rightness of the UN." The United Nations project, to Sporborg’s mind, was not only still viable but was validated by the Korean War. International organizing had served its purpose by addressing aggression quickly and forcefully. Applause followed her comments, indicating that at least some Federation clubwomen supported her

Continuing their tradition of community level foreign affairs activism, Federation leaders encouraged local clubs to support American efforts in Korea by sending care packages to displaced Korean families and reminded clubwomen that "many of these mothers belong to the Korean Federation of Women's Clubs, an affiliate of the General Federation." By emphasizing this commonality, Federation leaders hoped to promote both international awareness and sympathy for the UN effort.\(^{68}\)

The Federation's layered understanding of the connection of international circumstances to American communities survived the Korean conflict. Following a Federation-sponsored briefing to educate state international relations chairmen about foreign policy, one New Jersey clubwoman echoed the State Department pronouncement that "there is no longer any difference between foreign questions and domestic questions" and explained that "American Foreign Policy is debated today much as local issues were in the town meetings of our forefathers." After some deliberation, state representatives concluded that the role of Federation clubwomen in these community debates was to "lead a campaign of education on foreign policy generally, and as to the purposes and achievements of the United Nations," and thereby to support "international cooperation and united action."\(^{69}\) State federations implemented a variety of programs toward this end in 1951. Georgia clubs sponsored public opinion quizzes on world problems, while Florida's state chairman traveled to speaking engagements with a panel of foreign students. North Carolina clubs organized regular foreign policy briefings in cooperation

\(^{67}\) Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1951, Box 23, p. 878, WHRC.

\(^{68}\) Mrs. Hiram Cole Houghton, "Challenges Await Us," General Federation Clubwoman, 31 (September 1951), 4.

with the state university, and Nebraska clubs held community conferences on world
affairs.\textsuperscript{70}

Federation leaders continued to believe that their clubwomen bore a particular
Cold War–era responsibility to perform these duties. Federation president Dorothy
Houghton contended in one 1951 article that “[w]omen were never so important as in this
sixth year of the Atomic Age.” This was true in part because the new consumer culture of
the fifties made women a more available section of citizenry. “We have 92 labor saving
devices to give us more time to think about the affairs . . . and problems of our times,”
explained Houghton. In addition, women had a special connection to United Nations
work. “Every wife, every mother shudders at the thought of another war,” Houghton
asserted, “And no wonder. For her husband or son may fall in battle. That’s one reason
why women in every land are so keenly interested in the United Nations . . . .” Citing the
work of Eleanor Roosevelt, Houghton instructed her readers “Women have always
played a prominent part in the UN . . . . And you have a UN job too . . . . Speak up for
collective action against aggression . . . . Tell your friends and neighbors about important
UN accomplishments.”\textsuperscript{71} This vision of the particular role for women in promoting
internationalism played both on the cultural changes at work in fifties America and on the
parallel gender ideal that prioritized women’s roles as wives and mothers. Declaring that
domestic and foreign affairs could not be divorced from one another, Federation leaders
packaged civic work for international understanding into this vision of fifties womanhood
and used this image to mobilize their clubwomen for the United Nations.

\textsuperscript{70} Mrs. Frederick Beggs, “International Relations,” \textit{General Federation Clubwoman}, 31 (May 1951), 20–21.

Efforts to unify women under the banner of maternalism were common among female activists in the fifties, though they occasionally confronted the exigencies of America's prevailing red scare. WUUN founder Rose Parsons spent a large part of 1951 working against a group called World Organization of Mothers of All Nations, or WOMAN. Founded by journalist Dorothy Thompson, WOMAN sought to bring about world peace by uniting mothers around the globe. The group's ultimate goal was "Total, Universal Disarmament," and in order to advocate this plan, Thompson proposed a trip around the world with stops in major cities to speak with world leaders. The trip was to culminate in Berlin, where a pacifist festival would be held. In the course of planning her event, Thompson approached WUUN members for support. Concerned that such an amorphous strategy would invite communist infiltration, Parsons, with the help of Eleanor Roosevelt, attempted to dissuade Thompson from continuing with the idea. Parsons also conducted research on the organization that she ultimately turned over to the State Department. Parsons's primary motivation seems to have been her fear that the efforts of WOMAN would reflect poorly on the work of other women's organizations in support of internationalism and the United Nations. 72

The 1952 Election

Opposition to the UN continued to escalate despite the efforts of its supporters in groups like Women United. DAR activists levied a broad array of critiques at the

---

72 Rose P. Parsons, "Early Days of WUUN 1946," Folder 6, WUUN Papers; see also extensive correspondence in Folders 22 and 23, WUUN Papers, esp. Dorothy Thompson to Rose Parsons, July 9, 1951; Rose P. Parsons to Dorothy Thompson, July 23, 1951; "A friend in Germany" to Rose Parsons, October 16, 1951; Rose Parsons to Dr. Strecker, November 26, 1951; and Rachel C. Nason to Rose Parsons, undated; in Folder 22, WUUN Papers, as well as Rose Parsons to Dorothy Thompson, March 4, 1952, and Dorothy Thompson to Rose Parsons, August 9, 1952, in Folder 23, WUUN Papers. Eleanor Roosevelt joined with Parsons in attempting to undermine Thompson's plans. See Dorothy Thompson to Eleanor Roosevelt, January 7, 1952; and Eleanor Roosevelt to Dorothy Thompson, January 23, 1952, both in Folder 23, WUUN Papers.
international organization in 1952, including complaints about the portion of the financial burden borne by the United States and protracted ceasefire negotiations in Korea. Talks had been underway without success since July 1951, as the war, and the casualties, wore on. DAR members also actively promoted Senator Bricker's proposal for amending the Constitution to prevent treaties from becoming "the supreme law of the land." They persevered in their campaign against the United Nations flag, as well; members were encouraged to support Pennsylvania senator Edward Martin's 1951 bill to establish strict regulations on when and where the United Nations flag could be flown and make violations punishable by fine and imprisonment.  

In addition, the Daughters exhibited particular hostility when American actor Paul Robeson attempted to present a petition, entitled "We Charge Genocide," at the United Nations on behalf of the openly communist Civil Rights Congress (CRC). An indictment of the Jim Crow practices of the American South, "We Charge Genocide" sought to employ the Genocide Convention to bring international attention to America's racial inequalities, to motivate domestic civil rights activism, and, more obliquely, to encourage support for the CRC's campaign to free the eleven imprisoned leaders of America's Communist Party. Robeson's petition was evidence that the DAR's fears about international intervention in America's domestic policies were well-founded. The UN Convention was being used to endanger racial practices that many Daughters supported, but also to do the work of the Communist Party in America. Though the State

---


Department denied Robeson a passport, preventing him from presenting the petition at the UN meeting in Paris, one DAR magazine article reported Robeson's endeavor and demanded "Will the United Nations have authority to use regional defense forces against us if we refuse to submit to trial for genocide . . . ?" This same article mentioned a recent resolution passed by the Sons of the American Revolution "calling for the withdrawal of the United States from the United Nations at the earliest possible moment." Though National Defense chairman Katherine Reynolds acknowledged that the Daughters had historically supported the UN "as a union of sovereign nations," she pointedly asked her March 1952 readers if this vision still applied. "Recent happenings cause one to pause before continuing to accept this assumption," Reynolds warned.\(^75\)

When the Daughters met for their April 1952 national convention in Washington, D.C., suspicious members voted in a total of seven resolutions seeking to limit the authority of the United Nations and its agencies. The first defended the true purposes of the United Nations as union of "free and independent nations" and reiterated DAR opposition to any attempt to transform the international organization into a world government. The next urged Congress to adopt Senate Joint Resolution 130 "to prevent treaties becoming the supreme law of the land." The Daughters then voted their opposition to United States ratification of the Genocide Convention, as this "encroaches on our just use of free speech and a free press." When two "noes" were heard from the floor during the voting for this particular resolution, the presiding DAR president asked the two women to stand and reveal which states they represented (Wisconsin and New York). The dissenters aptly shamed, the Daughters then voted that "the safety of the

\(^{75}\) On the CRC petition, see Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*, 180–86, 193–94; on DAR response, see Katherine G. Reynolds, "You Be the Judge," *DAR Magazine*, 86 (March 1952), 289–90.
United States . . . has been and is being endangered by the futile policy of appeasement by the United Nations in Korea” and demanded that the U.S. government “put forth every reasonable effort to win the war in Korea before it is forever too late.” Finally, DAR members approved three resolutions urging the maintenance of immigration quotas and the limitation of the amount of time “aliens” would be allowed to remain in the United States.\(^76\)

The Daughter’s obvious suspicion of the UN evidently raised some eyebrows, for later in the convention the group’s president felt obliged to clarify her position. “Today the United Nations has a socialistic trend,” she argued, “and we . . . are against a number of the ramifications of the United Nations.” This selective opposition did not mean that the Daughters opposed the United Nations in toto, yet. “I have never made the statement at any time that I wished our organization to propose that our country withdraw from the United Nations,” she contended. “That step would have to come from the members of our Society when and if it were necessary.”\(^77\) In spite of this careful rendering of the DAR’s position, the idea of proposing withdrawal from the UN took hold. National Defense Chairman Katherine Reynolds suggested in the wake of the convention that if Congress failed to take the Daughters’ recommendations with sufficient seriousness, she could “see no alternative to adopting a resolution next April to withdraw completely, requesting the other member nations to remove their headquarters to some other nation.”\(^78\)


\(^78\) Katherine G. Reynolds, “Comments on Resolutions,” *DAR Magazine*, 86 (August 1952), 883.
A change in the way America related to the UN therefore represented the only hope for the international organization, and the DAR administration had little faith in the Truman administration’s ability to change course. “Is there any hope at all,” lamented the DAR’s Executive Secretary of National Defense, Frances Lucas, “when the State Department booklet, ‘Our Foreign Policy,’ starts with this sentence, ‘There is no longer any real distinction between ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’ policy.””79 This State Department position violated the Daughters’ order of priorities, which placed loyalty to nation above loyalty to any other body. The Daughters drew a firm line of defense between the domestic and the international, and the diplomatic community’s failure to do the same compromised their patriotism and their ability to fulfill their responsibilities in the eyes of DAR activists.

As far as the Daughters were concerned, what hope there was came in the form of an impending election, and the opportunity it afforded DAR members to make their voices heard at the ballot box. Frances Lucas urged Daughters to examine candidates carefully to ensure that they shared the DAR vision of world affairs. “It is up to YOU, the voter, to ask yourself a few questions before you vote,” she instructed, proposing a list of inquiries that included, “Does the candidate advocate any form of world government?” and “Is he an American or an internationalist who would continue to dissipate our wealth by ‘hand-outs’ to foreign nations . . . .” The 1952 contest was not merely an election, Lucas concluded, but “a battle between those who wish to protect the freedoms, national and international, enumerated in the Constitution . . . and those who wish to socialize our

79 “Rumor or Fact?” DAR Magazine, 86 (October 1952), 1031–32, quote on 1032.
great country or betray it to the rule of an international governing body." The Daughters’ votes would "make the decision."80

The Daughters were not alone in ascribing particular significance to the 1952 election. Republican party strategists picked up on the growing divide in the nation’s commitment to internationalism and sought a candidate who would appeal in a time of global insecurity. General Dwight D. Eisenhower suited admirably. Though Eisenhower lacked the clear conservative pedigree of either Douglas MacArthur or Ohio senator Robert Taft, both of whom were initial contenders for the Republican nomination, his military experience made him particularly attractive to those who felt the Truman administration had given diplomacy free reign and lacked sufficient patriotism. Republican campaigners billed their candidate as an alternative to years of Democratic Party socialization and compromise to international pressures. Though Eisenhower largely refrained from committing to specific foreign policy positions while campaigning, his broad statements labeling Truman’s foreign policies as "negative, futile, and immoral," and particularly his October 1952 promise to "go to Korea" if elected, encouraged conservatives suspicious of the Truman administration to view Eisenhower as a change for the better. Frustrated Truman aides saw in Ike’s vague rhetoric an attempt to placate the segment of the population most hostile to the United Nations. Democratic campaign staffers tried to shift the debate by focusing candidate Adlai Stevenson’s statements on the domestic successes of the Democratic Party, but a spectacular series of advertising campaigns (the first of their kind) promoted Eisenhower as the candidate able to answer the questions of average Americans, and the Democrats failed to counter these ads effectively. Republican candidates predictably accused Stevenson, and the

Democratic Party as a whole, of being weak on communism, and the nomination of Richard Nixon as Eisenhower’s running mate pleased anticommunists across the nation.81

The DAR took the 1952 campaign as an opportunity both to promote their foreign policy priorities and to mobilize women to participate in politics. “For how long can less than seven per cent of the population of the world . . . carry a world financial burden and supply over 90 per cent of the troops to ‘police’ and die on foreign soil . . . ?” one article demanded, continuing, “We women cannot be proud of our voting record in the last presidential election, for there are more women over 21 eligible to vote in the United States than the entire number of people . . . who cast ballots in 1948. It’s up to us, the women.” To see that DAR members lived up to this responsibility, national leaders instructed the national defense chairmen of local chapters to make certain their members were registered to vote, and encouraged every Daughter to ask ten of her female friends who were not DAR members if they were registered. Daughters should also make phone calls to get out the vote on election day. DAR leaders used the election to promote discussion of women’s political role in America. In the November 1952 issue of the DAR Magazine, Katherine Reynolds posed the question, “What part can the women of America who are unable to enter into politics as a profession do?” Her answer: a quote from Princeton president Harold Dodds enjoining women to mobilize locally. “If we fail to govern our home localities well,” explained Dodds, “popular government will collapse all along the line. If we succeed at home, we shall similarly succeed in Washington.”

DAR members were thus encouraged to believe they could shape national politics and

foreign policies by their actions in local communities. By these means, they could promote their vision of American government to save the republic.82

Faced with a presidential election, the national leaders of the Minute Women also fused their opposition to internationalism with their attempts to improve on the voting record of women. Since every Minute Woman pledged “to vote in every election,” the first national political contest since the group’s founding would be a true test of its principles. As one article in the Minute Woman newsletter declared, “Every effort should be made to see that the disgraceful record of the number of women who voted is raised to as near 100% as possible.” A West Virginia chapter of Minute Women developed a sample talk, subsequently distributed in the national newsletter, for their members to use when making phone calls to get out the vote. “Hello Mrs. ———. I am Mrs. ———, a member of the Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.,” the script began. “We have recently formed an organization . . . and our slogan is Guarding the Land We Love. Our first project is to ask every woman to make sure she is registered so she can vote in the primaries and in the Presidential election in November.” The caller was then to provide the location and hours of the appropriate voter registration office. The script continued, “In the 1948 election, only 47% of the eligible women voters of our country voted. If the Minute Women could get all the women to register and vote, we believe they could halt our drift toward socialism and another world war, and reduce the cost of government.” This pitch sought to rouse women based on the belief that female citizens bore a particular responsibility to reform American government, and that the path of reform would be clear to them. Baltimore Minute Women used a similar tactic to reach

unregistered female voters in that city, while Texas Minute Women focused on making
certain women paid their poll taxes.\textsuperscript{83}

Though the newly elected president of the Minute Women, West Virginian
Dorothy Frankston, reminded newsletter readers that "the Minute Women do not presume
to dictate WHAT party to support or HOW women should vote," newsletters did not shy
away from delineating which issues should form the litmus test for political candidates.
The 1952 action program of the Minute Women had focused in part on supporting the
Bricker Amendment, and newsletters urged members to write their representatives in
support of this legislation. As the election neared, Frankston encouraged Minute Women
across the country "to give wholehearted support to those men who would favor the
enactment and enforcement of legislation which restores to our government the principles
for which we stand." Of particular concern should be support for the Bricker Amendment
and an "honorable, definite, and uncompromising conclusion of the Korean conflict."\textsuperscript{84}

Caught up in election year fervor, former national chairman of the Minute
Women, Suzanne Stevenson, even joined in an attempt to form a viable third party to
challenge the Democrats and Republicans in the national election. At an August 1952
meeting in Chicago, Stevenson convened with a group of conservative political activists
to discuss ways of organizing against "internationalism" in government. Stevenson seized
control of the meeting, along with conservative economist Percy L. Greaves, Jr., and she

\textsuperscript{83} "Voting," Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (March 1952), 3, in Box 5, Folder 1, O'Leary Papers,
HMRC.

\textsuperscript{84} "Treaty Law—A Threat to the Constitution," Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (November 1952), 2;
Mrs. Ross Biggers, "Your Action Is Needed Now," bulletin from Houston Chapter, Minute Women of the
U.S.A., Inc., in O'Leary Papers, HMRC; Dorothy B. Frankston, "Dear 'Minute Women,'" Minute Women
of the U.S.A., Inc. (November 1952), 1–2, Reel 76, M19, "Minute Women of the United States of
America," Iowa Right Wing Collection. Dorothy Frankston was a native of Wheeling, West Virginia.
and Greaves were appointed co-chairman of the new Constitution Party, which they hoped would appeal in particular to conservative Republicans displeased with the Eisenhower candidacy. Within weeks, however, more extreme and anti-Semitic proponents, including W. Henry McFarland, Jr., took control of the Constitution Party. Together with Greaves, Stevenson immediately resigned, declaring she would “have no part of any movement which seems to me so steeped in bigotry.” The Constitution Party successfully put candidates on the ballot in Texas and Colorado but failed to garner significant Republican votes elsewhere.\(^5\)

Local chapters of Minute Women also participated in 1952 political campaigns. Houston Minute Women, for example, offered two candidates for election to Houston’s school board, which they felt had fallen victim to the socialized thinking of progressive educators, particularly as propounded in UNESCO teaching materials. According to Houston’s Minute Women, UNESCO materials were part of “a conspiracy spreading throughout the length and breadth of America” that sought specifically the fill the minds of children with “ideals foreign to the American way of life.” The only way to prevent this was to keep UNESCO materials out of Houston schools, and Minute Women candidates Dallas Dyer and Bertie Maughmer made this issue the heart of their campaigns. If teachers used UNESCO materials, Dyer contended at one school board rally, “UNESCO would strip children of their patriotic allegiance to the United States by

\(^5\) George Kellman, “Anti-Jewish Agitation,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, Vol. 54 (New York and Philadelphia: Copublished by the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1953), 93–94; Conservative activist W. Henry McFarland, Jr., founded the American Flag Committee in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1950, and was a lively opponent of the United Nations, focusing his efforts particularly on banning UNESCO materials from American schools and on supporting the Bricker Amendment, which he suggested making retroactive to apply to the United Nations Charter. Among his supporters were virulent anti-Semites Gerald L. K. Smith and Allen Zoll, as well as conservative economist Merwin K. Hart. For information on McFarland, see Foster, *Red Alert!*, 84–85; and Tananbaum, *Bricker Amendment Controversy*, 55.
indoctrinating them in a far-fetched citizen-of-the-world philosophy." Then, according to Dyer, "when war comes, there will be no youth in our country who knows enough about it to fight for it." These local Minute Women thus echoed the defensive connection the DAR made between foreign affairs (in the form of United Nations agencies) and domestic affairs (in the form of their local school system); their role was to defend the school system from international interference. These women believed strongly that this local activism could, and would, effect change at the national and international levels. "The one vital issue before the people in the approaching elections, at every level from local to national," wrote Houston Minute Woman Virginia Biggers, "is whether they are ready to change their republican form of government for that of a socialist and later a totalitarian state." Lest the Houston Minute Women "lose in our fight to GUARD THE LAND WE LOVE," they must remain engaged at all levels of politics.87

Dismayed at the apparent strength of the anti-internationalism movement, United Nations supporters among women's clubs attempted to respond. Speaking at the General Federation's May 1952 convention in Minneapolis, Constance Sporborg addressed opposition to UNESCO in her capacity as the Federation's representative on the United States Commission for UNESCO. "I want to tell you from the very start that the Soviet Union never joined and is doing everything it can to sabotage [UNESCO]," Sporborg began, "That is why it puzzles me when so many people are attacking it without knowledge, about its being subversive and . . . communitistic . . ." She begged Federation…


87 Mrs. Ross Biggers, "Elections," Houston Chapter Newsletter, Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (October 1952), 4, in Box 5, Folder 1, O'Leary Papers, HMRC.
clubwomen, "Please, in interpreting international relations, be sure of the source of the attack, weigh things for and against, and then make up your own minds." Sporborg then read aloud a letter from Federation president Dorothy Houghton that identified the American Flag Committee, and its founder W. Henry McFarland, Jr., as the source of the UNESCO attacks. Houghton noted in her letter that McFarland also participated in the Nationalist Action League, which the Attorney General included "as a fascist organization" on his list of subversive groups. "I hope this information will help you to clear away the mist of misapprehension," Houghton's missive concluded. Sporborg stationed herself at the door of the auditorium to pass out copies of the letter to interested members.\(^88\)

The General Federation also reaffirmed their resolution supporting the United Nations at this 1952 convention, albeit with some telling changes in wording. The 1952 resolution sought to assuage fears that UN treaties would abrogate national sovereignty. An added section explained that "[n]ational integrities are safeguarded by the Charter of the United Nations" because, according to that document, UN agreements must be ratified by participating nations "in accordance with the respective constitutional processes" and because "the organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members." The resolution also committed Federation clubwomen to the spread of "accurate information and interpretation of the United Nations," presumably to counteract the campaign of misinformation in which other organizations engaged. The wording of the resolution endeavored, in part, to forestall any internal opposition that

\(^88\) Convention Records (Proceedings—Transcripts), 1952, Box 24, pp. 254A–57A, WHRC.
might compromise Federation support for the UN. Federation leaders wanted their continued backing on record.\textsuperscript{89}

An intense discussion followed the reading of the new version of the UN resolution. In a testament to the strength of UN opposition, the Federation Executive Committee for the first time asked that the pro and con positions on the resolution be formally presented, and Resolutions Chairman Edith Ritchie accordingly gave summary statements of each argument. In what can only be construed as a concession to internal dissent, International Relations Chairman Vera Beggs then pushed for a change in wording to distinguish the United Nations from its agencies, because “one of these agencies may carry on its activities in a way that we might not like . . . and the actions of one agency might very well condemn in our minds the entire organization if we do not realize that they are separate activities.” Federation representatives supported her amendment. Questions from the floor also testified to the pervasiveness of suspicion of the international organization. One clubwoman from Springfield, Illinois, suggested the Federation add a clause “insisting that our treaty powers be left with Congress.” Another, from Tampa, Florida, asked how she should respond to the club leaders in her community when they told her the UN had “become a propaganda machine” and “had the power to ratify treaties.” “I read them the Constitution,” she explained, “but they said that that had been overridden.” Constance Sporborg assured the bewildered woman that the United Nations Charter protected national sovereignty and condemned those “who are using this

\textsuperscript{89} Convention Records (Proceedings—Transcripts), 1952, Box 24, p. 194B, WHRC.
moment of unrest and emotion and the election year and many other things to bring about a sentiment for isolationism."

In an attempt to calm the group's concerned membership, former Federation president Sarah Whitehurst also admonished the assembled clubwomen not to "let a few hysterical people sway you . . . to vote down the United Nations . . . I think it would be the most backward step in the entire world picture if a group such as this did that." She then presented two members of international women's clubs, one from Lithuania and one from Greece, to testify to the benefits provided by the UN. "It is the only place where we people seeking freedom and peace may appeal for our rights," pleaded Lithuanian clubwoman Ligija Dirkis. Several American representatives also avowed their belief in the United Nations as the best hope for world peace. One New York clubwoman advised the assembly "We cannot live alone, and I think that the United Nations has demonstrated to one who lives under its shadow that it is an instrument we can use." Another Illinois clubwoman reminded her peers, "For thousands of years, women have sat back while their menfolk went to war, thinking of what they would do for them if . . . and when they came back. Now let us devote ourselves to the building of peace with an instrument that has been given to us." A Sheridan, Wyoming, clubwoman sentimentally professed, "Out of loyalty to my God, to my country, to my Federation, to myself, I am wholeheartedly for the United Nations. I should weep as I should to lose a friend if I ever said or did anything to hurt it." Applause followed each of these statements, and the pro-United Nations speakers managed to quell any opposition from the assembled women.

Federation representatives unanimously approved the resolution and again affirmed the group's support for international organizing. Yet, though the Federation remained in the

---

90 Convention Records (Proceedings—Transcripts), 1952, Box 24, pp. 195B–208B, WHRC.
internationalist camp, anti-internationalist criticisms had clearly gained salience and threatened to disrupt Federation unity.  

Women United members also reported with growing distress on the increasingly entrenched opposition to the United Nations. In February 1952, they listed among the “forces against the UN” the possibility of a bill calling for U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations, as well as the “Bricker resolution” which used treaty law to oppose the international organization. They also theorized that “the DAR is unwittingly being used against the U.N.” and promised to examine that thorny problem further at future meetings.  

At the end of March, WUUN member Mabel Head, of the United Council of Church Women, identified the Minute Women as another major player in the campaign against the United Nations “and foreign countries.” Women United also, at long last, addressed the American Bar Association attacks on the Genocide Convention and Human Rights Declaration. The women worked up a list of responses to Bar Association criticisms, noting that it was “perfectly possible to ratify a treaty with reservations” and that both treaties stipulated that their provisions must be put into effect by the legislatures of the signatory nations. They also studied the Bricker Resolution in great detail and concluded that supporters of Senator Bricker simply “fail to understand what the results of the Bricker Amendment would be.”  

At a May brainstorming session on ways to address UN opposition, WUUN members blamed the national election, contending that “during an election year, the bi-partisan foreign policy slows up and eventually gets drawn into politics.” They also

---

91 Convention Records (Proceedings—Transcripts), 1952, Box 24, pp. 199B–214B, WHRC.

92 Meeting Minutes, February 15, 1952, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.

93 Meeting Minutes, March 21, 1952 and April 18, 1952, both in Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.
theorized that people continued to be uninformed both about the United Nations and about American government. If the public could be better educated about politics in general, Women United members believed, people would be more likely to support international organizing. "They think if U.S. policy isn’t accepted by the U.N., the U.N. isn’t any good," one member remarked. Another agreed that "if it was understood that a congressman can vote against an administration measure and defeat it, it would seem clearer that countries can vote against our measures in the U.N. and defeat them." Along those lines, members proposed to answer complaints that the percentage of the UN budget absorbed by the United States should translate into more votes in that body by responding, "Mr. Rockefeller pays more income tax than most. Should he have more votes?" By simultaneously educating about American government and the UN system, Women United members hoped to garner support for the international institution. They linked the two—national and international—to render the international more familiar and comprehensible.

The women also sought to pair national interests with international organizing. Members suggested that, in discussing the UN, they must "[a]void the choice of idealism on the one hand and self-interest on the other—a policy to make sense must have both." This false dichotomy made it too simple to abandon international organizing in favor of national defense, a choice the DAR and the Minute Women actively promoted, and which the UN observers rejected outright. Instead, they agreed with Eleanor Roosevelt that it was better to contain Soviet communists within the UN, where they could be watched and controlled. Acknowledging that the Truman presidency had become a liability, WUUN members also argued that it was "very important to separate the U.N. in
people's minds from the present administration.” They were not about to have their international organization dragged down by that sinking ship. Momentarily abandoning all pretense of merely recommending action to their member organizations, Women United members concluded, “We ourselves must get into politics in order to fight for the U.N.”94

This enthusiasm aside, exactly how to go about fighting for the UN remained a mystery. In their analysis of the forces behind UN opposition, Women United members made a crucial miscalculation. The UN observers simply could not credit the fears expressed by their anti-internationalist opponents with any validity. These fears must, they argued, grow from ignorance. They firmly believed that if people could only understand the UN completely, they would see the reasons to support it. WUUN women failed to consider the possibility that antipathy to the UN might, instead, derive from a different set of priorities or a different understanding of the way the United States should relate to the world. As a result, their efforts could not address the roots of public hostility to the United Nations. Members offered the usual suggestions for public education and lobbying Congress, but fundamentally, these UN observers talked past their anti-UN foes. One emblematic exchange occurred later that year. Attempting to do her part, Women United’s UN Center director Katherine Bryan wrote former Minute Woman and founder of the equally conservative Liberty Belles, Vivian Kellems, to protest Kellems’s “outrageous” criticisms of the UN. An unfazed Kellems promptly responded by inviting

---

94 Meeting Minutes, May 16, 1952, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.
Bryan to join the Belles’ crusade. Women United’s education-centered activism just could not overcome the commitment of conservative partisans.

When Eisenhower won an overwhelming victory in the November election, conservative clubwomen believed that this triumph signaled in part the ascendance of their more conservative perspective on international organizing. Though Eisenhower would not prove as opposed to international obligations as anti-UN activists hoped, in 1952 these activists viewed the removal of the Truman administration and the defeat of the Democratic Party as a victory for patriotism and national sovereignty. Women played a crucial role in the Eisenhower win. Southern white women in particular abandoned the Democratic Party to vote Republican; 59 percent supported Ike in the 1952 presidential contest. Conservative clubwomen credited themselves with the victory. “The November election has shown us what women can do when they set their minds to it,” wrote Minute Women president Dorothy Frankston. “The women’s efforts in the ‘Get Out the Vote’ campaign paid big dividends.” And women should not hesitate to reap the benefits of this contribution. “This is not the time to relax our efforts, it is the time to redouble them,” cried Frankston, “Those recently elected to office offer us both an opportunity and an obligation. They will be anxious to ‘represent’ those who put them in office, and thus it becomes our duty to let them know what we are thinking . . . .” Their efforts, they believed, had given them political voice, and Minute Women should use this to shape the new administration’s policies, foreign and domestic.

---

95 Meeting Minutes, October 17, 1952, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.

96 Rymph, Republican Women, 110.

The DAR leadership agreed wholeheartedly. On the heels of the election, their National Defense department distributed a flyer to local clubs calling on members to "act at once" to inform Eisenhower of the Truman administration’s plans to promote world government. The flyer provided Eisenhower’s mailing address and a list of issues to be brought to his attention. "Now is the time to express your American stand," Frances Lucas stressed in the circular, "Either the internationalists will be retained in high positions or Americans will be appointed to protect our constitutional republic. Write to Mr. Eisenhower at once."98 The Daughters were determined that the new administration would not fall victim to the same faulty vision of international interdependence that afflicted Truman in office. "It is inferred that in order to be Americans worthy of high respect from other nationals, we must abandon our sovereign rights and enter the cauldron of international chaos," wrote Katherine Reynolds in the year’s final issue of the DAR Magazine. Nothing could be further from the truth in the Daughters’ estimation. "Never has the world been in such turmoil as it has been since the formation of the so-called United Nations," Reynolds asserted. "Perhaps some consider it an honor to be cited as citizens of the world! For my part, I cannot see how one can become a world citizen unless one is first disloyal to one’s own country." Newly elected officers of government had a job to do to address the flawed devotion to world cooperation that had become so prevalent in American society and foreign policy. "Unless the Congress . . . can and does adopt an unbreakable means of safeguarding the Constitution . . . ,” Reynolds cautioned her readers, "we should withdraw our membership from the United

Nations. We did not sign the charter for the purpose of self-destruction.\textsuperscript{99} Exactly how Eisenhower's administration would negotiate this threat remained to be seen.

As the United Nations began its work in earnest, a series of developments on the international stage changed the ways American clubwomen looked at international organizing. The escalating Cold War, the implications of new international treaties, and the ongoing Korean War demonstrated to both supporters of the UN and those suspicious of it that America's involvement in international affairs had profound repercussions for the nation and its citizens. In response to these developments, the domestic implications of United Nations membership began to dominate public discussions of the UN.

Conservative clubwomen, their ranks swelled by the emergence of such anticommunist groups as the Minute Women, increasingly used their foreign affairs activism to advocate limiting the degree to which international obligations could impact Americans at home. Clubs that had traditionally supported the UN, meanwhile, were forced to focus their community campaigns on answering the critiques of conservative opponents of global interdependence. The connection between the foreign and the domestic that had originally energized all clubwomen became the point on which they disagreed.

Progressive clubwomen continued to pitch this connection as a positive one; conservative clubwomen began to view it as a threat. This bifurcation also shaped the way clubwomen viewed the 1952 presidential contest. While internationalist club leaders expressed frustration with the inflammatory foreign policy rhetoric that dominated the campaign, opponents of expansive internationalism hoped to use Eisenhower's election to the presidency as the impetus for a broad reevaluation of America's relationship to the world community. When Eisenhower won overwhelmingly, conservative women believed their

\textsuperscript{99} Katherine G. Reynolds, "Threats to Americanism," DAR Magazine, 86 (December 1952), 1299–1304.
vision had also triumphed. No longer would “internationalists” dominate American foreign policymaking, conservative club leaders announced; their members would see to it that a victorious Eisenhower instead prioritized national sovereignty and the rights of American citizens. This changed agenda for conservative women’s clubs fed a growing divergence among women’s organizations over questions of foreign affairs. Though both groups persisted in promoting international awareness among their members, American clubwomen found themselves more and more at odds over American policymaking and the role of the United Nations in American society.
Chapter Three
The One-Worlders and Their Crew: The Persistence of Internationalism, 1953–1954

For many years I've wished to know
Why God put Internationalists here below.
Just why he lets this tribe increase
That mars the happiness and peace.

In lodge and clubs, in churches, too
You'll find the one-worlders and their crew;
You'll listen to the hammer ring
And hear the anvil chorus sing.

But then I know Jehovah makes
Mosquitoes, lizards, toads and snakes;
So there's a reason I suppose—
Just what it is—God only knows.

—Anonymous member
Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.1

By 1953, American clubwomen more fully understood the complications of tying American foreign policy, and their support of it, to the United Nations. The pairing not only enmeshed the United States in international politics; it entangled clubwomen themselves in the controversial political debates of their day and thereby divided them. The polarization among women's clubs on the subject of internationalism clearly evident during the 1952 election only increased during the early years of Eisenhower's presidency. Initially, internationalist clubwomen feared the implications of Eisenhower's election and hoped their community activism could address growing public suspicion of the United Nations, while conservative clubwomen expected the new presidential administration to heed their warnings about international entanglements. Yet conservative clubwomen soon discovered that internationalism had become much more entrenched both in their nation's policies and in the American political imagination than they suspected. Over the two years following their supposed electoral triumph, activists in the

DAR and the Minute Women found their efforts to support such legislation as the Bricker Amendment opposed by the Republican president they had helped elect; their warnings about the United Nations ridiculed in the national media; and their own members critiquing their national positions on internationalism. Supporters of the United Nations in women’s clubs rallied, meanwhile, to take prominent positions in the Eisenhower administration, to claim the UN as the true envoy of America’s Cold War interests, and to reaffirm the dedication of their local clubs to UN education. These different experiences put the local educational programs of conservative and liberal clubwomen firmly in opposition to one another. By the 1954 mid-term elections, the internationalist ideals of the United Nations had become the ground on which these clubwomen fought their postwar political battles.

In the face of an apparent conservative victory in the 1952 election, internationalist clubwomen regrouped. As Eisenhower prepared to take office in January 1953, Women United met once again to consider methods of combating United Nations opposition. Guests attending a January 16 strategy session at the Upper East Side Bank of Manhattan included Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as journalists from the New York Times and the Herald Tribune. Rose Parsons introduced the question of the day by warning the gathering that “if the present trend continues, it may become so strong that the UN will be destroyed.” “This is a real danger to our Foreign Policy,” Parsons declared. Accordingly, the women were there to consider whether their organizations should “give up working for anything but the UN” or if they should form “a watch-dog committee
acting as liaison between the State Department and our organizations to alert us on bills coming up in Congress.”

Research by Women United members suggested that anti-UN activists in cities across the country used the same set of tactics to challenge UN advocates. League of Women Voters observer, Zelia Reubhausen, described her experiences on a recent southern tour to promote the UN. During her visit to Tampa, Florida, Reubhausen had discovered “a highly organized attack on the UN.” “Loaded questions were asked at all meetings,” Reubhausen reported, “which were not really understood by those who asked them.” “People were afraid that foreigners will control them,” Reubhausen explained, and local veterans groups aggravated the situation. Though fearful Tampa school superintendents refused her requests to speak on the UN, Reubhausen finally convinced veterans groups to consider meeting with her “to learn more about the UN.” Pearl Richardson, observer for the United Presbyterian Church, described similar findings on her eight-week tour of Michigan, where “the Minute Women [were] very active.” “Planted questions against the UN were asked by people who didn’t know what they were asking and who couldn’t uphold their questions because they admitted they didn’t know enough,” Richardson told the group.

Despite the fact that local protesters appeared ill-informed to Women United members, anti-UN activism continued to grow. Eleanor Roosevelt interjected that the national League of Women Voters president had confessed to her that “the League couldn’t train enough workers to combat the situation.” “Other organizations must help,”

---

2 Meeting Minutes, January 16, 1953, Box 1, Folder 9, Women United for the United Nations Collection, Collection No. 70-70-78-M200, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as WUUN Collection).

3 Meeting Minutes, January 16, 1953, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.
Roosevelt pressed. Theorizing about the “real motives” of the UN opposition, Roosevelt suggested that “if the UN were abolished, its attackers would be free to work for their special interests.” Roosevelt proposed that “America Firsters” like Allen Zoll and Gerald L. K. Smith were behind the attacks, along with “a communist element that is using these groups to divide and confuse” and “overpatriotic people.” AAUW observer Janet Robb shrewdly added that “if they changed their scapegoat from the UN, the attack might be on minorities.” Robb had clearly noticed the connection her opponents forged between UN authority and domestic social issues.

These piecemeal ideas about the motivations for UN opposition prompted a number of suggestions from frustrated Women United members. May Weis, observer for the National Women’s Conference of the American Ethical Union, demanded “We are trying to handle propaganda—could we not get someone to come and teach us the best way?” “Should we not throw our whole support toward the [American Association for the United Nations]?” asked Charlotte Boudreau, of the Country Women’s Council of the U.S. One representative suggested that Women United had focused too much on “the intellectual approach” instead of the “popular approach,” and proposed that visitors to the UN be asked to “make one positive statement about the UN in his or her local newspaper on returning home.” Times reporter Kathleen McLaughlin offered that perhaps more press on the UN’s technical assistance programs would help, but several Women United members lamented that when they “spoke on technical assistance, people just asked who is paying for it.”

---

4 Meeting Minutes, January 16, 1953, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.

5 Meeting Minutes, January 16, 1953, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.
Absent a concrete plan of action, Women United focused instead on developing responses to the most common criticisms made by UN foes. In response to critiques of UNESCO-sponsored educational supplements, Women United members should point out that UNESCO programs for American schools had been designed by Americans, “not foreigners,” and that “if children aren’t educated about other countries, we would have uninformed people in the State Department and other government agencies . . . so that we would not be able to deal intelligently with those countries.” When opponents cited the enormous financial burden borne by the U.S., Women United members should remind them that, without the UN, “we would have to be doing all these things alone.” When critics pointed out the dangerous hypocrisy of maintaining international ties to the USSR when the U.S. was also committed to fighting communism, Women United members should counter that “it is useful to have Russia in the UN where we can watch her.”

Though the meeting closed with no firm decisions made about how precisely the UN observers would direct their women’s organizations to fight UN opposition, the options they considered reveal two persistent assumptions at work. First, Women United members viewed the work of the United Nations as an integral part of implementing American foreign policy. Every patriotic American should also be an internationalist in part because so-called internationalism facilitated the expansion of American ideals across the globe, trained a cadre of knowledgeable foreign policy experts, and kept a close watch on America’s enemies. Second, the Women United observers remained committed to education as a means of converting the American public to their point of

---

6 Meeting Minutes, January 16, 1953, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.
view. If they could simply come up with the right answers, the observers believed, Americans would see the logic of supporting the United Nations.

The early days of the Eisenhower presidency gave little cause for hope that internationalism, or the United Nations, would be given priority in national policymaking. In his first weeks in office, Eisenhower placed great emphasis on excising security risks from governmental positions. Truman’s loyalty oaths had proven insufficient; background checks and internal investigations were necessary to purge potentially compromised employees, particularly from the State Department.\(^7\) Senator Joseph McCarthy, ensconced in his position as chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, took the advent of a new presidential administration as an opportunity to launch his own aggressive purge of State Department employees. McCarthy focused primarily on Foreign Service officers, thereby crippling the junior diplomatic corps and undermining State Department morale. No additional junior Foreign Service officers were appointed between 1952 and 1954.\(^8\) Shortly after Eisenhower’s inauguration, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles gave an address describing the new administration’s view on foreign policy, which emphasized the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Stalin’s ultimate goal, according to Dulles, was the encirclement and eventual destruction of the United States. The goal of United States foreign policy would be, therefore, to counter this effort. Eisenhower himself went further in his first State of the Union address, on February 2, calling on Congress to draft a resolution “making clear

---


\(^8\) Lyon, *Eisenhower*, 491–93.
that this government recognizes no kind of commitment contained in secret
understandings of the past with foreign governments” to allow the spread of communism.
With this oblique reference to the diplomatic efforts of his Democratic predecessors,
Eisenhower both repudiated international commitments involving the Soviets (namely,
those made by Franklin Roosevelt at Yalta) and placated Republicans in Congress who
were less than certain of his conservative politics. Though Eisenhower ultimately
proposed a resolution that was far less conservative than Congressional Republicans
would have liked, the days of international cooperation and presidential reliance on
diplomacy seemed numbered.⁹

In part, Eisenhower’s stern rhetoric responded to anti-internationalists in Congress
who had been putting the new Republican administration on the defensive. Before
Eisenhower’s inauguration, on January 7, the relentless Senator John Bricker introduced
Senate Joint Resolution 1, or what would become known as the Bricker Resolution. With
the backing of sixty-two senators in addition to Bricker, the resolution sought again to
curb the treaty-making power of the President by amending the Constitution to require
Congressional approval of all “Executive and other agreements with any foreign power or
international organization,” and legislation to make treaty laws applicable within the
United States. Though he had in the past expressed similar fears about the power of
treaties to override the Constitution, Secretary of State Dulles feared the Bricker
Resolution would drastically hamper his, and the President’s, diplomatic efforts around
the world. Though Eisenhower’s position was less clear initially, he came to oppose the
resolution. Yet, Bricker’s supporters in Congress were vocal and powerful, and

Eisenhower's failure to repudiate the resolution immediately fueled the campaign for its passage.\textsuperscript{10}

To further complicate the situation, the United Nations was in the midst of a transition. Secretary-General and frequent American supporter Trygve Lie had announced his resignation in November 1952 and remained in his post only until a replacement could be found. Lie's resignation, due in part to a Soviet campaign to undermine his authority, threatened the UN as a vehicle for American foreign policy goals. If United States representatives to the UN failed to secure support for an anticommlunist replacement for Lie, American support for the United Nations would wither rapidly. The ongoing Korean conflict only heightened the tension. With as many as seventeen candidates vying for the position at one point, achieving consensus proved challenging.\textsuperscript{11}

Internationalist clubwomen therefore had reason to be discouraged, and no doubt some were. Despite their 1952 endorsement of the UN, even the national leaders of the General Federation backpedaled on their longstanding commitment to an internationalist agenda. Under new president and Indiana clubwoman Mildred Ahlgren, the Federation's national committees had spent the year since their 1952 convention focused on an aggressive "Americanism" campaign, which Ahlgren defined in her inaugural speech as "campaign of national housecleaning" that would initiate "a return to basic values."

"[W]e have been so busy giving aid to our neighbors that we have neglected the state of


affairs at home," Ahlgren instructed Federation clubwomen, "It is axiomatic that we must have world cooperation to have world peace. But I believe that we will never have world peace unless we take care of many problems in our own backyard." Ahlgren even warned her listeners not to be afraid of being called "isolationists." "How can we make the rest of the world believe in our way of life unless we believe in it ourselves?" she demanded.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus, Ahlgren encouraged General Federation clubs to refocus their efforts on domestic concerns, a less controversial course for the organization in light of the very prevalent hostility to international organizing evident during the national election. Even loyal UN partisan and WUUN member Constance Sporborg felt moved to acknowledge the flaws of the UN to the Federation she represented. "Since the allies of the last war have become enemies today," Sporborg admitted in one early 1953 report to Federation members, "there seems to be a great deal of senseless bickering in the UN." But Sporborg would not allow the Federation to abandon its UN support entirely. "[I]t is unwise to grow impatient . . .," she counseled, "Think instead of the solid core of accomplishments the United Nations has to its credit." Margaret Arnold, a member of the International Affairs committee, even pitched both internationalism and Americanism to members as two halves of the Federation’s program. "We have the ‘near look’ which is our Americanism campaign and the ‘far vision’ which is the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies," she contended.\textsuperscript{13}


As Federation leaders scrambled to adjust to changing political circumstances, these circumstances shifted yet again. On March 5, 1953, Joseph Stalin died. Initially, Americans reacted with uncertainty; the death of the leader of America’s bitterest international enemy left even the presidential administration floundering for an appropriate response. Then, unexpectedly, Stalin’s first successor, Georgi Malenkov, indicated in a March 15 speech that the Soviet Union was now committed to peaceful resolution of its international disputes. Soviet media immediately echoed the call for peace. Unwilling to be outdone, if dubious of Soviet sincerity, Eisenhower responded with a now celebrated April 16 speech at the Statler Hotel in Washington, D.C. Notably, the language of the address echoed many of the beliefs that undergirded the internationalism of American clubwomen. Eisenhower called for numerous specific concessions from the Russians as proof of their sincerity. In return, the United States would agree to some arms limitation and to international control of atomic energy under the auspices of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{14} More than this, Eisenhower’s specific references to the price of continuing the arms race focused on domestic social conditions. “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed,” Ike declared. One bomber equaled more than thirty modern schools, or two fully-equipped hospitals; one destroyer equaled homes for eight thousand people. If the Soviet Union truly wished to end the arms race, Eisenhower promised, the U.S. would send a portion

\textsuperscript{14} The concessions included the release of any prisoners held since 1945, honorable armistice in Korea, a free and united Germany, and the full independence of East European nations. Eisenhower’s political advisors, and particularly Secretary of State Dulles, knew these proposals to be largely impossible for the Soviet Union to accept. Eisenhower presented them largely to foster the perception that Americans took the Soviet offer for peace seriously and were willing to participate in the conversation. Ambrose, \textit{Eisenhower}, Vol. II, 67, 91–96; Lyon, \textit{Eisenhower,} 530–34.
the money it saved "to a fund for world aid and reconstruction . . . to assist all peoples to know the blessings of productive freedom."  

Americans and people around the world lauded Eisenhower's speech, which the State Department printed and distributed in dozens of languages. For internationalist clubwomen particularly, the speech signaled greater promise than the preceding year's election had given them reason to expect. Eisenhower's administration had not abandoned the internationalist cause entirely, nor had it rejected the authority of the United Nations. Ike's domestic imagery echoed the vision so frequently expressed by clubwomen committed to the work of the Economic and Social Council of the UN and the language they often used to mobilize communities to support the United Nations more generally. If Eisenhower was committed to furthering the agenda of the United Nations, as many clubwomen saw it, then perhaps clubwomen could be committed to Eisenhower. The speech encouraged additional attention among clubwomen to other policy statements by the Eisenhower administration, including numerous provisions in his State of the Union address that the media had largely overlooked. Numbered among these were proposals for substantial support of foreign aid programs; extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act allowing the president to raise and lower tariffs by executive order; and some tempering of the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, which many felt was discriminatory.  

---


17 McCarran-Walter tied immigration quotas to national origins and based them on the breakdown of the American population in 1924. Conservatives, including the national leadership of the DAR, hailed this bill for preventing "undesirable aliens" from entering the country and for maintaining America's racial proportions. Eisenhower disapproved because the bill effectively excluded hundreds of thousands of
to these policy proposals was positive; conservatives largely felt Eisenhower to be on the wrong side of each issue. Yet, Eisenhower's support for these actions also represented a continuation of the international engagement that had characterized the Truman administration. Internationalist clubwomen in organizations like the General Federation took this opportunity to capitalize on presidential backing and attempt to counter the conservative impulse stoked by the 1952 election.

At a contentious annual meeting a little over a month after Eisenhower's speech, the Federation considered supporting a number of Eisenhower's policies. One resolution sought to encourage study of the controversial McCarran-Walter Immigration Bill. Introducing the resolution, Resolutions Chairman Edith Ritchie explained that "there had arisen so many complaints from our friendly allies and the friendly nations of the world" regarding the Act immediately after its passage that the Federation felt the Act must be examined. President Eisenhower's suggestion that the bill was discriminatory and needed revision merely encouraged this perception. The final wording of the resolution echoed Eisenhower's call for reconsidering some elements of the legislation, urging "Congress to review the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 and to enact a statute which would both guard our legitimate national interest and be faithful to our basic ideals of freedom and fairness for all." The resolution also called on "all club groups to make a thorough study of the McCarran-Walter Act . . . ." Federation leaders

---

18 Ominously for the group's UN partisans, Federation clubwomen gathered at Constitution Hall, the national headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C. The Daughters had donated the space when the Federation failed to find a suitable meeting site in the District. Convention Records (Proceedings--Transcripts), 1953, Box 25, p. 85, WHRC.

19 Convention Records (Proceedings--Transcripts), 1953, Box 25, pp. 216–18A, WHRC.
thus identified immigration reform among the Federation’s international areas of interest. Clubwomen must inform themselves on McCarran-Walter so that they could serve as knowledgeable advocates for the Act’s reforms, which promised to improve the United States’ reputation abroad. Yet Federation members did not immediately rally behind this issue.

Though no one mentioned the United Nations, the debate that followed essentially turned on the question of how engaged the United States should be in the problems of the larger world. Members of the Federation who opposed the resolution argued that revising McCarran-Walter would flood the American labor market with cheap workers and introduce “a large number of unassimilable [sic] people,” while the bill as it was originally conceived served to protect the American way of life. “Strange ideas are pressed upon us that America must first exist for all those other peoples whose governments have not been able to give them a good national life, that when they knock at our doors we must be their benefactors . . . .” one irate clubwoman argued, “By guarding our liberties we will promote the peace of the world . . . . This is our country, not to be entered by the rest of the world and turned into something else.” Opponents also argued that “subversive organizations” were the primary critics of the original legislation. Proponents of the resolution, meanwhile, argued that the president himself had endorsed reform of the legislation, and that those so-called subversive organizations included the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the United Council of Church Women. In the end, those in favor of liberalizing immigration quotas by revising the bill won out; Federation members approved the resolution.  

---

Advocates of international engagement were not so lucky with every resolution. Federation members also debated a related proposal committing Federation support for "President Eisenhower's recommendations for emergency legislation to bring in, after proper screening, 240,000 refugees and people from overpopulated areas in Western Europe in the next two years . . . ." According to the resolution, the influx of refugees would "help supplement [America's] manpower shortage, reunite families, and at the same time strengthen the objectives of our foreign policy." Once again, the debate centered on what America's responsibility should be to the world. Proponents argued both that it was America's duty and that it was in America's interest to admit the additional refugees. "[I]f 240,000 suffering people in Europe are in need of a proper place to make their contribution to the great sciences of the world and many of our great industrial achievements," Zaio Schroeder, chairman of the International Relations Department, argued, "let's you and I as clubwomen put down our fears and admit them."

"[I]t is to the enlightened self-interest of this country that we bring in these people to increase our stockpile of goodwill," another woman argued, "We need the goodwill of the countries from whom these people come." A third reasoned, "I cannot see how under the sun we can possibly do without the friendship of the peoples around the world. We have a tradition that we must uphold, and an American heritage." Accepting international responsibilities would further America's foreign policies, the women believed, and clubwomen were in a position to affirm this process.

Federation opponents of the resolution, on the other hand, repeated their arguments against liberalizing the McCarran-Walter Act—too many foreign entanglements threatened the American way of life. "[T]his McCarran-Walter

---

21 Convention Records (Proceedings-Transcripts), 1953, pp. 485-505, WHRC.
Immigration bill . . . is designed to protect us against the Communists and other things that were detrimental to the United States of America,” one member maintained, “I think we should back up our elected Congressmen who had the courage to vote for these immigration laws over [President Truman’s] veto.” Another invoked the Korean conflict, blaming the continuing hostilities for the manpower shortage referenced in the resolution. “While these boys are away,” she demanded, “shall we fill their jobs so that when they return they will be the ones seeking employment?” A third delegate cautioned that refugee families could grow, flooding the nation from within with “foreigners.” The heated debate went on for some time, through two attempts to table the resolution for later consideration. When, at long last, Federation members put the measure to a vote, proponents lost by four votes and the resolution was rejected. Apparently, having Eisenhower’s endorsement did not guarantee Federation internationalists the support of their fellow clubwomen.

Clearly, the divisions evident at the Federation’s 1952 convention continued to split the organization, in spite of their record of support for the United Nations. Federation members also voted at this 1953 convention in favor of the Bricker Resolution, though admittedly some women advocated Bricker’s provisions because they felt his Constitutional amendment would make international agreements more palatable to a larger section of the American population; if these agreements did not have the power to affect domestic law, more Americans would be willing to support them, the argument went. Nevertheless, outright internationalists were frustrated with the vote. “The Federation has had a very fine record in support of the United Nations, being one of the organizations which was . . . invited to San Francisco,” one member cautioned, “and
many people believe that this is perhaps an attack upon the United Nations in limiting the
treaty-making powers.” Her warning passed unheeded, however, and the Federation went
on record in favor of Bricker’s proposed legislation.22

Yet some internationalist efforts survived unabated. Local clubs continued to
promote international activities in communities across the country. One Kentucky club,
for example, reported sending “two young men to Europe as community ambassadors in
an experiment in the international living.” Michigan clubs sponsored a United Nations
workshop that six thousand Michigan clubwomen from fourteen cities attended.23
Convention delegates voted to reaffirm their support for courses in foreign languages and
history in schools and colleges across the country, because such knowledge was “basic in
building greater understanding of and participation in world affairs.”24 Federation
clubwomen also passed an unusual resolution explicitly endorsing Eisenhower’s foreign
policy as outlined in his April 16 speech, which they declared “displayed understanding,
restraint and at the same time, broad vision and determination.” “WHEREAS, the foreign
policy address of the President also presented a positive and constructive attitude toward
the problems of the world,” the text of the resolution read, “THEREFORE, The General
Federation of Women’s Clubs . . . takes this occasion to express to the President of the
United States its appreciation of his statesmanlike policy and pledges its support in the
furtherance of the purposes expressed in this foreign policy.”25 Evidently, Eisenhower’s
renewed commitment to positive engagement in international affairs resonated with most

24 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1953, pp. 72–73, WHRC.
Federation clubwomen, despite some suspicion of certain kinds of international obligation.

Just as conservative elements within the General Federation were emboldened by Eisenhower’s victory, so conservative clubwomen in other organizations began 1953 optimistic about the prospects for their foreign policy program. Eisenhower’s election to the presidency heralded the end of the Democratic Party’s domination of that office and the advent of a new era of (more) limited government, or so conservatives believed in the immediate aftermath of the campaign. In response, conservative clubwomen stepped up their community-level work against UN proponents, sponsoring the kind of open questioning of the UN that Women United found so vexing during their promotional lecture tours. Conservative activists also tailored their national priorities to a new administration, which some quickly felt might not provide the conservative leadership promised on the campaign trail.

The Minute Women spent the early months of Eisenhower’s first term promoting the Bricker Resolution and defending the McCarran-Walter Act, both of which sought formal separation of foreign elements—treaties and people—from the American body politic. Bricker’s proposed Constitutional amendment was not new to these women, of course—they had advocated an earlier version of this legislation—but the Eisenhower administration presented them with a new opportunity to press for its passage. Houston Minute Women received the complete text of Senate Joint Resolution 1 in their local chapter’s January newsletter. “If you feel that the protection of our national sovereignty is imperative, so advise your senators and representatives,” the newsletter instructed. This same newsletter contained a detailed account of the criticisms leveled at the McCarran-
Walter Act, which focused particularly on strict anti-subversive clauses and the national origins quota provision. "A discussion of the [anti-subversive clauses] hardly seems necessary," wrote the editor of Houston's newsletter, Virginia Biggers, "in view of Russia's avowed . . . intention to destroy us and the ease and thoroughness with which her agents and communist aiding pinks and liberals have infiltrated the policy making branches of our government." McCarran-Walter would serve the Cold War purpose of preventing communist infiltration of American society, Biggers suggested, by refusing admittance to compromised persons. The national origins provision would engage in a similar protection of the nation, Biggers explained, by maintaining a white majority. By keeping "the racial proportions of our population predominately the same as in that society which evolved it," she noted, the McCarran-Walter Act would protect the American way of life. The measure was therefore worthy of Minute Women support.26

Houston Minute Women also received continual reminders to pay their poll taxes so they could vote when the time came. Though such encouragement to participate politically had long been a part of the Minute Women's mission, as American opinions diverged on the UN abroad and social change at home, club leaders knew that political participation would come with a price. Disagreements with neighbors and peers, as well as with public figures, was only likely to increase as the Minute Women expanded their public efforts to shape policy. In an effort to prepare her Houston members to face such controversy, Biggers included a few words of encouragement. "Let each remember," she advised, "that if she attempts to oppose collectivism she will receive her share of vilification from the stupid, and the well-meaning but un-informed, as well as those who

26 "The Bricker Resolution," and "Write As You Think," Houston Chapter Newsletter, Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (January 1953), 1-3, in Box 5, Folder 1, Ralph S. O'Leary Papers, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas (hereafter cited as HMRC).
are conscious instruments of the conspiracy.” Minute Women should not be daunted, Biggers counseled. Their duty was to educate and convert those who could be converted and to boldly combat those who could not. This advice would come in handy as the year wore on, for the Minute Women would face some very public vilification.\(^{27}\)

The Daughters of the American Revolution began the new year equally focused on foreign affairs. The National Defense Department report in the February edition of the *DAR Magazine* contained discussions of a pledge of allegiance to an international flag spreading among Girl Scout troops; the refusal of eighteen American employees of the United Nations to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee; their subsequent dismissal by Secretary-General Trygve Lie; Lie’s resignation; and plans brewing in the UN for the establishment of an international court of justice.\(^{28}\) That same month, executive secretary of National Defense, Frances Lucas, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on behalf of the DAR to record the organization’s support for the Bricker Resolution. “The Daughters of the American Revolution will continue to expose the fallacies inherent in the world-government idea,” Lucas promised in her testimony. Turning UN supporters’ purported dedication to self-determination of peoples against them, Lucas even espoused solidarity with anticolonial protesters. “The rising tide of nationalism in the Far East, and especially in countries subject to colonial rule is ample

---

\(^{27}\) “McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act,” Houston Chapter Newsletter, Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (January 1953), 2, in Box 5, Folder 1, O’Leary Papers, HMRC.

\(^{28}\) Katherine G. Reynolds and Frances B. Lucas, “*American Scouts, “United Nations,” “Trygve Lie, “United Nations,” and “International Criminal Court, *DAR Magazine*, 87 (February 1953), 189–92; Trygve Lie cooperated fully with the U.S. International Organizations Employees Loyalty Board, even allowing FBI investigators to fingerprint American employees of the UN within the grounds of the UN in 1952. The Board investigated a total of two thousand American UN employees, though only twenty pled the Fifth Amendment when asked to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. Lie eventually fired all twenty employees. After Lie’s departure as Secretary-General, however, the UN Administrative Tribunal reinstated eleven of the twenty; new Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld refused the reinstatements but authorized compensatory pay in the amount of $189,370. See Meisler, *United Nations*, 82–83.
proof that like-minded people want to control their economic and political destiny free of any outside dictation," she declared. The Daughters, Lucas assured the committee, endorsed this tradition of "local self-government," and the Bricker Resolution, not the United Nations, would ensure its continuation.29

Yet, by the time the Daughters met for their annual convention just four days after Eisenhower’s April 16 foreign policy address, controversy brewing within the organization threatened to compromise their unified public support for the Bricker Resolution and a host of other conservative international relations projects. Initially, DAR support for Bricker seemed guaranteed; Bricker himself addressed the assembled Daughters on the second night of their gathering, along with Frank Holman, former president of the American Bar Association. Both men praised the Daughters for their loyalty to Senator Bricker’s cause and reminded them that the Eisenhower administration’s response to the resolution had been tepid. Holman accused Secretary of State Dulles of being particularly evasive on the topic. The Daughters’ lobbying work must continue, both men insisted.30 When it came time to approve resolutions opposing all sorts of international obligations the next morning, however, some Daughters refused to toe the line. The second resolution considered at the convention was the Daughters’ standard disavowal of United Nations Specialized Agencies, the Genocide Convention, the Human Rights Convention, and any attempt to convert the UN into a world government. When the presiding president Marguerite C. Patton asked for any discussion


following the reading of the resolution, an Illinois clubwoman in the balcony section stood, marched down to the microphone in the center aisle of Constitution Hall, and declared, “I believe in the United Nations.”

For the next three minutes of allotted speaking time, Emma Waring Walbridge of Illinois’s Waukegan DAR Chapter enumerated all the positive achievements of UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Health Organization, and UN technical assistance programs. “May I just say that this has cost you, each individual, 62 cents in 1952,” she concluded when President Patton cut her off. “Is it not worth a try?” Mrs. Cannon Hearne, from Fall’s Church, Virginia, then elicited a collective gasp from the assembled Daughters when she rose and proclaimed that “world government is the only hope for peace.” The president later struck her remarks from the record. Next to stand was Mrs. Arthur Thevenet from Newark, New Jersey. “The words that these parts of the UN supersede or may supersede our Constitution are an erroneous interpretation of the facts,” she began, explaining to her audience that the checks and balances created by the Constitution served to safeguard the country from overzealous treaty-making. “So we are already protected from any constitutional superseding,” she concluded. Two outraged members then chimed in both to question the relevance of these comments to the resolution at hand and to remind the listening crowd that the “sovereignty of this Nation” was at risk. But the dissenters persisted. Elizabeth Peck of New York rose and clarified, “I would like to go on record that we are not for world government; but we do feel that the DAR is unnecessarily afraid that the UN will become a world government.” At this point, the defensive resolutions chairman interjected that the resolution did not “repudiate the United Nations as sold to us in its original form,” but instead condemned “some of the agencies and some of the
things within the agencies with which we do not agree." The president thanked her and
called for a vote. The dissenters did not prevail; the Daughters approved the resolution
with only six negative votes. But the rebellion was not at an end.\textsuperscript{31}

When the Daughters reached their fifth resolution of the morning, recommending
that all monies allotted for UN organizations first be presented to Congress for approval,
Emma Walbridge again addressed the group. "It has been proven and shown and printed
that the cost of the United Nations is 62 cents per American citizen for the year 1952,"
she assured her audience. The president silenced her again, declaring her comments "not
germane to the resolution." Marion Davis of Glen Falls, New York, next jumped into the
fray, asking for additional time to consider the resolution. The resolutions chairman
commented that all chapters had received copies in plenty of time, and, though Davis
denied her claim, the vote proceeded. The resolution passed with one dissenting vote on
record.\textsuperscript{32}

When the assembly came to the resolution on "Lawmaking by Treaties," Mrs.
Arthur Thevenet took charge once again, advising the crowd that, though "the proposal of
Senator Bricker has an appeal because he says it will protect our Constitutional liberties,"
the Daughters should beware, because "many equally able lawyers . . . . said that it strikes
at the stability of the whole network of our treaties with other countries," and that "it
might paralyze our foreign policy" by placing the approval of treaties in the hands of
Congress, where the filibuster could be used to delay a decision. "The amendment is

\textsuperscript{31} Proceedings, 62\textsuperscript{nd} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution
(1953), pp. 138–40, DAR Archive; Anita Holmes, "DAR Quells Revolt Over UN Stand," Washington Post,
April 23, 1953, pp. 1, 9.

\textsuperscript{32} Proceedings, 62\textsuperscript{nd} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution
(1953), pp. 141–42, DAR Archive.
superfluous,” Thevenet asserted, “opposed to our national tradition, and merely, I believe, shows a sense of internal insecurity.” When Thevenet’s three minutes expired, Elizabeth Peck again spoke out, arguing that the Bricker Resolution “would hamstring the executive branch of the government in the proper conduct of foreign relations, and ability to make treaties” and thereby “jeopardize the influence of the United States in the world today.” President Patton then interjected that, under the current system, treaties could be approved by only a very small number of senators and that this was no adequate safeguard. Bolstered by their president’s intercession, other anti-internationalist Daughters spoke out against the dissenters and in favor of the resolution, which they eventually approved over eight negative votes.

Opposition continued for the rest of the voting period. Four negative votes were registered for the resolution denouncing “socialization,” or, specifically, federal aid to education, socialized medicine, and compulsory health insurance. Walbridge and several dissenters also voted against a resolution commending Senator McCarran and Representative Walter for their immigration legislation. According to Walbridge, the McCarran-Walter Act “put no welcome mat out to huddled masses” and she therefore could not support it. 33 The rebellious Daughters then halted their efforts for the day.

The following morning, the disruption of DAR proceedings made the front page of the morning paper. The Washington Post reported that “a small revolution broke out in the ranks of the Daughters of the American Revolution yesterday in Constitution Hall.” Describing all of the controversial votes, the Post piece particularly mentioned Hearne’s comments favoring world government and noted that the “two United Nations resolutions

brought out the greatest opposition from the floor” but that “both were passed overwhelmingly by a voice vote” of the 2,400 voting delegates.\textsuperscript{34} In this same edition of the \textit{Post}, a letter to the editor from DAR dissenter Marion Davis of Glen Falls appeared decrying the Daughters’ methods of considering and approving resolutions. Davis complained that the DAR president “stated recently . . . that no one who does not wholeheartedly agree with the expressed policies of NSDAR should ever be a regent” with voting privileges. She further protested that “only the most one-sided views of controversial questions are ever presented in DAR publications and releases.” According to Davis, resolutions that deviated from the DAR party line were regularly buried by the resolutions committee and “nowhere near adequate time [was] given to study the resolutions in their final form.” Finally, Davis criticized the habit of voting resolutions in by voice instead of ballot. “It is a brave woman who will rise in Constitution Hall to vote no . . . .” Davis noted.\textsuperscript{35}

Walbridge, Davis, Peck, and Thevenet must have been brave, since they chose to continue their critiques of DAR policy when the Daughters reconvened that next morning to consider additional resolutions. When the resolutions chairman presented a resolution recommending that the UN and its affiliated agencies be removed from the jurisdiction of the State Department and “made responsible” to Congress, Marion Davis spoke first.

“Madam President, the management of foreign affairs is in the hands of the Executive Branch, the President and the State Department; and they have done it very well for many years,” Davis argued, “If this resolution were passed, a truly deplorable dent would be

\textsuperscript{34} Holmes, “DAR Quells Revolt Over UN Stand,” pp. 1, 9.

made in the system of checks and balances . . . .” When another Daughter, Mrs. William D. Leetch of Washington, D.C., rose and argued that the resolution sought merely to encourage some accountability for “the great sums of money” spent on United Nations programs, Mrs. Arthur Thevenet countered by again declaring that “these tremendous appropriations . . . totaled the great sum of 62 cents per person for every citizen of the United States” and agreeing with Davis that the resolution inappropriately shifted power from the executive to the legislative branch of government. Leetch then suggested that the dollar amount was irrelevant and that the true purpose of the resolution was to force the State Department to fulfill its role representing the interests of the United States. “Today, it is functioning as an agent of the United Nations . . . .” she asserted. The Daughters passed the resolution over three negative votes. The dissenters also voted against a resolution condemning UNESCO educational materials and a resolution aimed at the UN flag, which requested additional restrictions on the locations where “international and command flags or banners may be flown.”

At the end of the resolutions period, Elizabeth Peck rose and requested permission to read a prepared statement encapsulating the views of the dissenting women. When President Patton agreed, Peck began by reaffirming “the patriotism and loyalty” of those whose opinions she was to present. After studying the Daughters’ positions “for a number of years,” Peck explained, the women decided to oppose “those resolutions which we believed to be concretely destructive to the United Nations.” While acknowledging that the UN was “not perfect,” Peck lauded the organization for serving as “the town hall of the world.” “The UN needs the support of patriotic organizations like the DAR to make it

---

a more perfect instrument for world peace,” Peck argued, pleading with her audience to “try to make the UN stronger and better by intelligent study,” instead of “trying to destroy the whole by indiscriminately damning its parts.”37 Though the Daughters had consistently claimed to support the UN, Peck insisted that no resolution had ever actually praised any United Nations effort. “On the contrary, they have always been critical,” she argued. Most problematic had been the suggestion circulated throughout the organization that the United States should withdraw from the United Nations. Peck declared this idea “dangerous,” and suggested that, if the Daughters could not develop a more thorough means of examining foreign policy questions than the one that prevailed, the DAR “should abandon its present policy of taking a stand on national affairs and of offering resolutions on domestic and international policies.” If the Daughters could not come to well-informed (and supportive) conclusions about the United Nations, Peck implied, they should not be involved in politics at all.38

As for the rationale of the Daughters who opposed UN programs, Peck could only theorize that the suspicion of the UN derived from “fear.” “Fear of what?” she asked. “Fear of losing our national sovereignty, fear of a world order to keep peace, fear of a closer cultural and social tie with other peoples of the world.” But these fears, according to Peck, were the real danger. “If we allow these fears to keep us from assuming our place of leadership in the United Nations . . . ,” she cautioned the Daughters, “some day we will walk alone without the support and confidence of our needed friends and allies.”


Instead, Peck pushed the Daughters to "turn the strength massed within this great, influential, and highly esteemed organization into a constructive force for the United Nations."^{39}

When Peck finished speaking, she had not persuaded her audience. Marguerite Patton asked again if Peck and the other dissenting Daughters supported world government, which Peck vehemently denied. Mrs. William Leetch then provocatively quoted Eleanor Roosevelt's suggestion that the UN was "the incubator for world government." Another audience member asserted that "the only thing we have to fear today . . . is such statements as we have just heard," and labeled Peck's comments "the worst kind of propaganda in this country." National Defense chairman Katherine Reynolds reminded the assembled women of the threats posed by UN treaties; the Genocide Convention meant they could be accused of "mental harm" and sent to an international tribunal for trial, while the Covenant of Human Rights condoned censorship of the media. Another delegate demanded of Peck whether she had ever personally visited the United Nations. When Peck admitted that she had not but contended that that "does not necessarily mean . . . that I have not read a lot about it," the president closed the discussion, leaving Peck apparently discredited.^40

The Washington Post again reported the turmoil on the front page of the next morning's paper. Describing how "the little band of oppositionists" had "gathered before a microphone in the center aisle" of Constitution Hall to take their stand, the Post


depicted each debate in detail. Reporters interviewed Peck after the close of the day’s session, and Peck noted that, while “a lot of people have come up to shake my hand, ... some want to slit my throat.” Another editorial, this one anonymous, appeared that morning indicating that “some faint but healthful signs of opposition to the traditional one-sided public policy line of the Daughters of the American Revolution have shown up” and praising the dissenters for “upholding an American principle and tradition” with their daring stand.41

Yet, in spite of the DAR dissenters’ bold campaign in favor of the United Nations, the Daughters’ national policy remained unchanged. In the June edition of the DAR Magazine, National Defense Chairman Katherine Reynolds presented a detailed account of the Daughters’ case against the UN. Reynolds argued that after two global wars and an ongoing war in Korea, the world was no safer or more peaceful, for all the international commitments taken on by the United States. She also complained that, while the United States focused on conflicts abroad, “strange philosophies have sprung up at home, causing dissension among us.” Included in the list were class consciousness, the increasing power of the federal government, and international socialism. By welcoming the foreign into the domestic, Reynolds contended, the UN undermined the American nation. The combination of “foreign entanglements and socialistic extravagances at home” had led to enormous national debt, and “powerfully influential” groups of world government proponents sought to intensify the phenomenon until all America’s wealth and freedom had been sacrificed to an international governing body. The United Nations had “failed utterly” at its original goal of promoting “peaceful cooperation of its member

states.” Invoking a neo-Darwinian understanding of race, Reynolds contended that the UN’s broad membership gave too much power to nations composed of people unready for the responsibilities of governance. Such inappropriate advancement of non-white peoples “caused unrest and discontent,” she argued, “by preaching equality of people centuries apart economically, culturally, and militarily.” The UN was also “closing in on the rights of citizens,” notwithstanding its pledge “not to interfere with the domestic affairs of any nation.” Reynolds concluded by suggesting that “many persons think it is about to fold up,” and that to prevent this, world government proponents were planning to use the mandatory 1955 review of the UN Charter to convert the organization into “a compulsory world government.” The Daughters must combat this plan by staying in touch with their Congressional representatives, supporting the Bricker Resolution, and protecting American schools from “government control and infiltration by subversive material.”

Reynolds’s analysis of the threat posed by the United Nations reflected a continued pairing of domestic issues with international affairs. In the minds of those clubwomen opposed to internationalism, the obligations forced on the United States by its involvement in the United Nations threatened the nation in multiple ways. First, the international organization itself endangered the financial solvency and democratic freedoms of American citizens. International treaties made laws that overrode the Constitution and curbed the rights of Americans; the enormous amount of financial support provided for the UN by the U.S. drained American coffers; and military obligations to United Nations partners got American soldiers killed and left the nation undefended. Second, Reynolds argued, by encouraging Americans to focus on

international issues, the UN fostered dissent and disorder in the American body politic.
The samesocialistic ideas that fueled a commitment to world government also fueled the
move to centralize power in the federal government, thereby taking it away from the
states. Issues as diverse as social security, compulsory health insurance, federal control of
the educational system (made more resonant by the pending Brown v. Board
desegregation cases), and taxation fell under shadow of increased socialization inspired
by the internationalist impulse. American government was too focused on international
obligations to perceive the threat posed by these domestic shifts in policy. Thus,
according to Reynolds, the UN and the internationalists who supported it would
undermine America both from without and from within. DAR chapters and their national
leadership must persist in their campaign to inform the public of these threats to the
American way of life.43

Though the dissenters clearly failed to transform the beliefs of DAR leaders about
the United Nations, their emergence at this point in DAR history is telling. The shift in
Eisenhower’s national policy in the wake of Stalin’s death may have emboldened Peck,
Walbridge, and their compatriots. The revolt may also have occurred because, after
almost a decade of resolutions hostile to international organizing, the internationalist
minority of the DAR had had enough. Likely, their motivation was some combination of
these factors. What their rebellion at this convention concretely illustrates is the
persistence of faith in internationalism that prevailed in the mid-fifties. Even in
inhospitable environments like the DAR, committed internationalists held firm in their

43The Brown desegregation cases were originally presented to the Supreme Court in December 1952, but
the Court justices postponed their decision and, six months later, in June 1953, ordered a rehearing of the
Brown cases in October 1953, later shifted to December of that year. For a basic history of the Brown
decision, see James T. Patterson, Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled
beliefs, in spite of a multitude of controversies surrounding the United Nations, the ongoing Korean War and the Soviet presence on the Security Council chief among them. The determined policy-makers of the General Federation, the WUUN observers, and even the small band of internationalist rebels in the DAR had not abandoned the notion that the United Nations could foster peace and, further, that support for the international organization went hand in hand with national loyalty. They also continued to believe that women’s organizations should be responsible for promoting a complete understanding of the United Nations among their members and in the public at large. As the statement by Peck (and the Daughters’ response to it) illustrate, the United Nations and its affiliated organizations remained at the center of a national debate about the role of America in the world and the role of women’s clubs in America.

Another telling element of the DAR rebellion is the media coverage it received. Up until this point, the national media had been largely unconcerned with the debate raging among clubwomen about international affairs in general and the United Nations in particular. The detailed reports on the front page of the Washington Post reflect greater attentiveness then emerging among national publications to the United Nations debate and to the particular role of women’s organizations in that debate. That same April, the New York Times carried an article by correspondent Kathleen McLaughlin about the work of Women United for the United Nations. “In a controversy that appears to be mounting in intensity,” the piece began, “the massed strength of 26,000,000 women is being mustered behind the United Nations and against the detractors of the world body.” Acknowledging the “formidable nature” of the campaign against the UN, McLaughlin noted that the clubwomen of Women United had pegged Florida, Texas, Georgia, and
California—all sites of a growing Sunbelt conservative revolt that came to fruition a
decade later—as "the focal points of the anti-United Nations drive." The article also
described the heckling tactics Women United speakers encountered during their
speeches, noting particularly the "noisy invasions of their programs by groups of women
who have sought to drown out their voices by audible conversation" and who sometimes
"dramatically walk out of meeting rooms." In the face of such opposition, the clubwomen
of Women United hoped to provide resources to answer legitimate questions about the
United Nations and to help foster understanding of and support for the international
organization.\textsuperscript{44}

These opposition tactics brought the attention of the media to the anti-
internationalist camp, as well. In August 1953, Gordon D. Hall published an exposé,
"Hucksters of Hate," in The Progressive. Seeking to catalog "the network of racist and
nationalist organizations" then operating around the country, Hall included the Minute
Women of the U.S.A. with the American Heritage Protective Committee, Conde
McGinley (publisher of the ultra-conservative newsletter Common Sense), the National
Council for American Education, and the American Flag Committee as prime purveyors
of "mid-century Know-Nothingsm in the United States." Hall estimated that 508,000
women then belonged to the Minute Women organization and reported that the group's
leaders were "determined to steer its members in the direction of extreme nationalism."

Hall also lamented that "with few exceptions the press has shown little muscle in dealing with ... these groups" and warned that "no community is immune to such attack."\(^{45}\)

Natives of Houston, Texas, would certainly have echoed this sentiment. In October 1953, yet another exposé of the Minute Women made the rounds, this time describing a particular community campaign orchestrated primarily by Houston Minute Women. The Houston chapter of the organization had successfully worked to remove newly-appointed assistant school superintendent George W. Ebey from office, because they felt his views on education were too progressive. Along with several other conservative community groups in Houston, Minute Women accused Ebey of consorting with communist organizations. Though the charges were never substantiated, the school board felt Ebey had become controversial and removed him from his post. After three months of research, Houston Post reporter Ralph O’Leary produced an eleven-part series chronicling the role of the Minute Women in the Ebey affair, as well as in other "anticommunist" activities in the Houston area. Labeling the Minute Women "the most powerful organization of its kind in Houston in more than a quarter century," O’Leary described the group’s founding and structure, the issues its members found most compelling (including opposition to the UN, and particularly UNESCO), and the methods the women used against their foes. The O’Leary series, which won the 1953 Heywood Broun Award for outstanding journalism, prompted a whole slew of articles in publications around the country. The Atlanta Constitution, as well as both Time Magazine and The Nation, ran stories based on O’Leary’s account. In the Nation piece, O’Leary himself echoed Gordon Hall’s call for increased media attention to the growth of

organizations like the Minute Women. "[C]ommunities should wake up and act before it is too late," O'Leary counseled.⁴⁶

The Houston Minute Women briefly attempted to defend themselves by printing responses in the Houston Post but primarily accepted the criticism as proof that their efforts had been effective. As the Minute Women's national newsletter put it after the Time piece appeared, "From the left wing every knock is boost, these days." DAR leaders were less tolerant of press criticism. "Many citizens and newspaper editors do not seem to understand the attitude of the Daughters of the American Revolution concerning the United Nations," the National Defense Department reported in the August 1953 DAR Magazine. "It may be that at times they deliberately wish to misunderstand or misinterpret . . ." the article theorized. Regardless, the piece contended, the Daughters should stand firm in the face of criticism. If UN member nations would simply abide by the original purposes of the United Nations, the organization "could and would be a power for peace in the world." If the organization continued on its errant path toward world government, however, the Daughters would continue to oppose it, in spite of bad press.⁴⁷

All of this media attention may not have changed the debates surrounding the UN, or the opinions of their participants, but the coverage does indicate the prevalence of the

---


international affairs controversy in communities around the nation. In 1953 particularly, the national media began to pick up on the activities of women’s organizations both in favor of and opposing internationalism, the UN, and other foreign policy issues. Whether or not reporters agreed with the groups about which they reported is less significant than that they credited these women’s organizations with enough political clout to warrant media attention. As the Minute Women shrewdly noted, the very fact of having made the papers suggested that their community campaigns exerted influence. Clubwomen, internationalist and anti-internationalist alike, were political actors, and the national media confirmed it.

In the meantime, the international situation that inspired the activism of clubwomen across the country shifted yet again. In July 1953, the Eisenhower administration agreed to an armistice in Korea that partitioned the country on the 38th parallel and left the northern portion of the peninsula under Communist control. The peace negotiations had lasted two long years fraught with setbacks, the most recent being South Korean president Syngman Rhee’s release of more than 27,000 prisoners from South Korean prisons, in defiance of a negotiated agreement on repatriation of POWs. Between that incident on June 18 and the July 26 signing of the armistice, roughly five thousand American soldiers died. Though Eisenhower had campaigned in part on his ability to bring the Korean conflict to a swift conclusion, the terms of that conclusion remained controversial. Eisenhower saw the termination of the Korean conflict and the end of the casualties as a success, but Republicans like McCarthy and Indiana senator William Jenner complained that Eisenhower had given Americans peace without victory.
The armistice also ceded territory to Communist control, something that conservatives had long found untenable.\textsuperscript{48}

Suspicion of the UN-sponsored peace negotiations had been evident among conservative clubwomen for some time. The Maryland Minute Women distributed a flyer earlier in the year, titled "Acheson Triumphs At Last," that recommended emphatically that "the U.S. should quit the United Nations in truce deals and negotiate for Korean peace by itself." "Appeasement is defeat on the installment plan," the Maryland Minute Women avowed, and they would protest it in any form.\textsuperscript{49} In the wake of the armistice, overt hostility to the conclusion of the war prevailed. The Minute Women explicitly blamed the United Nations for what they saw as a military defeat. "Under control of the United Nations, this our United States has suffered its first humiliation in war," their September newsletter lamented, "[W]e have suffered 150,000 casualties and spent billions of dollars while our so-called allies in the United Nations helped our enemy by trading with him, while denying us the right to win the war. . . . Now we accept insult after insult and figuratively take the pen from the hands dripping with the blood of our American boys to sign a truce."\textsuperscript{50} The DAR also exhibited suspicion of the terms of the armistice after the signing. In October 1953, the Daughters questioned a UN-administered prisoner exchange, noting the small number of American prisoners swapped for the "over 5,800 sick or wounded" handed over to the Chinese. "As reported by the


\textsuperscript{50} "United States Day," Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (September 1953), 2, Reel 76, M19, "Minute Women of the U.S.A.," in Iowa Right Wing Collection.
U.S. Military Service, 11,507 Americans are ‘missing,’ the article stated, “It’s about time that we learn from the bitter lessons of the past—the international communists cannot be trusted on any agreement.”

The Eisenhower administration’s participation in the Korean settlement encouraged growing wariness among conservative clubwomen that the Republican administration was Republican in name only, and that their policies too closely resembled the views of their Democratic predecessors. “The overwhelming vote for President Eisenhower last year was not so much a vote for Eisenhower as it was a vote against the things the Truman administration stood for,” the Minute Women’s national newsletter explained in December. “The voters who were ‘against’ the New and Fair Deals and Welfare Statism are beginning to feel they voted for a Republican version of the same thing.” The solution was simple: “The Administration must fulfill campaign promises on both foreign and domestic issues,” the newsletter declared, and it was “the responsibility of each individual who voted for President Eisenhower to see that he understands why he got that vote.” The Minute Women should write to the president and make their feelings known. Though it was too late to change the Korean settlement, other issues remained on the table. The Bricker Resolution still needed support, as did the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act. The Minute Women must oppose the admission of “Red China” to the United Nations. The Status of Forces Treaty, passed by Congress “under extreme pressure from the Administration,” should be rescinded as well, since it denied “our servicemen in NATO countries the protection of the Constitution” by “allowing them to

---

be tried in foreign countries under foreign laws” for crimes committed in those countries.52

National leaders also encouraged the Minute Women to support a newly conceived holiday, United States Day, set for celebration on October 23. This holiday, Minute Women hoped, would take the UN debate to the local level, where the real battle for American minds was being fought. According to the article introducing the holiday, its founders had conceived the celebration “because the American people have been, and are being, flooded with propaganda urging that we surrender the Liberty we enjoy . . . to world government and law by treaty with the alien controlled United Nations.” This misguided, at best, or malicious, at worst, attempt to take advantage of American citizens must be stopped, Minute Women leaders urged, and United States Day was intended to foster discussion of the UN threat at the community level. “If your community isn’t having a special celebration on October 23rd,” the newsletter recommended, “you at least can gather a few friends together . . . in your own home and do your part to awaken your community to the dangers of treaty law . . . .”53 Local chapters of Minute Women must continue to accept the responsibility for educating themselves and their neighbors about foreign affairs.

Not everyone reacted negatively to Eisenhower’s foreign policies. Internationalist clubwomen continued to lobby in favor of the United Nations and to recruit others to their cause. In November 1953, Marion Davis’s rogue chapter of DAR members even

52 “Congress Meets In January—Study the Issues—Then Write As You Think,” Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (December 1953), 2–5, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” in Iowa Right Wing Collection.

sent a letter to Rose Parsons, founder of Women United, asking to join the organization to help support the UN. Women United turned them down, since they had a policy of accepting only "representatives of national organizations," but the DAR members' application illustrates the persistence of the internationalist impulse.\(^{54}\) As the new year dawned, Women United members were feeling more optimistic that the public was finally paying attention. When Eleanor Roosevelt attended a February 1954 meeting to speak on her work with the American Association for the United Nations, one Women United member asked her why there seemed to be more interest in the United Nations than in previous years. Roosevelt theorized that "the attacks against it have begun to stir people up to defend it." "Practically no one wants to abolish it," she assured the UN observers. The observers of Women United felt even more encouraged when Marion Davis and her Glen Falls DAR Chapter promised Rose Parsons to petition that the DAR apply for NGO membership in the United Nations at the Daughters' annual convention that year. The Daughters' had been among Women United's most troubling opponents, and the observers felt optimistic that the "insurgent group" would force the Daughters to at least consider their position on the international organization.\(^{55}\)

The General Federation's 1954 conference, held between May 31 and June 4 in Denver, Colorado, reflected a similar optimism about the prospects for international organizing. Members spent much of the meeting recommitting the organization to the principles of internationalism that had characterized the group's programs immediately following the creation of the United Nations. Though the preceding two conventions had

\(^{54}\) Meeting Minutes, November 20, 1953, Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.

\(^{55}\) Meeting Minutes, February 26, 1954, and April 21, 1954, both in Box 1, Folder 9, WUUN Collection.
been plagued by conservative dissent, the internationalist voice of the Federation reasserted itself in 1954, in part due to the unexpected commitment of the Eisenhower administration to international work. General Federation leaders were particularly invested in the foreign affairs projects of the Eisenhower administration—two Federation presidents, Mildred Ahlgren and Dorothy Houghton, served in Eisenhower’s Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), which was charged with administering all foreign assistance programs. Ahlgren was a member of the advisory board, and Houghton served as director of the Office of Refugees and Migration.\textsuperscript{56} No doubt due to this connection, the Federation invited Harold Stassen, former delegate to the UN Charter Conference and then director of the FOA, to address the 1954 assembly. Introducing him, Mildred Ahlgren assured the listening crown that the Federation shared his “faith in world cooperation.” Stassen reiterated this joint vision and urged the Federation members to support Eisenhower’s policies, because the president, too, shared a “basic deep devotion . . . toward peace.” He assured the Federation of Eisenhower’s “remarkable background of experience [in] the whole wide range of international affairs, of cooperation between nations, of striving for a basis on which freedom is maintained and expanded without the tragedy of a third world war.” Federation women, Stassen suggested, should therefore strive to promote Eisenhower’s vision for American foreign policy.\textsuperscript{57}

Federation members did not need the encouragement; the majority of delegates to this conference were determined to commit their organization’s womanpower to

\textsuperscript{56} Houghton was a dedicated Republican Party activist. Later, in 1956, she co-chaired the Citizens for Eisenhower campaign and used her position to lobby Eisenhower to support the Equal Rights Amendment. See Cynthia Harrison, \textit{On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women’s Issues, 1945–1968} (Berkeley and other cities: University of California Press, 1988), 36.

\textsuperscript{57} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1954, Box 27, pp. C74–C90, quotes on pp. C74, C78, WHRC.
promoting international understanding. The third resolution of the convention sought explicitly to devote the energies of women to “furthering better international relations.” Acknowledging “the powerful influence of family life upon the affairs of all nations,” the Federation’s resolution declared that “a greater knowledge of the home life of peoples and the activities of women in the various countries is vital to international understanding [and] peace.” For that reason, the resolution read, the Federation “strongly urges that women from all walks of life including homemakers be included in the program of the United States Travel Commission . . . to interpret and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by fostering international travel and the exchange of persons.” The resolution claimed again a particular role for women in international affairs by suggesting that domestic conditions were the best means of understanding and connecting with foreign countries, and that women were most able to understand domestic concerns. Women therefore had a particular gendered role to play in the execution of American foreign policy. As Resolutions Chairman Edith Ritchie argued, “the foreign policy of the United States of America could be promoted and interpreted in no better fashion than by careful choice of such women.” The Federation delegates voted to approve the resolution.58

Determined to claim an active role in shaping international policies, General Federation delegates also sought to participate in the forthcoming review of the United Nations Charter, slated to occur in 1955. Federation members voted that clubs should “inaugurate an intensive study based upon the various proposals for revision of the Charter of the United Nations . . . in order to assist in formulating an intelligent public

opinion.” The results of these Federation community studies should be forwarded to Federation headquarters, “in order that they may be compiled and made available to the General Conference of Member Nations.” To facilitate the work of local clubs on the Charter revision, Constance Sporborg and her successor as chairman of the Federation’s UN Division coordinated an elaborate effort to provide local clubs with all the material necessary to conduct their studies, including “all the proposals already made by the Congressional Committee appointed by the President,” as well as “all of the amendments that the other Missions have sent in.” Federation clubs could thereby craft informed opinions about the Charter and articulate those opinions through the proper channels.\(^5^9\)

This continued emphasis on mobilizing local clubs for UN support reflects the Federation’s faith in the effectiveness of community foreign affairs activism. Despite the conservative upsurge at the national meetings in the early fifties, programs in clubs

\(^{5^9}\) Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1954, Box 27, pp. D10–D13, WHRC. In the spirit of supporting Eisenhower’s policies, Federation delegates also voted in favor of the reduction of trade barriers between nations. Tariff reduction was one of Eisenhower’s more controversial policies; conservative Republicans opposed executive control of tariffs, as well as the idea of lowering them to promote free trade. But Eisenhower was determined to maintain this particular prerogative of the executive branch. In January 1954, Eisenhower asked for a three-year extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, with the ultimate goal of lowering tariffs to encourage American trade with underdeveloped countries. Conservative Republicans in Congress balked, but Eisenhower managed to push through a one-year extension. Taking some of its language directly from Eisenhower’s speeches, the Federation resolution declared the reduction of trade barriers to be “necessary to the increased flow of goods in a world market,” which would ensure “economic progress everywhere,” and proposed that it be “sponsored as a world policy,” as well as an American one. Though Federation clubwomen recoiled from an additional proposal that the federal government aid those businesses “disadvantageously affected” by increasing free trade, most viewed the reduction of trade barriers as part and parcel of a successful American foreign policy. One member appealed to the assembly as a group of female consumers to press for increased international trade on behalf of peace. “I hope this great convention of women consumers will turn the key to world trade, and a golden age,” she enthused, “Thus we will substitute goods for guns, friendship for fear and peace for war.” Another member continued the domestic consumption theme, reminding the delegates that “mutual advantages come from buyer to seller whether from community to community or nation to nation.” A third member explicitly connected increased world trade to international stability. “We as a nation are becoming more and more a world community. . . . Exchange of economic goods from underdeveloped areas of the world must be promoted, so that the hungry may be fed, the naked clothed . . . for where people are fed and clothed we bring about a program of peace.” Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1954, Box 27, pp. D13–D55, quotes on D13, D14, D23, D45, and D48, WHRC; Ambrose, Eisenhower, Vol. II, 48, 155–56.
around the country had continued to focus on international education. In 1954, state federations reported a total of 6,480 international affairs programs held by local women's clubs over the preceding year. Constance Sporborg registered a 75 percent increase in club participation in United Nations Week for the same period, while 2,097 clubs had at least one program focused on the UN and over 250 organized UN tours for their members.\(^{60}\) Representatives from the Wisconsin Federation reported that two hundred of their local women's clubs had worked hard "to have our citizens reaffirm their faith in the United Nations." Georgia clubwomen had supported the work of the United Nations by sending care packages to needy countries like Korea, while Federation clubwomen in Kentucky sent packages to Greece in the spirit of community service "to the community of nations."\(^{61}\) Federation clubwomen in local clubs still clearly adhered to the idea that efforts on behalf of the United Nations, and internationalism more generally, formed an important part of their local community work.

When the Federation's newly elected president, Helen B. Chapman, gave her inaugural speech at the close of the convention, she encapsulated the principles behind the Federation's rededication to internationalism and the United Nations. Chapman began by declaring that "there is no clearer expression of the democratic process than in voluntary organizations." The General Federation, she said, therefore bore a particular responsibility "to preserve freedom, not only here in the United States . . . but in every nation of the world." Promising to recommit the labors of the Federation's female membership to national and global service, Chapman then offered a gendered rationale for this dual commitment. Chapman argued that it was the "collective responsibility" of

---

\(^{60}\) Convention Records (Proceedings--Transcripts), 1954, Box 27, pp. D133–34, WHRC.

\(^{61}\) Convention Records (Proceedings--Transcripts), 1954, Box 27, pp. E60, E65–E70, WHRC.
the Federation "as the largest women's organization in the world" to work for "a lasting peace." Her explanation echoed the paternalist rhetoric of numerous women's pacifist organizations throughout the twentieth century. Yet, unlike these organizations, Chapman did not advocate exclusively international work. Rather, Federation clubwomen should involve themselves and their neighbors in their own nation's politics and policies by educating themselves and their local communities on foreign affairs. "The foreign policy of a free nation is based upon public opinion," Chapman maintained, "and we of the General Federation of Women's Clubs have a very great influence upon that opinion. It is, therefore, our responsibility to see to it that it is an informed, tolerant, understanding public opinion and that emotion and rabble-rousing have no part in it." In so doing, Federation clubwomen would shape local opinion, national policy, and eventually international affairs, thereby fulfilling their female responsibility for peace advocacy. Each local club must provide its members with "authentic information" on major policy issues, Chapman urged. "To do less is to repudiate the very purposes and objectives of the General Federation..." Chapman asserted. Specific policy issues requiring Federation support included the reduction and eventual elimination of trade barriers, support for technical assistance programs, and promotion of the United Nations as the "best hope for an enduring peace."

Chapman also cautioned her audience about a force she felt undermined America's leadership of the world. "One thing that has been happening in this country... during the last few years should be viewed with great concern, and that is the prevalence

---

of FEAR,” she suggested, echoing Elizabeth Peck’s bold speech at the previous year’s DAR convention. “We FEAR communism and so we call names and suspect each other,” Chapman argued, “We FEAR that efforts to increase freedom in other countries will result in diminished freedom in the United States. We FEAR that to raise the standard of living in other countries will lower our standard of living so there are those who would withdraw from the United Nations.” “My dear friends, this is not the American way,” she concluded, proposing instead “that we American women do battle against FEAR.” Chapman resolved to dedicate the work of the Federation in part to “the development of an intelligent public opinion” and to fulfilling their responsibility for “the community, nation, and world.” Once again, Federation clubwomen should acknowledge the connections among these arenas; they would labor in all by laboring in one.63

The leaders of the General Federation thus rededicated themselves to a layered internationalist vision connecting local, national, and global activism. The Eisenhower administration had proven receptive to this vision and had also placed Federation leaders in political advisory positions. This no doubt encouraged the reengagement with foreign policy reflected in the Federation’s 1954 convention. Yet the Federation’s local education campaigns on international affairs had persisted, even through the conservative ferment surrounding the 1952 election. These campaigns, which formed the core of the Federation’s internationalist activism, survived in spite of debate both within and outside of the organization about the viability of engagement with the world outside American borders. The welcoming atmosphere of the Eisenhower presidency, then, helped reintegrate these local campaigns with the national policy of the organization. Federation internationalism had been fractured by the growth of conservative hostility to the United

Nations, to be sure, but as the 1954 convention suggests, many in the organization still viewed the UN project as an important component of the civic program of American clubwomen. Local work on foreign policy would connect individual clubs both to American government and to the world at large, allowing clubwomen to shape both.

Though DAR leaders shared the Federation’s sense that clubwomen could shape American government and foreign policy through their local activism, their vision of the ideal result of this activism differed profoundly. Even as many Federation clubwomen recommitted to internationalism, the Daughters’ opposition to international engagement deepened. Their January 1954 newsletter contained an article by Grace Lee Kenyon defending isolationism as the most enlightened foreign policy position available. “[I]t is becoming more and more apparent,” argued Kenyon, “that the ‘Isolationists’ are perhaps the only Americans who are approaching world problems from a realistic, rather than a sentimental or a political, standpoint.” Presenting a nuanced understanding of what it meant to be an isolationist, Kenyon contended that isolationists “advocate the preservation of our national and our individual integrity,” “resent outside interference,” and “call for keeping out of the quarrels of other nations.” Though isolationists agreed that America could be “the generous friend of any nation in time of need,” Kenyon maintained, they also felt that “this help should be offered as a gesture of friendship, not as a dole wrung from us because our country is a member of a super alliance . . . .” “The Isolationists have the wisdom to see the futility of foreign entanglements,” Kenyon concluded. “Standing alone, we can maintain our place in the sun.”

---

This intensified hostility to internationalism resulted in part from the dissent that had emerged so publicly at the organization's previous annual meeting. Small though the dissenters' numbers might have been, their actions disturbed DAR leaders, who attempted to crack down on any incipient internationalists in their membership. The January newsletter included a list of New Year's resolutions to be adopted by DAR members. In addition to committing to pay their membership dues, Daughters should promise to "study the Constitution" in order to "repudiate the doubters" and defend the document against "the plans of world government proponents to amend the United Nations Charter into a world governing document." Daughters should "pledge unswerving loyalty" to DAR leaders and offer "only constructive criticism" that did "not obstruct the policies or projects sponsored by an intelligent majority," even when they might "not be in complete accord with all points." Finally, Daughters would "respectfully listen to those who disagree" with DAR policies "but nonetheless forcefully state [their] stand for the Constitution [and] for an independent, sovereign United States . . . ." Evidently, DAR leaders felt that dissent, particularly with reference to world organizing, undermined DAR activism and should be discouraged.

While the DAR continued their support of the Bricker Resolution and strict immigration legislation, growing hostility to internationalists led members of the organization to blame the United Nations for all sorts of domestic discord. The UN caused juvenile delinquency because, as one DAR Magazine piece suggested, "while we are told by the internationalists that we must give security to the rest of the world, we are being forced to undermine the security of our own young people" with the draft. "High school and college men cannot plan for the future because tomorrow they may be drafted"

to fight in a foreign country—'police action'" the article theorized, "No wonder many of our young people are becoming delinquents or completely discouraged . . . ."66 The poverty of state governments could also be blamed on international obligations, because international obligations necessitated heavy federal taxes, which in turn prevented states from collecting money to finance internal improvements. "But, of course, . . . the sophisticated internationalists who have been handing out our taxes to foreign countries aren't interested in such archaic projects as the improvement of conditions for American children and adults," another DAR Magazine column carped.67 Many of these accusations were inflammatory, certainly, but they also reflect the increasing frustration of DAR members with the abiding commitment of Americans to international "entanglements" like the United Nations. In spite of their efforts to inform the public of the risks posed by the UN, and particularly by UN-sponsored treaties, proponents of internationalism still found a ready American audience. These complaints also illustrate the threatening connection the Daughters continued to perceive between the foreign and the domestic;

---
66 This analysis of internationalism as the cause of juvenile delinquency was part and parcel of a larger public concern in the 1950s with this phenomenon. As historian James Gilbert has pointed out, though public discussions of juvenile delinquency frequently blamed the explosion of mass culture in the fifties for creating distance between young Americans and traditional sources wisdom and authority, namely parents, in fact public fears about disorderly youth stemmed from a larger discomfort with cultural change in the postwar years. As Gilbert notes, World War II nurtured a whole series of transformations in American society, including the civil rights movement and increased class mobility, as well as what Gilbert labels "a looser grip of traditional thinking about social order." In response, many Americans sought to control these changes by controlling America's youth and limiting the effects of mass culture on American children. Though Gilbert does not include the expansion of internationalism in his list of social transformations wrought by the Second World War, the growth of "world-mindedness" in the postwar years, particularly among young Americans, certainly represented an objectionable social change to conservative women, and their suggestion that it fueled juvenile delinquency supports Gilbert's larger contention that this movement reflected concerns about broader developments in American society. See James Gilbert, Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), quote on p. 6.

foreign entanglements could negatively affect even purely domestic circumstances, and this connection made it the Daughters’ responsibility to intervene.

Much of this intervention took the form of opposition to all sorts of international treaties and obligations. The Daughters urged Congress to approve some version of the Bricker Resolution to prevent treaties and executive agreements from superseding the U.S. Constitution. They pressed for public education programs to alert American citizens to the dangers posed to the “specific rights and privileges” of Americans by the Human Rights Covenant and treaty law in general. They also advocated either amending or rescinding the NATO Status of Forces Treaty that, among other provisions, made American soldiers subject to the laws of NATO nations for crimes they committed while stationed in those nations. The Daughters felt that this treaty “abolished[d] the traditional protection of the United States Constitution and Courts for Americans stationed abroad.” Delegates also opposed the admission of “Red China” to the UN since this would give yet another communist power a veto on the Security Council and a vote in international deliberations that could affect the U.S. Finally, the Daughters resolved to make Americans aware of the risks posed by the forthcoming review of the United Nations Charter. “[M]any groups are already endeavoring to convert the United Nations into a world government or partial world government,” one 1954 resolution warned. The Daughters must sustain their opposition “to any change in the United Nations Charter which might cause the surrender of the traditional sovereignty of the United States . . . .”68 Thus, even as their opposition to internationalism increasingly emphasized domestic discord, the Daughters persisted in advocating a firm division between domestic and

foreign as the solution. By keeping the international out, the Daughters believed, they would stabilize the national.

Former DAR president and new Chairman of National Defense, Marguerite Patton, urged local clubs to work toward all of these objectives by educating their members. She suggested that “five minutes . . . at each chapter meeting” and “one full program a year” be given to the work of the National Defense Department. The chapters that met this requirement, Patton noted, “developed informed speakers who are able and willing to speak to other organizations,” thereby spreading the Daughters’ policy recommendations across the country. Patton believed this to be “the most important work accomplished by chapters.”69 Thus, the DAR used methods similar to those employed by both Women United and the General Federation to mobilize local communities. They emphasized community education, which they felt was the particular responsibility of DAR clubwomen. Yet, as their frustration with the persistence of internationalism suggests, while these educational initiatives may have done an excellent job of encouraging women to engage politically, they failed to change the perspectives of those Americans already committed to supporting international organizing.

In explaining their failure to convert Americans, the Daughters relied occasionally on a gendered reading of postwar political positions. The omnipresence of internationalism in American culture, the Daughters argued, in part reflected a failure of masculine traits such as loyalty and strength in American society. In one article describing the distressing practice of having school children take both sides in a debate about world government, the DAR National Defense department lamented, “[t]ime was

---

when our young people were reared with resolute manliness to stand firm and reply with conviction upon their beliefs—not to be glib exponents of either side.” The piece went on to suggest that subversives and internationalists had first coined “the oily phrase, ‘We must have both sides of this question,’” as part of their plan to “confuse and control.” In another column, the National Defense Department lauded the “true conservative” for his strength and steadfast commitment to his political positions. “He does not cry out hysterically, ‘I have been smeared,’ or ‘I have been attacked,’ as the internationalists and the subversives do when we expose their insidious plans,” the article contended, concluding “[l]et’s not lose the independence of spirit nor the courage and pluck to stand firm and be counted as Americans.” In this analysis, then, true Americans were independent, plucky, firm, manly, and convicted, while internationalists were glib, oily, and hysterical. In order to repudiate internationalism, Americans male and female, young and old, would have to embrace manliness. Scholars have pointed out the pervasiveness of gendered language in Cold War political culture in general, and the Daughters were not afraid to use this language to their advantage in their rhetorical campaigns to spread their foreign policy vision. Their position, they suggested, was the strong position that would bolster the American nation.70

DAR leaders were insistent that their members would not be accused of failing this test of Americanism, even in the face of public criticism. In one article responding to critiques of the DAR’s stance on UN treaty-making, the National Defense department insisted that “it is not being political nor controversial to quote the passages from

legislation which would deprive Americans of the protections and freedoms preserved by the [Constitution] and the Declaration of Independence.” “We . . . will neither be intimidated nor daunted in our unwavering stand for our right of freedom of speech,” the column proclaimed, “Only the weak or the uninformed cringe voiceless or frightened when facing opposition.” The Daughters were neither; they would continue their strong defense of American principles. Encouraging their chapters to ignore attacks on the organization, National Defense secretary Frances Lucas reported that “[a]ll have expressed their unwavering admiration for the ‘Daughters’ because of our undaunted stand regardless of criticism.” According to Lucas, the DAR’s “projects in the local communities” particularly had “established this confidence.” Lucas invoked these community projects to suggest that the Daughters had a broad base of support among the American people. By expressing strong foreign policy opinions, she implied, DAR members were merely reflecting the sentiments of average citizens.

The Daughters’ insistence that they were not “political,” paired with their emphasis on community support, reflects a tendency among women’s clubs in the postwar period to present their foreign affairs activism as an element of their civic duty. In spite of the overt policy recommendations so frequently contained within their convention resolutions, the Daughters tended to differentiate between being political, which they presented as disingenuous or self-interested, and participating in American government, which was their responsibility as citizens. Yet this civic duty often incorporated formal political participation. As one piece encouraging Daughters to vote contended, “this right to vote is one of the foundation stones of our government” and

women must exercise this right whenever possible. "Today there are more potential
women voters in this country than there are men," the article reported, "What an ever
increasing power women could and would be in our country if they would only have the
desire and the will to take an increasing interest in present day affairs and voice their
approval or opposition through the ballot box." Clearly, the Daughters embraced
participation in the political process, even if they balked at the "political" label.72 This
emphasis on civic duty may represent, in part, an attempt to differentiate their foreign
policy activism from what some conservative women perceived as the self-interested
political activism of some equal rights feminists. As Candice Bredbenner has argued, a
communitarian vision for women's citizenship role had long characterized more
moderate women's activism. Yet it also served to defend DAR activists from their
political critics by representing them in an almost nineteenth-century fashion as outside
the aggressively selfish political realm.73

Like the Daughters, the Minute Women frequently denied the political aspects of
their activism, particularly when defending themselves against critics. In the statement of
principles regularly printed in their national newsletters, the Women dubbed themselves a
"non-partisan" organization, whose members "never take action as a pressure group" and
"act only as individuals." Their sole official pledge was "to vote in every election."74
Instead of claiming political activism as their vocation, Minute Women presented

---

72 Marguerite C. Patton and Frances B. Lucas, "Our Right to Vote," DAR Magazine, 88 (October 1954),
1038.

73 Candice Lewis Bredbenner, A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship

74 See, for example, "Minute Women of the United States of American, Inc.,” blocked advertisement,
Iowa Right Wing Collection.
themselves as concerned American citizens seeking only what was right for their country. For example, in the face of burgeoning criticism in 1954, the Minute Women’s national newsletter reported that “a serious attack is being made upon Americans who are concerned with our continuous entanglements with the United Nations.” Noting the use of “such terms as ‘hate-mongers’ and ‘merchants of fear’,” the article suggested that the “diatribe” against the Minute Women was the work of “professional campaigners” for the UN. Nevertheless, the piece contended, “patriotic citizens who have honest fears for the security and sovereignty of our country will not be deterred by such attacks. They cannot let name-calling intimidate them. There is serious work to be done . . .” As this rhetoric suggests, when faced with negative press, the Minute Women portrayed themselves as the disinterested victims of professional lobbyists.75

Yet they, too, sought to mobilize the latent power of women across the nation on behalf of their causes. In early 1954, the Minute Women focused specifically on the Bricker Resolution, joining forces with another organization, Vigilant Women for the Bricker Amendment, to lobby Congress for its passage. In January of that year, groups of women bearing petitions descended on Washington, D.C., to visit congressmen and promote the resolution. Minute Women president Dorothy Frankston, as well as two dozen Houston Minute Women, were among the lobbying crowd of “button and badge-wearing ladies” from 31 states. Before meeting with other members of Congress, including Texas representative-at-large, Martin Dies, and Senator McCarthy, the women presented Senator Bricker with petitions supporting his resolution that bore more that half a million names from 48 states. In addition to the Minute Women, participants in the

week's events included Marguerite Patton, former DAR president and then chairman of the Daughters' National Defense Department, as well as at least one member of the District of Columbia Federation of Women's Clubs. Intent on maintaining the organization's apolitical façade, Houston Minute Woman Virginia Hedrick disingenuously reported that the women spent their time in Washington "just flitting about and seeing old friends." In actuality, the women participated in an organized attempt to buttonhole senators and force them to commit to supporting the Bricker Resolution. One Washington Post piece described the efforts of the women "swarming over Capital Hill corridors," including an inspired attempt by one woman to convert the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Wisconsin senator Alexander Wiley, who had been leading the campaign against Bricker's resolution. When her long speech supporting Bricker failed to move Senator Wiley, the woman shook her finger in his face and declared, "I just wish you were my husband for a few days. I'd soon change your mind!" Not to be outdone, Senator Wiley pointed his finger at the woman and shouted, "Don't you try to intimidate me."  

Upon her return, President Frankston reported with pride that the Minute Women "were by far the largest single group represented" at the Washington event and that the impressions made by the "determined women" who met with senators "are still the subject of comment in the Senatorial cloakrooms." Though she acknowledged that some Bricker opponents had made "disparaging comments" about the lobbying women, she

---

noted that others expressed “amazement at the intelligence of the arguments presented.”

“Win, lose, or draw, the women created a large disturbance,” Frankston enthused. She also expressed the hope that women might follow through on this effort at the ballot box, when the time came to vote for Congressional representatives. “[S]ome Senators are probably wishing they had been a little more cautious in some of their statements,” she theorized, noting that “[w]omen have long memories.”

Clearly, then, the leaders of the Minute Women embraced the political role their members played, in part because they hoped it would illustrate to politicians in positions of power the fruits of the group’s community education campaigns. These campaigns had created a large constituency of Minute Women who were well-informed and assertive political actors, and their leaders hoped governmental officials would take their views seriously.

In addition to the Bricker Resolution, the Minute Women promoted activism among their members on a whole host of UN-related international relations issues throughout 1954. The influence of the United Nations on American schools and schoolchildren was a persistent worry. The release of another volume in UNESCO’s “Toward World Understanding” series for teachers prompted some concern, since it contained information on how to incorporate discussions of the Declaration of Human Rights “into every subject—English, History, Civics, or what have you.”

The AAUN’s 1954 national conference elicited further anxiety when the Minute Women discovered that, among other topics, the UN proponents had held a panel discussion on the “UN in


the Schools.” “It was agreed that students are the greatest resource material for the future, and it is best to start with the very young,” the Minute Women’s national newsletter reported. AAUN representatives also suggested, according to the newsletter, that since “the UN doesn’t always succeed,” “[g]eneralizations . . . were the best way to ‘build attitudes so that children are conditioned.’”79 Minute Women were thereby encouraged to believe that UNESCO and its supporters in the United States conspired to indoctrinate American schoolchildren. The New York state chapter of the Minute Women also announced with great trepidation in their May newsletter that the Soviet Union had joined UNESCO, becoming its seventieth member nation.80 The Communist link to UNESCO materials was thereby cemented. Combating UNESCO in schools would continue to rank high among Minute Women projects.

Another serious concern was the forthcoming review of the United Nations Charter. Minute Women complained that the State Department had been presenting its views on the Charter in “secret meetings,” while “no public meetings” with the senators considering proposed revisions had been held. Fearing that “[p]roponents of world government will be heard in great numbers, as usual,” national leaders of the Minute Women pressed the group’s members to get involved. Encouraging local chapters to inform themselves on the Charter, the national newsletter suggested Minute Women examine the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the United Nations’ newly released collection of documents entitled A Review of the United Nations Charter. This


“enlightening volume” consisting of “900 pages of information . . . dealing with our foreign relations” would provide Minute Women with “a gold mine of information not only on the Charter, but on other treaties such as NATO and the Inter-American Agreements.”

Treaties and secret international agreements were a particular preoccupation for the Minute Women. Besides promoting the Bricker Resolution, the Minute Women opposed the NATO Status of Forces Treaty for the same reasons the DAR did; they argued that it denied “our boys serving in foreign countries . . . the full protection of their rights under the Constitution . . . ” The Women also supported Senate Joint Resolution 3067, sponsored in 1954 by Senators Homer Ferguson (R-MI) and William Knowland (R-CA). SJ 3067 required that any international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States be sent to the Senate within thirty days of their execution. The bill was conceived in part because the senators discovered that the UN Charter required the American State Department to submit these agreements to the UN, though there existed no requirement that any U.S. Congressional representatives be notified. New York Minute Women quickly labeled this discrepancy “completely UNREASONABLE.” Exhibiting characteristic suspicion of the State Department, the Minute Women’s national bulletin announcing the resolution also mused, “It will be interesting to see

---

81 “Committee on Charter Revision,” *Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.* (January 1954), 2; and “Get This Book!” *Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.* (February 1954), 1, both on Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” in Iowa Right Wing Collection.

whether the State Department fights it as it did the Bricker Amendment. Their wings might be clipped if such a bill were passed, and State doesn’t like to be interfered with.”

The prospect of UN control of atomic energy also stirred suspicion among Minute Women. Inspired by Eisenhower’s reference to the possibility in his April 16, 1953, foreign policy address, a bill was introduced in 1954 proposing that the United States seek arms limitation agreements with member nations “within the United Nations.” That any American would propose placing atomic weapons under the control of an agency of which the Soviet Union was a member outraged the Minute Women. “Most Americans feel that giving away atomic power and atomic weapon secrets is dangerous to the security of the country,” one article railed, “Is this not an opening wedge for Russia to gain through negotiation and infiltration?” And what had happened to America’s refusal to negotiate with the Soviet Union, the Minute Women wanted to know. “[H]ave our foreign policy makers changed their foreign policy again?” the piece demanded.

Ever growing suspicion of the Eisenhower administration, and particularly his State Department, ran throughout the Minute Women’s 1954 informational bulletins. On the surface, much of this suspicion seems rooted in the administration’s rejection of the Bricker Resolution. More fundamentally, the Minute Women were anxious about the administration’s refusal to abandon international commitments and its continued reliance on diplomacy. Like Dean Acheson before him, John Foster Dulles became a prime target for the Minute Women’s critiques of administration policy. In April 1953, Dulles testified

---


before the Senate Judiciary Committee that the Eisenhower administration would not go beyond "traditional limits" in making treaties with other nations. To the Minute Women's dismay, however, Dulles qualified the statement, noting that "by 'traditional limits' I do not mean to imply that the boundary between domestic and international concerns is rigidly fixed for all time." Reporting on the testimony in a 1954 newsletter, one columnist suggested that "if Mr. Dulles were not the age he is, one might conclude that he is the victim of progressive education." The piece reminded Minute Women that "Under the Dean Acheson state department, the people of the United States were resigned to the policy that 'there is no longer any difference between domestic and foreign policy,'" and that "the present administration was elected by the voters to change such a theory."

Dulles's statements, and the administration's willingness to consider such options as UN control of atomic energy, seemed to indicate a return to this internationalist perspective. "Does the foregoing statement of the Secretary . . . . mean that no firm policies to protect Americans can be established unless it is convenient with our world neighbors?" the columnist demanded. Was the Eisenhower administration merely a Republican version of the Truman presidency, the Minute Women wondered. Some concluded that it was. As one California Minute Woman wrote to reporter Ralph O'Leary, "the 'internationalists' are entrenched in all high places, and are selling America short."

85 "Which Way Foreign Policy," *Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.* (February 1954), 4, Reel 76, M19, "Minute Women of the U.S.A.," in Iowa Right Wing Collection; letter to Ralph O'Leary from "A Californian for the Bricker Amendment and a California member of Minute Women," February 3, 1954, in Box 5, Folder 7, O'Leary Papers, HMRC; domestic politics also promoted mistrust of Eisenhower's administration. The Minute Women found administration's handling of the Army-McCarthy hearings particularly vexing. McCarthy had long been a hero of the Minute Women, and they followed his investigation into the promotion of Army dentist Irving Peress closely. New York Minute Women in particular kept tabs on Peress's wife, who was a PTA member in Queens. When her husband refused to sign a loyalty oath and to answer McCarthy's questions in a hearing, Mrs. Peress became the target of a resolution demanding that the New York City Board of Education refuse to deal with any officials who would not sign loyalty oaths. Minute Women laid the blame for the presence of disloyal individuals in the
Though not a United Nations action, the French war in Indochina exacerbated the Minute Women’s wariness of Eisenhower’s foreign policies. Repeated requests for additional aid from the French, which Eisenhower granted to some extent, encouraged both Democratic and Republican congressmen to compare the Vietnam situation with Korea. Eisenhower seemed determined to keep the United States out of any full-scale Southeast Asian conflict, but the fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 and the persistent involvement of American forces, equipment, and financing worried the Minute Women. The Minute Women’s New York state president, Anna O. Nisbet, blamed the French for the hostilities. “Conditions that brought present war in Indochina were . . . [a] direct result of French colonial policy,” Nisbet argued in a July 1954 state newsletter. “Our duty is to demand that France give recognition to the ideals of freedom in Indochina.” That was as far as most Minute Women were willing to extend American involvement.

Though Nisbet lamented the prospect of all Southeast Asia “fall[ing] to the Reds,” she also reported to her New York chapters that “an informal resolution” had been “circulated in Congress . . . to give the Executive authority to impose stand-by controls and to move quickly in Southeast Asia.” The echoes of Truman’s actions during the Korean conflict were obvious, and Nisbet noted that most senators “regardless of political

affiliations,” were “disturbed and distressed” because they feared “fullscale [sic] war in Asia.” New York Minute Women must inform their representatives of their feelings on the subject and “send a copy to the President.”

DAR leaders repeated the Minute Women’s concerns about the Indochina situation in an August 1954 newsletter. Reporting that the American taxpayers were “furnishing 800 million dollars a year” to help the French finance the war, National Defense Department representatives also noted that the French had asked “that American boys be sent to fight in this colonial war.” The Daughters would have none of this. “[W]hy should Americans tolerate another Korea?” the column asked DAR members.

DAR leaders also displayed profound suspicion of the administration’s diplomatic efforts. “We sincerely hope that no executive agreement or treaty has been made which will be brought from under the table or from under the veil of secrecy saying that we have been committed to such action,” one article commented ominously. The responsibility for this threat to American citizens, according to these DAR leaders, rested squarely on familiar shoulders. “The internationalists and world government proponents are always shedding crocodile tears for the rest of the ‘downtrodden world,’” the National Defense Department complained, “but seem to have no compassion for young Americans and our overburdened taxes.” By prioritizing global issues, DAR leaders suggested, internationalists undermined America’s youth and the nation’s financial stability.

---


87 Marguerite C. Patton and Frances B. Lucas, “Indo-China,” DAR Magazine, 88 (August 1954), 877; the $800 million figure cannot be substantiated, since the Eisenhower administration concealed the monies sent to the French in complex ways, but current estimates suggest that the United States was financing 75 percent of the war’s costs in early 1954. See Ambrose, Eisenhower, Vol. II, 175.
All of these issues reflected what conservative clubwomen like the Minute Women, as well as the Daughters of the American Revolution, perceived to be a persistent divergence in Eisenhower’s priorities from the policies promised during the 1952 presidential election. Eisenhower himself had never been a member of the conservative wing of the Republican Party, but he had campaigned on the idea that Truman’s foreign policies were excessively “soft.” Foreign policy conservatives voted for him in part to signify their repudiation of Truman’s support for international projects like the United Nations. Two years later, the national leaders of the Minute Women feared that Ike’s attempts at a centrist policy agenda sought merely to placate internationalists. Noting the ongoing battle between “‘GOP Liberals’ and ‘GOP Conservatives’” over where the party should take the country, leading Minute Women argued that the liberals, and Eisenhower along with them, advocated a legislative program on “the progressive side” that theoretically would appeal, not only to liberal Republicans, but also to independents and some Democrats. Part of this program, as rendered by the Minute Women in their January 1954 newsletter, was “[s]trong support of the United Nations and of free world alliance” together with “strong opposition to any ‘isolationist, go-it-alone philosophy’ [and] to such restrictive legislation as the Bricker amendment.” Eisenhower and the liberals also recommended reducing tariffs to promote world trade and making defense agreements with other nations regardless of the cost, thereby “putting survival ahead of economy.” These policies went against the policy recommendations of both the Minute Women and the DAR. The Republican president

---

who, two years before, had been their hope for the future had instead spent two years siding with the internationalists.

Eisenhower faced a good deal of criticism from a variety of conservative Republicans for his middle-of-the-road policies, especially as congressmen geared up for the 1954 midterm elections. Though Eisenhower believed support for his centrist policies would ensure Republican victories, senators like William Knowland challenged Ike’s willingness to continue trading with Communist nations, and others rejected his proposed social programs at home. This posturing proved unsuccessful; congressional Republicans struggled to hold their seats in this election. The Democratic Party, with the particular support of labor unions, engaged in an elaborate grassroots campaign to recruit voters. The CIO’s Political Action Committee specifically targeted “union wives” during this campaign, as well as other northern voters, and succeeded in garnering significant support for Democratic candidates. Though Eisenhower was initially reluctant to involve himself in the midterm political contest, in the end he did attempt to campaign on behalf of some candidates. Nevertheless, the Republican Party lost two seats in the Senate and seventeen seats in the House, thereby ceding control of both houses of Congress to the Democrats.89

Though many forces contributed to the Republican losses, this Democratic victory seemed an apt conclusion to two years of disarray for the foreign policy agendas of conservative clubwomen. Eisenhower had not abandoned the United Nations as an international authority, nor had he embraced legislative attempts to limit its influence on the domestic laws of the United States. Though some Republican congressmen advocated

the policies most central to the foreign affairs activism of the Minute Women and the DAR, these women felt that loyalty to the United Nations and the internationalist principles behind it still shaped too much of American foreign policy. In addition, the press seemed increasingly inclined to vilify the foreign policy recommendations of conservative clubwomen, and internationalists continued to promote the UN and its agencies in communities across the country. Even within the DAR, internationalism reared its head, prompting the Daughters to clamp down on dissent within their ranks. Conservative clubwomen persisted in their campaigns to educate women around the country about foreign policy issues and to mobilize them to combat the internationalist impulses they felt threatened American traditions. They centered their lobbying efforts on defensive legislation like the Bricker Resolution and SJ 3067 and used their national publications to keep women in local chapters informed on international developments and their effect on American citizens. Yet both the DAR and the Minute Women expressed growing frustration with the lack of support they received from politicians at the national level and from public institutions like the press.

These two years had a very different impact on internationalist clubwomen in the General Federation and the WUUN. The 1952 election had been disheartening, and conservative elements, within the General Federation in particular, had been momentarily ascendant. Yet Eisenhower’s foreign policy recommendations in the wake of Stalin’s death spurred internationalist clubwomen back into action and gave them a presidential platform for their activism. Women United for the United Nations continued to nurture internationalist impulses among clubwomen, even in the DAR, and more actively used the press to promote their work. Leaders in the General Federation took advantage of the
president's mandate, involving themselves directly in the governmental offices created to implement his foreign policy. Federation members also recommitted themselves to supporting the United Nations and its agencies, specifically by beginning education campaigns on the forthcoming review of the United Nations Charter. In addition, they encouraged the government to take advantage of housewives as foreign policy emissaries. While these internationalist clubwomen had always forged a connection between their work at home and international peace, in the first years of the Eisenhower presidency they began to posit more explicitly that they, and the United Nations, should also serve *American* foreign policy interests. This overt merging of foreign policy goals with domestic political involvement was in many respects the culmination of a decade of activism by Federation clubwomen. They had succeeded in using their foreign affairs expertise to secure presidential recognition, even in an unpromising political climate, and in turn Federation leaders encouraged the presidential administration to look on women, and particularly homemakers, as political partners.

A notable element of the international affairs activities of all clubwomen during this period was their increasingly domestic focus. Much as they always had, conservative clubwomen contended that involvement in the United Nations threatened American interests, and internationalist clubwomen argued that supporting the UN served to promote these same interests. Both groups expressed the rationale for their foreign policy positions in terms of the connection between foreign and domestic, but as the Cold War persisted, both groups began emphasizing the domestic half of the equation. In addition to facilitating peace among the nations of the world, internationalist women during these years believed that the United Nations would also combat the spread of communism and
control the Soviet Union. At the same time, for opponents of internationalism, the United Nations became the fuel behind a host of domestic problems including juvenile delinquency and socialistic thinking. The debate about issues of internationalism in the early fifties thus centered increasingly on the effect this internationalism would have on America, politically, culturally, and economically. Moreover, during these early years of the Eisenhower presidency, the debate focused inward, with both camps paying more attention to each other and to domestic politics than to the world situation that notionally inspired their battles.

The one thing these clubwomen continued to agree on was that the UN and the debates the world organization engendered served them well as a way to bring women into American politics. Their foreign affairs work had garnered attention, both in the media and from political officials. Too, their grassroots education programs helped women across the country develop political know-how and encouraged them to engage as citizens, by voting and lobbying. The connection all these women forged between international politics and domestic policy continued to justify a particular political role for American clubwomen, just as it nurtured a profound breach among these women on a host of political issues. In the coming years, a whole new group of international problems would emerge to challenge these women. The divergent ways liberal and conservative women structured their foreign affairs work in response would shape the American debate about international politics and help determine the future course of American clubwomen’s political activism.
One Nation, One World:  
American Clubwomen and the Politics of Internationalism, 1945–1961  

by  

Margaret Nunnelley Olsen  

Volume II
Chapter Four
The UN Works for You: Liberal Clubwomen and Political Engagement, 1955–1957

The theme for the United Nations Tenth Anniversary is ‘The UN Works for You.’ Let us help bring home to every citizen what this has meant to all of us in conflicts resolved, world wars averted, lives made a bit easier through U.N. self-help programs . . . .

—V. B. Ballard, U.N. and Specialized Agencies Committee Chairman, General Federation of Women’s Clubs

At the March 14, 1956, meeting of Women United for the United Nations, Frances Sawyer, UN observer for the Women’s National Farm and Garden Association, presented her technique for giving community talks on the UN. Sawyer explained that, as she spoke, she “cleverly tie[d] in with her talk on Economic Assistance or on the Status of Women or whatever, a bowl from Haiti or a piece of brocade from Damascus or a length of rich silken material from Burma.” By using these material objects from her international travels as visual ties to the nations she discussed, Sawyer emphasized the work of UN programs that were “channeling native skills in numerous countries into the production of more saleable merchandise . . . . that will appeal to the tourist trade.” “The Cottage industries are, as we know, important not only for the family income . . . but also as morale builders,” Sawyer noted, “Are not many if us here in the West seeking these same satisfactions in handicrafting?” With these suggestions, Sawyer attempted to tie material culture to international diplomacy, thereby making an esoteric topic more accessible to the clubwomen she addressed. Sawyer also hoped her focus on domestic skills and culture would divert attention from the political controversies plaguing the United Nations. Accordingly, Sawyer stressed that Women United could use the
domestic realm to help middle-class American women understand international affairs by illustrating the positive connection between the two.¹

Unfortunately for the UN observers of Women United, it was this very intrusion of the foreign into American domestic tranquility that their opponents found threatening. Though the observers could certainly use the UN’s ability to influence family life around the world as a selling point for women already inclined to see this merger as a positive one, the activists of the DAR and the Minute Women perceived this link to be the most profound danger posed by the United Nations. The UN’s power to directly affect the American family was the threat against which these women felt it their responsibility to organize; this threat animated their opposition to the UN, and to all international organizations. As such, the WUUN’s attempts to defuse hostility to the UN by emphasizing the domestic and social aspects of international diplomacy were, in fact, guaranteed to fuel the very antipathy the women sought to counteract. The UN observers failed to perceive this contradiction. They continued to believe that their education campaigns would convert Americans if they could merely find the right language to use when discussing the UN.

This attempt to navigate the political implications of supporting the United Nations by emphasizing domestic culture suggests the larger project of liberal women’s clubs during the latter half of the 1950s. Having committed themselves to promoting the UN, the members of liberal women’s groups confronted deep and vocal opposition to this internationalist project from women with whom they shared backgrounds and even club memberships. Moreover, though the creation of the UN had been a profoundly American project, the organization itself was made up of numerous nations, including the Soviet

¹ Meeting Minutes, March 14, 1956, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.
Union, all of whom had national interests to pursue that frequently conflicted with American policies. Liberal clubwomen therefore had to negotiate the implications of their UN loyalty in a climate of public discord, domestic political tension, and foreign policy conflict. Though both groups maintained their commitment to promoting international engagement among American citizens, the General Federation and Women United took divergent paths when faced with political controversy. Their differing responses to the domestic political ramifications of their internationalism determined the kinds of programs these two groups would use to support the UN. While the WUUN focused almost exclusively on advertising the UN’s social programs to the exclusion of any political issues, the General Federation argued that the UN advanced America’s Cold War goals. By supporting the UN, Federation officers proclaimed, Americans also supported their nation. This UN work, in turn, helped shape their relationship with American political culture. By the end of this period, Women United found themselves moving largely outside their nation’s political conversation, while the General Federation became more immersed in the policies of a Cold War liberal national state.

*****

On December 17, 1954, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously approved a resolution marking a momentous occasion in the organization’s short history. “Considering that both the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Charter and the tenth anniversary of its coming into force . . . provide fitting occasions to promote greater understanding of the purposes and of the work of the United Nations,” the resolution read, “[the General Assembly] calls upon the Governments of all Member States and invites the Governments of non-member States to give all appropriate support
to programmes in their own countries designed to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the United Nations in 1955." The UN's first decade of international organizing had been filled with controversial campaigns, from drafting the International Declaration of Human Rights to mediating Arab-Israeli hostilities to intervening in the Korean conflict to creating a vast array of subsidiary organizations charged with solving world problems. The United Nations had grown into a global body whose efforts, for good or ill, had the power to shape the policies of its member nations and the lives of their citizens. By the UN's tenth year, sixty nations participated in the General Assembly's deliberations, and new Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld confronted a complex set of international problems. Cold War hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union persisted with both nations seeking to use the organization as a platform for their own foreign policies. As the mandated tenth-year reexamination of the United Nations Charter loomed, the UN's efficacy as international arbiter was tested regularly.²

Faced with this contentious international situation, Americans treated the tenth anniversary of the UN's founding as an opportunity for both celebration and serious appraisal of the organization. At the invitation of the city officials from San Francisco, where the UN's founding conference took place, the General Assembly planned to hold the tenth anniversary meeting of the UN in that city, between June 20 and June 26, 1955. The Assembly extended invitations, along with travel expenses, to one representative

from each UN member state. American newspapers began covering plans for the
anniversary assembly in May, reporting on which ministers would attend and who would
speak. After some waffling, President Eisenhower announced on May 30 that he would
address the gathering and encouraged Americans to “review the [U.N.’s] record of
accomplishment and failure and . . . fix in our own minds again what are our hopes and
our expectations for such a body.”

One editorial in the Washington Post lauded
Eisenhower’s decision, suggesting to readers that “[t]here is more and more recognition
of the importance of the U.N. as a world forum” and that “[o]nly as the U.N. is accorded
increasing stature can it make the hopes for its success a reality.”

Former president
Truman also accepted Dag Hammarskjöld’s invitation to speak at the meeting, after
having rejected a similar invitation from John Foster Dulles. Truman had given both the
opening and closing addresses at the UN’s founding conference ten years before, and as
one reporter noted, though Truman would “be speaking as a private citizen, . . . no one
doubts that close attention will be paid to his remarks and detailed comparisons made
with those of President Eisenhower.”

American supporters of the United Nations took full advantage of the opportunity
afforded by the tenth anniversary festivities and all the publicity these events garnered. In
early February 1955, Women United for the United Nations joined forces with the
American Association for the United Nations, the Foreign Policy Association, and the US

---

3 For details of San Francisco arrangements as approved by the General Assembly, see section B of Resolution 889(IX), *Yearbook of the United Nations: 1954*, p. 448.


Committee for the UN to launch what amounted to a nationwide organizing drive in support of the United Nations. Confident that “the tenth anniversary year of the founding of the United Nations offers every citizen an opportunity for . . . increased knowledge and understanding of the UN and its value to the United States,” these four groups resolved in a public statement to “work together to assist communities across the nation to develop the most effective and appropriate activities in recognition of the United Nations.” More specifically, they sought to coordinate “the establishment of one representative committee of citizens and organizations cooperating to develop United Nations programs” in every community and to garner for these committees “the official recognition of local civic authorities.”

For Women United, this effort evolved into their One Hundred City Campaign.

The idea behind the One Hundred City Campaign was to select one hundred American cities wherein “UN activity had not been great” and to mobilize citizens to combat this apathy. Women United would use the connections of their members’ organizations to locate community leaders, particularly of women’s groups, in these cities, thereby tapping a local activist brain trust for the benefit of the United Nations. They would set up committees of these local contacts and demand recognition from city officials. With the help of civic authorities, committees would then coordinate tenth anniversary celebrations in each city, thereby spreading the gospel of the UN to the local population. The observer members of Women United had long believed community

---

education campaigns to be the most effective means of encouraging support for the United Nations among American citizens. Yet for the first ten years of the UN's existence, the WUUN women had relied heavily on press coverage and the efforts of UN observers through the organizations they represented to promote community awareness of UN work. Even their most autonomous endeavor, the UN Information Center, had been merely a clearinghouse of information produced by other groups. The observers had repeatedly deemed overt, WUUN-sponsored mobilization too controversial and had avoided anything more radical than making recommendations. With the One Hundred City Campaign, Women United took an aggressive step toward using their network of female activists to create a national support structure for the United Nations.\(^8\)

This relatively bold move reflects Women United's reinvigorated confidence in the nation's potential for embracing their internationalist vision. Gone were the dubious pronouncements of the 1952 election season with its peppering of anti-UN rhetoric. The ever-cautious observers of Women United felt confident enough in 1955 to launch an overtly interventionist crusade. First, Women United chose the one hundred cities to play host to their campaign. Picks included Baltimore; St. Louis; Salt Lake City; Chicago; Stamford, Connecticut; and Los Angeles. Twenty-two of Women United's member organizations, including the American Association of University Women, the National Council of Negro Women, and the National Council of Jewish Women, as well as the General Federation, then provided contact information for active members in those one hundred cities. Next, WUUN representative Ellen Garrison sent letters to these contacts, asking them to serve as interim chairmen of local UN anniversary committees and

\(^8\) "Report on 100 City Campaign," Box 1, Folder 3, WUUN Collection.
informing them that their names had been forwarded to their respective mayors. Along with the letters, Garrison enclosed contact information for the other "local leaders" provided by WUUN member organizations and asked each interim chairman to "call a meeting of these leaders and offer assistance to the Mayor in order that the 10th Anniversary program might be started by June 24, the Anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter."9

In spite of their nominal celebration of the United Nations, much of the diplomatic world attending the San Francisco anniversary session focused instead on the forthcoming meeting of world powers to which the United States and Soviet Union had finally agreed. At that meeting, slated to begin in Geneva on July 18, 1955, Eisenhower would meet Nikita Khrushchev for the first time and the powers would discuss disarmament proposals, as well as the prospect of a unified Germany and Soviet control of Eastern Europe.10 Reference to the summit made its way into many of the speeches given at the UN gathering. Opening the session, Eisenhower reaffirmed American dedication to "the principles of the [UN] Charter" and declared that "without the United Nations . . . the victories" of the past ten years "could not have been achieved.

Reminding his audience that "[w]ithin a month there will be a four-power conference of heads of government," Eisenhower dramatically asserted that "[t]he basis for success is simply put: It is that every individual at that meeting be loyal to the spirit of the United Nations and dedicated to the principles of its Charter."11 Foster Dulles echoed

9 "Report on 100 City Campaign," Box 1, Folder 3, WUUN Collection.


Eisenhower's rhetoric. After offering a list of problems facing the UN in its second
decade that essentially recapitulated American foreign policy goals, Dulles insisted that
“There is one extremely simple method of bringing an end to what is called the ‘cold
war’—observe the charter of the United Nations.” “It is in that spirit that we go to
Geneva,” Dulles concluded, “and we hope to find that spirit shared.” 12 Soviet
representative Molotov also took advantage of the global platform, suggesting the Soviet
proposals for admission of Communist China to the UN and the promotion of “peaceful
uses of atomic energy,” among others, must be considered if the United Nations was to
successfully promote global peace and security. 13

While American and Soviet representatives rather transparently merged the
foreign policy goals of their respective governments with UN principles at the
anniversary meeting, community celebrations of the tenth anniversary, like those
coordinated by Women United, focused on praising the achievements of the international
organization. Many of these local celebrations took place, not during the June session, but
on and around United Nations Day in October 1955. Global commemorations of United
Nations Day included ceremonies in Seoul and at the UN cemetery in Pusan, “tribal
parades” in Liberia, and a “symbolic release of pigeons” in Sweden. Washington D.C.
women’s clubs marked the day with a variety of observances, including a memorial
service for the “men and women of the United Nations Armed Forces” and addresses on
“the active role of women in the United Nations” and the UN Trusteeship Council. A

12 American foreign policy goals expressed as UN priorities by Dulles included the reunification of
Germany, the liberation of Eastern European nations from Soviet control, the condemnation of the Chinese
Communist government, the end of the spread of international communism, and the control and regulation

reception at the D.C. United Nations Information Center for “diplomatic and State Department representatives,” a review of the UN’s first ten years by the International Relations department of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase chapter of the AAUW, and a UN tribute by the Sisterhood of Congregation Har Tzeon also made the papers. The League of Women Voters even extended their celebratory efforts into 1956 by sponsoring “four one-day guided tours” to “see the U.N. in action.”¹⁴

Women United called their One Hundred City Campaign a moderate success at encouraging this type of community celebration elsewhere in the country. Women from forty-six cities accepted UN committee chairmanships. Several women who declined indicated that planning for anniversary celebrations was already underway, and twenty-eight others corresponded with the US Committee for the UN about their commemoration work. Though Women United received only sixteen official reports in the wake of the tenth anniversary, merging their reports with data from the US Committee for the UN showed a total of eighty-five cities with mayor’s committees to promote anniversary observances.¹⁵ Women United tracked the progress of community celebrations throughout 1955. Members heard with satisfaction in September that Spokane, Washington, had organized its program under the title “Spokane United for the United Nations.” The committee from Fort Smith, Arkansas, requested “hundreds of copies of whatever flyers and booklets on the UN” Women United could spare. And in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the celebration featured “the singing of an original Cantata by a mass


¹⁵ “Report on 100 City Campaign,” Box 1, Folder 3, WUUN Collection.
chorus,” copies of which the composer, Mrs. Cary Miller, provided to Women United for distribution. Still, some WUUN members were disappointed with the efficacy of their efforts. In April 1955, Elvira Fradkin, UN observer for the American Unitarian Association, reported to the group on the anniversary organizing efforts in Trenton, New Jersey, which Women United tracked as a pilot project for the larger One Hundred City Campaign. “We are still living in an ivory tower as far as the community itself is concerned,” Fradkin lamented, “It is astonishing how little is trickling down. There is something wrong with the rigidity of our national programs that prevents the local people from exerting their leadership.” She noted with frustration that, in spite of their general invitation to all local civic groups, only four sponsored the Trenton events. “We must make contact,” Fradkin insisted, “We must guide our own organizations to prevent disasters.”

Some of Women United’s UN anniversary programs continued to conform to older patterns in spite of this call for more direct links with citizens at the local level. In their tradition of relying on the media to spread their message, the observers sponsored a television program on “Women at Work for the UN” that featured elite women like Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary Pillsbury Lord, and Virginia Gildersleeve, who were “closely identified with the UN.” Yet some WUUN media campaigns shifted their strategies slightly to incorporate more local flavor. In honor of the tenth anniversary, Women United’s UN News for Women Broadcasters pioneered a new tactic: scripted debates

16 Meeting Minutes, September 21, 1955, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.

17 Meeting Minutes, April 20, 1955, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.

designed to promote the UN by addressing (and debunking) criticism of the international organization. Instead of their usual bulletin of UN stories, the observers crafted a "conversation" where participants from the local community could play roles in a prepared radio discussion of the United Nations. Some were to be in favor of the organization, some opposed, and WUUN writers designed the conversation to acknowledge the weaknesses of the United Nations while emphasizing its strengths. The dialogue also provided pat answers to the most common critiques of the UN, including accusations that it could "infringe on domestic responsibility" and that it was "helpless in trying to keep the peace." The text read like a play, and contained such dubious queries as, "So, what is the story on disarmament plans in the U.N.? Anybody know?" to which another participant would then respond with a long, detailed account of the work of the UN's various commissions on armaments. Its clumsy rendering aside, the script was intended to involve members of the community in the project of educating their peers about the UN and make the education process more interactive. 19

Women United also expanded their media contacts beyond the large national newspapers to which most of their press releases had been directed in the past. In April 1955, members of Women United's press committee conducted a survey of 150 newspapers in 73 cities across the U.S., "to determine how much UN information local U.S. citizens were receiving through local papers." Members of women's clubs in these cities submitted 1500 clippings to the committee, but the UN observers expressed disappointment with what they read. They found "a disquieting lack of coverage of the economic and humanitarian aspects of UN activity" and an excessive focus on "the

political, the controversial, the divisive elements in UN activity. . . .” To address this imbalance, Women United decided to hold a conference for editors and publishers at UN headquarters. The conference took place on December 7, 1956, and representatives of 6000 weeklies and small daily papers attended the event. After surveying the newspapermen, Women United planned to establish a news service for a select group of papers in “strategically located cities,” that would provide “weekly news releases . . . background material for editorial use, and . . . special stories on United States personalities in [the] UN for home town consumption.”20 If average Americans did not read the New York Times, Women United hoped to reach them with human interest stories in their local papers.

Having broken the seal on direct community intervention, Women United also began surveying their members about the presentation methods their national organizations used to connect with average Americans, and particularly clubwomen. League of Women Voters observer Carolyn Tumarkin emphasized to her fellow Women United members that what mattered most was “not how much information we have . . . as the way we tell it.” “We must spark interest in our listeners,” she urged the group, “we must transfer some of the enthusiasm that has been aroused in us.” Tumarkin acknowledged that the techniques Women United had been using were often “not suited” to their audiences; the group must consider new methods. One way of developing and spreading new programs was to have WUUN members share the tactics that had proven

20 “Memorandum, To members of WUUN,” January 15, 1957, in Box 1, Folder 3, WUUN Collection.
most effective when used in communities by members of the organizations they represented.  

Numerous WUUN members stepped forward with suggestions, many of which focused on the domestic aspects of UN diplomacy. Frances Sawyer, for example, offered her technique emphasizing material culture and the morale benefits of handicrafting. UN observer for the Women’s Division of the Methodist Church, Mrs. C. A. Bender, presented a visual aid used by the study groups in her organization to demonstrate how the UN and its agencies affected “lands and peoples the world over.” The aid consisted of a large board with holes and pegs, to which Bender attached five square plaques representing, respectively, an American family, a European family, an Asian family, a South American family, and an African family. She then hung a panel with abbreviations representing the UN and the Specialized Agencies at the top of the board. Using small straps bearing the words “sanitation,” “waterways,” “per capita income,” and “literacy rates,” among others, Bender then connected the families to the agencies that provided them with services. She reported that forty women in the Women’s Division had been trained to use the board, and that ten regional centers planned to provide training to seventy-five additional women, who would then be qualified to give presentations. The Women’s Division also hoped to produce lap boards to be distributed more broadly.  

The WUUN observers greeted Bender’s demonstration with “amazement” and “admiration.” The aid reflected the neutral message the UN observers hoped to substitute for the politically charged vision of the UN so often featured in media coverage. The

---

21 Meeting Minutes, October 19, 1955, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.

22 Meeting Minutes, October 19, 1955, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.
board refocused audience attention on the economic and social aspects of UN work. Instead of representing nations with competing political agendas, the UN represented equivalent family units the world over. Rather than a hotbed of political strife, the UN was a family-centered agency that sought to benefit humanity by providing much-needed services. The visual simplicity of the aid also translated the complex bureaucracy of UN agencies into a series of direct material linkages. By presenting the UN through the domesticated lens of the family, the visual aid attempted to make the international organization palatable to the average American—and particularly American women. By simplifying the way the organization functioned, the aid demystified the UN’s role in the world. The observers of Women United praised Bender’s board to the heavens.\(^{23}\)

The problem with these techniques lay in the link they forged between international affairs and domestic culture. The pairing of international and domestic was part and parcel of liberal clubwomen’s vision of the UN’s ability to effect peace and of American women’s ability to influence the course of global politics. This pairing originally brought these women to UN activism, and they hoped by emphasizing it to spread the UN gospel more widely. Yet this link also meant, for conservative opponents of internationalism, that the UN had the converse power to interfere in American society and family life. The possibility that the UN could change American customs, according to conservatives, threatened American sovereignty and the political rights of American citizens just as much as any legal intervention. In fact, it laid the groundwork for legal intervention by usurping the loyalty of Americans to their country. Women United’s hope that they could focus on this tie to avoid the “political” aspects of the United Nations showed a profound lack of awareness. Highlighting the bond between foreign and

\(^{23}\) Meeting Minutes, October 19, 1955, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.
domestic was unlikely to convert those Americans who opposed the United Nations, precisely because they feared the results of this linkage. Women United's programs would speak only to those who already approved of the UN project.

Nevertheless, Women United's organizing drive surrounding the UN's tenth anniversary broadened the group's connections, and new connections spurred the impetus toward more direct community organizing in 1955 and 1956. In the wake of the 1954 United Nations Day celebrations, an anniversary committee chairman from Fort Worth, Texas, Mrs. Goosetree, contacted Women United to inform them of the very strong opposition to the UN prevalent in her home city. Offering that "perhaps a 'Critical Area Technique' could be developed" to intervene in situations like the one plaguing UN supporters in Fort Worth, Goosetree pleaded for some assistance from the observers. Rose Parsons responded by forming a committee to consider "the feasibility of spearheading some project or campaign in Fort Worth."24 By February 1956, the Pilot Project Committee, as this group became known, had convinced thirteen of Women United's member organizations to cooperate by providing the travel schedules of their field representatives and UN observers, presumably so the efforts of these traveling speakers could be coordinated to focus on cities where opposition was strong. The observers also created a chart to track the movements of NGO representatives "into the hinterlands," which would allow them to see just how far from New York City their UN promotions had traveled.25

---

24 Meeting Minutes, November 16, 1955, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.

25 Meeting Minutes, February 8, 1956, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.
The drawback of using their member’s organizations to coordinate direct action against UN opposition, however, was that opponents existed even within the membership of WUUN’s affiliated groups. As Mrs. Durand Taylor, UN observer for the National Congress of Parent and Teacher Organizations, cautioned at one meeting, many national organizations supported the United Nations according to resolutions passed by their state representatives. “Danger lies in the fact that these State groups might be ‘captured’ by anti-U.N. forces and these resolutions rescinded at some annual convention,” Taylor warned. The risk that local and state chapters of organizations might be “captured” by opponents of the United Nations made the task of community organizing all the more urgent. Yet Women United’s observers remained determined to approach the work with delicacy as well as dedication. “We just keep plugging away—always recognizing that we are working with people to whom the whole subject seems remote,” Taylor explained, and always “stressing the humanitarian aspects of the entire field rather than the political.”26 That these two fields could not be so readily separated continued to elude many of the members of Women United.

Like the other member organizations of Women United, the General Federation concentrated their tenth anniversary celebrations on what their leaders believed to be more neutral ground. Announcing the organization’s plans for marking the occasion, UN committee chairman V. B. Ballard fixed the attention of her readers on the services rendered by the United Nations. “The theme for the United Nations Tenth Anniversary is ‘The UN Works for You,’” she proclaimed, “Let us help bring home to every citizen what this has meant to all of us in conflicts resolved, world wars averted, lives made a bit easier through U.N. self-help programs . . . .” Particularly important had been the health

26 Meeting Minutes, April 11, 1956, Box 1, Folder 10, WUUN Collection.
and welfare programs of the UN’s Specialized Agencies, Ballard suggested. She acknowledged that “basic disagreements still exist,” but sought instead to focus on the UN’s “remarkable record of achievement.” “Surely ten short years, scarcely a flash on the pages of history—cannot cause despair,” she remarked, “Instead the record of the U.N.’s first ten years should inspire all of us to renew our zeal, to rededicate ourselves to U.N. purposes and principles, and to look with faith and confidence to the next decade!”27 As Ballard’s acknowledgement of “basic disagreements” suggests, General Federation leaders were conscious of the political controversy that plagued the United Nations. Yet, instead of shying away from these geopolitical conflicts entirely, Federation activists couched the rationale for their activism in terms of their perspective as female citizens. By mobilizing their civic organizations to support the UN, Federation leaders contended, local clubwomen did their part to stabilize the world situation and, thereby, both protect American citizens and promote world peace.

This careful pairing of UN projects with American foreign policy goals allowed the Federation to discuss UN politics more explicitly than Women United observers. As early as March 1955, Constance Sporborg informed Federation Clubwoman readers of the most pressing issues on the UN’s agenda, among which she included universal disarmament and, for the first time, the “Colonial Problem, which is growing more acute—more violent in Africa, as there are more racial tensions there.”28 Rather than avoid these questions, Federation leaders put them on the agenda for the Federation’s April 1955 annual meeting. Included among the activities at the Philadelphia gathering were consideration of a resolution on national self-determination, which was essentially a

referendum on the work of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, and a
discussion of how to establish an "enduring peace," with a roundtable made up of Walter
Judd, a congressman from Minnesota and a member of the House Committee on Foreign
Affairs; Mary Pillsbury Lord, U.S. representative to the UN’s Human Rights
Commission; and Norman Thomas, a former Socialist Party presidential candidate and
prominent peace activist.29

The resolution on national self-determination couched Federation support for the
UN’s Trusteeship Council in terms of American patriotism. The Trusteeship Council was
the wing of the United Nations created to administer questions relating to colonial
territories and their eventual independence. Stating that “the high mission of the United
States” was to support “peoples who are determined to exercise a free choice as to the
government under which they shall live” and “to encourage efforts toward self-
government which are truly expressive of the desires of a people,” the Federation’s
resolution committed the group to “the belief in the inherent right of people to self-
determination” as well as to “application of that principle under the auspices of the
United Nations.”30 After reading the resolution, Mrs. Norbert Klein, chairman of the
International Affairs Division, attempted to define self-determination for her audience.
Calling it both “the right of self-government” and “the right of a colonial people to
independence,” Klein asserted that the concept appeared in the American Declaration of
Independence, the French Declaration of Rights, the Atlantic Charter, and the Charter of
the United Nations. With such a pedigree, Federation clubwomen could hardly reject the

and Resource Center, General Federation of Women’s Clubs Headquarters, Washington, D.C. (hereafter
cited as WHRC).

idea. Next, Klein moved on to "who shall be included." According to her explanation, the concept could be applied to "ethnic groups [and] cultural groups, constituting a majority in a particular area," as well as "to groups having common historical traditions, inhabiting a certain territory" and "to those in a group having a common language or even perhaps a common religion." "A hundred and eighty years ago, the American people asserted their own Independence," Klein concluded her sales pitch. "Surely not one of us would deny the same privilege to others." 31

The Federation's longtime UN observer, Constance Sporborg, then went on to explain the mechanics of the Trusteeship Council. "Some [nations] have been granted [self-determination]," Sporborg contended, while "others are pending." The rationale of the Council, according to Sporborg, was "that those who are ready and qualified shall be given self-determination" and "that those who still have to be briefed are given it in the long future, such as happened in Ethiopia and Eritrea." Though Sporborg clearly agreed that certain nations, particularly those in Africa, might not be immediately "ready and qualified" to determine their own forms of government, she did claim for the United Nations a role the organization would increasingly come to play in the next several decades. "They are treating colonialism," Sporborg explained of the Trusteeship Council, arguing further that "[w]e in the United States should be the first to grant self-determination to people that do not wish to be anymore part of colonial heads" since "so many of them are fighting the same fight with us." Sporborg then pleaded for unanimous support of this project from Federation clubwomen. 32


32 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1955, Box 30, p. D63, WHRC; Ethiopia was one of the original 51 member nations that signed the UN Charter in 1945, and its admission seems not to have been
Sporborg’s insistence that the General Federation actively support the work of the Trusteeship Council reflected her continued commitment to the human rights principles expressed by the consultant organizations at the UN’s founding conference. The mechanisms of the Council, however, did not provide effective means for colonial populations seeking independence to achieve their goal. The UN Charter established a two-tiered structure of such territories: strategic trust territories (those with particular strategic value to the nations that administered them, like American-controlled islands in the Pacific), placed under the direct control of the Security Council, and other normal trust territories, which included only those territories listed as “mandate territories” in the League of Nations Covenant; any territories controlled by Axis nations; and any territories “voluntarily placed under the system by states responsible for their administration.” The Trusteeship Council took charge of these non-strategic trust territories. Instead of any specific procedure for securing the independence of these territories, as anticolonial lobbyists wished, the trusteeship portion of the UN Charter contained only very vague language providing for the promotion of “the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be

conditional in any way. Sporborg likely referred to Ethiopia’s contested admission to the League of Nations. On August 1, 1923, Prince Regent Ras Tafari (later Haile Selassie) of Ethiopia petitioned by telegram for Ethiopia’s admission to the League of Nations. Controversy ensued because of the continuation of slavery and slave trading in Ethiopia, which offended some members, and because some members felt that Ethiopia was “too undeveloped and disorganized a State . . . to collaborate with other League members on a footing of equality.” Several nations, led by Britain, opposed the country’s admission until it could be proven that reforms had done away with slavery. Finally, on September 28, 1923, Ethiopia was voted unanimously into the League, but only after Ethiopian representatives had signed a document pledging to end slavery and the slave trade, and to allow the League to intervene if necessary. See Charles H. Levermore, Fourth Year Book of the League of Nations and Chronicle of Related Events (New York: The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1924), pp. 318–21, quote on pp. 320–21; F. P. Walters, A History of the League of Nations (London and other cities: Oxford University Press, 1952; reprint 1960), 258; F. S. Norledge, The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920–1946 (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1986), 99.
appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory.” Though the document did refer to respecting “the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned,” the text did not specify which peoples’ desires were to be respected, those of the colony or its controlling nation. Further, the status of a trust territory could only be changed with the consent of the state that administered that territory. In other words, colonies could only become independent under the auspices of the Trusteeship Council with the consent of the nations that held the colonies—small wonder that many anticolonial activists, particularly those in the NAACP, held the arrangement in contempt.33 The text did provide for some supervision of trust territories and their administering nations by the Trusteeship Council; the Council was to prepare a questionnaire about “the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of each trust territory.” The nation administering that territory must then report annually to the General Assembly based on the questionnaire. Still, the Charter contained no provision for direct contact between the people of a trust territory and the United Nations. Granting independence thus remained at the discretion of UN member states.34

The Federation discussion of self-determination focused, not on these crucial details of the Trusteeship Council’s role, but rather on the principles behind it. Following Sporborg’s plea for support, international Federation members from Estonia and Lithuania also spoke in favor of self-determination, particularly as it applied to countries under Soviet domination. These women presented the controversial self-determination issue in Cold War terms; by supporting the Trusteeship Council, they suggested,

---

33 For the specifics of the trusteeship system, see Kennedy, The Parliament of Man, 41–42, 331–36; and Borgwardt, A New Deal for the World, 186–91.

Federation clubwomen were actually opposing the Soviet Union’s ruthless expansionism. Not all Federation representatives were persuaded by this anticommunist argument; other concerns, such as the prospect of numerous former colonies from Africa and Asia entering the United Nations with America’s help, weighed more heavily on some women. Mrs. Abbott S. Pond of Basin, Wyoming, spoke for this group. “If we . . . support the Trusteeship system and the International Trusteeship Council, it is some more of the pious bombast of the United Nations Charter whereby we are giving a lot of people a lot of false hopes . . . .” she began. The only way the United States could successfully support self-determination of nations, according to Pond, was “to get into another one [of] the perpetual wars for perpetual peace which the United Nations involves us in.” “There is only one qualification for self-determination,” Pond declared aggressively, “and that is the readiness to fight, die and sacrifice for it, to starve for it, the same as we did. . . . If we are going to meddle in everybody else’s affairs we will lose our own freedom . . . . When these people are ready for it, they will get it in the same way that we did and in no other way.” Pond concluded by attempting to table the resolution.35

Constance Sporborg was not about to let the anti-UN crowd carry the day. As soon as Pond finished speaking, Sporborg rose and demanded that the convention vote immediately on the resolution, with no further discussion. Since no one seconded Pond’s request to table the resolution, the vote proceeded. Federation representatives supported self-determination and the UN Trusteeship Council over only a few “scattered ‘noes.’”36 One vote obviously does not make the clubwomen of the General Federation radical anticolonial protesters. The women voted, with some dissent, to support the principle of

self-determination for colonized peoples under the supposedly benevolent guidance of Western powers within the United Nations. Yet the vote does reflect their continued faith in international organizing. A majority of Federation clubwomen remained convinced that the UN offered the best opportunity to regulate a changing international situation. The dissent during this discussion is also telling, however, since it focused both on the UN’s ability to commit the United States to conflicts abroad and on the possibility that the international organization would promote the independence of peoples who had not “earned” it and who were unprepared to exercise its responsibilities. This perceived threat would grow as anticolonial movements grew internationally.

The roundtable on peace at this 1955 convention also considered the foreign affairs issues that most concerned Federation clubwomen. When Mary Pillsbury Lord, Walter Judd, and Norman Thomas finished speaking, Federation leaders opened the floor for questions. Invoking the Federation’s longstanding commitment to education, one Missouri clubwoman asked if the exchange student program had been successful “in taking the ideas of the Western World” abroad. Walter Judd answered her query by emphasizing the role women could play in foreign affairs. “[H]ere is a place where you women can just at one stroke double the value of the money that is put into this program if you . . . take these folks into your homes, so that they can get to see Americans as we live at home, not as they see us in the movie screens or in the headlines,” Judd insisted.37 Another Mississippi clubwoman asked Thomas why he was so certain the universal disarmament would be successful. “[W]hen the nations agreed to it before, we sank ships,” Mrs. B. Howarth remarked, “It wasn’t long before we had to rebuild them and it

didn’t do any good.” Though Thomas acknowledged that “we have got a ways to go,” he reiterated that the need to disarm was “overwhelming.” Thomas and Judd also treated the attentive crowd to a rare discussion of the *Brown v. Board* decision in international context. Both men agreed that the decision had done the U.S. “an enormous good . . . throughout Asia in particular” by illustrating that the U.S. could “be true to the . . . heritage that gave her birth.” Though no Federation clubwomen responded to these comments, this discussion must surely have served to connect desegregation and civil rights for black Americans to international relations for these women. The absence of a response to this discussion is as telling as the discussion itself. That Federation clubwomen remained studiously silent on an issue that would only grow in significance over the next five years reflects the profound uncertainty within their organization about how to address changing race relations, in either a national or an international context.

These three issues—education, disarmament, and race relations—would remain prominent in the foreign policy activism of clubwomen for much of the next decade. Clubwomen of all stripes had long claimed education as the realm where their actions could directly shape the American body politic, and the local women’s clubs continued to focus their foreign affairs work on community education of both children and adults. Disarmament, on the other hand, was a large scale national issue, and many women’s groups sent representatives to lobby Congress as disarmament proposals were considered. This issue in particular served to link activist clubwomen to their national governmental

---

38 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1955, Box 30, p. D154, WHRC.

representatives and also forged connections among groups and individuals on both sides of the issue. Finally, race relations, broadly conceived, shaped much of the way clubwomen viewed the United Nations as anticolonial protests expanded abroad and the civil rights movement gained steam at home. Opponents of the United Nations added unwanted civil rights agitation to the list of ways in which the UN disrupted the American state, while clubwomen who had long supported the UN had to confront its role in addressing colonialism and, eventually, their own potential discomfort with the increasing prominence of African states in the organization.

Nevertheless, for the moment the leaders of the General Federation were pleased with the effects of their nuanced international relations programs. Mrs. Norbert Klein commented, in the wake of the national convention, that the state and local chapters were doing “amazing work” toward establishing “a peaceful world.” Thirteen hundred clubs reported celebrating the United Nations, many in conjunction with other organizations. Twenty states reported that clubs paid particular attention to the forthcoming review of the United Nations Charter. Significantly, junior members of Federation clubs focused their efforts predominately on children’s education. “[T]here has been more cooperation with youth through the study of the United Nations than through any other single interest,” Mrs. Kenneth Howell, chairman of junior member programs, explained in one Federation Clubwoman update. In addition to providing literature and films on the UN to schools and offering lectures and discussions, junior Federation members, many of whom were young mothers, also used their positions in other civic organizations to promote the international awareness. “The Juniors who are Sunday School teachers, Brownie leaders, Blue Bird leaders, Den Mothers, have been teaching songs and games of other lands to
their groups, even teaching the words in the original language,” Howell proudly announced.40

As these educational programs suggest, Federation club leaders agreed with Women United’s observers that domesticity, specifically women’s traditional role as educators of children, offered an appealing way to introduce international thinking to American citizens. Federation women targeted young Americans in other ways, as well. In September 1955, Federation leadership suggested that local clubs launch “Trick or Treat for UNICEF” programs in their home communities. These programs involved local clubwomen supervising groups of children who gathered donations for UNICEF, rather than candy, during their Halloween celebrations. In addition to “channel[ing] the destructive energies of Halloween pranksters into constructive fun,” Federation leaders reminded members, UNICEF trick-or-treating collected funds to help UNICEF continue “its health-building programs for children in over 90 under-developed countries.” By directing children’s Halloween energies into UN fundraising, Federation clubs could employ the strength of American cultural traditions to support the international benevolent work of the United Nations. Predictably, the Federation’s national office developed a kit, available by mail, to help local clubs participate in this effort.41

Though Mrs. Norbert Klein’s international affairs report emphasized first and foremost the work clubwomen were doing to advance the peaceful aims of the United Nations, Klein also noted that international affairs work served two additional purposes.


First, global awareness programs promoted women activists around the country. "We find that our State Chairmen are distinguished women who are widely known to their clubs, the public and officials," Klein bragged, "Many are invited to present club programs, speak to outside groups and represent their organizations on State and City Committees." The Federation's UN education efforts launched capable women in communities around the country into civic careers. In addition, international affairs work also strengthened the General Federation's connections with other civic organizations. "Our local clubs and federations combine with other groups," explained Klein, "this giving a broader base, adding strength, and spreading knowledge in the work for peace."42 The Federation thus built a network of connections that could serve the group in all their organizing efforts. By training and promoting women as community leaders and broadening the base of support for General Federation programs, UN activism did more than educate American citizens about foreign affairs; it educated them about the organizing abilities of women, as well.

Federation representatives also continued to produce detailed reports on UN sessions, which the General Federation Clubwoman published monthly. First and foremost, these reports kept local members abreast of diplomatic news. The December 1955 report focused primarily on colonialism, which UN and Specialized Agencies Chairman V. B. Ballard identified as "a most explosive, ever-present issue in the United Nations." She explained that, while "newly independent nations are determined that the 'old colonialism' . . . shall be wiped out immediately regardless of many pertinent factors," the persistent issue of how much the UN could "intervene in the internal affairs

42 Mrs. Norbert Klein, "International Affairs Department," General Federation Clubwomen, 35 (May 1955), 44.
of a member nation" prevented the international organization from pressing forward on any anticolonial agenda. "[T]he communists," Ballard also reported, were making the most of this clash by supporting the "Asian-African bloc." Noting in particular debates about French-controlled Algeria and South African apartheid, Ballard described the heated exchanges among the delegations of various nations. She also mentioned that the clash of colonial powers with "anti-colonialists" effectively hobbled the drafting of the International Covenant on Human Rights, in part because the draft included a contentious self-determination clause. Through informative, Ballard’s report carefully avoided commenting on the most controversial implications of the anticolonial conflagration, namely its potential to promote broad African membership in the UN and its clear implications for American domestic civil rights protests. Ballard’s silence on these issues likely represented an attempt by Federation officers to avoid alienating clubwomen who might be uncomfortable with calls for black equality, domestic and foreign, while still providing them with the information they needed to sustain their clubs’ foreign affairs programs. Club leaders hoped the regular updates from their national international affairs department would make Federation clubwomen some of the best-informed members of their communities on foreign affairs issues, and that clubwomen could not only study but actively spread this information. In the process, Federation clubwomen would develop organizing skills, advertise the abilities of women as citizens, and increase their influence on civic life. Clubwomen would only be in a position to play this role if they were well informed about the UN, but they would only be willing to represent the UN if the international organization did not conflict with their own domestic politics. Responding

to this tension, Federation leaders elected to elide one of the most significant domestic resonances of United Nations debates.

This kind of political maneuvering characterized much of the Federation’s work in support of international organizing, particularly in the face of Cold War tensions abroad. As another presidential election year rolled around, Federation members considered a host of thorny foreign affairs questions. Introducing an agenda she dubbed “Aid, Trade, and Arms,” at the Federation’s April 1956 conference, international relations chairman Mrs. Norbert Klein sought to focus the Federation’s legislative lobbying efforts on these three areas. Aid referred to Eisenhower’s Mutual Security Program, for which the president had asked an additional $2 billion. Klein declared that this program would “help strengthen the free world” and urged Federation members, “get to your Congressmen to discuss the measure with him.” Trade denoted more specifically support for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and for the creation of another organization, the Organization for Trade Cooperation (OTC), to administer the world trade regulations laid out in GATT. As Klein explained to her

---

44 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 122–24, WHRC.

45 Essentially, GATT sought to encourage member nations to formulate agreements among themselves, but under the sponsorship of the UN, to reduce tariffs and other protectionist policies in order to promote international trade. The economic planning that led to the development of GATT regulations began at the July 1944 Bretton Woods conference, during which time the details of a host of other postwar economic structures, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were agreed upon by participating nations. The overarching goal of this conference was the creation of mechanisms to encourage international trade and facilitate rebuilding efforts after World War II, but trade and tariffs proved too contentious an issue to be resolved immediately. The actual terms of GATT were finalized by the UN Economic and Social Council’s preparatory committee, after a long and fractious conference lasting from April 1 to October 30, 1947. The regulations came into effect in the U.S. on January 1, 1948, after President Eisenhower consented to them under the authority given to the executive branch by the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. GATT was officially administered by the UN’s Economic and Social Council. For discussions of international trade and the creation of GATT, see Simon Reisman, “The Birth of a World Trading System: ITO and GATT,” in The Bretton Woods–GATT System: Retrospect and Prospect After Fifty Years, edited by Orin Kirshner (Armonk, N.Y., and London: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1996), 82–86; Georg Schild, Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks: American Economic and Political Postwar
audience, members of GATT had considered tariffs on roughly 58,000 items and made “a good deal of progress” toward the “orderly arrangement” of world trade. Still, representatives of the thirty-five GATT member nations met only once per year, and the meetings were frequently long and unmanageable. Accordingly, Federation members should work in support of a bill, HR-5550, which proposed the creation of the OTC. Urging her club members to “put the power of our organization and the power of yourself as an individual and a women voter in a democracy behind this bill,” Klein also noted that a petition had been placed in the international relations booth at the conference so that members could start their support by signing it.\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Arms}, meanwhile, actually alluded to world disarmament, which Klein most optimistically declared was “no longer a controversial subject.” Equivocating that “the word disarmament is a misnomer because we are not going to disarm as such,” Klein alerted the crowd of clubwomen that some type of resolution addressing disarmament was likely to appear on the Federation agenda in the coming year. “Please put some emphasis and some thought on the subject,” Klein told the women, “and understand the implications and the kind of program you yourself feel would be good for America.”\textsuperscript{47}


\textsuperscript{46} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 124–26, 136, WHRC; Klein expressed particular urgency about backing the OTC legislation “because that Bill right now is in immediate danger.” HR 5550 was “in danger” because the Democrats in control of Congress were waylaying the bill in the Rules Committee until they could be assured of sufficient support among Republicans to secure its passage. The Federation’s Legislation Committee Chairman, Mrs. A. Paul Hartz, theorized that the Congressional Democrats, having been accused of leading a “do-nothing Congress,” feared they would be blamed if the bill was defeated. She encouraged Republican Federation members in particular to press their Republican representatives to support the bill. See Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, p. 137, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{47} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 126–27, WHRC.
This lobbying agenda set the Federation's focus squarely on the UN's social work. Aid, trade, and disarmament could successfully be packaged with the Federation's longstanding interest in all UN programs administered by the Economic and Social Council. According to the economic wisdom of the day, aid and trade would benefit peoples around the world by raising their standard of living. Disarmament, too, could be billed as a step toward world peace. All of these programs fit well with the vision of the United Nations as a stabilizing force the ultimate goal of which was to end war and bring prosperity to the globe. Yet, all of these programs also faced significant opposition from American conservatives, and even from some Federation members. Conservatives felt they threatened to expand the regulatory machinery of international organizations, to cost the U.S. additional money, and to disadvantage American businesses on the world market. As such, they could hardly be divorced from American politics. Each issue required Federation members both to lobby Congress and to face opposition from fellow citizens.

To help mitigate this challenge, the lobbying agenda adhered strictly to the Eisenhower administration's foreign policies. Federation leaders continued to follow the federal line closely, enabling them to cite the president frequently as they presented what were undeniably controversial positions. Perhaps Federation leaders believed this affiliation with administration policy rendered these political stands innocuous, though for their opponents they were anything but. Perhaps, too, the Eisenhower administration successfully found a middle ground that appealed to a broad swath of Americans, and Federation leaders sought to capitalize on this achievement to reign in the group's heterogeneous membership. These pragmatic possibilities aside, it is also true that some,
perhaps most, of these women genuinely believed these policies were good for America and the world. For all of these reasons, the Federation did not adopt Women United’s strategy of downplaying the controversial politics of the United Nations entirely. Instead, they used these politics to get their members’ attention. They pressed Federation clubwomen to educate themselves, formulate opinions, and then share those opinions with their communities and their governmental representatives. No doubt, Federation leaders also attempted to suggest which opinions might be best for a responsible clubwoman to hold, but first and foremost, the focus of their international relations program was to make women pay attention to politics, both at home and abroad.

Together with their more controversial positions on world trade and disarmament, Federation delegates also maintained perennial commitments to education and child welfare. Citing the Federation’s long participation in exchange student programs as an “effective means of bring[ing] about world understanding,” one 1956 resolution pressed Congress to allocate sufficient funding; to require that exchanged students remain in their home nations for two years following their U.S. visits to more fully interpret American life for their countrymen; to encourage programs whereby the experiences of exchange students could be used “in the education, understanding and appreciation of other nations by our people;” and to create groups of congressmen, educators, and (most importantly for the Federation) community leaders to coordinate the exchange program more effectively.\footnote{Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 418–21, WHRC.} The Federation also included plans for international child welfare work on the agenda of their Community Affairs Department. Together with calls to support additional funding for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, as well as pending legislation to improve child welfare services, the department advocated
additional appropriations for UNICEF. Community Affairs chairman Mrs. Walter Magee labeled this UN effort one among several programs targeted “to help the helpless, the children and mothers.” Asking Federation members to “urge [their] Senators to approve the full appropriation of twelve million dollars” for UNICEF, Magee reminded the assembled clubwomen that they had “consistently supported UNICEF . . . through voluntary contributions and special drives.” Lobbying Congress would merely be one more effort in a long history of community work to support the program. “Through UNICEF, millions of children have been given a better chance for life in some ninety countries . . . ,” Magee declared. “The women of the General Federation believe that it is the moral obligation of the United States to join with other nations of the world in seeing to it that children of underprivileged countries . . . have more than the bare necessities of life.” Moreover, the lobbying work Magee encouraged would benefit Federation members, in addition to the mothers and children of the world. The “great persistence [of clubwomen] in following the progress of bills, and in pressing for their consideration by legislators,” only reflected well on the women involved, Magee noted in conclusion. This perseverance “successfully impressed upon the minds of the legislators . . . that [these women] know what they want and they know how to get it.” “The results are concrete,” Magee proudly asserted, “and convincing to anyone who doubts that clubwomen are fully capable of realizing legislative needs and promoting legislative action for the common good.”

That Federation clubwomen were political animals could not be doubted, either by legislators or the clubwomen themselves. Yet the organization’s handling of two prominent issues in domestic politics at this same conference reveals just how carefully

49 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 113–17, WHRC.
these women negotiated the boundaries of their political activism. One of these was the Equal Rights Amendment. The Federation’s Public Affairs Chairman, Margaret Hasebroock, introduced the topic during her presentation, apprising Federation members of their “opportunities of service to the General Federation of Women’s Clubs on a bill known as the Equal Rights Amendment.” After a brief resume of women’s political history up to that day, including references to the Seneca Falls convention and the suffrage campaign, Hasebroock reminded her audience that “it takes the adoption of three-fourths state legislatures to ratify any amendment to our Constitution” and that “such an act has to be accomplished within seven years [from] the date of which it is submitted to the States . . . .” According to Hasebroock, “the adoption and the acceptance of the Suffrage . . . gave women and men as well, the knowledge that there was an opportunity of greater acceptance for the full right, the full character, and the full recognition of services by women . . . .” This new concept of women’s role in society found expression, Hasebroock explained, in the Equal Rights Amendment. She then eagerly informed the crowd that the Amendment had just been brought out of the Judiciary Committee “without any riders or attached amendments,” and was ready to be brought to the Senate floor. “If and when that happens,” an excited Hasebroock pressed her audience, “it may entirely depend on you and the agitation that you will bring against—upon your Senators for such action.” She urged clubwomen not just to write their Congressmen, but to “buttonhole him on the street . . . .” As they had done for the OTC, Federation leaders placed a petition supporting the ERA in the public affairs booth at the conference and encouraged Federation delegates to sign. The booth also provided a list of Senators and Representatives who supported and opposed the amendment.50

50 Convention Records (Proceedings—Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 127–30, 136, WHRC.
Though the Federation had long been on the record supporting the ERA, some members remained concerned that not all women’s organizations held the same position. One delegate inquired if “some of the women’s organizations . . . are opposing this because . . . the Amendment would reduce the protections that are now provided for women in legislation?” Though Legislation Chairman Mrs. A. Paul Hartz admitted that this was so, she also assured the woman that “the great power of labor” could handle any protective legislation workers, male or female, required. She also noted that some protective labor legislation could “sometimes work as a hardship” on women, for example, “when a woman . . . could perhaps better work at night when she could have someone stay with her children than during the daytime.” In addition, Hartz reminded the delegate that “provisions in many States . . . deny women practically all control of their property.” “So while there might be a few things that we would lose by the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment,” Hartz concluded, “there are many things to be gained . . .”\textsuperscript{51} Evidently, Federation leadership felt the benefits afforded women by the ERA balanced the trouble of facing down public opposition, even from other women’s organizations.

Federation leaders treated another controversial domestic issue with more delicacy. In her presentation on pending legislation requiring Federation attention, Hartz struggled to present a particularly prickly issue in need of Federation backing: federal aid to education. “The Federal Aid to School Construction [bill] is bottled up in the Rules Committee of the House,” Hartz began, “in part because Representative [Adam Clayton] Powell of New York has announced his intention to introduce a Civil Rights Amendment.” Acknowledging that the proposal of any such legislation was likely to derail the school construction bill, which the Federation supported, Hartz reluctantly

\textsuperscript{51} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 139–40, WHRC.
concluded that “there is a growing ferment in Congress over the entire field of States’ Rights which I believe we cannot properly ignore.” She then began a subtle tap dance around issues of race and federalism that threatened to undermine the national agenda of the General Federation, and to divide the country. “I shall not allude to the Supreme Court decision of May 1954,” Hartz said, thereby alluding to it, “lest my Southern accent should lead you to feel that I have a natural prejudice in that direction.” Instead, Hartz focused on two other court decisions, one establishing federal jurisdiction over Oregon’s intrastate waterways and one striking down Pennsylvania’s state sedition conviction of an alleged Communist.52 Both decisions, and the Brown v. Board decision by implication, reflected a persistent tension between state and federal law that Hartz felt must be resolved. She then explained that the House Judiciary Committee was considering legislation that would do just that. The bill provided “that no Federal law shall be construed as superseding a State law unless the Federal law so states, and that no State law shall be superseded unless it is in direct conflict with Federal law.” Refraining from evaluating the viability and implications of such a bill, Hartz simply recommended that state Federations launch “a study of this situation.” She then moved on to other topics.53

Federal aid to education was clearly a more volatile topic than the ERA, because of its connection to racial integration and civil rights for black Americans. Though some

52 The Oregon case revolved around the decision of the Federal Power Commission to grant, over the state of Oregon’s objection, a license for a power project using nonnavigable waters on a federal reservation within the state. The Court of Appeals set aside the Commission’s grant on the grounds that Congress’s public lands law gave the state of Oregon control of nonnavigable waters within the state. The Supreme Court reversed this decision, ruling with one dissenting vote that the Commission’s grant of license was within the authority granted by the Federal Power Act. See Federal Power Commission v. Oregon et al., 349 U.S. 435 (1955); the Pennsylvania case considered whether the Federal Smith Act superseded the Pennsylvania Sedition Act, under which Steve Nelson, a member of the Communist Party, had been convicted. The Supreme Court decided, six to three, that the Smith Act did supersede Pennsylvania’s state law because the interest of the federal government precluded state intervention and the administration of state acts would hinder the operation of the federal law. See Pennsylvania v. Nelson, 350 U.S. 497 (1956).

53 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 107–8, WHRC.
Federation members may have been comfortable with all the implications of bringing federal money to southern schools, others, like Hartz, were not. As a result, Hartz attempted to advocate, without acknowledging it, a legislative solution that supported states’ rights and separated federal money from federal control. She did this by invoking the *Brown v. Board* decision while denying the invocation, highlighting instead several other Supreme Court decisions that privileged federal over state authority. The entire speech was an impressive exercise in doublespeak, necessitated by the range of opinions held by the millions of women from all geographical regions represented by the General Federation. The speech also illustrates the Federation leadership’s awareness of all the political implications of the issues at stake, both for their organization and for American society.

The Federation’s handling of the ERA and federal aid to education demonstrates the willingness of these women to make calculated political decisions based on their own interests and postwar policy agenda. When it benefited their organization, Federation leaders boldly took a partisan stand on a contentious issue. By contrast, when public controversy threatened a policy project, as well as the unity of their organization, Federation leaders proved just as able to navigate the issue without taking a position, downplaying the disputed implications of the policy (school integration) while continuing to support the policy (federal aid for schools) itself. This political savvy kept the broad base of local women’s clubs under the national umbrella and allowed Federation clubwomen to act politically without being divided by politics. Federation leaders used these tactics in supporting the foreign affairs projects that mattered to them, as well. Their flexibility frequently allowed the national organization to advocate divers UN projects
without becoming bogged down in partisan wrangling about domestic ramifications. Nonetheless, this same moderation discouraged Federation leaders from adapting to rapidly changing social conditions within the United States, particularly with reference to race relations.

The way these clubwomen handled both of these issues reveals their perspective on activism. A persistent faith in the American political system and the effectiveness of negotiation and compromise with government officials characterized both Federation campaigns; the most aggressive suggestion made in either instance was that clubwomen “buttonhole” Congressional representatives on the street. The care with which Federation representatives approached their political activism typifies the organizing efforts of all clubwomen in the years between World War II and the advent of the New Left. The discomfort exhibited by the Daughters of the American Revolution with the “political” label and Women United’s concerted effort to downplay the politics of their cause reflect the same careful weighing of the costs and benefits of overt political engagement. Though these women sought to promote women’s interests, as well as their preferred causes, in the political arena, and to encourage female participation in political activities, only certain kinds of activism were appropriate. The level of engagement depended, not only on the gravity of the issues at hand, but also on public perception of the organization and its female membership, as well as the effect the activism would have on the group’s unity.

The Federation’s response to the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 exemplified this careful negotiation in the realm of foreign affairs. At their 1956 convention, along with the ERA resolution, the Federation unanimously passed a resolution supporting the work
of the Crusade for Freedom and its subsidiary, Radio Free Europe. This organization, the resolution contended, was “in the best American tradition” and represented “the collective efforts of private citizens dedicated to keeping alive the hopes of enslaved peoples that they may regain their rights of freedom, independence, and self-government.” Secretary of State Foster Dulles had also expressed great faith in the power of Radio Free Europe to promote change in Eastern Europe, so the Federation was in prominent company. Their faith was rewarded when, in late October 1956, Hungarian students began demonstrating against the Soviet-controlled Hungarian government. As the demonstrations escalated into full-scale revolution, Radio Free Europe fed the fire, encouraging Hungarian freedom fighters and suggesting that help would be forthcoming from the United States in the event that Hungary successfully threw off the yoke of Soviet control.55

As fighting continued, the UN Security Council met in an emergency session on October 27, but succeeded only in resolving to discuss the Hungarian situation. Soviet veto power would undermine any attempt at a resolution to intervene, so none was forthcoming. After a series of political declarations and clashes with Soviet forces, on November 1, new Hungarian premier Imre Nagy finally announced Hungary’s neutrality and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. Even then, neither the United States nor the

54 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1956, Box 31, pp. 443–44, WHRC.

United Nations came to the aid of the Hungarian dissidents. Distracted by the Suez crisis and unwilling to risk war with the Soviet Union, the United States backpedaled on earlier, more assertive statements of support and indicated that the U.S. had no direct responsibility to involve itself in the Hungarian situation and that it would not be in the interests of the Hungarian people to do so. On November 2, a desperate Nagy appealed to the United Nations to recognize Hungary’s neutrality. Confident of a Soviet veto, the Security Council could not agree on a course of action. Meanwhile, on November 4, Soviet forces finally began an all-out assault, crushing the Hungarian freedom fighters. As the world watched images of Hungarians battling Soviet tanks with rocks and broomsticks, the General Assembly finally voted on a resolution asserting Hungary’s right to independence and requesting that UN observers be sent to Hungary. The vote was too little too late; the pro-Soviet regime, in control of Hungary by November 8, would not allow the UN observers access to the country.  

The Eisenhower administration was unapologetic in the wake of the Hungarian disaster; according to Dulles, the United States had no legal obligation to support the Hungarian revolutionaries. UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld evaded questions by citing claims from both Soviet and new Hungarian governments that the unrest was a domestic matter that posed no threat to any UN-sponsored endeavors. Close to 3,000 Hungarians were killed during the uprising, and 200,000 refugees, approximately 2 percent of the Hungarian population, fled the country. The UN’s High Commissioner for Refugees took charge of the international effort to aid the fleeing Hungarians, and the

---

General Assembly established a UN-Red Cross relief program to provide humanitarian help for Hungary.57

In the wake of these events, at their 1957 convention, Federation clubwomen revisited the question of Eastern Europe, but with a predictably different focus. In their international relations session, chairman of junior clubwomen, Mrs. K. Richard Breidenbach, noted that efforts to educate adults about foreign affairs had been particularly successful during the preceding year. "Interest was so greatly aroused over the Hungarian crisis," Breidenbach reported, "that more that $50,000 was raised by your Junior clubwomen." One lone Pennsylvania club collected $1,600 to support Hungarian relief efforts, she proudly added. She then moved on to describe other educational projects. Concluding her remarks, Breidenbach declared, "By working together we have stimulated and furthered the understanding and accomplishments of the United Nations."58 Thus, Federation clubwomen elected to focus exclusively on the UN-coordinated relief effort, rather than the ill-fated "American tradition" of promoting anticommunist rebellion or the failure of the United Nations to address Soviet repression in Hungary.

Yet, Federation leaders did not abandon the more political implications of the Hungarian Revolution entirely. Later in conference, Federation delegates voted in an amendment to their 1955 self-determination resolution, specifying that the Federation "strongly condemns the use of mental or physical brutality and/or coercion on the part of an occupying power against a people seeking freedom." Introducing the proposed


58 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 338–40, WHRC.
amendment, chairman of the international affairs department, Zaio Schroeder, enumerated the types of mental or physical harm that comprised an official list awaiting approval by the UN. The list included, among other actions, “[l]egal violation of human rights;” “[i]mprisonment or detention of citizens without charge or trial;” “[a]rbitrary arrests and searches of homes without warrants;” “[t]he destruction of . . . property;” and “ill treatment of innocent persons.” Honorary Vice Chairman of International Affairs, and wife of the Greek ambassador, Mrs. George Melas, went on to note that such acts had been “observed and testified in countries lying behind the Iron Curtain,” as well as “in countries occupied by friendly and allied nations, in crown colonies themselves, after people have expressed their desire to regain their independence.” Having thus alluded to Hungary and simultaneously secured the Federation’s anticolonial stance, Melas declared her support for the amendment. A majority of Federation delegates agreed with her; the amendment was approved and added to the group’s official statement on self-determination.59

When this more generic resolution is compared with the enthusiastic support given to Radio Free Europe the year before, the Federation’s careful gauging of the politics surrounding their resolutions is clear. In light of the newly-reelected Eisenhower administration’s withdrawal from the Hungarian situation, and Dulles’s disavowal of responsibility, Federation leaders would not aggressively advocate similar revolutions elsewhere. Instead, they supported innocuous UN-sponsored relief efforts, while at the same time condemning, in the abstract, Soviet actions during the rebellion. Federation leaders thereby hewed to their organizational principles (promoting world peace, human rights, self-determination, and democracy) while carefully avoiding any political fallout

59 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 432–36, WHRC.
that would result from criticizing official American policy. Though these tactics may appear weak-willed, they can perhaps be better interpreted as a manifestation of the particular kind of activism practiced by the General Federation in the postwar period, activism that was based on trust in American government and that dictated cautious, rather than confrontational, intervention in politics.

In addition to the Hungarian Revolution, the United Nations faced a number of world crises in 1956 and 1957, most prominently the global firestorm resulting from Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal. General Federation clubwomen watched these events carefully but couched much of their reaction in terms of their support for American government. Mrs. Harold Christensen, chairman of the Near East, South Asia, and Africa division of the international affairs department, lauded Secretary of State Dulles in particular, whose “patience and skill” she credited

---

60 In July 1956, Nasser seized control of the canal in part as a statement of Arab nationalism and in part to retaliate for the United States’ withdrawal of support for the construction of the Aswan High Dam, a project that would have regulated the irrigation of and electrified the Nile valley. America, with some help from Great Britain, originally intended to fund the dam as a means of increasing their influence in the Middle East, to the detriment of the Soviets, who had been shipping arms to the region. When Nasser recognized the Communist government of China, however, funding offers from the U.S., Britain, and the World Bank were withdrawn. Nasser’s forces subsequently seized the canal. The British and French governments were outraged at Nasser’s action, both because the canal was a principal shipping route for western Europe and because Nasser couched his rationale for the seizure in anticolonial language designed to inflame independence struggles in British and French colonies. The French were particularly troubled, since they were in the midst of a war in Algeria, and Nasser specifically referred to the “battle in Algeria” as a part of the Arab nationalist struggle against colonial power. The governments of Britain and France threatened military intervention if the canal was not returned to international control, and the United Nations stepped in to forestall armed conflict. After considerable wrangling, Dag Hammarskjöld nearly succeeded in negotiating a settlement among all parties, but the Soviet Union vetoed the plan when it came before the Security Council for approval. Convinced that no diplomatic solution could be found, Britain and France, with the aid of Israel, invaded Egypt and attempted to retake the canal. The United States immediately condemned the invasion, as did the General Assembly of the United Nations. On November 2, four days after the initial assault, the General Assembly passed a U.S.-sponsored resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Egypt, as well as a resolution calling for the creation of a peacekeeping force to be sent to Egypt while political solutions were devised. Primarily due to American pressure, Britain and France agreed to a ceasefire beginning on November 7. On the Suez crisis, see Kissinger, Diplomacy, 522–49; Heller, The United Nations Under Dag Hammarskjöld, 42–52; and Cohen, Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, 109–14.
with maintaining peace in the region.\textsuperscript{61} Reporting on the UN, meanwhile, Constance Sporborg noted that the crises in Egypt and Hungary had "focused attention on the United Nations," though perhaps not the right kind of attention, since she also declared the international organization to be "in a state . . . of extreme crisis."\textsuperscript{62} Nevertheless, Federation leaders maintained their support for the global body, primarily by focusing their advocacy on what they considered a consistent strength of internationalism: the aid it gave to America's image abroad. Federation leadership concentrated many of their international affairs discussions during this period on promoting world trade and economic development for underdeveloped countries. Declaring economic development "critical . . . for security," Mrs. George Melas emphasized that underdeveloped nations were at a higher risk for infiltration by Communism "on account of poverty and need." This was the most compelling reason, she argued, to support international efforts to promote trade, as well as campaigns to encourage development. Zaio Schroeder, chairman of international affairs, emphasized this same point, cautioning Federation members that they should consider the "economic development program on its own merits . . . as an instrument of foreign policy." Alluding to the forthcoming midterm elections, Schroeder also implored Federation delegates not to allow aid and trade programs to fall victim to political maneuvering. "I beg of you, regardless of your partisanship, do not permit these issues in the forthcoming political campaigns to be tossed about as political footballs," she pleaded, urging clubwomen instead to

\textsuperscript{61} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 350–52, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{62} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 355, WHRC.
"[d]iscourage it, be vocal about it, and even threaten not to vote for such a candidate."63 Yet again, Federation leaders encouraged clubwomen to engage in politics without becoming distracted by the politics of doing so; they should use their political authority as female citizens to press for nonpartisan solutions to world problems.

Foreign affairs thus became the area wherein Federation clubwomen could, and should, demand concrete political action, even when faced with conflicting opinions. Acknowledging the complexity of all the international affairs issues facing clubwomen in the coming year, Schroeder warned her delegates to expect some conflict. "When 'several' choices are equally unpleasant, . . . then you and I may expect debate on the issues," she explained, "But such situations, unpleasant as they may be, need to be debated. They cannot be evaded, and all sides of the problem must be clearly seen and a well-considered opinion reached." When it came to international issues, this was the responsibility, unpleasant though it might be, of all Federation clubwomen. "It is our duty to study and to understand these problems," Schroeder concluded, "and to exercise our collective influence in the making of our Nation's foreign policy."64

In order to help clubwomen fulfill this responsibility, the Federation concluded their 1957 international relations work with a World Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C., in mid-October. Attended by around two hundred clubwomen from around the country, the conference featured a day of briefings at the Pentagon, as well as talks by such notables as Jose Mora, Secretary General of the Organization of American States; Secretary of State Dulles; and a host of State Department spokesmen representing all

63 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 334–36, WHRC.
64 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 361, WHRC.
regions of the world. The general tenor of the talks was not optimistic. The conference fell just a week after the Soviet Union successfully launched the first man-made satellite, Sputnik, surprising the Eisenhower administration and the American public. But the women were also pressed to continue their engagement with their nation’s foreign policy. As one speaker so aptly put it, “we can’t hide under the bed.” Instead, clubwomen must continue to educate Americans, to “get rid of the apathy in the country.”

Federation clubwomen had no intention of hiding, but given the number and complexity of global problems, just where they would focus their foreign affairs activities in the coming years remained to be seen. To be sure, local clubs continued to educate their fellow citizens about international affairs. The majority of their programs focused on increasing international awareness, rather than on any particular issue facing the United Nations. Clubs entertained foreign students, teachers, and dignitaries, thereby informing themselves on other cultures and illustrating for these visitors the American way of life. Michigan clubs hosted over 5,000 foreign guests between 1956 and 1957, while Mississippi clubwomen developed “a unique program for entertaining sailors and soldiers from other countries who come into ports in the seacoast towns” and New Jersey clubs gave particular attention to Hungarian refugees being housed at Camp Kilmer, an Army post near New Brunswick. Clubwomen from around the country also spent considerable time raising money to send food and other supplies to needy countries; in addition to Hungary, Korea and Greece received particular attention. Texas clubs launched the “Heifer Project,” raising $2,500 to send cows to Korea, while sixty clubs

from several states sent “nylons” to Japan. Clubs also raised funds to bring foreign
students and scholars to the United States. Texas clubwomen provided money for three
“Oriental scholarships,” which paid for the education of one student each from Korea, the
Philippines, and Taiwan. Washington clubwomen funded an Indonesian scholar’s journey
to the United States, where he would spend a year working at the United Nations.\footnote{Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1957, Box 33, pp. 171–72, 176–77, 366–69.}
Though none of these fundraising efforts engaged directly with international politics, the
work made the world matter to local women; geopolitics was but a few short steps away.

While all this work continued at the local level, however, Federation leadership
seemed less certain about where exactly to focus the Federation’s interest in foreign
affairs. Though Federation leaders still encouraged clubwomen to work hard at
maintaining their awareness of world problems, America, rather than the UN, had
become the arbiter of what was good for the world. The United Nations, still worthy of
attention and support, became for these clubwomen a conduit for the implementation of
American global strategies. In part, this resulted from the all-consuming nature of the
Cold War, which divided the world between two superpowers. Federation women
adopted the American perspective because they would not adopt the Soviet one, and their
foreign policy platform necessarily reflected this allegiance. Yet, in addition to this
geopolitical reality, the realities and traditions of negotiating politics as middle-class
clubwomen encouraged Federation members, at least on the surface, to affiliate
themselves with government officials. Federation activists believed they could most
effectively implement their vision of a beneficent world order by negotiating within
American governmental structures. Paradoxically, then, their interest in the international
took the Federation ever deeper into American politics and policies.
The General Federation thus responded to the politics of internationalism by incorporating their commitment to national goals into their commitment to international ones. The national officers of the organization did not avoid the controversial debates surrounding such UN-related issues as disarmament and national self-determination, but they repeatedly connected their organization’s recommendations to the policies of the federal government, thereby neutralizing what some members no doubt felt were politically charged positions. Their careful negotiation of the politics surrounding the UN illustrated their political savvy, but it also took them away from pure internationalism and moored them more firmly in domestic politics. Together with the group’s national policy, clubwomen’s local activism, in the form of exchange programs and fundraising for foreign aid, focused on furthering American foreign policy goals through the United Nations, instead of promoting the UN itself. Nevertheless, the Federation’s willingness to maintain dual loyalty to the federal government and to an international organization of nations with conflicting priorities continued to make them suspect to conservative women.

In the years following the UN’s tenth anniversary, Women United for the United Nations, meanwhile, abandoned all pretense of simply “recommending” activism to their member organizations and launched directly interventionist campaigns to promote the UN in communities across the country. They sought to enact their belief that community education was the key to acceptance of the UN project by developing more accessible ways of informing average Americans about the United Nations. Yet, as they became more assertive in their UN activism, they shied away from the so-called political aspects of UN work. They downplayed controversies like the Hungarian and Suez crises in favor
of a focus on health initiatives and economic development, which they believed were less controversial projects. As the conservative women’s reaction to community-level UN work discussed in the following chapter illustrates, however, these United Nations programs were just as threatening, if not more so, to opponents of internationalism, as the international political conflicts plaguing the UN, because they represented an insidious infiltration of internationalist thinking and UN loyalty into American society.
Chapter Five
Battle of Convictions: Conservative Clubwomen and Political Alienation, 1955–1957

The battle of convictions is a never ending struggle against apathy.
We all have more influence than we take the trouble to use. Self-exertion is a powerful releasing force.

—Mary Barclay Erb

National Defense Chairman, National Society,
Daughters of the American Revolution

Following the UN’s tenth anniversary in 1955, the foreign affairs activities of liberal and conservative women’s organizations, and their foreign policy perspectives, diverged significantly. While liberal women attempted to defuse the political conflagrations surrounding internationalism, conservative women in groups like the DAR and the Minute Women hoped to stoke them. As the number of international agreements and amounts of foreign aid expanded abroad, the civil rights movement received unprecedented federal support at home. Conservative women perceived the same centralizing impulse behind these two initiatives and began to combat the two together. Though motivated by changes in foreign and domestic policy, this emerging divide between liberal and conservative clubwomen also pervaded women’s political culture during these years. Conservative women increasingly used perspectives on internationalism as the yardstick by which they judged women’s political capacity. Liberal clubwomen were marked for more aggressive educational campaigns, as conservative women sought to create the political unity they believed should exist among American women at large. Yet conservative women’s clubs faced their own set of challenges; media coverage of their efforts became increasingly negative, and politicians at the national level persistently ignored their recommendations. These trials had a radicalizing effect on both the DAR and the Minute Women, as they struggled to sustain

faith in a representative American political system that seemed, for the moment, not to represent them. In response, conservative club leaders encouraged their members to bide their time, to rededicate themselves to combating UN promotional efforts in American communities, and to use their political clout to elect Congressional representatives who shared their hostility to internationalism and all its domestic counterparts.

The Daughters of the American Revolution had long been confident that domestic politics and policies should be prioritized over UN projects. Their concern was that American officials and a disturbing number of American citizens seemed not to share this perspective. As the United Nations’ tenth year dawned, the Daughters feared that the forthcoming revision of the UN Charter would have dire consequences for American democracy. “For the past four years our monthly mailing . . . has warned our members . . . that world government is possible under the United Nations Charter,” National Defense Secretary Frances Lucas cautioned in the January 1955 issue of the DAR Magazine. “1955 is THE YEAR.” Quoting several passages attributed to the United World Federalists, Lucas concluded that “[t]he plans are being made already,” and lamented that “if the Bricker Amendment had been adopted, our Republic would be safe.” She finished by demanding of her readers, “[h]ave you written your opinion to your Senators and Congressmen?” Other Daughters shared the sense that Senator Bricker represented the best hope for turning the tide of UN encroachment on American society. Mississippi Daughter and newspaperwoman Florence Sillers Ogden wrote to Bricker himself in March 1955 that the Mississippi Daughters were “looking to you to save us from the United Nations.” “Please keep bringing it up as long as you have breath to read it,” she urged. She also noted that “women seem more aware of what is happening to our country

---

than the men.” “Go after it through the women,” Ogden advised, “We will MAKE the
men listen and do something.”

Determined that their organization’s warning would be heard, DAR President
Gertrude Carraway and National Defense Chairman Marguerite Patton testified before
the Senate Subcommittee on the UN Charter on April 25, 1955. Carraway spoke first. If
there was to be any discussion of revising the Charter, she implored the senators to retain
two crucial provisions that protected American interests: first, veto power on the Security
Council, and second, Chapter I, Article II, Section 7 of the Charter, which stated that
“[n]othing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to
intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.”
As in previous testimony by DAR representatives, Carraway assured the senators that the
Daughters were not opposed to the UN “in its original purpose as a federation of
sovereign nations seeking world peace and world understanding.” It was “the threat of
having the UN converted into a world government under which we would lose our
sovereignty and independence of action” that concerned DAR members. Marguerite
Patton echoed this theme, reminding the senators again that the world organization’s
founders had intended the UN to be “an assemblage of sovereign nations.” Unfortunately,
she continued, “[s]ome unrealistic, impractical or visionary persons are advocating the
so-called ‘strengthening’ of the United Nations by converting it into a world government
... This we strenuously oppose” “All of us are for world peace and world order,” Patton
observed, “But the way to procure them is not through forced union of diversified groups
with divergent interests and differing standards of law and justice.” Should anyone try to

3 Letter from Florence Sillers Ogden to Senator John W. Bricker, March 26, 1955, Box 2, Folder 28,
Florence Sillers Ogden Papers, Charles W. Capps, Jr., Archives and Museum, Delta State University,
Cleveland, Mississippi (hereafter cited as Ogden Papers).
enforce such an arrangement, Patton concluded ominously, “frictions and irritations, strife and war, will follow. Peace would not be promoted.”

DAR officials had the growing sense that the balance of power had shifted dangerously toward the executive branch of American government. After all, the president and his State Department administered the treaties and agreements that concerned the Daughters. Proponents of world government used this expanding authority to their advantage, DAR officials contended, by opposing protective legislation like the Bricker amendment and by “demand[ing] that the power of the executive be used to undermine the Constitution.” The Daughters’ initial confidence in Eisenhower had been eroding for some time, and his expansive policies on foreign aid and world trade did little to allay their anxiety that the president did not put America first. As Frances Lucas explained, “If American money continues to pour into foreign enterprise, American business, which must furnish its own financing, will be destroyed by those who are financed by our taxes. . . . Isn’t it time we ‘took care of our own?”

As part of their 1955 international affairs agenda, the Daughters took on the responsibility for curtailing the overreaching executive branch. In order to discourage what they dubbed “lawmaking by treaty,” the DAR delegates approved an updated version of their standard resolution supporting the Bricker Amendment at their April 1955 convention. The new version specified that, while “originally, treaties were intended to be agreements between sovereign nations concerned solely with international affairs,” circumstances had changed. “Treaties and executive agreements have been and

---

are now being drawn," the resolution declared, "which admittedly endanger American
domestic laws, override the Constitution, give Congressional powers to the
effective branch . . ., give States rights to the Federal Government or to an international
body, and cut across the Bill of Rights." The Bricker Amendment must be passed to
remedy this situation, the text concluded.\textsuperscript{7} Notably, the new resolution accused
treatymakers of more than simply superseding the Constitution and negating the Bill of
Rights; treaties also undermined states' rights and promoted Federal, as well as
international, authority. Merging domestic issues with international ones was not new for
the DAR. The Daughters had been adamant for many years that international policies
disrupted the American body politic. The explicit merging of states' rights with anti-
internationalism, however, occurred increasingly as the American civil rights movement
 gained momentum. UN treatymakers believed in executive, or federal, authority, as well
as an aggressive human rights agenda. This agenda proposed the equality of all people,
had been cited in cases like \textit{Perez v. Sharp}, and threatened America's racial order. That
treatymakers would therefore work to abrogate states' rights in the same ways as civil
rights activists seemed axiomatic to many Daughters.\textsuperscript{8}

The Daughters' also passed a more comprehensive indictment of the United
Nations at this same conference. Reiterating that the UN was originally intended as an
organization of sovereign states, the resolution suggested that the UN's "CONCEALED

\textsuperscript{7} Proceedings, 64th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (1955),
p. 139, Archive, Daughters of the American Revolution National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
(hereafter cited as DAR Archive).

\textsuperscript{8} As stated in Chapter 2, \textit{Perez v. Sharp} invalidated California's anti-miscegenation laws and allowed a
mixed-race couple to marry in that state. One concurring justice in the decision cited the UN Charter's
equal rights and human rights clauses to bolster his argument, and the case was subsequently used by
Bricker Amendment architect Frank Holman and other conservatives to demonstrate the plausibility of
domestic interference on the basis of UN treaties like the Declaration of Human Rights. For details on the
purpose” was “to destroy the sovereignty of the United States of American in order to build a WORLD GOVERNMENT without the right of secession.” Evidence for this secret agenda could be found in a variety of incidents and programs stretching back over the history of the organization. The list included the Fujii Alien Land Law case “through which the Charter of the United Nations was substituted for the laws of the State of California”; the “Steel Seizure case,” wherein one justice on the Supreme Court cited the UN Charter in claiming the president’s right to seize private property; “the propaganda of the Declaration of Human Rights,” which confused Americans about the true intent of the Covenant of Human Rights to deny them free speech, a free press, freedom of religion, and private property ownership; the Genocide Convention, which would “deprive American citizens of the right to trial by jury” and subject them to the whims of a world court; and finally, UNESCO’s campaign “to create public opinion for world government,” which was particularly aimed at “the school children of the NATION.” All of these facts pointed to only one course of action: Congress must “declare in unmistakable language the sovereignty of the United States” and demand that the UN cease interfering in “domestic affairs” of the nation.9

Though many DAR delegates supported the scathing resolution, one lone Daughter attempted to moderate the group’s position. When President Carraway asked for discussion, Mrs. Roswell Tripp of Washington, Connecticut, rose and declared that she, along with the President of the United States and “[m]any . . . loyal Daughters,”

---

believed the UN to be necessary as a forum for hashing out world problems. "Let us observe before we condemn," Tripp urged. "[T]he second is the way of Hitler." More specifically, Tripp suggested that, if the DAR administration wanted their members "to believe the rumors of concealed world federalists on the United Nations," she felt "very strongly" that the Daughters should "have an accredited observer at the United Nations who is able to prove or disprove these rumors, as most women's organizations of any importance do." She then accused the Resolutions Committee of burying a proposed resolution asking for this very thing. Though President Carraway interrupted to claim that the committee was still considering this proposed resolution, Tripp countered that she had attempted to find the committee at their scheduled meeting location the previous day to investigate and had been unable to do so. Carraway then cut her off and announced that any proposed resolutions must be sent well in advance of the conference. 10 Sadly for Tripp, the numerous "loyal Daughters" who purportedly supported the UN did not come to her aid. Instead, several Daughters spoke out for the resolution and against the idea of having an accredited UN observer. Mrs. Ernest Howard, of Clarence, Missouri, argued that the DAR need not "undignify" itself by appointing an observer. "[B]ecause if you have had a sample of observers," Howard commented, pointedly deriding the observers from numerous other women's clubs, "you know that they get up there and they become so enthused with the importance of this observing that the forget what they were sent there for." The DAR could observe the UN without an observer, Howard argued, as they

had done up to that time. In the end, the resolution passed, and Tripp’s proposed UN observer for the DAR was not mentioned again.¹¹

The remainder of the UN-related resolutions at this conference did nothing to temper the vehemence of the DAR’s opposition to international organizing. The delegates voted to repeal the Status of Forces Treaty, to oppose the admission of “Red China” to the United Nations, to discourage American religious leaders from advocating world government under the UN, and to establish a law against flying any “international flag or banner” at the same level with or higher than the American flag.¹² Marguerite Patton also noted enthusiastically, during her report on the work of the National Defense Committee, that the DAR’s national effort to devote at least five minutes at each local chapter meeting to national defense topics had borne fruit. “These five minute have . . . developed speakers who are now giving talks to other groups,” she revealed. Daughters in twenty-five states had established speaker’s bureaus for national defense. “The practice of using these members to speak and thus explain our resolutions which pertain to our country’s national defense can and will be of increasing value both to chapters and to communities,” Patton declared.¹³ Trained to educate and advocate their cause to the public at large, these expert speakers would spread the DAR policy message to a broader constituency.

Unhappily for the DAR’s anti-internationalist majority, not everyone was receptive to the DAR’s position on the United Nations, particularly not during the


international body's tenth anniversary year. The negative press directed at the DAR that had begun in the wake of the 1952 election persisted. Following the passage of the anti-UN resolution at the 1955 national convention, the coverage became so unfavorable that the National Defense Committee worried that members might be affected. Accordingly, in the August 1955 issue of the *DAR Magazine*, the committee attempted to respond.

“Because of many erroneous statements appearing in the press regarding the D.A.R. and the United Nations,” the committee members wrote, “we believe it wise to summarize for your information and reference the stands on the U.N. taken officially by the National Society, D.A.R., during the past decade.” They then laid out, year by year, every national resolution relating directly to the United Nations, highlighting the “hearty cooperation and support” for the UN expressed in 1946, as well as their continued support for the “true” purposes of the UN and their opposition to an attempt to transform it into a world government. The committee thereby encouraged DAR members to claim their history of foreign affairs activism. The Daughters were not, the committee contended, overzealous isolationists but, rather, consistent analysts of American foreign policy for the good of the country. They should be proud of their record of service and civic engagement.

But the attacks in the press continued. At the April 1956 annual meeting, national defense chairman Marguerite Patton again responded to critics of the DAR’s position on UNESCO. “Answering the charges of certain newspapers,” she began, “in my opinion there is no inconsistency in being FOR the United Nations Organization in its original concept as a group of SOVEREIGN NATIONS . . . but at the same time being AGAINST the world government teaching of UNESCO-information which has been circulated among citizens of this country especially school children . . .” Labeling
UNESCO materials “propaganda,” Patton argued that, in disseminating such material, UNESCO was “intervening in our internal affairs . . . despite the fact that such domestic interference is specifically prohibited in the United Nations Charter.” In opposing UNESCO, Patton explained, the Daughters both supported American interests and adhered to the true purposes of the United Nations.\(^{14}\)

These defenses must have seemed somewhat disingenuous in light of the DAR’s growing hostility to all aspects of the United Nations, including its Charter. In the February 1956 *DAR Magazine*, for instance, Marguerite Patton argued that the United Nations Charter had actually been patterned on the constitution of the Soviet Union. “The exact authorship of the United Nations Charter is an international mystery,” she claimed, but if the document was compared with the constitution of the USSR, the similarities were overwhelming. Most crucial was the notion, expressed in both documents, that individuals derived their rights, not from God, as the American Constitution stated, but from the government. By contrast, the Charter contained no references to American conceptions of “divine and inalienable rights.” Patton declared this absence proof of Soviet influence and a danger to American society. In addition to facilitating the infiltration of Communism, this concept of individual rights encouraged citizens to rely on the government for everything, thereby squelching individual initiative. Moreover, if rights came from the government, the government could take them away.\(^{15}\)

Later in the year, the federation’s new National Defense Chairman, Mary Barclay Erb, went one step further, equating internationalism more generally with Communism.

---


“For several years it has been unfashionable for Americans not to be ‘international-minded,’ and not to accept the dicta of the ‘internationalist’ pundits,” Erb observed. “In fact, the price of being a patriot, a ‘nationalist’ frequently was social and political ostracism.” The DAR had suffered under these circumstances. Yet, Erb suggested, if you looked more closely, internationalism was actually Communism. “No less authority than Joseph Stalin states: ‘An internationalist is he who unhesitatingly supports the U.S.S.R.,’” Erb reported, contending that the American Communist Party also linked internationalism directly to socialism and to the Soviet Union. If Communists believed that to be an internationalist was to be loyal to the USSR, how could anyone deny the tainted heritage of the concept, Erb demanded. Nevertheless, patriotic Americans like the Daughters still suffered attacks because of their “deep rooted faith in their own country.” Erb counseled DAR members to be confident in their vision for America’s relationship to the world, in spite of criticism. “We know that the opposite of internationalism is not ‘isolationism,’” she asserted, “While wanting our country to sustain friendly relations with like-minded nations, we know that nationalism and patriotism are the sound basis of sound international relations.”16 Erb thus expressed again the foundation of the Daughters’ foreign policy positions; national interest always trumped international obligation.

The Daughters elected Mary Barclay Erb as their national defense chairman at their 1956 annual convention, and she would serve as the mouthpiece for the DAR’s National Defense Committee for the next three years. Originally from Philadelphia, Erb was a concert pianist and teacher until she married, at which time she stopped working and devoted herself entirely to foreign affairs activism and anticommunism. She lectured

extensively and served as the national defense chairman of the New York chapter of Pro
America. Pro America was a right-wing women’s organization that began as a garden
club in Seattle, Washington. Officially founded in 1933 with former first lady Edith
Kermit Roosevelt as figurehead, Pro America opposed New Deal policies and
government bureaucracy, while promoting a return to family and community power. The
group had some affiliation with the Republican Party. Erb was also the editor of the
American Coalition of Patriotic Societies newsletter and spent five years as president of
the Republican Committee of One Hundred, a Republican women’s organization. She
was, in other words, a professional conservative. Like many of her counterparts, she was
a married white woman of means whose husband financed what was essentially an
unpaid career as an activist clubwoman. Erb was particularly devoted to her work. Rather
than share the responsibilities of producing the national defense bulletins for the DAR’s
monthly magazine, their Press Digest, and their news releases, as her predecessors had

---

17 On the early history of Pro-America, see June Melby Benowitz, Days of Discontent: American Women and Right-Wing Politics, 1933–1945 (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 16–18. Benowitz examines the right-wing women’s movement during the New Deal era, when she contends large numbers of women joined right-wing groups because of the combined appeal of the maternalist vision propounded by these groups, the anti-Semitic arguments they proposed to explain the misfortune of the Depression, and their anticommunism in response to the Russian Revolution and the expanding power of organized labor in the United States. Benowitz accurately highlights the prevalence of both maternalism and a belief in women’s traditional role as political reformers in these groups, and her broader contention that their popularity was based on opposition to both the New Deal and broader social change in America is also persuasive. Benowitz incorrectly argues that these impulses declined after World War II, however, and states that there was “no direct connection” between these earlier right-wing women and postwar female conservatism. I would suggest that the persistence of all of these views in the postwar period, as well as the continued involvement of activists like Erb and Minute Woman Lucille Cardin Crain (who also appears in Benowitz’s book) undermines this argument; later in her activist career, Erb focused more exclusively on immigration. She published two anti-immigration books, Invasion Alert: Rising Tides of Aliens in Our Midst in 1965 and While America Sleeps, Foundations Crumble in 1966. For biographical information on Erb, see Mary Barclay Erb, Invasion Alert: Rising Tides of Aliens in Our Midst (Washington, D.C.: Goetz Company Press, 1965), back cover; and While America Sleeps, Foundations Crumble (Washington, D.C.: Goetz Company Press, 1966), back cover.
done, Erb wrote everything herself.\textsuperscript{18} Strongly nativist and anticommunist, Erb would
guide the Daughters' foreign policy platform on the United Nations through one of its
most momentous shifts.

In addition to electing Erb, the delegates at the Daughters' 1956 convention
reaffirmed their belief that women had a particular role to play in postwar politics.
Because "statistics show that more than one-half of the United States citizens of voting
age are women," DAR delegates passed a resolution indicating that there existed "a
greater responsibility upon the women as voters." The resolution encouraged all DAR
members "to assume their civic responsibility to register and vote in all elections;"
thereby ensuring "the election of good candidates to public office."\textsuperscript{19} If all eligible
women voted, they could successfully dominate American politics, the text suggested,
and, further, if DAR members voted, they would necessarily elect quality candidates. As
this resolution reveals, DAR leadership regularly invoked a nineteenth-century
understanding of women as a benevolent political force. These women believed that they,
as both women and educated citizens, were doubly responsible for guiding American
politics. This belief drove the Daughters' involvement in both foreign and domestic
political campaigns and justified the taking of obviously controversial political stands by
a group that regularly displayed discomfort with being \textit{political}. If their efforts against
rampant internationalism were based on fact and led by informed and engaged women
(like Mary Erb) in communities across the country, DAR leaders were confident that

\textsuperscript{18} Erb proudly announced this fact at the Daughters' 1957 national conference. See \textit{Proceedings, 66\textsuperscript{th} Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution} (1957), p. 323, DAR Archive.

American citizens would perceive the truth eventually. Not unlike Women United's faith in their pro-UN educational programs, this faith both motivated the Daughters and caused them to underestimate their opponents. They simply believed if they argued loud and long, a majority of Americans, and particularly female Americans, would rally to their cause.

To that end, the Daughters compiled a comprehensive catalog of internationalist threats to American life. Delegates to the Daughters' 1956 convention adopted standard resolutions supporting the Bricker Amendment, opposing any attempt to transform the UN into a world government, opposing UNESCO, opposing interference in domestic affairs by Specialized Agencies of the UN, opposing the Status of Forces Treaty, and opposing the admission of "Red China" to the United Nations. Little dissent appears in the record from this convention; one lone delegate stood and voted against the UNESCO and Specialized Agencies resolutions, and some opposition is suggested in the record for the general United Nations resolution. Nonetheless, no vocal debate occurred, and the Daughters carried forward their oppositional stance toward the UN in spite of public criticism. 20 After the convention, newer targets joined the list, including the World Health Organization (WHO). In her last message as national defense chairman, Marguerite Patton labeled the WHO a special threat because the UN subsidiary "does not need to use treaties to have its schemes become law." Instead of informing Congress of new health regulations, the WHO liaised directly with the U.S. Public Health Service, which could, in turn, force unwanted vaccinations or other medical care on American citizens. This meant, according to Patton, that "the international law of the World Health Organization"

---

took precedence over the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Much to Women United's amusement, UNICEF greeting cards also appeared on the list of malefactors, for failing to recognize the birth of Christ as the most important aspect of the Christmas season.

Yet formulating a list of enemies was not enough. As a new year dawned, Mary Barclay Erb synthesized all of these positions into a concise attack on the United Nation and a reformulated call to action for DAR members. In the January 1957 edition of DAR Magazine, Erb laid out her foreign policy vision. She prompted Daughters to remember, as they counted freedom and economic opportunity among their blessings in the new year, that these very things were "under attack from outside forces and from our own misguided citizens." In response, Erb argued, Daughters must "start living our convictions openly, if necessary, belligerently." Emphasizing the connection between foreign policy and domestic life, Erb argued that "[t]here is no community in this country, no matter how far it may be removed from Washington, that is not beset by constant efforts to alter our way of life to the detriment of our own people and to the benefit of other nations." UN treaties, of course, were the instrument used to make these alterations, while UN educational programs promoted "foreign thinking" in order to make Americans more receptive to the transformation. Aside from countering these efforts with education campaigns of their own, however, what was it that DAR members could do to confront this danger? Erb had a concrete suggestion. Referring to a

---


recommendation made at a recent DAR state conference that America withdraw from the UN if Communist China was admitted, Erb indicated that the Daughters might consider broadening this plan. “We should analyze the true objectives of this sovereign body,” Erb recommended, “and try to determine what would be the inevitable results to our future as free people if we remain in it, and what would be the results of we left it.” Essentially, Erb said, the Daughters should consider, for the first time, recommending unconditional withdrawal from the UN.\textsuperscript{24}

So as not to commit to any rash position, Erb went on to “assess accurately the significance of our membership in the United Nations” by examining the organization’s origins. Though Franklin Roosevelt purportedly claimed the idea as his own, Erb explained, in actuality “the idea originated with Stalin.” And in spite of all the high-minded rhetoric about world peace, “the United Nations has proven itself to be simply the framework on which hang the treaties and conventions destined to destroy our sovereignty by means of world government.” The actual effects of U.S. membership in the United Nations could be seen in the “humiliating” Korean defeat, while the international organization’s failure to administer world problems necessitated “the formation of regional pacts such as NATO, SEATO, and the Baghdad Treaty.” As for the consequences of withdrawal, Erb argued, “the only casualty would be the death of a few naïve and unrealistic ideals held by starry-eyed people in the face of unassailable facts.” Benefits, on the other hand, would include “saving our self-respect, our prestige as a world power, and enormous sums of money.” Leaving the UN would not force America into isolation, Erb contended. The U.S. would merely “return to the traditional processes of diplomacy,” which involved direct negotiations with individual nations and “ad hoc

\textsuperscript{24} Mary Barclay Erb, “Shall We Withdraw?” \textit{DAR Magazine}, 91 (January 1957), 31.
international conferences as needed.” Countering those who argued that the UN was the best way to control the expansion of Soviet Communism, Erb concluded by invoking her own version of containment theory. “The first step toward resisting [Soviet] expansion and helping others to save themselves, is to leave the United Nations to Russia who conceived and created it for her own evil purposes.”

At long last, then, the DAR’s National Defense Chairman recommended American withdrawal from the United Nations. Gone from the remainder of Erb’s 1957 columns was any pretense of supporting any version of UN diplomacy. Instead, the United Nations became the source of all disorder in the world outside America’s borders, as well as the inspiration for domestic social upheaval. The world events of 1956, and particularly the Hungarian and Suez crises, merely proved the incapacity of the UN as global arbiter. Invoking the Hungarian tragedy, Erb demanded, “[w]hat did we think we were doing when we signed this Declaration of Human Rights and still permitted Russia to remain in the United Nations?” “Many of us hoped that Hungary’s experience would awaken our misguided devotees of socialism to the evident facts of its tyranny,” she continued, “but their silence is as complete as that of the murdered Hungarian students . . .” The Suez crisis, on the other hand, resulted from more direct mismanagement on the part of the United Nations. “All of the United Nations decisions have built up Nasser’s temporary power and prestige,” Erb contended, thereby making him impossible to control and the Suez canal issue impossible to resolve. More specifically, Erb condemned the “Nationalization of Property without Compensation” resolution, which the UN passed in 1952. This resolution, according to Erb, “enabled Nasser to seize the property of the Suez Canal Company . . . and destroys all hope of American investments in foreign countries.”

The problems of the Middle East as a region, moreover, were only exacerbated by the UN resolution that "sanctioned the creation of the State of Israel, founded on the territory of 270,000 Arabs who are still homeless refugees" and who would "never be content until their home are restored or compensated for . . . ." The Middle East, Erb concluded, could "never be stabilized or made prosperous until these two United Nations resolutions have been revoked and their evil results wiped out."\(^{26}\)

The merging of American foreign policy with United Nations programs created yet another layer of problems. Discussing the proposed Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED), Mary Erb declared the program "not sound or valid." "Every nation would like to raise its living standards," she commented. "Handouts are not the answer." Yet, the federal government continued to invest money in foreign aid programs, without even making funds contingent on the recipient renouncing the Soviet Union. This practice ensured that American foreign aid "merely subsidizes the socialistic elements in the recipient nations." "The taxpayers are told that if these sums are administered through the United Nations they will in some mysterious way become sanctified and therefore more effective . . . ." Erb reported acidly. In reality, Erb asserted, if the UN administered the programs, the situation would only worsen, because Americans would have no say about which nations would receive their dollars. President Eisenhower's request that the U.S. join the International Trade Organization, meanwhile, would mean simultaneously abdicating all control over foreign trade. Proposals for international control of atomic energy seemed even more absurd to Erb. By signing the International Atomic Energy treaty, Erb insisted, the U.S. "lost a tremendous economic

advantage and considerable sovereignty over [a] crucially important industrial power of
the future.”

In the domestic realm, meanwhile, Erb argued that Americans had “permitted so
much socialistic propaganda to color our domestic policies that our people are divided
between American principles and promises of expediency.” “Much of this infiltration into
our national thought is due to the United Nations,” Erb alleged. Lamenting the resulting
disorder in American society, Erb contended that it prevented America from playing an
appropriate leadership role in global politics. “At this crucial moment, when the world is
looking to us for a solution,” she complained, “we are divided as a nation into two
camps.” The concept of the individual was the crucial point of contention; some
Americans valued the individual as the basis of society, while others discounted his
importance in favor of a collectivist vision. Collectivists advocated “centralized power,”
supported the United Nations, and sought “to appease Russian military power.” And this,
for Erb, was the point where the domestic and foreign policies connected. “Every time we
permit states rights to be defied, and the worth of the individual ignored, we have taken
one step nearer to a collectivist society,” Erb declared, thereby tying the anti-integration
position concretely to opposing the UN and internationalism generally.

27 Mary Barclay Erb, “SUNFED,” DAR Magazine, 91 (March 1957), 302–4; Erb, “Straying from the
Constitution,” DAR Magazine, 91 (May 1957), 629–31; SUNFED was intended to finance large
development projects, such as surveys of available resources and training programs, in underdeveloped
countries, with an eye toward encouraging investment from both foreign and domestic sources. Dag
Hammarskjöld fought hard to promote SUNFED during his tenure as UN Secretary-General, as did
numerous Third World nations, but so many countries needed such assistance that funding was never
sufficient. On SUNFED, see Heller, The United Nations Under Dag Hammarskjöld, 103–5; “Economic
and Financial Questions,” International Organization, 9 (February 1955), 93–96; and “General Assembly,”

Spiritual Values,” DAR Magazine, 91 (February 1957), 155–57, 263.
This reference to states' rights was not accidental. The DAR's growing hostility
to the federal government's support for the United Nations paralleled the emergence of
civil rights initiatives within the Eisenhower administration. Though Eisenhower himself
remained largely silent on civil rights before 1957, his attorney general introduced a
broad-ranging civil rights bill in 1956 that would be under consideration by the
legislature for much of the next year. Though southern senators weakened the bill that
emerged as the Civil Rights Act of 1957 considerably, this bill was also the first federal
civil rights legislation in eighty years. As such, federal willingness to intervene in matters
of racial discrimination in southern states was on the minds of many white conservatives.
In combination with the continuing bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, and other
local civil rights initiatives, even nominal support of black equality by the executive and
legislative branches prompted disquiet among supporters of the racial status quo. White
segregationists more broadly responded with such public declarations of solidarity as the
Southern Manifesto of 1956, officially dubbed the Declaration of Constitutional
Principles, in which a majority of southern senators and representatives in Congress
condemned the Brown decision as an "abuse of judicial power" that infringed on states'
rights. Yet conservative clubwomen went further; they readily incorporated their critique
of civil rights initiatives into their larger critique of collectivism and internationalism.
The Brown decision and its aftermath were part of a larger threatening trend.29

---
In response, Erb maintained that the DAR had a role to play. “The answers for tomorrow will be given by brave individuals and not by organizations dedicated to collectivism in any form,” she asserted. The Daughters would be the vanguard of these brave individuals. “We of the D.A.R. have the grave responsibility . . . to help lead our nation back to the ways of self-respect and to the spiritual worth of the human being,” she contended. Aside from advocating American withdrawal from the United Nations, Erb suggested that the Daughters focus their activism closer to home. “In our day, perhaps the greatest offender is the Federal government,” Erb reasoned, “which is committing us, with the use of taxpayers’ money, to membership in international organizations whose authority is the greatest threat of all to our national sovereignty.” More specifically, the executive branch had expanded its authority far beyond what the checks-and-balances system intended. “By usurpation, and largely via treaties and executive agreements, the Executive has encroached on the legislative power and caused . . . international compacts not only to be the ‘law of the land,’ but to . . . [override] the Constitution,” Erb protested.30

The Bricker Amendment was intended to address this issue, but the Daughters could also counter this power imbalance by more actively supporting the legislative branch of government. Congress, Erb reminded DAR members, was “our public servant and our direct representative in Washington.” It could “be made to be what we wish it to be,” Erb argued. More specifically, Daughters should focus on electing members of the House who supported their positions. “The House of Representatives has four times as many members as the Senate and is elected every two years,” Erb pointed out. “We

---

should insist that the Lower House take a more active part in our legislative program, because they are more directly answerable to the public.”

Accordingly, along with their usual gaggle of anti-UN resolutions, DAR delegates to the group’s 1957 conference passed a resolution condemning the “Usurpation of Constitutional Powers.” The resolution demanded that Congress pass legislation that would “restore [the] balance of power” by limiting the executive branch “to its original specifically designated powers” and limiting the judicial branch “to its sole function as an appellate court.”

Here the merger of the Daughters’ anti-UN position with a states’ rights perspective is even more evident. By limiting the executive branch and the courts, the Daughters would prevent executive treatymaking and support for civil rights reform, as well as what they believed to be the judicial overreaching of decisions like Brown. Their dedication to this position was reinforced several months later when Eisenhower dispatched federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce the integration of public schools there.

As 1957 came to a close, Mary Barclay Erb had forged a new foreign affairs agenda for the Daughters of the American Revolution. While they maintained their foreign policy educational campaigns at the community level, the Daughters now intended to try more actively to reshape American government by restoring what they


33 Ironically, while conservatives in the DAR were worrying about the effect of internationalism on America’s domestic policies, the Eisenhower administration was worrying about the effect of domestic policies (and Americans’ defiance of them) on the international community. Recent works by scholars of race and foreign affairs have demonstrated both the profound effect the racial order in the American South had on America’s image abroad and the concerns the Eisenhower administration expressed about this very issue. On the Little Rock crisis of 1957 and international response to it, see Mary Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 115–51; Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line, 99–110; and Chafe, Unfinished Journey, 157–59.
perceived to be the traditional balance of power and encouraging withdrawal from the UN. These efforts would counter the collectivist trends threatening American democracy and restore individualism to its rightful place at the center of American political theory. They would also, Erb argued, stabilize domestic social conditions, which many DAR members found increasingly worrisome. Eisenhower’s continued investment in international organizing, along with his emerging support of racial change, had effectively destroyed any trust the DAR leadership had in presidential power and driven them into the arms of Congress. This alienation contrasts directly with the General Federation’s expanding investment in the policies of the executive branch and reflects a growing sense on the part of conservatives that American society was adrift from its founding principles. The Daughters’ opposition to the United Nations had finally reached its culmination and had taken them down a new political path, where a profound distrust of all centralized power, federal and international, paired nicely with a states rights agenda made increasingly resonant by domestic civil rights campaigns.

That the Minute Women of the U.S.A. shared the Daughters’ perspective on the socialistic drift in American society should not be surprising, since the two organizations had overlapping membership and participated in the same conservative networks. Suggesting the emergence of a postwar network of conservative women, Minute Women addressed local DAR chapters on occasion, and the Minute Women’s national newsletter printed articles written by DAR officers. While she was serving both as the Daughters’ National Defense Chairman and as the chairman of the Republican Committee of One Hundred, for example, Mary Barclay Erb had at least one piece published in the Minute
Women's newsletter. Yet the Minute Women had long held more extreme views on the danger posed by the United Nations; they had never supported any part of the UN project, and the Korean conflict placed the UN firmly on their list of threats to the American state.

Therefore, when the international organization's tenth anniversary arrived, the Minute Women celebrated in their own fashion. In April 1955, just two months before the UN's anniversary meeting, former national chairman Suzanne Stevenson, along with Mississippi Minute Woman and Summit Sun newspaper editor Mary Cain, represented the Minute Women at the fifth annual conference of the vociferously anti-UN Congress of Freedom. The meeting was held, pointedly, in San Francisco at the Veterans' Memorial Building where, ten years earlier, the United Nations Charter had been signed. Attending the event were representatives of numerous right-wing organizations, a majority of whom were women. The purpose of the gathering, according to Congress executive director Robert LeFevre, was to "take on the U.N., with no holds barred."

Events included numerous speeches, along with ten symposiums on the record of various UN programs over the organization's ten-year history. Stevenson gave an address, while Cain led the symposium on the economic aspects of the UN. Delegates to the meeting...

---

concluded, unsurprisingly, by recommending that the United States withdraw immediately from the United Nations.\textsuperscript{35}

Given the anniversary celebrations proceeding around the country, withdrawal was unlikely. Nevertheless, in the Minute Women’s June/July 1955 newsletter, editor Edith Hooker derided the celebratory gathering in San Francisco. “The UN group, in tenth anniversary assembled, is putting forth the old smoke screen of Peace,” she scoffed, “But it doesn’t even \textit{look} like Peace this time, much less sound like it.”\textsuperscript{36} The national newsletter also reported on one United States Day celebration in Cincinnati, Ohio. According to the piece, an assertive Cincinnati native, Mrs. Hamill, was “determined to do something about promoting . . . United States Day to offset the grandiose celebrations that were being planned in honor of United Nations week.” Enlisting the support of the American Legion, Hamill convinced the mayor to proclaim October 21 United States Day in Cincinnati. Mirroring Women United’s efforts to coordinate tenth anniversary celebrations, Hamill then formed a committee of representatives from more than thirty local civic groups, and a luncheon was planned. The event was “a sell-out,” according to one local paper. Minute Women leadership found the tale inspiring. “Such a unified community plan . . . should offer much suggestion for future action,” an article in the November newsletter noted, congratulating Mrs. Hamill on her “fine achievement.”\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{36} Edith P. Hooker, “Dear Minute Women;” \textit{Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.} (June-July 1955), 1–2, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.

Minute Women valued this kind of successful community activism, and as the
election year neared, many women in the organization geared their community efforts to
the political contest. Houston Minute Women hyperbolically labeled 1956 “the most
fateful year in our national history.” The election would determine if “the sovereign
independence of the United States [would] be preserved,” and the most important figure
in making that determination would be the president. Eisenhower, of course, was up for
reelection, and the Houston Minute Women expressed their distrust of his record, both at
home and abroad. “If the object is to preserve [national sovereignty],” the newsletter
demanded, “why does our incumbent president advocate more and more Marxist-
Socialist intervention by the federal government into the affairs of the states—in
education, road building, medicine, insurance; and more and more billions to be
squinaded abroad while the national debt climbs ever upward toward Lenin’s goal of
spending us to destruction?” This pairing of states’ rights rhetoric with anti-
internationalism reflects the particular regional interests of the Houston chapter, to be
sure, but it also suggests the parallels that many conservatives perceived between
internationalism and domestic faith in big government. Both relied on centralized power
to regulate local affairs; both derived from so-called “collectivist” principles. Houston
Minute Women hoped these questions would be “debated in the approaching
congressional and presidential primaries, from one end of the country to the other—as it
should be.” Yet they had no faith that politicians themselves would launch the debate.
“The answer lies with you,” their newsletter enjoined the Houston women, “They will if
you, as a citizen, live up to your responsibilities and privileges and demand that they do.”
Houston Minute Women must do their part to force the conversation into the political contest.\textsuperscript{38}

National Chairman Dorothy Frankston echoed this local call in the group’s national newsletter, instructing her membership in February to “start questioning the candidates filing for office” at all levels of government, “Local, State, and National.” Frankston urged the Minute Women to use the power of the ballot box to press their agenda forward. Minute Women must impress upon candidates that they would only vote for those who did not equivocate in their positions on important issues. “Let them know true Americans are tired of these election time ‘pig in the poke’ affairs where all too frequently the voter is confronted with a ‘worse of two evils’ rather than a real pride choice,” Frankston counseled. Issues such as the Bricker Amendment were significant, according to Frankston, but the real key was to “put men who believe in our Constitution and Bill of Rights in Congress.” Neither party could be relied upon, Frankston contended, so Minute Women must “[k]now the voting records of candidates seeking re-election.” Most important, Minute Women should recognize their political influence. “Remember women can control the vote since they are in the majority,” Frankston prompted. And the stakes were higher for women, as well, Frankston suggested. “Who pays the biggest price under socialistic rule?” she rhetorically asked her readers, answering without hesitation, “Women.”\textsuperscript{39}


Some Minute Women needed no urging to get into politics; Suzanne Stevenson received the endorsement of an independent Republican group in Connecticut in her run for the Senate, beating out her old rival and former Minute Woman Vivian Kellems.\textsuperscript{40} Dorothy Frankston felt that others might need a push, particularly in the face of public criticism. Therefore, Frankston appealed to her female constituency not just as citizens but as women. Noting that predictions suggested that the 1956 election would be “the first time in the 36 years they have had the right to vote [that] the women will lead in the voting,” Frankston encouraged women to ignore anyone who might downplay their political credentials. “We are told we are unpredictable,” she commented acerbically. “The pollsters as well as the politicians may have a surprise in store when the women take advantage of their strength.” Frankston’s appeal suggested, of course, that women would vote as a bloc, and that the bloc would side with the Minute Women. Though this presumption was clearly false, Frankston hoped a sense of female solidarity would encourage larger numbers of Minute Women to go to the polls.\textsuperscript{41}

Minute Women had little faith that any presidential candidate would serve their interests once in office. Executive power had already run amok, and Minute Women wanted instead to install congressional representatives who would restore balance. As Mary Barclay Erb would later suggest to the DAR, Dorothy Frankston told the Minute Women that only “Congress has the power to change the advances toward one Worldism and restore full sovereignty to the United States.” “PUT NONE BUT CONSTITUTIONALISTS ON GUARD IN CONGRESS,” she promised her


\textsuperscript{41} Dorothy Frankston, “Dear Minute Women:” \textit{Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.} (July-August 1956), 1, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.
membership, "and concern over the other two branches will be greatly minimized."42
Local chapters interpreted this call through the prism of their own political interests. With
the Montgomery bus boycott continuing in Alabama and school integration in contention
in many southern states, the civil rights movement was at the forefront of southern
conservative minds. Accordingly, the Houston Minute Women paired their opposition to
internationalism with an aggressive states’ rights agenda that indicted the Supreme Court,
and particularly the "socialists and communist-fronters" who the Houston women
believed had aided the Court in deciding Brown v. Board. In the chapter’s June
newsletter, Houston chairman Virginia Biggers prominently placed a quote from
Clarence Manion, Notre Dame law professor and conservative activist, that explained the
connection between the two. According to Manion, “long ago, the International Socialists
marked the doctrine of States’ Rights for destruction, because . . . this unique freedom-
formula is a complete barricade against the subjugation of our country by Socialism,
Communism and/or World Government.”43

Yet, as campaigning wore on, Minute Women everywhere became frustrated that
neither party seemed attentive to their wishes. In the wake of the Democratic and
Republican conventions, which Minute Women felt featured candidates with “practically
the same platforms,” Dorothy Frankston even went so far as to declare the National
States’ Rights Conference the most representative convention for “all who believe in the
American concept of the right of minority groups to be heard.” There were differences

42 Dorothy Frankston, “Dear Minute Women:” Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (July-August 1956), 1,
Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.

(July 1956), 1, Reel 77, M53, “Minute Women of the United States of America, Los Angeles, The Minute
Women of the United States of America, Inc., California State Division,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.
between the policies of the Eisenhower/Nixon ticket and the Stevenson/Kefauver ticket—Stevenson, for instance, had recommending rescinding the draft and banning nuclear tests—but neither pair of candidates would espouse the more extreme policies of the Minute Women's domestic or international programs. As the Hungarian and Suez crises raged, the country prepared to go to the polls. Certainly these two events must have confirmed the hostility of Minute Women (as well as that of the DAR, and many conservatives) to internationalism, in light of the UN's handling of both situations. Still, in the end, one of the two slates of candidates had to win. Eisenhower emerged victorious, by an enormous 10,000,000-vote margin.44

In addition to the election, the Minute Women spent much of 1956 preoccupied with a piece of legislation then pending in Congress. H.R. 6376, popularly known as the Alaska Mental Health Bill, was intended to give the territory of Alaska control of the mental health care of patients from that territory. Though the bill appeared harmless to its drafters, the Minute Women focused a great deal of attention on this seemingly innocuous piece of domestic legislation. They felt threatened by the bill in part because of domestic hostility to conservatism, but their hostility to the UN also fueled their interest. The awkward attempts by Minute Women leadership to connect this domestic statute to international organizing illustrates both the extent to which these women blamed the United Nations for domestic social conflict, and the level of desperation they had reached in attempting to substantiate their indictment of the international organization.

The bill originally came to the attention of California Minute Women in December 1955. Led by their bulletin editor Gene Birkeland, the California Minute Women had been working with a network of conservative women in southern California to investigate several community mental health initiatives. Their interest in these initiatives derived largely from the way some mental health professionals defined mental disease. As Michelle Nickerson has argued, conservatives had come to believe that academics, social scientists, and other mental health “experts” invested their definitions of mental illness with political value judgments. Such experts, many right-wing conservatives argued, encouraged the use of mental health legislation to compel Americans, and particularly American children, to adopt liberal or progressive political beliefs. Simultaneously, these experts questioned the sanity of individuals who held more conservative views. There was undeniable truth to these accusations. Richard Hofstadter’s 1955 piece, “The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt,” is perhaps the best-known piece of academic scholarship in this vein, but the mainstream media also taunted the Minute Women and the DAR by questioning the sanity of their “extreme nationalism.” Thus, mental health legislation, and the theories behind it, had particular resonance for conservatives during this period.45

Yet the Minute Women’s opposition to community health campaigns, and to the Alaska Mental Health Bill, was also connected to their hostility to internationalism and to the UN. Like the DAR, the Minute Women had been suspicious of UN-sponsored health initiatives in general for some time. The June/July 1955 national newsletter featured a

story about WHO director Brock Chisolm’s promotion of birth control. According to an article cited in the newsletter, Chisolm had helped to form an International Planned Parenthood initiative with fourteen nations, “to spread the gospel of birth control.” The newsletter then reminded Minute Women that the United States provided a substantial portion of the WHO’s budget. “FOR THIS?” the piece demanded incredulously.\textsuperscript{46}

Concern with \textit{mental} health in particular was built into the WHO’s Charter, which defined health as a state of “complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Given that the stated purpose of the WHO was to help all peoples attain the highest possible level of health, Minute Women leaders feared that the organization would be all too willing to intervene in matters of mental, as well as physical, well-being. Too, UNESCO’s penchant for fostering “world-mindedness” encouraged Minute Women to see in internationalism an inclination to tinker with the minds of American citizens. Indeed, it was anti-UNESCO work that originally attracted the California Minute Women to mobilize against community health measures.\textsuperscript{47}

So, in January 1956, after almost a year of working on various community-level mental health issues, Gene Birkeland attacked the Alaska Mental Health Bill in an article titled “Now—Siberia, USA,” which appeared in the \textit{Santa Ana Register}. Birkeland contended in the article that provisions in the law would allow any state to send any individual deemed to be mentally ill by anyone to Alaska, where that person would be

\textsuperscript{46} “Is This World Health?” \textit{Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.} (June-July 1955), 3, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.

forcibly committed. Her claims were based primarily on two portions of the bill: section 119, which, among other provisions, allowed the governor of Alaska to arrange for “the care and treatment of the mentally ill residents” of any of the 48 states and any U.S.-controlled territories; and the commitment procedures listed in the bill, which offered the option of having an individual committed by various third parties, including policemen, welfare officers, and other “interested individual[s].”\(^{48}\)

Feeding on conservative suspicion of mental health expertise and federal authority, the article was immediately circulated throughout national conservative networks. The February issue of the Houston Minute Women’s newsletter mentioned the piece and provided Houston chapter members with an overview of the argument.\(^{49}\)

Writing to her chapter chairman that same month, Dorothy Frankston noted that she had never “had as much mail about a Bill as is coming on the Alaska Mental Health one.” In March, Frankston cited the bill in her list of important pending legislation in the Minute Women’s national newsletter. She provided an analysis of the bill, which she encouraged Minute Women to “[r]ead and study” before writing their senators. In addition to laying out Birkeland’s case against the legislation, this analysis also attempted to connect the Alaska Mental Health bill directly to several subsidiaries of the United Nations. “The terms of this bill are substantially in accordance with moral legislation drafted by the old Federal Security Agency and a survey committee of July 1949, which was headed by Dr. Winfred Overholser,” the piece reported. In case the name was unfamiliar, readers were


informed that "Dr. Overholser is a member of the World Federation for Mental Health," which in turn was "an official consultative agency of UNESCO, WHO, and UNCEF [sic]."  

This attempt to connect the Alaska Mental Health Bill to the United Nations was somewhat bungling, but it was not the last time the Minute Women newsletter would try to associate the two. Readers were pointedly reminded in a later discussion of the bill that Richard Hofstadter had included "the most ardent supporters of the Bricker Amendment" in his list of pseudo-conservatives who were "more than ordinarily incoherent about politics." The article also noted that another pamphlet, published by the American Friends Service Committee in 1952, had labeled fear of the UN and UNESCO a "typical paranoid delusion." Therefore, this mental health legislation was not only in the spirit of WHO intervention and patterned on proposals made by a member of a UN subsidiary organization but could be used against American citizens who were deemed insane by Hofstadter and other experts for their opposition to UN treatymaking.  

The Minute Women were by no means entirely opposed to domestic legislation relating to the mentally ill; they even proposed revisions to the Alaska Mental Health act that would make it less objectionable, and in the end, this is exactly what happened. The bill was revised at the suggestion of Arizona senator Barry Goldwater and passed unanimously. Even in the wake of the controversy, however, Minute Women continued

---


to accuse the UN and its subsidiaries of manipulating mental health regulations to promote world government. What is significant about this moment, then, is both the furor it elicited and the willingness of Minute Women leaders to engage in an aggressive campaign to associate the United Nations with an apparently unrelated piece of domestic law. The Minute Women felt embattled for their stance on the United Nations in the late 1950s, and this may have encouraged the conspiratorial connections they attempted to forge. Michele Nickerson has argued that conspiracy theories were particularly powerful among Cold War–era conservatives, because these theories helped conservatives explain ever more remote power relationships. The United Nations, the federal government’s relationship with it, and the support it received in American society was one such set of relationships. Incomprehensible to the members of the Minute Women, these relationships continued to dominate the foreign policy of the United States, simultaneously undermining and belittling the foreign affairs activism of the Minute Women. Viewed in this light, their momentary fixation on domestic mental health legislation as an agent of internationalism can be viewed as a symptom of the same frustration they expressed during the 1956 election. These women felt increasingly isolated from the American polity, underrepresented by their supposedly representative government. At the same time, they retained their faith in the American political process and in political activism. The tension between these two perspectives contributed to the unexpected attention given Alaskan psychiatric policy.

Some small good came to the Minute Women from the 1956 political contest. Their February 1957 newsletter proudly reported the election of Minute Woman Jessica

---

Payne, from Huntington, West Virginia, to the state legislature and congratulated her for, as she put it, breaking "the man barrier." This victory aside, much of the news was bad. On the heels of his reelection, Eisenhower petitioned Congress to approve his plan to send economic and, if need be, military aid to nations in the Middle East that resisted Communism. More specifically, he sought explicit permission to send armed forces at his discretion, without the approval of Congress, as well as $200 million to fund the whole endeavor. The Minute Women immediately disapproved of this commitment to defend nations in the Middle East, popularly dubbed the Eisenhower Doctrine. The national newsletter printed a missive from DAR National Defense Chairman Mary Barclay Erb arguing that the Doctrine merely illustrated the total inutility of the United Nations. "If the [UN] cannot be used for the peaceful settlement of international disputes among its members . . . ," Erb argued, "then clearly the first step for us to take is to withdraw from that organization forthwith, and to require any country requesting our aid to do likewise." Houston Minute Woman Virginia Biggers, on the other hand, accused Eisenhower of transferring American governmental authority to the United Nations when he stated that any action taken in the Middle East would have to be "consonant with . . . the Charter of the United Nations" and would be subject to the authority of the Security Council.


Hostility to Eisenhower among Minute Women grew when the president announced in late January 1957 that the United States would be joining the International Atomic Energy Agency. Though Eisenhower presented this as part of his program to promote peaceful use of atomic energy, many Minute Women were dubious. “Once our Senate has ratified the treaty authorizing our participation,” wrote one angry Minute Woman in the March newsletter, “our national atomic energy establishment will have become part of a supranational socialistic empire, far beyond the dreams of the most dedicated one-worlders.”  

Frustration with Eisenhower boiled over in June, when fears that the administration was considering recognizing “Red China” prompted Dorothy Frankston to send out an emergency issue of the national newsletter. Frankston accused both Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles of harboring secret plans for the eventual recognition of the Communist nation, and she urged Minute Women to write to senators and representatives protesting this action. “Ask them to inform the White House and State Department of your views,” a bitter Frankston instructed, since “[w]riting to the latter two offices is obviously futile.” Minute Women should also recruit “important business men” as well as friends and sympathetic organizations to do the same, and should encourage local newspapers to take strong stands against the recognition of China. This typical community mobilization, paradoxically, illustrates both their alienation from and their continued faith in political activism. Though they may have lost

---


trust in their president, the emergency newsletter suggested, Minute Women should retain their commitment to politics and political organizing at the local level.

Among their enemies in 1957, the Minute Women also discovered other women’s organizations, to their great frustration. The controversy began when one Minute Woman found that the Board of Managers of the United Church Women had held an international relations dinner at their annual board meeting. The gathering featured both Paul Hoffman, administrator of UN aid programs, and Lorena Hahn, delegate to the UN Status of Women Commission. In addition, the board had passed resolutions pressing for additional aid to refugees, endorsing Eisenhower’s foreign aid programs, and urging American participation on the “United Nations atomic energy agency.” Writing under the pseudonym “North Star,” the Minute Woman explained that she was incensed not only because the resolutions “closely follow the line laid down by Moscow for the Communist Party, USA,” but also because the United Church Women claimed to represent “10,000,000 church women.” “The great majority . . . of these blanketed-in members,” she contended, “are not even aware that there is such an organization, or that they are members.” Most of the women had been included, North Star explained, because they belonged to churches that in turn belonged to the National Council of Churches, which enabled the United Church Women to claim them as members.58

Moreover, North Star explained that this kind of misrepresentation of women’s views was a common practice among larger women’s groups, such as “the Federation of Women’s Clubs, or the League of Women Voters.” “When such preposterous statements, or resolutions, are . . . issued by ‘policy making committees,’ the public . . . takes the

58 North Star, “‘10,000,000 Women Are Behind Me!’,” *Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.* (June 1957), 3–4, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.
pronouncements made by small groups of ‘officers’ as the actual thinking of the rank-and-file membership,” she complained. Members, meanwhile, may not have even been aware of the resolutions. Labeling these supposed procedures “dictatorial,” North Star suggested “a counterattack.” “If you are as furious after reading this as those of us who have just learned of this unwarranted use of our votes by the ‘policymakers’ of the United Church Women, let’s start a crusade,” she proposed. Minute Women must write letters to their representatives in Washington informing them when they felt a women’s organization was misrepresenting the views of its female membership.59

Though state reports and member commentary at the General Federation’s national meetings make it clear that the national policies of the organization did reflect the thinking of a rough majority of its members, there is a kernel of truth in the accusations. Certainly, some Federation members disagreed with the national policies of their organization, particularly with reference to the UN, as their vocal dissent at some conventions indicates. The hesitancy of some Women United observers to commit the broad member base of their organizations to promoting more controversial aspects of United Nations policy reveals the same phenomenon at work in other large women’s clubs.

Yet North Star’s frustration derived from more than just this variance of opinion within women’s groups. In her article, she also expressed the hope that “the women who wrote these resolutions are merely ignorant,” and demanded with frustration, “why don’t they trouble to get the facts?” North Star was not only upset that she had been co-opted by her political opponents to bulk up their numbers of supporters. She was angry at the

betrayal of the female solidarity she expected from other women on these foreign policy issues. She displayed a clear sense that, if these women had bothered to educate themselves, they would undoubtedly recognize the perfidy of the UN and the truth of Minute Women policies. Instead, these women embraced what North Star believed to be ignorant positions, thereby undermining the hard work of conservative female activists.\(^{60}\)

This revelation, in combination with Eisenhower’s relentless investment of American dollars in international projects, the federal government’s continual engagement with the United Nations, and the burgeoning civil rights movement at home created a profound sense of desperation among Minute Women. Toward the end of 1957, North Star returned to report that “[t]he outlines of a well organized campaign to subordinate American history, the Constitution, and the Government of the United States to the UN and its Charter are beginning to appear more and more boldly.” She then catalogued a series of disturbing events, including the flying of a UN flag at Jamestown during celebrations of the colony’s founding; the appearance of UN booths that distributed “free propaganda” at county fairs; the joint celebration of UN week and the anniversary of William Penn’s landing in Pennsylvania; and AFL-CIO president George Meany’s presentation of the U.S. government’s integration policy to the General Assembly of the UN that September.\(^{61}\) Each of these incidents merged the domestic and international in ways that disturbed the Minute Women. The community promotions of the United Nations, the very projects that Women United encouraged, were particularly

---

\(^{60}\) North Star, “‘10,000,000 Women Are Behind Me!’,” *Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.* (June 1957), 3-4, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.

disturbing because they merged American traditions with United Nations imagery. Children attended these events and could be particularly susceptible to such displays. Meanwhile, the explanation of the integration issue to the UN suggested that the international organization had the authority to comment on such national affairs. This, in combination with the federal government’s support for civil rights, threatened those Minute Women who opposed integration with the prospect of increased pressure from international, as well as national, agencies to transform their local practices.

All of this “U.N.-ification,” as North Star called it, pushed the Minute Women increasingly to the edges of what was politically acceptable in the late 1950s. Anticommunism retained enormous authority in American political culture at this time, of course, but the Minute Women’s more aggressive opposition to all international engagement seemed drastic and impractical, and they had little success at shaping American foreign policy along these lines. Though certainly a network of right-wing organizations, and even the DAR, agreed that the United Nations should be abandoned, few powerful politicians took the Minute Women seriously. American culture seemed to these women to be sliding further and further into the centralized, socialized mentality of the internationalists. This made their community organizing that much more important, but it also encouraged the spread of more and more drastic conspiracy theories. Surprisingly, however, the Minute Women did not abandon their political education campaigns for women, nor their faith that these campaigns would bear fruit, particularly at the local level.

The Daughters of the American Revolution took a similar path, displaying more and more suspicion of what they viewed as the ballooning authority of the executive
branch of government and its refusal to distance America from the United Nations. Though proud of their clubwomen for developing their speaking skills and spreading the Daughters’ foreign affairs vision to other individuals and organizations, the DAR faced growing opprobrium in the national media for their hostility to the United Nations. In response, their determination to promote their perspective only grew, and by 1957, the national officers of the organization actively recommended American withdrawal from the United Nations. Like the leaders of Minute Women, they also encouraged their members to focus their domestic political activism on electing congressmen who agreed with them, since they contended that these were the politicians closest to the American people.

Examining these positions tells us not only what conservative, white, middle-class American women believed about internationalism and its toxic relationship to domestic policies, but also what Americans more broadly debated during this period. Issues of federalism brought on by the Brown v. Board decision and the civil rights movement merged with more longstanding questions about executive authority and international obligations to create a complex set of overlapping political issues. Navigating these issues brought Americans into conflict with one another in myriad ways, and clubwomen were no exception. By associating the centralizing impulses of Cold War internationalism with the expanding federal authority that was rapidly empowering social and racial change in the United States, conservative clubwomen used their opposition to the UN to process their hostility to domestic campaigns for economic, social, and racial equality. Moreover, women’s political culture had also become thoroughly entangled with questions of internationalism, to the extent that conservative clubwomen were using
women's foreign affairs perspectives to evaluate their fitness for political participation. Those women who disagreed with conservative hostility to the UN displayed political ignorance, conservative clubwomen argued, and demonstrated the need for continuing female political education. That these women filtered these issues through the prism of their perspectives on the United Nations suggests just how intertwined the image of the UN had become with American political culture.
Chapter Six

Everyone knows that we do live in a world that is most unsettled. . . . We see all around us problems that are really grave in character, the problem of disarmament, the East-West problem, the ‘Cold War,’ tensions in the Middle East, the revolutionary trends in Africa and Asia, the basic conflict of ideologies, all of these are enough indeed to command our attention and perhaps to destroy our faith.

—Andrew W. Cordier, UN Undersecretary of General Assembly and Related Affairs, addressing the General Federation of Women’s Clubs June 1958 National Convention, Detroit, Michigan

In keeping with the DAR’s layered understanding of the connections between domestic social unrest and internationalism, the opening article in the National Defense section of the first 1958 DAR Magazine analyzed the use of U.S. soldiers to enforce the integration of Central High School in Little Rock the preceding fall. H.S. Lasell, author of the piece, theorized that this event, important though it might be, was merely a symptom of more fundamental problems plaguing the United States. Though Eisenhower’s actions undermined the rights of southern states and divided the country, Lasell contended, regional differences were not the root of the controversy. American was “not . . . divided between North and South this time . . . ,” Lasell explained. Instead, the country was split, “as it is on all issues today,” between two groups: “Internationalism and Internationalist vs. Nationalism and those citizens who believe in literally practicing the Constitutional guarantee of States Rights as a protection to our nation.” This division among American citizens derived from a systematic assault on the Constitution led, not by civil rights activists, but by the disciples of global interdependence. According to Lasell, their longstanding willingness to compromise Constitutional safeguards in the name of world peace beat a path straight to the Little Rock incident. “Our international

---

fanatics have taken us far afield,” Lasell declared, “through executive agreements, treaties, world government ideas, and large funds of money contributed to bring about a World Federation—sidestepping and circumventing our CONSTITUTION . . . .” The result was an endemic tendency to dismiss the Constitution, which jeopardized all American citizens. By contrast, if Americans could simply stay true to their founding principles, Lasell believed that domestic stability could be restored. The responsibility for enacting this renewed Constitutionalism lay with “thinking American[s],” like the Daughters of the American Revolution.²

Unpalatable as it might be, Lasell’s analysis of the divide in American society was not without foundation. Certainly the evident differences in perspective among American clubwomen as the fifties drew to a close reflected profound disagreements over the meaning and advisability of internationalism as a concept. The pairing of internationalist projects with civil rights activism in the DAR piece suggests a connection that conservative women, and their male counterparts, would repeatedly make in the coming years. Civil rights legislation, and the government’s enforcement of it, became one more piece in a complex structure of top-down regulations that undermined local authority. Drawing parallels between international control and federal control, between UN agencies and the executive and judicial branches of American government, conservative women associated domestic civil rights agitation with international Communism. Using their understanding of international affairs developed over fifteen years of studying the United Nations, conservative women fashioned a critique of the civil rights movement that packaged it with the numerous other threats to American society posed by the UN, its agencies, and its proponents. These women thus filtered

their understanding of domestic politics through the lens of internationalism, and used the vehicle of internationalism to encapsulate the broad array of forces, both domestic and foreign, that they felt were leading American society astray. In this way, they transformed the meaning of internationalism to conform to their understanding of American political culture.

General Federation clubwomen around the country began 1958 focused on their own marrying of internationalism and domestic education. Patterning their local efforts on the Federation’s World Affairs Conference held the preceding year in Washington, D.C., state Federations hosted a series of meetings to instruct local women on pressing international issues. The complex problems of international diplomacy during these years offered ample fodder for conference discussions. In the early months of 1958, the Soviet Union announced the suspension of all nuclear tests, pressing the U.S. and Britain to follow suit; Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro urged Cubans to rise up against President Fulgencio Batista and subsequently launched an attack on the regime; and Lebanon complained to the Security Council of harassment by its Syrian neighbors. Accordingly, Pennsylvania Federation clubwomen held an event at Pennsylvania State University, offering lectures, panels, and group discussions on topics such as “How to Look at a Country,” “Dilemma in the Middle East,” and “Education of Adults in Today’s World.” Missouri’s state Federation also partnered with their state university to offer a World Affairs Conference attended by 17,000 Missouri clubwomen, and Iowa clubwomen concentrated more exclusively on global economic policy, convening a World Trade Council for their local clubs. Texas clubs created a total of 2,500 programs centered on

---

international topics, and their United Nations presentations in particular attracted over 300,000 participants. Federation leaders were clearly determined that their educational programs would equip Federation women to interpret a increasingly complex set of international problems for their neighbors.

By the late 1950s, however, issues that liberal women’s organizations had carefully attempted to circumnavigate began to threaten the moderate, centrist perspective that the General Federation and Women United sought to popularize. As their loyalty to community education projects shows, many internationalist clubwomen remained committed to foreign affairs activism as a means of mobilizing American women. Yet new member nations and new world problems altered the United Nations organization itself, and its supporters in American women’s clubs confronted equally pressing new issues in American politics and society, including a new president, an escalating civil rights movement, and changing styles of domestic political activism. The failure of internationalist clubwomen to deal effectively with domestic issues during these years undercut their United Nations activism. Though the muscular Cold War American internationalism to which the General Federation had tied itself was momentarily ascendant, the domestic issues that they consistently elided—particularly American race relations—would figure prominently in the American political discourse of the 1960s. Their avoidance of these issues left the grassroots discussion of the UN’s relationship to American social change increasingly in the hands of conservative

---

4 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1958, Box 36, pp. 465–67, 483–85, 769–70, 778–81, WHRC; in addition to educating their own members on the world situation, Federation clubs continued to promote international exchange of ideas by offering scholarships to students from foreign countries. Texas clubs raised $15,000 between 1957 and 1958 to establish an “Oriental Scholarship Fund” intended to educate Asian students at a Texas university. Missouri’s Federation women similarly supported students from Germany, Chile, Greece, and Mexico in teachers’ colleges around the state. See Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1958, Box 36, pp. 483–85, 778–81, WHRC.
opponents of internationalism. The progressive coalition of Women United observers shared this disassociation from American political discourse. Though they persisted in promoting the UN in American communities, their idealistic message of the world organization’s possibilities seemed increasingly anachronistic in the face of Cold War conflict. Too, the organizations that had supported Women United’s activism divided over domestic issues, with more progressive groups refocusing their activism on civil rights and social reform, and the more moderate groups at a loss in the face of rampant social change. As a result, domestic United Nations activism lost its vital center among liberal American clubwomen.

Notwithstanding the waning relevance of liberal clubwomen’s broad, public, UN-based education initiatives during these years, the translation of this foreign affairs activism into women’s rights activism proved more successful. If it had not materially contributed to international peace and understanding, foreign affairs activism in American women’s clubs had created a network of well-informed, engaged political activists that club leaders, in the General Federation particularly, believed could be channeled into other political initiatives. Highlighting the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in their UN discussions and urging Federation clubwomen to embrace their political identities as never before, Federation leaders used their internationalist credentials as a foundation for an expanding women’s rights agenda that fed new American feminist initiatives, both within and outside the federal government.

*****

The civil rights struggles in the American South formed only one part of the DAR’s critique of internationalism and its negative influence on American society. The
danger internationalism posed to American traditions was manifested in a variety of ways, several of which the Daughters explicitly condemned at their 1958 national convention. One resolution contended that Eisenhower’s foreign aid program operated “in violation of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution,” exhibited “a flagrant waste and abuse of the dollars of the overburdened American taxpayer,” and contributed “on a worldwide basis” to “destroying the principle of private property, individual initiative and freedom.” In addition, foreign aid furthered the Soviet goal of bankrupting the United States. The resolution requested that Congress immediately reduce foreign aid appropriations, with the ultimate goal of terminating the program entirely. Though one dissenting delegate proposed that the Daughters listen to two congressmen then serving on the Foreign Aid Committee speak in favor of foreign aid before deciding, her motion was lost for want of a second. The convention voted in favor of the ending all foreign aid.5

Delegates also approved a resolution denouncing “the political, economic and socialist one-world activities of the National Council of Churches of Christ.” According to the resolution, the NCC, which purported to represent “37 million Protestant church members and 35 denominations,” had taken collectivist positions on numerous issues “in violation of the principle of separation of church and state.” By opposing the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act; by supporting foreign aid, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the International Labor Organization, and the Organization for Trade Cooperation; and by promoting “the ecumenical or one-world church for the final

triumph of socialism in world government,” the NCC had betrayed its Christian members and allied itself with international Communism. The Daughters voted to oppose this merger of religion and international politics, which they believed threatened to incorporate American churches into the “vast network of collectivism” then threatening American interests.⁶

DAR members considered an additional resolution opposing the fluoridation of American water. Plans to fluoridate public water systems, which had been in the works for some time, offended DAR members on several levels. First, water fluoridation threatened both individual and states’ rights, since the addition of the chemical to the water supply circumvented the individual’s freedom of choice and constituted “arbitrary imposition” of the government’s will. Second, DAR members believed fluoridation to be collectivist, since “inherent in any control of public utilities is the threat of Socialism.” Third, proponents of fluoridation kept suspicious company. The plan was being “promoted by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the World Health Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations.” As one delegate explained, the Daughters had “[f]or many years . . . opposed the various agencies of the United Nations because they are a part of the program for collectivism, centralized government, and World Government.”⁷ As such, opposition to UN-inspired fluoridation should be an obvious position for DAR members to support.

In addition to their ideological objections, some DAR members believed that fluoridation posed a more insidious threat. Former DAR president Florence Becker, who

---


had attended the UN Charter conference for the DAR in 1945, cautioned the delegates that investigations had revealed "that fluoridation is not a purification of the water but a drug which gradually weakens the human being, which is still part of the international plan to weaken all human beings to become standardized, so that they can work out their plan for World Government." A delegate from Miami clarified that the "they" to which Becker referred were international Communists. "I would like to tell you that fluoridation and the gun are the two potential weapons that Russia uses in its prisoner camps," she informed the listening crowd. "When they cannot control them with fluoridation, then they shoot them. They like to bring them into a state of apathy with fluoridation." This fear of mass medication fell into the same category of conspiracy theory as the concerns expressed by the Minute Women about mental health legislation. Yet the hyperbole also reveals the profound alienation from and suspicion of governmental power experienced by many DAR members. The sense that they had little control over local circumstances, domestic politics, and foreign policies manifested itself in this more profound fear that even control of their own bodies was being taken from them by global forces and national politicians. Delegates affirmed the resolution opposing fluoridation with little opposition.  

All three of these resolutions considered different components of the larger problem of internationalism in American society. According to the Daughters, internationalists infiltrated policymaking branches of government and undermined the

---

8 *Proceedings, 67th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution* (1958), pp. 377–81, DAR Archive. Notably, the delegates at this convention also voted in a resolution condemning mental health legislation "which can be used as a political weapon," and urging the House of Representatives to conduct a thorough investigation of all mental health legislation. See *Proceedings, 67th Continental Congress, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution* (1958), p. 302, DAR Archive.
national economy with exorbitant foreign aid expenditures and annexed American religious institutions to compromise Christianity from within. Internationalists also invaded health authorities to weaken both local governments and individual American citizens. Each of these campaigns demonstrated the successful cooption of the domestic by the foreign, of American society by international interests. Since the United Nations perpetrated each campaign to some extent, Mary Barclay Erb’s recommendation that the U.S. withdraw from the UN seemed an obvious course of action. Delegates finally voted to make this the national policy of their organization at this same 1958 convention.

The relevant resolution, entitled “The United Nations,” laid out in detail the Daughters’ case against the international organization. The resolution first declared the “anti-Christian philosophy motivating the United Nations” to be “hostile to the Christian fundamentals of the United States of America.” They then argued that the UN had become obsolete. “In the light of events in Korea, Hungary, and the Middle East,” the text contended, “the United Nations has proved that it is a declining factor in the maintenance of ‘international peace and security.’” Contrary to the arguments made by many of its American supporters, the DAR also believed that the UN undermined the United States’ efforts to destroy international Communism. “Many instances of the abuse of diplomatic immunity,” the resolution stated, “have proved it to be a center of international espionage, a refuge for disloyal American citizens,[and] a sounding board for attacks against the United States . . . and the capitalistic system for which it stands” The expanded membership of the United Nations threatened American interests abroad. “The organization has developed in such a way,” the resolution suggested, “that a bloc of small nations can outvote the United States of America in the General Assembly, though
we furnish one third of the financial support.” Moreover, America’s domestic interests were also at risk. The resolution warned that, using “social, industrial, and trade conventions, the United Nations has developed a means of shaping the domestic law in the United States of America, by treaty law.” Finally, the UN was using its subsidiary agencies to create, covertly, the infrastructure for a world government that would destroy the American way of life. “Through the technical assistance program and its financial arms—the World Bank and International Monetary Fund—a socialized one-world state is being developed with American funds, financed by American industry and trade, but hostile to the free enterprise system,” the text concluded. As a result of this totality of evidence, the Daughters resolved to “urgently request the Congress . . . to withdraw from the United Nations, and to demand the withdrawal of the United Nations from the soil of the United States of America.”

The resolution did not pass without dissent. The determined UN supporters of the Glens Falls, New York, chapter of the DAR voiced their rejection of the resolution’s accusations. “As a chapter we believe that the United Nations offers the best existing means of learning to co-operate with other nations in a realistic effort to bring about a peaceful world,” their spokeswoman, Mrs. William Montgomery, argued during the discussion period. Though she acknowledged that the UN was “far from perfect,” Montgomery proposed “so are we.” The resolution to withdraw, she chastised her fellow Daughters, displayed “a deplorable lack of confidence in our elected leaders and an exaggerated fear of losing one iota of our sovereignty, and downright selfishness in denying to other countries the right to attain our own standard of living or to share the

---

basic human rights we have proudly enjoyed for 150 years.” Some delegates took umbrage at Montgomery’s criticisms, but others rose to back her rejection of withdrawal. One woman declared that withdrawal would be dangerous because the U.S. would then be unaware of what was happening in the UN. Another invoked the dependence of “the free nations of the world” on the United States for support against Soviet aggression.\(^\text{10}\)

Their determination notwithstanding, the dissenters were in the minority. Far more DAR delegates feared the deleterious influence of the UN and its internationalist supporters, and when the president closed the debate, the convention voted in favor of withdrawal. This vote marked the final renunciation by the DAR of their organization’s qualified support for the international body. The UN had simply become too powerful, DAR delegates felt, and its interventionist policies too threatening to the vision of an individualist American republic independent of international obligation. More fundamentally, they contended that the international body had become excessively entangled in American lawmaking, facilitating the expansion of the federal government, and particularly its executive branch. American proponents of internationalism, meanwhile, eased the expansion of Communism by promoting collectivist thinking, the DAR’s UN opponents argued. This, in turn, encouraged the American public to accept the encroachments of governmental authorities, national and international, on their local institutions, domestic arrangements, and private lives. The DAR’s national leadership would spend the next several years raining criticism down upon the UN and encouraging their local chapters to spread the word.

As the international crises of Cuban revolution and Lebanese unrest persisted, the Daughters feared that America’s continued reliance on the United Nations weakened the nation’s foreign policy and undermined its authority as a world power. The ongoing conflict in Lebanon underscored the problematic sway the UN had over American actions on the world stage. The U.S. had landed 10,000 Marines in Beirut in July 1958, in response to persistent requests from the Lebanese government for assistance. Lebanon’s leaders believed that the United Arab Republic (a short-lived union of Egypt and Syria) was assisting Lebanese rebels, backed by the Soviet Union. UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld criticized the American decision to deploy troops, since UN observers had been unable to determine whether Syrians in the UAR were in fact aiding the homegrown Lebanese rebellion. U.S. authorities eventually agreed to remove American troops and to allow UN observers to take their place. Mary Barclay Erb characterized America’s accession to UN pressure as a capitulation to “Soviet blackmail.” American foreign policy had become “a drifting one,” she lamented, that made the Soviet Union appear a more powerful and appealing ally to underdeveloped nations. Another piece reprinted in the DAR Magazine argued that the Eisenhower administration’s evident willingness to defer to the UN on international affairs meant that “we are no longer ‘masters of our own foreign policy,’” and that “[o]ther nations, large and small, are telling the United States how it should act, when it should act, how much it should spend, and whether or not it must suffer war or privation.” This inappropriately deprived the American people of control over their own government, and to no end. “We have put ourselves at the service of the United Nations and every time come out the loser,” the piece asserted. Middle Eastern conflict was merely the successor to America’s defeat in Korea, failure to aid
Hungarian dissidents, and ongoing deferral to Communist expansion in North Vietnam. United Nations interference was behind each of these foreign policy failures.11

More troubling still for the DAR was the continued adherence of many American citizens to UN principles and the persistent campaign by internationalists to promote this allegiance in American communities. In the October 1958 issue of the DAR Magazine, Mary Erb reported on a plan to display the United Nations emblem on commercial airplanes and potentially steamships in the United States. According to Erb, this effort sought to displace American loyalty to nation. “Since the advent of the United Nations and UNESCO,” Erb wrote, “discredit has been cast on nationalism and some kind of dual allegiance to take the place of national patriotism and loyalty has been substituted.” Presenting the UN emblem as a “competitor” to the U.S. flag was part of this crusade, and Erb believed the campaign was bearing fruit. Later that same year, she noted that “some of our citizens are wavering in their loyalty to the Constitution.” “It has become popular with many to scoff at conservative principles,” she lamented, while “[i]t is ‘smart’ and sophisticated to be liberal.” According to Erb, this trend weakened American ability to resist Communism and undercut the appeal of American principles to the rest of the world. As it had for many years, the responsibility to counter this campaign rested on DAR shoulders. “If we American women, with our freedom and luxury, cannot prove the worth of freedom for the individual, then who will do it for us?” Erb demanded.

Evidently, the privileged position of American clubwomen obligated them to uphold the American principles that had afforded them that privilege.12

Leading Minute Women, too, urged their female supporters to promote the conservative position in American politics. True to the commitment they expressed in the wake of the 1956 election, the Minute Women focused much of their attention in 1958 on the congressional elections, in which they believed women must play an important role. “In this election year the men in Washington are very mindful of constituents and their requests,” national chairman Dorothy Frankston reminded her Minute Women, “Women can be a powerful telling force in what happens in Congress this session. Urge your friends to write.” Conservative congressional representatives echoed this call for female support in the pages of the Minute Women’s newsletter. Representative Wint Smith of Kansas declared in one statement that “[t]he purple robes of omnipotence that these Internationalists and ‘Doers of Good’ have arrogated to themselves... must be stripped from their shoulders.” “America must be made aware of these evil forces,” Smith continued, “It is only such organizations as the Minute Women of the U.S.A. and other patriotic groups that can do this job.”13

The editors of the Minute Women’s newsletter occasionally took a moment to laud other such patriotic organizations for their work against internationalism in America. In the wake of the DAR’s 1958 national convention, Dorothy Frankston printed a list of

---


the resolutions approved by DAR delegates. Frankston declared the list, which included the resolution advocating withdrawal from the UN, as well as those opposing foreign aid, GATT, fluoridation, mental health legislation, and the National Council of Churches of Christ, “one of the finest sets of resolutions ever.” “Again women have led the way in courageously facing the problems which confront our great Nation,” Frankston enthused. “It is to be hoped that other comparable groups do likewise.”¹⁴ To the Minute Women’s irritation, some groups were doing quite the reverse. Minute Woman Marjorie Niles Kime drafted a short poem, which was published in the Minute Women’s newsletter, criticizing the PTA for their internationalist tendencies. Titled “The Little Red Hens,” the poem seems to have been primarily directed at women working in the parent-teacher organization. It accused the “little red hens of the P.T.A.” of attempting to brainwash Americans with UNESCO-sponsored propaganda. “One World under Moscow/is the permanent yen/And the inner compulsion/of each little hen,” Kime wrote, recommending to her fellow Minute Women, “Let’s feed the red hens/to Soviet foxes/And put in their places/some good Plymouth Rockses!”¹⁵

In spite of all the motivational literature produced by Minute Women around the country, the election failed to transform Congress as the Minute Women had hoped. “The elections have come and gone,” Dorothy Frankston wrote that December, with the result that some of the Minute Women’s “good friends in Congress” had been removed. “To help overcome this handicap we can and will double our efforts,” Frankston promised, noting optimistically that there had been an increase in new members and membership


renewals. This expansion of female political involvement was crucial to the Minute Women's cause. "If 'we' are to win," Frankston mused, "it is the women who have to do it, and I think and hope women are beginning to realize it." Women should take this responsibility seriously because, according to Frankston, women had "the most at stake in the fight to preserve America." She explained that, "[f]rom a monetary standpoint they control the greater proportion of the wealth," but even this was not the chief reason to support the Minute Women's platform. "Far more important . . . is the home, the family, and the moral decency," Frankston proclaimed, "These are the stakes, women. They come high! Too high! We dare not lose!" 16 This call to action explicitly identified the protection of the American home and family as the central issue in the Minute Women's fight and, simultaneously, as the particular purview of American women. The domestic issues at stake made the fight against internationalism, and its partner international Communism, a women's fight.

By virtue of their entirely female membership, Women United for the United Nations also suggested that the UN, especially as it related to the United States, was a female responsibility. Even as the Minute Women and the DAR sought to claim for women the job of promoting Americanism and critiquing the UN, the observers of Women United searched for more effective ways of using their member organizations to encourage internationalism. Since Women United had resolved to connect more directly with the grassroots, they spent much of 1959 conducting a formal survey of their member groups about the methods they had employed up to that point to promote the United Nations. Distributed in April and May 1959, a written questionnaire drafted by Women

United posed queries such as "[h]ow does your organization link itself to the U.N.?"; "[d]o you have publications through which you inform your membership?"; and "[w]hat is your biggest problem in getting your information and program across to your membership?". Eighteen organizations with representatives belonging to Women United returned completed questionnaires. The combined membership of these organizations was 20 million, although even Women United acknowledged that this number was certainly inflated by individuals who belonged to multiple organizations. The majority of the organizations that responded, eleven of eighteen, were exclusively women's organizations.

WUUN officials found some of the survey results encouraging. The leaders and administrators of women's organizations displayed a clear interest in the United Nations, and in international affairs more generally. Sixteen of eighteen organizations maintained either an international relations committee, a UN committee, or both, to direct their organizational programs related to world affairs. Seventeen of the organizations produced either a magazine or a bulletin for their members, and all but one of these reported regular publication of articles on world affairs. Fifteen of the organizations reported that their national officers developed world affairs and UN programs to be sent to local clubs. As all of these structures for the promotion of global awareness indicate, stimulating an

---

17 April 1959 survey questions, Box 1, Folder 2, Women United for the United Nations Collection, Collection No. 70-70-78-M200, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as WUUN Collection).

18 "A Survey of Eighteen National and Seven International Organizations with Representation at the United Nations," December 1, 1959, p. 1, Box 1, Folder 2, WUUN Collection.
interest in the UN and in international affairs had become an institutionalized part of the programs of women’s organizations around the country. ¹⁹

Despite these successes, respondents also cited a number of problems in disseminating their UN-related material to their members. Women United placed these problems into seven broad categories. Most frequently mentioned was “lack of interest [or] apathy” on the part of the members. Second most common was “[l]ack of local leadership.”²⁰ These facts, together with the anecdotal evidence provided by UN observers, led WUUN members to speculate once again that reaching the grassroots was the most challenging, and most important, part of any effort to promote awareness of the UN. “Local leadership coupled with good national programming seems to be the clue to effectiveness and action on a local level,” their report on the survey noted. ²¹ Women United’s observers concluded that, if they were to be successful in their project of fostering greater understanding of the United Nations among American citizens, they must find a way to mobilize local leaders and thereby kick-start UN programs at the local level.

A similar attempt to reenergize women in local clubs is evident in the General Federation’s 1959 programs. Noting at the group’s annual meeting that “hundreds of you have asked us to give you an example of the kind of program that you could use that

---

¹⁹ “A Survey of Eighteen National and Seven International Organizations with Representation at the United Nations,” December 1, 1959, pp. 1–2, Box 1, Folder 2, WUUN Collection.

²⁰ Also mentioned were lack of funds, difficulty of communications downward, difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of the program, small membership, and lack of time of younger women members. For complete list, see “A Survey of Eighteen National and Seven International Organizations with Representation at the United Nations,” December 1, 1959, p. 2, Box 1, Folder 2, WUUN Collection.

²¹ “A Survey of Eighteen National and Seven International Organizations with Representation at the United Nations,” December 1, 1959, pp. 2–3, Box 1, Folder 2, WUUN Collection.
might be a good program for a small club,” International Relations chairman Mrs. Norbert Klein suggested that any international relations program must be “meaty,” “meaningful,” and “current.” She offered the idea of basing a program on newspaper headlines, and also provided Federation delegates with State Department briefs on American foreign policy positions, “done in clear, brief style,” but nevertheless “comprehensive.” The heads of various divisions in the International Relations Department also reported on significant recent developments in their areas of expertise. Some made a concerted effort to tie these developments to the concrete reality of American women’s lives. Encouraging Federation members to support international aid and world trade programs, Trade and Aid Division chairman Mrs. Kermit Haugen reminded them that, as women, they were important economic actors. “Let’s look at statistics showing the financial status of American womanhood,” she suggested. “She or you own 51.6% of all shares in public companies. . . . You are the beneficiaries of 75% of life insurance and own nearly 50 billion in your own name. You do 85% of the spending. You hold 1/3 of the jobs and run the homes of the Nation. You do much of the volunteer work of America. Politically, you have over ½ of the votes and influence over the rest.” According the Haugan, these statistics meant that Federation women were “politically and financially . . . in the ‘driver’s seat.’” Yet this position came with a consequent responsibility: to guide the U.S. in formulating foreign policies that would facilitate peace. To accomplish this, Haugan suggested that Federation members inform themselves by arranging a world trade exhibit. Every community had an intimate connection to world trade through the goods it produced and exported, she explained. By “digging out your State’s stake in world trade,” Haugan contended, Federation members

---

22 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 187–90, WHRC.
would both inform and energize American women to "become ... better trained drivers on the World Trade, Foreign Aid Route to Peace." 23

In her report on disarmament, Mrs. H. M. Zell made a similar plea for women to rededicate their energies to mobilizing local communities. "[W]hat is wanted is 11,000,000 clubwomen who will understand our definition of disarmament," Zell began. Once this had been accomplished, clubwomen must then spread their understanding to other Americans. "[I]f we are to live up to our full potentials we must have clear concise opinions based on facts," Zell explained, "we must be ready to stand and be counted. Better still we must speak up." Citing a survey that indicated that "one American in ten appears to have a strong potential interest in world affairs," Zell pressed Federation delegates to use their position of civic authority in communities to nurture this interest. "Community leaders [prefer] to concern themselves with projects that they feel they can influence," Zell noted. Federation members must make these other leaders see that foreign policy was just such a project. "In a democracy, responsible policy cannot long maintain itself in times of crisis when the public is misinformed ... or uninformed," Zell argued. Achieving global stability would depend on "the understanding of the people from who the statesmen draw their power," Zell concluded. "Women, what are we waiting for?" 24

Not unlike Women United's survey of their member groups, Federation leaders also asked state presidents to recommend their local clubs' most effective techniques for community mobilization. One California club used a "Spotlight on the News" feature at each meeting to draw the attention of members to prominent issues in global politics.

23 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 190A–90C, WHRC.

24 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 191–94, WHRC.
Minnesota clubwomen went one step further, formally enlisting the help of a major metropolitan newspaper to provide “a background program” on some world affairs problem. The background material was sent to every club wishing to use it early in the week. Later in the week, the paper published a questionnaire on the issue and, at the end of the week, the answers to the questionnaire. In addition, the Minnesota state president boasted that one Minnesota member provided “splendid United Nations programs” because of her particular interest in that topic, which could then be distributed throughout the state. Arkansas clubwomen coordinated a UNICEF trick-or-treat campaign for schoolchildren across the state, accompanying groups of four to five children on their Halloween jaunts and hosting parties at the conclusion of the solicitation. “These future world leaders will early learn, the real meaning of international understanding,” boasted the Arkansas state president. Of 117 Federation clubs in Arkansas, 106 held some form of international affairs program over the preceding year.²⁵

Clearly, not all of the programs focused on the United Nations; many clubs concentrated more loosely on promoting attention to international affairs, and particularly to United States foreign policy. Some took an actively anticommmunist approach. A group of Virginia clubwomen learned, among other things, how to identify communists by their “traits, characteristics, and methods of operation.” Another group of Virginia women sought to educate foreign countries about the United States by collecting used American magazines and mailing them to selected individuals overseas. Over two hundred clubs throughout Kentucky, meanwhile, met to discuss such topics as American military defense policy, trade policy, relations with Latin America, and relations with “Afro-Asian

²⁵ Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 198–203, WHRC.
nations.” Still, some local clubs attempted to target their efforts toward educating local residents about foreign nations. One Kentucky club hosted an event featuring all the foreign-born residents of their town presenting dances, photographs, and materials from their homelands, while other Kentucky groups invited professors returning from study abroad to address them on various foreign cultures. Tennessee clubs even tied this type of education program back to the United Nations. When conducting “group studies of foreign countries,” Tennessee clubwomen studied “how the country stands with the United Nations,” as well as whether it was “armed or disarmed” and whether “communism [was] one of their problems.”

The diversity of these techniques may account for the continued strength of the Federation’s international relations program. Since anything from mailing American magazines abroad to studying U.S. foreign policy to sending a Hiroshima orphan to beauty school (a Tennessee Federation project) could fall under the rubric of international affairs education, Federation clubs around the country were able to tailor their foreign affairs programs to the interests and beliefs of their local clubwomen. Though they grew out of the same impulse—to stimulate international awareness in American communities—these diverse programs differed, on occasion significantly, from the Federation’s early United Nations education campaigns, which had been targeted exclusively at spreading the gospel of the UN to the grassroots. This change, which had occurred gradually over the fourteen years since the UN’s founding, allowed international relations to remain a vibrant part of the Federation’s club programming in the face of changing international circumstances and a changing UN. In some sense, this suggests that Federation leaders had been successful; Federation clubwomen saw foreign affairs as

---

26 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 204–11, 221–23, WHRC.
a part of their local club responsibilities. Yet the growing divergence from UN-centered activism at the local level is significant. While international circumstances continued to resonate with American clubwomen, the United Nations was no longer at the center of this international awareness. Mirroring the trend in the Federation’s national programming, local programs regularly prioritized U.S. interests and perspectives, particularly in Cold War contests with the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{27}

Nevertheless, Federation leaders continued to incorporate some UN projects into the national policies of their organization, and to use these projects to energize local clubwomen. At their 1958 national meeting, Federation delegates passed a resolution in support of World Refugee Year under the auspices of the United Nations. In the spirit of promoting local action, the resolution not only supported the abstract concept of a year dedicated to refugees, but also encouraged Federation clubs to be actively involved, both by raising funds and by “undertaking such special events or programs that will bring this world problem to the attention of women throughout the United States.” Federation leadership thus continued to pitch this UN aid work as the particular province of American women.\textsuperscript{28}

Predictably, any attempt to reinvigorate local internationalist activism disturbed conservative clubwomen, who spent much of 1959 preoccupied with several campaigns of this kind. The Minute Women and the DAR had opposed UNICEF Christmas cards for some time, since both groups felt that the cards took the focus of the holiday away from Christ’s birth to promote the United Nations and used artwork created by artists with

\textsuperscript{27} For examples of programs, see Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 207, 208–9, and 223, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{28} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1959, Box 37, pp. 719–22, WHRC.
questionable affiliations. In late 1958, however, internationalists launched a new campaign to promote the UN with holiday festivities. In October 1958, the New York Times announced the inauguration of a program to incorporate a United Nations slogan, “U.N.—We Believe,” into Christmas decorations at department stores across the nation, beginning with Bamberger’s in Newark, New Jersey. The program’s sponsors included the U.S. Committee for the United Nations and the National Retail Merchants Association (NRMA). The goal of the campaign was “to enlist support for the United Nations by asking business and industry to ‘disseminate facts about the U.N. and to arouse interest in the organization.’” Suggested methods of achieving this objective, provided by the NRMA, notably targeted a female audience. They included holding a UN fashion show “in your tea room, where you can use UN place mats,” and inviting women’s groups “such as the Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, League of Women Voters, Junior League, and others” to hold discussions about the UN.29

The Minute Women reported this campaign to their members in their January 1959 newsletter, calling it “particularly women’s business, since it involves department stores throughout the country.” Declaring the program “a frenzied attempt to restore lost U.N. prestige via the retail trade,” the anonymous author of the piece pushed women to claim this fight as their own. She noted that prominent Minute Woman Lucille Cardin Crain, who had begun her activist career in 1941 as the leader of a consumer advocacy group, had already launched the attack by writing the president of the NRMA critiquing the campaign. The piece then pleaded with Minute Women to sustain Crain’s efforts. “Will patriotic Christian women see their opportunity here?” its author demanded. “It is

they on whom the retail trade largely depends for its prosperity. Our merchants have obviously underestimated us this time.” The next monthly newsletter contained former NRMA president George W. Dowdy’s response to Crain’s critique. Dowdy defended the “UN–We Believe” campaign on the grounds that it was “in the public interest” and that, since Christmas was a “universal holiday” that had been “accepted by most of the world,” pairing it with the United Nations was appropriate. Minute Women were not persuaded. This piece once again encouraged Minute Women to use their power as female consumers to undermine this UN promotional effort. “[W]omen customers who deplore their ill-advised venture to confuse Christmas with the United Nations have an obvious course to follow,” the second article counseled. As Christmas neared, Minute Women leaders urged their members to police local department stores for evidence of the “UN–We Believe” campaign. “[D]o a careful checking job on the department stores in your city (particularly those where you have charge accounts),” national chairman Dorothy Frankston wrote in one piece. 30

The Daughters shared the Minute Women’s hostility toward this venture. In an April report, Mary Barclay Erb introduced the campaign, also declaring it “of special interest to American women,” because of their position as primary consumers. She noted that the appearance of UN material in department stores might not be limited to the holiday season. “Our merchants are not stopping at the idea of using the Christmastide for promoting the United Nations,” she cautioned. Efforts could continue throughout the

year, unless conservative women mobilized against this improper “venture of retail trade into the field of controversial political propaganda.” “Would it not seem that the political arena is the proper place to weigh the merits or demerits of the United Nations?” Erb demanded, calling the campaign “one more attack on the minds of America.” Shortly after writing her piece, Erb reported that she had received notice from the NRMA that they would no longer be suggesting the pairing of “UN–We Believe” materials with Christmas decorations. Evidently the anti-UN outcry made some impression. Yet Erb feared retail venues would continue to promote the UN in other ways. “Should the stores be used for such a purpose?” she again asked her readers.31

This monitoring of American businesses for UN promotions represented one more battleground for conservative activists. As United Nations supporters attempted to use popular consumer venues to reach the American grassroots, opponents of international organizing mobilized to defend these bastions of American capitalism. Around this same time, Minute Women also took note of the campaign, critiqued by the DAR’s Mary Barclay Erb the previous year, to display UN emblems on commercial airliners. They responded with an open letter to the director of the Independent Airlines Association. In the piece, Minute Women Charlotte Starr reminded the director that American “taxpayers had never been given the opportunity to vote on the question of enforced ‘support’ of the United Nations,” and that “whether or not President Eisenhower and the government support the United Nations, so far neither the White House nor the Capitol are carrying the UN ‘trademark.’” “Until that happens,” Starr declared, “there is no place on any United States plane for this emblem.” She also pointedly suggested that “Americans are

trained to read the labels and then buy accordingly.” Using American capitalism to promote the UN was the same thing as polluting American democracy with internationalism, conservative women contended, and America’s female citizen-consumers would not stand for this confusion of interests.

The incorporation of commercial venues into the UN debate reveals the growing importance of these retail sites to American culture. UN supporters viewed consumer culture as a conduit to the average American, while UN opponents saw it as a frontline in their battle against internationalists. Conservative women clearly resented the invasion of political issues into the supposedly neutral realm of American business, though their own activism infused American capitalism with profoundly political significance. That UN supporters attempted to co-opt this safely “apolitical” sphere of American society merely demonstrated for conservative women the insidious qualities of internationalism. Nothing was sacred to one-worlders, not Christmas and not American consumer culture. This clash is also notable for its focus on American women as consumers. The UN promotional programs designed for department stores targeted female customers in particular. Similarly, the Minute Women and the DAR both viewed the retail realm as the responsibility of those who frequented its establishments, namely middle-class American women. This identification of women as consumers echoes the Federation’s paean to female economic power at their 1959 convention. Women’s clubs had clearly recognized the growing economic role of women in American society. Yet it also harkens back to a long tradition of women’s consumer activism by such organizations as the National Consumer’s League, the League of Women Shoppers, and even Lucille Crain’s

conservative consumer protection group, We the People, Inc. Ranging in their efforts from support of unionizing to opposition to taxation, all of these groups sought to capitalize on the prominence of female consumers for political purposes. The emergence of UN politics in the realm of consumption therefore, reinforced female activists’ sense that this issue belonged to them particularly.\footnote{33}

Despite their moderate success at discouraging the promotion of the United Nations by American retailers, the Minute Women had reason to fear the effect of the UN on American institutions. In his 1959 state of the union address, President Eisenhower suggested that it was time for the U.S. to modify the treaty language under which the nation had joined the International Court of Justice, a subsidiary of the United Nations. The clause at issue was shepherded through the Senate by Texas senator Thomas Connally in 1946 and was informally known as the Connally Amendment. The amendment reserved for the United States the unilateral right to determine what constituted a “domestic issue,” outside of the jurisdiction of the World Court. In so doing, the U.S. could effectively determine which disputes it wished to put before the World Court and which it did not. By labeling any dispute “domestic,” the U.S. government could exempt that dispute from the World Court’s jurisdiction. Critics of the Connally Amendment had long contended that it undermined the Court’s ability to administer international justice, by encouraging other nations to avoid international arbitration by similarly dubbing conflicts “domestic.” Proponents of Connally’s amendment,

meanwhile, contended that it protected the U.S. from intervention in its domestic affairs by other nations and by international bodies.34

The move to repeal the Connally Amendment had many prominent backers. Minnesota senator Hubert Humphrey put a resolution to that effect before the Senate in March 1959, and Vice President Nixon publicized, in an April 19 speech, the administration's intent to recommend formally that Congress modify the amendment to broaden the authority of the International Court. The Minute Women were immediately alarmed and alerted their members in an April newsletter. "Is it not time to make it known to all and sundry that we prefer to retain the right to manage our own affairs and will refuse to turn that inherent right over to a spurious judicial offspring of the monstrous United Nations?" the author of the piece demanded. The following month, Lucille Cardin Crain reported in more detail, reminding Minute Women of former ABA president and Bricker Amendment sponsor Frank Holman's warnings about UN treaties. Crain instructed Minute Women that all UN treaties, "including the present World Court plan presented by a Republican Administration," were rooted in the State Department's 1950 policy that there was "no longer any real difference between domestic and foreign affairs." "It is distressing that the present Administration, despite its promises in the Republican platform of 1952, could appear to be subscribing to this policy," Crain lamented. She also highlighted the possibility of Soviet domination of the International

Court. "Why do we think, then," Crain asked, "that while two Communist judges [from Poland and the Soviet Union] sit on the World Court, we will fare better with that institution than we have in any other experience we have had with the Soviets, directly or through the United Nations?"35

In taking this position, the Minute Women joined a larger conservative outcry against repealing the Connally Amendment, which escalated over the course of 1959 and 1960. In one of his final crusades before his death, Bricker Amendment architect Frank Holman led a band of conservative attorneys in an unsuccessful campaign to change the American Bar Association’s thirteen-year stance opposing the Connally Amendment.36 At their April 1959 convention, the Daughters of the American Revolution also went on record against any change in the terms of America’s relationship to the International Court. “The reserved power to settle domestic issues without World Court interference is a shield against provisions contained in such international conventions as the Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention, which infringe upon the rights of United States citizens,” the Daughters declared.37 In January 1960, the DAR’s new National Defense chairman, Elizabeth Chesnut Barnes, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee against the repeal of the Connally Amendment and any expansion


of the World Court's authority. Barnes listed eleven reasons why repeal of the amendment could be disastrous to American interests. Like the Minute Women, Barnes threatened that repealing the amendment would "confer upon a foreign body the power to determine its judicial jurisdiction" and would subject America to the judgments of Communist judges. Perhaps most fundamentally, she feared that the justices on the International Court would have little understanding of American law and no "tradition of judicial restraint." "The United States during the last twenty-five years," Barnes told the senators, "has experienced decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States in which there has been a trend of blending sociological and political concepts with judicial decision." What reason did Americans have to trust, Barnes demanded, that a World Court would not "decide cases upon a political and ideological rather than upon a strictly judicial basis." Barnes thus obliquely suggested that the World Court would encourage decisions like Brown v. Board that sought to transform American society by interfering with what she viewed as domestic, even local, issues. "Internationalists would superimpose upon this Nation a judicial dictatorship which would rob our Chief Executive of his time-honored authority, deprive the Supreme Court of its prerogatives and dispossess the Senate of its actual power," Barnes concluded dramatically, "Let us preserve our Republic . . . ."38

In an effort to keep her local activists informed, Barnes printed a summary of the Daughters' case against the World Court, as well as a history of the Court's founding, in the April issue of the DAR Magazine. Explaining that the current World Court had its roots in the Permanent Court of International Justice created by Covenant of the League

38 Mrs. Wilson K. Barnes, "World Court—International Court of Justice: Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 27, 1960, HEARING on REPEAL OF CONNALLY AMENDMENT (S. Res. 94)," DAR Magazine, 94 (March 1960), 200–1, 222.
of Nations, Barnes also noted that Secretary of State Christian Herter, as well as “well-known American Socialist, Norman Thomas,” had been in favor of reestablishing the World Court under the auspices of the United Nations. Also among the supporters were numerous women’s organizations, Barnes revealed, including the National Council of Jewish Women, the League of Women Voters, and the American Association of University Women. By contrast, the DAR had a long history of opposing such endeavors, Barnes explained. To prove this patriotic heritage, she quoted former DAR president Mrs. Lowell Fletcher Hobart’s rejection of internationalism and World Court authority from twenty-nine years earlier. By invoking Hobart, Barnes attempted to imbue DAR members with a sense of their own political history, to strengthen their embattled policy positions.\(^3^9\)

Like the Daughters, the Minute Women believed the World Court plan to be part of a larger plot to centralize American society and do away with local autonomy. This plot connected such moves as expansion of World Court authority with programs that consolidated governmental authority closer to home. “According to the planners, life has become so complicated we must have experts to do all but breathe for us,” national chairman Dorothy Frankston commented sardonically in a December 1959 piece. “It is the experts who have given us fluoridation, Metro Government, insidious mental health programs. They seek to change the State Constitutions [and] to give us World Peace through Law.” All of these programs shared a socialistic bent that subsumed the rights of individual American citizens to a variety of national and international controls. And as Frankston reminded her readers in another column, “[s]ocialism . . . is the conditioning prerequisite for Communist take over.” If the Minute Women allowed such measures as

the repeal of the Connally Amendment, Frankston suggested, they were essentially condoning both "the end of American sovereignty" abroad and Communist victory at home. In this sense, U.S. support for expansion of the International Court's power threatened Americans at the local level just as much as UN promotional material placed in department stores. Minute Women perceived in all of these UN-related campaigns an effort to shift the thinking of Americans and the structures of American government toward collectivism.  

Such was the public furor over the proposal that discussion of Humphrey's World Court resolution, which required the affirmation of two-thirds of the Senate to pass, was ultimately postponed indefinitely by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in spite of support from the presidential administration and a bipartisan group of senators. Reports in the media blamed a combination of poor public understanding of the resolution and election-year pressures. Yet this delay was also a modest victory for conservatives who viewed the bill as one more internationalist threat to American interests. This success gave members of the Minute Women and the DAR little comfort, however, in light of the breadth of the internationalist campaign and the support it received from American politicians.  

For the Daughters, the connection between the foreign and the domestic had always been a defensive one. American laws had to be safeguarded from the encroachments of international treaties, and individual rights and privileges protected

---

40 Dorothy Frankston, "Dear Minute Women:" Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (October 1959), 1–2, 4; and Frankston, "Dear Minute Women:" Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (December 1959), 1–2, 4, both on Reel 76, M19, "Minute Women of the U.S.A.," Iowa Right Wing Collection.

from interference by international authorities. By the late fifties, the Daughters had expanded this defensive theory. In part due to the civil rights movement and the *Brown v. Board* decision and in part due to their growing hostility toward the executive branch for its failure to repudiate international entanglements, the Daughters paired their hostility to international regulation of American society with their resentment of federal control of state and local institutions. They perceived direct connections between supporters of both trends and, like the Minute Women, began to posit these efforts as two sides of the same coin. The ultimate goal of internationalism was, according to Mary Barclay Erb, Elizabeth Barnes, and their supporters, the subjugation of America to world government under Communist control. Similarly, the ultimate goal of centralizing federal government was an unwieldy, bureaucratic, socialist version of the American state. To join these two campaigns was a small leap, and as the fifties came to an end, the Daughters focused on several programs that, they argued, made this leap.

The first of these programs was in the field of education, a longstanding target of female reform efforts. In her final newsletter as DAR Chairman of National Defense, Mary Barclay Erb took on what she dubbed the theory of “togetherness.” Togetherness, according to Erb, had originally been proposed by a women’s magazine as a term denoting “the essence of family life.” Unfortunately, Erb said, the idea had been co-opted by “the One Worlders and the modern educators” and was being used to warp the minds of American children. Internationalists posited that the world could be viewed along the same lines as the family and that this perspective would promote harmony among the family of nations. Erb declared this, not a tool for peace, but “a special technique for social regimentation.” The comparison between family and world “defied” both
experience and logic,” according to Erb, because the family was “a small intimate unit of members related either by marriage or blood.” It existed, Erb explained, “to give the children protection from all adverse influences until they develop their individual abilities.” “No government agency or society could ever assume the authority or responsibility that parents should rightfully exert over their minor children,” contended Erb, but this was exactly the goal of the “social engineers and educators.” They sought to create a society in which “the adult is a child to be directed and supervised by government and its agencies.”

To accomplish this, Erb reported, they created “new and novel ideas about modern education, every one of which contributed to the concept of communal living.” These ideas, she explained, had been very popular at the 1955 White House Conference on Education and were subsequently paired with federal aid to promote their usage in American schools. As a next step, Erb’s conspirators began “to equate certain political opinions with correct social thinking and to classify all who protested against such socialization as belonging to a group . . . in need of mental treatment.” In other words, internationalists, social engineers, and modern educators equated conservatism with mental illness. Ultimately, Erb warned, Americans would be brainwashed into believing “that any government official, especially one of the United Nations, would have the right to determine one’s sanity, or right to liberty.” American individualism would thus be destroyed, and a global version of the welfare state would have been established.

Erb’s rendering of these ideas is typically hyperbolic, but her rejection of a citizenry that was dependent on government was rooted in a conservative political

---


perspective. Deriving from a longstanding hostility to New Deal programs and governmental regulation, this suspicion of reliance on government also formed an important part of the Daughters’ rejection of internationalism. In the Daughters’ view, internationalists and Communists believed that rights came from the state, while the Daughters adhered to the American concept of inalienable rights given by God to every individual. An emphasis on individualism unified these two perspectives, and the Daughters’ perception the both governmental regulators and internationalists devalued the individual fed their enmity toward both groups. Erb’s fear that these collectivist ideas had been incorporated into the American educational system to transform the minds of American children, meanwhile, derived both from the use of UNESCO material in schools that emphasized world understanding and the parallel spread of progressive education techniques that focused on relativism and problem solving instead of a more traditional curriculum. Having identified the crisis for her readers, Erb also urged the Daughters to redouble their efforts to fight collectivism. “So long as our States plead for federal funds . . . and as long as socialistic ideologies seem to be gaining acceptance, we must be prepared to negate the spread of these false concepts . . . ,” she declared. “As we see the efforts of our Federal Government increase along the lines of centralization of power in Washington, there is only one thing left for us to do,” Erb argued, “We must increase proportionately our role as alert citizens.”44 An active citizenry was the key to resisting these collectivist trends, and the Daughters were at the forefront of engaged citizenship.

DAR members were encouraged, for the same reasons, to mobilize against the creation of metropolitan governments in American cities. Because of metro government’s

centralizing tendencies, DAR activists accused its supporters of promoting collectivism in American society. Dubbing metro government “a new mask to an old enemy—totalitarian dictatorship,” DAR speaker Jo Hindman explained in one speech that proponents of metro government advocated “political consolidation—centralization—which takes government further from citizen control.” Though Hindman acknowledged that metro government supporters had not overtly mentioned “internation-world government,” she was confident that this was the next logical step once city had been merged with county, county with state, state with region, and region with nation. The most disturbing element of the metropolitan government campaign for the Daughters was the urban renewal initiatives that frequently accompanied calls for metropolitan consolidation. Hindman contended that metro government supporters’ use of eminent domain laws to confiscate private property in the name of urban renewal derived directly from the UN’s refusal to protect private property rights. Proposing that “the United Nations Charter” might be “where hordes of Metro planners get their mandate” to take private property, Hindman declared it “common knowledge that Metro adjuncts hold memberships in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including UNESCO . . . .” Notably, she urged DAR members to “resist Metro,” not by voting locally, but by pressing for the Bricker Amendment, American withdrawal from UNESCO, and “abrogation of the United Nations Charter, itself.”

45 Indicating that they shared this fear of the consolidation of local governments, DAR delegates at the April 1959 national convention voted in a resolution urging “all citizens” to resist campaigns for metropolitan government, because the “logical result of this long-range, well-designed plan, starting at

the local level, is the ultimate establishment of a totalitarian world government.” Accordingly, DAR members should combat this UN-inspired campaign to transform American society one community at a time.46

Finally, the Daughters stepped up an established campaign against a UN specialized agency with particular connections to local American communities: the United Nations Children’s Fund, or UNICEF. Having condemned UNICEF’s frequent partnership with the World Health Organization, the proportion of its budget paid by the United States, and its additional fundraising programs, a resolution passed by delegates at the DAR’s April 1959 national meeting concluded by urging “members to study carefully and analyze” UNICEF because its programs were “designed to promote the World Welfare State and to remove the Christ from Christmas.” When former DAR member Eleanor Roosevelt critiqued this resolution, new National Defense chairman Elizabeth Barnes published an article in the DAR Magazine presenting, in more detail, the rationale behind the Daughters’ hostility to UNICEF. Barnes condemned the continual funding of a relief organization unconnected to any war-related emergency. “The Government of the United States is not a philanthropic organization,” Barnes sneered. “There is no constitutional power in the Federal Government to dispense monies for charitable projects . . . however worthy.” She contended instead that “[r]egimented and forced giving is a part of the plan for the World Welfare State” that violated American charitable traditions. Moreover, Barnes argued, UNICEF aid provided only temporary answers to

deep-seated world problems that required more systematic solutions, which should only be applied by national governments.\textsuperscript{47}

Still more disturbing was UNICEF's attempt to use American culture to promote its program and encourage additional giving by American citizens. "Members of the D.A.R. and Christians throughout the country have been much alarmed," Barnes reported, "by a concerted effort on the part of proponents of One Worldism to substitute activities on behalf of the United Nations for celebrations which should be concerned with religious observances or which have a particular reason for being a part of this country's mores." UNICEF trick-or-treat and Christmas card projects were prime examples of this inappropriate merger of American traditions with United Nations programs. While the trick-or-treat campaign was presented by its supporters (like the General Federation) as a means of keeping kids out of trouble on Halloween, the Daughters felt instead that the campaign unfairly asked Americans to give additional money to a UN program they had already funded and, simultaneously, taught American children "that they are now citizens of the world." The UNICEF greeting card campaign, meanwhile, inappropriately associated a Christian holiday with a secular (at best), or godless (at worst), organization. Though billed as a fundraising technique, UNICEF greeting cards had a darker purpose, according to DAR leadership. "This plan to associate the United Nations with Christmas, and have it replace the religious aspects of Christmas, is believed to be part of a broader Communist plan to destroy all religious beliefs and customs," Barnes informed her readers. Barnes knew that Eleanor Roosevelt would not be the only critic of the Daughters' stance on UNICEF. Still, she pressed her

readers to stand firm in their opposition. "We hope," she concluded, "that the reasons outlined in this article . . . will furnish compelling arguments in discussions with those who advocate the support of this agency of the United Nations."48

In each of these instances, foreign affairs concerns merged with local concerns, creating a direct linkage between the United Nations and battles being fought by women in communities across the country. DAR leaders pressed their membership to take a stand in these battles against collectivism and for American individualism, and they provided them with background material to support their side of the debate. By combating "socialistic" trends in school curricula, plans for metro government, and UNICEF trick-or-treat campaigns, DAR members could defend their home communities against UN-sponsored attempts to undermine American traditions from within. They could also claim the mantle of true American republicanism, in opposition to the controlling power of the liberal establishment, the press, the judiciary, social engineers, progressive educators, and last but not least, communists. Because the plans promoted by these groups—progressive education, metro government, UNICEF—were collectivist in their emphasis on social interdependence and in their control by large centralized bureaucracies, DAR activists argued that they were also by definition opposed to traditional American values. In opposing them, the Daughters argued that they remained true to their self-governing, individualist national heritage. Moreover, because each program, according to the Daughters, was connected to the UN, these programs also had a direct link to the Soviet Union and international Communism. Identifying the United Nations as the agent behind these social changes and the mechanism by which they were introduced into American

society gave the Daughters a concrete means of opposing a broad array of societal forces.\textsuperscript{49}

This was their responsibility as engaged and politically informed citizens, to be sure, but it was also, according to some DAR leaders, their responsibility as women. Activist Daughters claimed this role by invoking the revolutionary heritage of America's female citizens. One essay submitted by an Illinois member to the DAR Magazine traced the illustrious history of DAR women and used it to spur her peers to action. Claiming that women stood side-by-side with American men during the Revolution, Mrs. Paul Fisher traced this legacy of patriotism down through generations of American women.

"Fear was not the way of women born in freedom," Fisher asserted. "They were the mothers of a new race. They were not content to be merely industrious wives. They had minds and ambitions, too." Their descendents, Fisher wrote proudly, "educated themselves," "rose as individuals," "secured property rights," and "fought to gain the franchise." "Women of today inherited these qualities from their thoughtful mothers," Fisher explained, "We have known no other life than freedom of action." Yet this was only the beginning of women's capabilities. "We must go on," Fisher insisted, "We must set the pace for more truly American legislation."\textsuperscript{50}


Fisher went on to describe all the ills she perceived in American society, from the brainwashing of American children to the merger of two political parties into “one liberal, international, prideless mold.” In an impressive declaration of political identity, Fisher then offered American women as the solution to this political emergency. “Now is the time for women to strike against the destruction of American freedom,” she avowed, “We are educated, we have gained status and are respected as individuals. We stand for stability, tradition, and conservative beliefs.” “We must urge a movement of enlightened conservative principles,” Fisher continued, pressing Daughters to stay informed, to form their own opinions “through study and reflection,” and to “speak out openly and vigorously.” “[T]his sisterhood of dedicated American women can sway public opinion toward faith in our future,” Fisher concluded. “We have work to do.”

This unusual statement captured the conservative feminism on which DAR leaders increasingly relied to spur their membership to political activism. By claiming American political history, these women could also claim civic authority to bolster their increasingly embattled position in the foreign affairs debate and its domestic corollaries. This statement reveals a solidifying sense of conservative political identity among DAR women, just as it reveals their sense of political crisis.

On occasion, leaders of the DAR consciously stoked the latter to feed the former. One such instance occurred in the wake of the organization’s 1959 national convention. At this convention, the Daughters voted, over the opposition of approximately one hundred delegates, to reaffirm their 1958 resolution advocating withdrawal from the United Nations. Although not on the official schedule, the reaffirmation was proposed

---

from the floor by prominent Mississippi Daughter Florence Sillers Ogden because, in her view, there had been “some doubt expressed by the newspapers as to the D.A.R. stand on the United Nations.” After the close of the convention, the DAR’s recording secretary sent copies of all the DAR resolutions to various members of Congress and other governmental officials, including UN ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Ironically, given his elder namesake’s central role in preventing U.S. participation in the League of Nations, Lodge did not prove sympathetic to the Daughters’ recommendation. Instead, he took the opportunity to respond with a letter calling the DAR’s position on the UN the result of “virtually total misapprehension.” He also released the letter to the press, launching a firestorm of public criticism of the DAR.52

Frustrated by multiple editorials echoing Lodge’s critique of their position, DAR leaders published a caustic response from Ogden in the National Defender, a new publication designed to serve as the official mouthpiece of the DAR’s National Defense Committee. Introducing the piece, the officers of the National Defense Committee announced that, in view of editorials that had been “belittling the Society generally,” they took “pleasure in presenting an excellent reply.” Ogden then offered her rendering of the Daughter’s well-known case against the United Nations. “We do not give an inch,” she announced defiantly, cataloguing the UN’s many faults and failings, from the role of Alger Hiss in its founding to the Korean “defeat” to the dangers treaty law posed to American sovereignty. In response to the Christian Science Monitor’s suggestion that the

---

Daughters should invite Lodge to speak to them about the UN, Ogden contended that the DAR had “watched [the UN’s] performance much longer than Mr. Lodge could possibly speak to us and ‘explain.’” These women were UN experts already. “This DAR does not want Mr. Lodge, Mrs. Roosevelt or any other spokesman for the United Nations coming to our platform to ‘explain’ the United Nations and our ‘misapprehensions,’” Ogden averred. Invoking the Daughter’s patriotic forbearers, she demanded pointedly, “Did our forefathers, after writing and signing the Declaration of Independence, invite King George or his representative to come before them to ‘explain’ why they should not sign it?” “You are either for a free and independent government, or you are against it,” Ogden insisted, “You are either for World Government, or you are against it. . . . The DAR are not middle-of-the-roaders. They are not compromisers. Neither were the Founders of this Nation.”

DAR leadership clearly hoped that Ogden’s implacable response would bolster any members who might be shamed by negative press coverage. Of course, the Daughters were veterans of bad press. The politically savvy among them treated criticism as fuel for their political outrage.

The immediate reaction of DAR leadership to Lodge’s critique reflects a larger initiative within the organization to better manage their responses to pressing political issues. Leading Daughters, particularly in the National Defense Committee, hoped to improve the coordination of their membership’s political activism. At the April 1960 national convention, National Defense Chairman Elizabeth Barnes announced plans to revamp the structure of the DAR’s national defense program. “In order to facilitate a prompt response from our membership on matters of vital interest,” Barnes explained, she had requested the vice-chairmen of national defense in each state to provide more

---

53 Ogden, “Cannot Serve Two Masters,” Box 8, Folder 11, Dunaway Papers.
support for state chairmen. She also mandated the appointment of legislative chairmen for each state, as well as the creation of state speakers’ bureaus. State chairmen were instructed to create a committee of local chapter chairmen who would “contact designated chapters when it is necessary to get quick action on a release from National Headquarters.” Barnes encouraged individual chapter chairmen to employ a similar structure within their local groups. She also created cards that every chapter was expected to return to national headquarters indicating that chapter representatives had “alerted their congressional representatives and chapter members” about important issues.54 In addition, Barnes spearheaded the creation of the National Defender publication, to replace the less detailed single page allotted to the National Defense Committee in the DAR’s Press Digest. Mostly made up of condensed versions of news items produced by the National Defense staff, the National Defender was “designed primarily to promote [the] educational work” of the National Defense Committee. Barnes noted that the publication had “stimulated to a marked degree the interest not only of our chapter members but many non-members.” It had also brought in numerous new subscriptions and funds for the committee.55

Overall, Barnes’s efforts seem to have been intended to create a more formal lobbying structure for the DAR, so that the organization and its members would function more effectively in the political arena. By streamlining communication between national headquarters, state chairmen, and local chapters, Barnes’s system made mobilizing women at the local level around the country easier for DAR leaders. As is illustrated by


the Ogden letter, the *National Defender* also facilitated contact between the National Defense Committee and DAR members everywhere. As Barnes herself admitted, this was a system designed explicitly to enable the Daughters to rally around political issues as an organization and to act aggressively when needed.

Clearly, press attacks had not daunted the DAR's national administration; to the contrary, opposition from elite internationalists in the national media only stoked their outrage and suspicion. As the sixties dawned, growing public opprobrium, together with burgeoning fears about the infiltration of internationalist thinking into American society, led the DAR to develop more inflated suspicions of mental health legislation. Like the Minute Women, DAR leaders began to see connections between internationalism and mental health initiatives. Elizabeth Barnes produced a two-part series for the *DAR Magazine* entitled "Are You Mental?" that detailed the threat posed to American communities by mental health projects. Barnes began by warning DAR members to be certain before they contributed to any mental health drive that they were not giving to "a group which will one day claim you as a 'patient' to be sent to Alaska or some other convenient hideaway for those who disagree with socialism." Yet the risks of these programs went beyond political retaliation, according to Barnes. She detailed the connections between the World Health Organization, the World Federation for Mental Health, and the National Association for Mental Health. Together, Barnes said, these groups had devised a variety of mental health projects that could affect the lives of Americans.56

The WHO in particular, according to Barnes, pushed for the passage of legislation providing for research, treatment, control, and prevention of mental illness, including

---

initiatives to admit foreign doctors to the United States and to establish mental health divisions at mother and child health centers. "What a good scheme for one-worlders to fit mankind into a common mold," Barnes commented. More insidious still, proponents of mental health programs attempted to indoctrinate American clergy. Ministers had been encouraged, according to Barnes, "to take their training in the mental health field . . . in a family or court agency dealing with domestic problems so they could help people alter their pattern of behavior . . . ." The invasion of the intimate realms of family and religious life offended Barnes profoundly, who labeled it "a great menace to our freedoms" and likened it to the Communists' use of the church in Poland "as a means to gain their end." Furthermore, these attempts to intervene in the relationships of American citizens were not limited to individual family units; broader social relationships were also on the mental health agenda. Barnes provocatively quoted a psychiatrist who stated that desegregation was "above all, a psychological problem."57 By implication, the World Health Organization's mental health programs were simply another way the UN interfered in America's domestic matters.

Connecting the UN to international Communism, Barnes ultimately concluded that "Mental Health is a Marxist weapon in the ideological war being waged for the minds of free men, a technique to compel conformity in an individual's political beliefs, social attitudes, and personal tastes." Political, social, and personal conformity, Barnes argued, was simply a method to smooth the path to world government under Communist control. Yet adult Americans were not the group most at risk. As the second piece in Barnes's two-part exposé revealed, America's youth was the primary target of internationalist mental health activists. "The One-Worlders [have] agreed to intervene in

57 Barnes, "Are You Mental?" (May 1960), 383.
the affairs of mankind, to create a political creature completely subservient to
collectivism on a world-wide scale,” Barnes noted at the start of her second article, “The
third stage of their program . . . concentrates on children.” Barnes went on to detail a
whole series of personality tests and mental health analyses then being used in school
systems around the country. In addition to possibly upsetting children by invading their
privacy, Barnes contended, these tests risked those children whose answers did not
conform being labeled mentally unstable. A child who took “exception to UNESCO
propaganda,” for instance, might be committed, Barnes suggested provocatively. Under
the guise of promoting their mental stability, mental health experts were invading
children’s minds and their families to reshape the ways they thought and interacted, and
this attempt to eliminate “all opposition to a collectivist society” was spreading
throughout American institutions. “These tactics start in schoolrooms,” Barnes cautioned,
“and are used in colleges, churches, and in groups where those who are ceaselessly trying
to indoctrinate others into one-worldism operate.” She urged her readers to “awaken to
this great threat.” 58

As they concentrated more and more on the integration of internationalist
programs into American society, conservative women focused increasingly on children’s
education. History textbooks were a primary area of concern for DAR activists. New
Jersey Daughter Marian Strack produced an article for the DAR Magazine accusing the
Departments of Education and State of conspiring with UNESCO to alter textbook
guidelines in support of internationalism. Strack based her allegations on a pamphlet
produced by the Office of Education sometime around 1950 that focused, Strack

58 Barnes, “Are You Mental?” (May 1960), 384; Barnes, “Are You Mental?” DAR Magazine, 94 (October
1960), 582–86.
contended, on “chang[ing] the emphasis of our own textbooks so that the student would acquire a strong attachment for certain international concepts by developing less attachment to the United States.” Strack revealed that the pamphlet suggested incorporating phrases such as “family of nations” or “brotherhood of nations,” which emphasized global connection and interdependence as well as commonalities among the peoples of the world, into history texts. The pamphlet also suggested, according to Strack, augmenting discussions of current events in place of history, with particular attention to the achievements of the United Nations. According to Strack, the DAR’s recent survey of textbooks confirmed that many of these recommendations had been implemented. She concluded by condemning those officials in American government who had allowed “this indoctrination plan” to go forward.59

Minute Women expressed similar outrage over the national high school debate propositions for 1960-61, which they argued promoted collectivist thinking. As reported in the Minute Women’s newsletter, the propositions were, first, “Resolved, That the North Atlantic Treaty Organization should be transformed into a federal government;” second, “Resolved, That the United Nations should be significantly strengthened;” and third, “Resolved, that the United States should initiate a federal world government.” In addition to the problematic resolutions, the Minute Women discovered that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had prepared a collection of documents to send to schools for students to use as supporting material. The collection was, in the Minute Women’s estimation, skewed toward the internationalist side of the debate. It contained numerous articles by such prominent internationalist figures as Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul-Henri

Spaak but only one article by anti-internationalist lawyer Frank Holman. Horrified, national leaders sent out an alert to mobilize Minute Women. The piece urged Minute Women to “get in touch with your local high schools to furnish these students with material explaining why we must not enter a world government either through NATO or through the United Nations.”

The following month, one member reported on her attempt to challenge the debate topic at her local high school. She had, as she described it, “put up a little fuss” about the topic and managed to wrangle an invitation to speak for one hour to the debate team and their coaches. Even the coaches, she noted, seemed not to see the danger of the resolutions. Reviewing the materials provided for the students’ use, the anonymous Minute Woman discovered only a small number of opponents of world government represented. Instead, she explained, “debaters were frequently directed to articles by such one-worlders, Red-fronters, and Soviet appeasers as Bertrand Russell, . . . George F. Kennan, and Vera M. Dean.” Though the material claimed to give evidence for both sides of the debate, the woman found that “each of these ‘sides’ presented only ways and means for obtaining a world government.” She recommended that the best way for other Minute Women to confront this issue was to “inform parents of debating team students, and their teachers who, in the main, are just as naïve as the students,” of the subversive forces at work behind the topic.

---


61 “Planning United States Insecurity,” *Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.* (November–December 1960), 2–4, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection. Vera M. Dean was a well known scholar of international relations who had served on the U.S. delegations to the founding conferences of both the United Nations and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. She was a longtime staff member of the Foreign Policy Association, where she was both a writer and an editor. She also directed the University of Rochester’s Non-Western Civilization Program during this
What is notable about all of these efforts against internationalism in 1959 and 1960 is their almost complete focus on politics and political culture at the local level. Conservative clubwomen are remarkably silent on the 1960 presidential election. The Minute Women did report proudly that two members, West Virginia Minute Woman Jessica Payne and California Minute Woman Anne Heaver, were running for Congress. Yet this election served primarily to cement the alienation conservative women felt from both political parties at the national level. John Kennedy's liberal coalition of civil rights supporters, labor unions, and Catholics held little appeal, of course, but Richard Nixon also disappointed conservatives across the nation. Conservative Republicans had failed in their attempt to secure the party's nomination for Barry Goldwater, leaving many in the right wing feeling unrepresented once again. Certainly Nixon's choice of Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., as a running mate must have alienated the DAR, given Lodge's recent attack on their UN position. Too, Nixon's vocal support for repealing the Connally Amendment and broadening the authority of the World Court had rendered him suspect to UN opponents like the Minute Women and the DAR. Thus, although conservative clubwomen remained determined to wield their influence to move the country away from collectivism and internationalism, the ascendancy of the internationalist wing of the GOP encouraged them to center their efforts during this period on the grassroots.


Nevertheless, this did not leave conservative women uninformed on developments in international politics. With United Nations troops attempting to bring the crisis in the Belgian Congo under control and the UN loudly criticizing South African apartheid measures, the sudden interest the Minute Women displayed in visiting African heads of state in 1960 is not surprising.\(^{64}\) In one 1960 newsletter, the Minute Women criticized *My Weekly Reader and Junior Review*, two papers frequently placed in school libraries, for announcing the visit of Guinea president Ahmed Sekou Toure, without informing readers that Toure was a Marxist; chastised officials in Washington for welcoming President Kwameh Nkrumah of Ghana, also a Marxist; and rebuked members of the American Committee on Africa for inviting Kenyan labor leader Tom Mboya to speak at an African independence rally in New York.\(^{65}\) This attention to the spread of Marxism in African countries reflected more than simply Cold War concerns over the expansion of Communism. In the preceding five years, significant numbers of African and Asian nations had been admitted to the UN, adding to the number of nonaligned states in the organization. Minute Women watched these developments with apprehension, both because they feared the tendency of nonaligned states to vote with the Soviet bloc in the General Assembly and because they believed newly independent nations, particularly in Africa, to be ill-suited to making responsible political decisions.

---


Displaying an unsurprising paternalistic Eurocentrism, in their next newsletter, Minute Women national chairman Dorothy Frankston quoted an alert from another conservative publication about the changing character of the United Nations. Announcing that, in the UN, “Libya’s 500,000 nomads have the same voice as America’s 170 literate millions,” the alert also contended that “[t]he approaching imbalance in the UN announces the insolvency of the West in The Organization.” “Led by Russia, the Afro-Asiatics will have an absolute majority in the Assembly,” the piece warned, and that meant “their word will be law.” Expanding UN membership thus benefited the global interests of the Soviet Union, not the United States, the Minute Women argued, and could be added to the list of ways in which the UN threatened American interests. Certainly some of their discomfort with the expansion of UN membership derived from their hostility to racial equality. One newsletter quoted segregationist Mississippi Congressman John Bell Williams’s accusation that “African revolutionists,” in the country because of student exchange programs, were fueling the efforts of African American students leading the sit-in movements across the South. Yet the Minute Women also feared that the growing number of African nations in the UN could institutionalize this kind of intervention in local affairs. Later in the year, the newsletter featured a piece calling supporters of repealing the Connally Amendment deluded for “believing that the World Court will unerringly and meticulously distinguish between domestic and international matters.” The piece specifically drew readers’ attention to


"deliberate meddling by American leaders in Washington and in the United Nations with the domestic affairs of South Africa." Clearly, the piece suggested to Minute Women, if the UN was willing to chastise South Africa for its apartheid policies, unlimited jurisdiction for the World Court of a United Nations with a large African representation could spell trouble for southern American segregationists.

Conservative clubwomen were not alone in connecting the American civil rights movement to the independence of African nations. At their April 1960 convention, the General Federation listened to Eleanor Roosevelt urge them to make the same connection, if to different ends. The Federation honored Roosevelt at that meeting with a medallion for her achievements in human relations, noting that her "perception of and insight into public affairs has spurred women all over the world to take more interest in government realizing that with distances telescoped, what happens to the people of other lands impinge[s] directly . . . on our own lives." In her acceptance speech, Roosevelt sought to reinforce this link, as well as its converse, that what happened in America had great significance for people all over the world. "There was a time, of course," Roosevelt began, "when we could talk about domestic issues and 'foreign issues.' That day is past because there is hardly a domestic issue which somewhere does not have contact with a foreign issue." Women bore unique responsibility to bring this connection home to Americans, Roosevelt argued, because of "the better understanding which we have through intuition . . . of the feeling of other peoples throughout the world." "Here at home we paint the picture in our daily lives of what democracy means," Roosevelt continued,

---

“All over the world they hear whatever happens anywhere in this country.” This meant that women could have powerful influence over world affairs.69

As a result, Roosevelt contended that Federation women could not afford to think of any question, “no matter how difficult it is,” as exclusively domestic in its implications. Roosevelt then drew on her own personal experience interacting with leaders of newly independent nations. “[I]n some areas of our country it is very difficult to face what civil rights means in the world as a whole today,” Roosevelt acknowledged, “but the question you meet is ‘How do you treat your minorities?’ And it is not easy to answer—because you know the people asking it of you are often people of color who have just gained their freedom and they want dignity in the world, they want to be treated as equals.” The ability to answer this question, Roosevelt suggested, had profound implications for American prestige on the international stage. “[A]s you journey the world you come to realize,” she concluded, “that hard as it may be, this is no longer just something you can think about and hope that some day it will be solved. Your leadership in the world is at stake, and the communists will exploit this in every way they can.”70 Roosevelt thus urged Federation clubwomen to support civil rights for African Americans because of the implications for American foreign policy. It was a connection that had been drawn before, but the growing number and influence of African nations in the UN gave it new resonance.71

69 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 39, pp. 8(a)–10(a), WHRC.

70 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 39, pp. 11(a)–12(a), WHRC.

In spite of Roosevelt’s attempt to play on the Federation’s longstanding commitment to mobilizing domestically for international issues, Federation programs continued to eschew the controversy of civil rights activism. Concern with the problems of African and Asian nations made the Federation agenda, to be sure, but with no overt references to domestic race relations. At this same conference, Federation women heard a talk on the plight of Muslim refugees around to world, particularly in Africa and Asia. Numerous local clubs also reported their efforts to raise funds for international relief efforts, including those that benefited Asian and African countries. Yet no further mention was made of the Cold War obligation to work simultaneously for African American civil rights that Roosevelt attempted to highlight. Conference events firmly lodged the Federation’s work for African and Asian nations in the more familiar (and less politically volatile) realms of international humanitarian, aid, and trade programs. Engaging domestically with civil rights activism seems to have proved too contentious for Federation leaders to promote. This avoidance of political controversy had the unintended consequence of ceding this aspect of the UN debate entirely to the Federation’s right-wing competitors. By sidestepping this issue, the Federation allowed the DAR and the Minute Women to monopolize the discussion of connections between the UN and domestic racial reform at the grassroots. In so doing, they empowered one of


72 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 40, pp. 820–35, WHRC; for examples of fundraising program for international aid, see Colorado, Minnesota, and Georgia state reports in Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 40, pp. 884, 900, 936, WHRC.
their opponents’ most politically charged and concrete critiques of the United Nations. They also failed to participate in a movement that was increasingly energizing more progressive women’s organizations and younger Americans around the country.

The same was not true for other forms of political activism, however. The Federation inaugurated a new president, Oklahoma clubwoman Katie Ozbirn, at this same conference, and in her inaugural speech, Ozbirn outlined a bold new agenda for the Federation in the coming years. She began by invoking the Federation’s long history of international activism. The Federation, according to Ozbirn, “worked for international goodwill and understanding in a period when our country was steeped in the philosophy of isolationism.” “Our clubwomen have never made the mistake of ignoring our neighbor because it was ‘too much trouble’ to try to understand him,” she declared. Ozbirn also reminded her listeners that “as early as 1896, the General Federation was agitating for a bill in Congress that would provide for the settlement of our international problems around a peace table.” Because of this history of internationalism, Ozbirn said, it was “altogether fitting” that the Federation had participated in the United Nations’ founding conference.\textsuperscript{73} As the sixties began, Ozbirn explained, the Federation faced a new set of international challenges, dictated primarily by the Cold War raging between the United States and the Soviet Union. Ozbirn declared that “[t]wo nations, representing two ideologies, in a life and death struggle for the minds of men,” shaped world affairs. Federation clubwomen must do their part in this struggle to “mobilize the womanpower of the General Federation,” beginning, as always, in local communities. Ozbirn urged Federation delegates to spend the next two years reevaluating and adjusting Federation programs “to meet the needs and demands of this day.” “[C]ubwomen must lay aside old

\textsuperscript{73} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 40, pp. 1034–37, WHRC.
rules and customs and unite in giving their best efforts to meet the present challenges,” Ozbirn avowed.\textsuperscript{74}

Ozbirn went on to clarify just exactly what she meant by abandoning “old rules and customs.” She encouraged clubs to do away with old methods of hosting expert speakers and turn their club programs into roundtable discussions “where clubwomen could meet, study and engage . . . .” She also pressed local clubs to “open wide the doors” to people from the community so that they could participate in these same discussions. Ozbirn announced that she had even conducted a survey of state governors, senators, and university presidents to determine what issues most interested Americans around the country, with the hope of tailoring the Federation’s programs to those interests. Ozbirn declared her belief that the key to dealing with all of these issues was “the immense proliferation of action through dedicated and informed women, acting on a voluntary basis.” Voluntarism was “the essence of responsible citizenship and the basis of democracy,” she said, and women had recognized its value for generations.

In terms of specific programs, Ozbirn noted that she intended to focus the international efforts of her administration on the Western Hemisphere. Specifically, Ozbirn planned to highlight Canada and (perhaps more importantly) Latin America as a new front in the Cold War. If the United States would work to bind itself more closely with its northern and southern neighbors, Ozbirn argued, the Western Hemisphere could become “a true bulwark of peace and democracy.” Certainly, Ozbirn’s focus on Latin America must have been motivated in part by the success of the Cuban Revolution. She noted that the Federation’s associates in the State Department had commended the Federation for its chosen focus and planned to provide support for seminars on both

\textsuperscript{74} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 40, pp. 1038–39, WHRC.
Canada and Latin America. Ozbirn thus continued the Federation's close association with the federal government, by changing the concentration of their international relations work to address a pressing American foreign policy issue.\footnote{Convention Records (Proceedings-Transcripts), 1960, Box 40, pp. 1042-45, WHRC.}

Yet, Ozbirn had not finished introducing new Federation strategies. She concluded her speech by identifying the forthcoming election as the most immediate concern for Federation members. Ozbirn intended to use the occasion of this national political contest to press forward another important shift in Federation policy. “The time has come,” she announced, “when we must discard the outmoded idea that the General Federation is a non-political organization.” Instead, she clarified, the Federation was “a bi-partisan organization.” “Politics today is everyone’s business,” Ozbirn argued, “We are obliged, as responsible citizens, to know the issues, the principles involved, and the character of the men and women who are seeking public office.” With this pronouncement, Ozbirn officially abandoned women’s clubs historic disavowal of partisan politics. She acknowledged, instead, that her clubwomen not only were but should be invested in American politics. It was their duty as citizens to participate, and their duty as clubwomen to encourage others to do so. Ozbirn noted that the voting record of American citizens indicated a troubling level of apathy about exercising the franchise. She begged Federation delegates “to immediately set into motion an intensive program in your communities designed to arouse your citizens from their apathetic indifference.”

“The fate of this era, in this perilous time, could well be determined by the next election,” Ozbirn cautioned, “for much of the survival of the Free World and of this nation, depends on the leadership of your Nation.” This overt politicization of the mission of Federation clubs reflected the profound changes that had taken place over the fifteen years since the
UN’s founding. Federation clubwomen were no longer disinterested clubwomen working for world order. They were partisan political actors guiding their fellow citizens toward making responsible political choices for the good of the nation and the world.76

Ozbirn’s express claim of a political identity (and her express renunciation of a non-political one) illustrates an important shift in Federation culture that had paralleled the group’s investment in foreign affairs in the postwar period. Though the Federation’s foreign policy activism had long emphasized the women’s roles as citizens and their obligation to shape American foreign policy and promote international awareness, that Ozbirn began her speech by reminding her audience of the Federation’s history of internationalism suggests the important role this investment in global politics had also played in the Federation’s growing comfort with political participation. Their interest in global politics, after all, had led to formal recognition of the organization by the State Department and the United Nations. It had encouraged their clubwomen to become experts on international affairs and American foreign policy. It had equipped them to lead their communities in understanding the issues at stake in the Cold War. This foreign affairs activism, therefore, facilitated a new level of domestic political participation by Federation clubwomen. Ozbirn simply insisted that Federation clubwomen openly acknowledge this transformation.

The reports at the national convention the following year from state chairmen indicated that some local clubs took this advice to heart. South Carolina clubs, their state president reported, “encourage[d] political consciousness among our women, because we know that many of these problems must be resolved within the field of politics.” South Carolina clubwomen were, she stated, “keenly aware of the many international

76 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1960, Box 40, pp. 1045–47, WHRC.
problems,” but local clubs would also “seek to develop among the women of South Carolina, a keener awareness of their role in public affairs and of their personal responsibility in the social welfare of our state.” South Carolina clubwomen would, their president promised, “continue to train for leadership. . . .”\textsuperscript{77} Missouri’s state president also cleverly reported that her clubwomen planned to “put the ‘U’ and ‘I’ back in ‘public issues.’” Missouri clubs had already been asked to plan discussion programs “in every field of study, whether it is local, state, national, or international. . . .” Once those programs had been held, they would “act to try to do something. To stimulate interests, to try to broaden our past activity and participation in legislation.”\textsuperscript{78}

Not all clubs made these overt commitments to engaged political activism, of course. Some simply maintained their programs as they had been before Ozbirn’s call to arms, emphasizing community work, fundraising, and education for global awareness. Yet as Ozbirn’s speech had suggested, much of the Federation’s international affairs work focused less on the United Nations and more on improving America’s position in the Cold War. Even International Relations Day at the Federation’s 1961 conference featured numerous discussions of Cold War contests with the Soviets. Federation delegates heard from their international relations chairman Zaio Schroeder about the danger posed by Cuba’s connections to international Communism, the importance of Latin American friendship, the prospect of China developing nuclear weapons, and the Soviet Union’s aid campaigns to nations like Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, and India. This last issue, which pitched underdeveloped nations as Cold War battlegrounds, gave

\textsuperscript{77} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1961, Box 41, pp. 153–54, WHRC.

\textsuperscript{78} Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1961, Box 41, pp. 306–9, WHRC.
the Federation's emphasis on aid programs even more significance. Yet the United Nations was wholly absent from these international affairs reports.

The Federation did reaffirm their support for the United Nations at this same meeting, with a unanimously approved resolution calling the UN "the only true world forum" and "the greatest organized hope for all mankind." The final sentence of the resolution displayed a slight shift in focus, however. "The General Federation of Women's Clubs," the text read, "pledges its support of and confidence in the United States of America delegation at the United Nations and in the present Secretary-General."

By thus highlighting the U.S. delegation and the Secretary-General, the Federation emphasized their loyalty to U.S. interests. The reference to Secretary-General Hammarskjöld must certainly have been in response to repeated Soviet calls for his resignation, because of Hammarskjöld's handling of the Congo crisis. The endorsement of the U.S. delegates, meanwhile, was undoubtedly meant for Adlai Stevenson, Kennedy's newly appointed, and controversial, UN ambassador.79

What limited discussion there was about the UN at this meeting focused more specifically on its Commission on the Status of Women. The Federation had supported the CSW since its founding, and Federation representatives periodically reported on its progress. Still, at this Federation convention, the Status of Women Commission received singularly detailed attention. Recent Kennedy appointee to the UN Commission (and

79 For Federation UN Resolution, see Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1961, Box 41, pp. 287–89, WHRC; Soviet criticism of Hammarskjöld began in September 1960, due to Hammarskjöld's failure to use UN troops to support Patrice Lumumba's forces in the Congo. The Soviets accused Hammarskjöld of using the United Nations to further Western policy agendas. On September 23, 1960, in a speech to the General Assembly, Khrushchev called for Hammarskjöld's resignation and replacement by a group of three men representing, respectively, the Soviet Union and its bloc, the Western nations, and the nonaligned nations. The Soviets would make this request repeatedly for the remainder of Hammarskjöld's tenure. See Heller, United Nations Under Dag Hammarskjöld, 127–30; and Meisler, United Nations, 121–22; on Adlai Stevenson's appointment as UN ambassador, see Meisler, United Nations, 134–37.
former chair of the Women’s Division of the Democratic National Convention) Gladys Avery Tillett addressed the assembled Federation members on her work with the CSW. Tillett began her talk by urging her female audience to “at some time in your career[s] to give some time to the political party of your choice.” “What a reservoir of leads and leadership we have in our great volunteer organizations of women,” Tillett commented, “and yet many of these women take the veil politically.” She then discussed her recent journey to Africa, pressing her audience to try to make connections with women in African nations. “I wish more of our . . . clubwomen could go and meet them and see them” Tillett said, “and bring the word back and carry the word . . . about our country.” This kind of publicity was key in the face of Soviet efforts in the region, Tillett insisted, since it helped to keep these emerging nations “in the democratic orbit.” By visiting African nations, Tillett suggested, clubwomen could more actively use their influence to promote American interests, in addition to informing Americans about conditions abroad.

International Relations Day also included an information session on the CSW. Mrs. Joseph Page of Kentucky chaired the Federation’s Status of Women Division, and she began her presentation by again urging Federation members to “awaken in women a full awareness of their own possibilities.” “Go beyond your membership,” she insisted, “extend your inspiration, and your leadership to include your community, for it is women themselves who will improve the status of women.” Reminding her audience of women’s increased economic power in American society, Page asked Federation members to “work for identical curricula in schools for girls and boys” and to “insist that girls remain in school until they graduate.” She also suggested that Federation’s clubs plan women’s affairs conferences in their communities to press for new work opportunities for women,

80 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1961, Box 41, pp. 503–16, WHRC.
"especially older women." Directing her delegates toward an agency that would help shape American women's campaigns for political recognition in the sixties, Page instructed Federation clubs to contact the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor for advice on planning such conferences. 81

All of these domestic efforts to advance women's position, Page informed her listeners, would also facilitate global stability. Paralleling their efforts to promote women's interests within the United States should be a campaign to promote the advancement of women internationally. In order to "build mutual respect and understanding of the women of the world," Page suggested Federation clubs "use every facility at your command" to educate American women about women of other nations. "All over the world there are signs of a great awakening among women," Page declared, "awakening to their rights, and to their duties, . . . and we have a responsibility in this awakening." This responsibility was to build bridges among the women around the globe, Page insisted, which would serve as the basis for world understanding. By working for their own advancement and the advancement of women in other nations, Page argued, female citizens could lay the foundation for world peace based "not . . . upon economic and political arrangements," but "upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind." 82

Page paired political advancement for women directly with the internationalist mission of the Federation. She indicated that domestic women's rights activism would

---

81 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1961, Box 41, pp. 639–41, WHRC; for an account of the role of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor in sustaining women's rights activism during the postwar years and in laying the foundation for the modern feminist movement, see Laughlin, Women's Work and Public Policy, esp. chaps. 3 and 4.

82 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1961, Box 41, pp. 642–43, WHRC.
serve this mission just as much as promoting international awareness in local communities, because this domestic women's rights work would connect Federation women to women around the world. All women sought the same kinds of progress, Page argued, and working for this progress could bring them together. This feminist internationalism contrasts markedly with the conservative feminism expressed by the DAR during this same period. Yet both groups worked to incorporate a growing sense of women's political identity into their preexisting policy programs. Foreign affairs work was a natural area for this incorporation to take place, since this work had encouraged women's engagement with the political realm throughout the postwar period. Thus, Federation clubs could and should use the same organizing techniques at the local level for women's rights as they had in their foreign affairs education campaigns. Moreover, they could pair these two campaigns in order to broaden their appeal to club members and female citizens outside of their clubs.

These parallel shifts in the Federation's foreign affairs work to support both Cold War foreign policy and women's rights marked the end of the postwar UN campaigns as they had been envisioned by clubwomen at the UN charter conference. Although Federation clubs continued their foreign affairs community education, these efforts focused heavily on combating the Soviet Union rather than on promoting global interdependence. Much of the discussion of the United Nations was channeled, instead, into the Federation's feminist political agenda. This shift was primarily dictated by domestic political realities. The all-consuming anticommunism of the Cold War era and the challenge of civil rights activism had driven the Federation away from their original plans to promote the UN project at the local level. Though Federation leaders used some
of the same language when describing the purpose of the United Nations, instead of a broad agenda encompassing human rights and world peace, Federation clubs supported a narrower anticommunist one. Yet the political mobilization their foreign affairs education had encouraged among club members simultaneously nurtured political consciousness among these clubwomen. Thus, as the postwar era came to a close, the UN, and internationalism more generally, became an apt vehicle to aid the Federation’s developing women’s rights project.

Even as the General Federation refocused their internationalist efforts on Cold War issues and domestic campaigns to advance women’s interests, Women United persisted in trying to promote United Nations awareness at the local level. The WUUN had spent much of their time since the conservative scare of the 1952 election trying to counter suspicion of the UN with community education campaigns. Though the observers often used their connections among women’s organizations to facilitate their efforts, Women’s United’s activism adapted very little to changing circumstances in the American polity. Their single avowed purpose—to convince American citizens to support the United Nations as the best route to world peace and global stability—guided their programs, and though they made use of women’s prominence in community organizing, they never paired their UN projects explicitly with any other kind of domestic political activism. As a result, though their programs to promote the UN were moderately successful, their inability to acknowledge and incorporate politics, indeed their outright avoidance of what they considered the political aspects of UN work, gradually marginalized their organization. American political culture shifted around them, and the observers of Women United struggled to find footing for their narrow perspective.
That said, Women United’s projects frequently served to raise the prominence of women’s groups in the communities they targeted, and their campaigns provided hands-on training for local women in using civic connections to organize community events. The group’s 100 City Campaign was particularly effective at promoting this kind of local organizing around the UN’s tenth anniversary but, since completing that project, Women United had failed to come up with new ways of reaching the grassroots. In May 1960, the brainstorming sessions of the preceding three years finally bore fruit, when National Association for Women Broadcasters representative Dorothy Lewis, who had long coordinated Women United’s press projects, suggested a new plan to take their activism directly into the community. The plan grew out of the results of Women United’s 1959 survey of their member organizations, which indicated that apathy and a lack of leadership at the local level were the greatest challenges for organizations in promoting the UN. Lewis suggested, therefore, that Women United confront these issues head on by implementing local programs themselves. The plan was “to carry out a ‘Pilot Project’ in three cities of various sizes, using NGOs in these cities to hold an all-day Conference on the United Nations, preferably where no previous project has been attempted.” The projects could be tracked and recommendations developed for use in mobilizing other cities and towns around the country. In this way, Women United could address both apathy and the absence of leaders directly.Observers approved the project at their September 1960 meeting, and it would occupy the group for the next three years.83

Much like their 100 City Campaign, then, Women United’s Community Mobilization Pilot Projects, as they became known, relied on using their member

83 Meeting Minutes, May 25, 1960, Box 1, Folder 11; and Meeting Minutes, September 28, 1960, Box 1, Folder 12, both in WUUN Collection.
organizations to connect with the leaders of local clubs, particularly female leaders. The observers selected Port Jervis, New York, as the target city for the first project, and made contact with Irene Hoppey, Executive Secretary of Port Jervis's Chamber of Commerce. Hoppey declared her city to be "virgin territory" in terms of UN organizing and agreed to contact other local leaders to bring them into the project.\textsuperscript{84} In January 1961, Hoppey brought nine women from various Port Jervis civic groups to New York to attend several briefings at the United Nations, as well as a planning session for the pilot project. The clubs included Hadassah, the Business and Professional Women's Club, the PTA, the Women's Division of the Methodist Church, and the Port Jervis Community Club.\textsuperscript{85} Following their New York visit, the women began making arrangements for Port Jervis's UN celebration, scheduled for February 16, 1961. WUUN representatives provided films, press clippings, and other supporting materials. Port Jervis's men's civic clubs, such as the Kiwanis and the Lions, were invited to participate as well, and Women United members planned to bring guests, including representatives from the U.S. Committee for the UN.\textsuperscript{86}

In the weeks leading up to the event, local newspapers ran publicity items, and a series of UN films were shown in local schools and at other club events. The conference itself went off without a hitch. An all day affair, it featured several panel discussions and films on the UN, as well as a keynote address by Dorothy Lewis on promoting the United

\textsuperscript{84} Meeting Minutes, November 30, 1960, Box 1, Folder 12, WUUN Collection.


\textsuperscript{86} Meeting Minutes, January 25, 1961, Box 1, Folder 12, WUUN Collection.
Nations among American citizens and a series of afternoon workshops on the role of
governmental organizations at the UN. Attendance ranged from 175 to 200 people for
each event, and several newspaper reporters attended, including a representative of the
Christian Science Monitor. A local radio station also broadcast the meeting live all day.
Women United members who attended expressed satisfaction with the execution of their
idea. Immediately following the event, Elizabeth Cain, a representative from the Port
Jervis Community Club, wrote Dorothy Lewis to thank her for bringing the program to
town. “I have heard nothing but favorable comments,” Cain assured Lewis, “and I feel
sure that there will be a decision to continue an annual United Nations Day.” Explaining
that she had been “stimulated” by the challenging presentations at the conference, Cain
promised Lewis that the women’s Community Club in Port Jervis would “always be
ready to participate in any United Nations function . . .”

Satisfied that their pilot project had the desired effect, namely the creation of
interest in the UN where there had been none, Women United observers threw
themselves into planning a second pilot project, which would take place in Woonsocket,
Rhode Island, in October 1961. They followed the same pattern, making a local contact—
Ann DeNevers, Executive Director of Woonsocket’s Family and Child Services—and
inviting a group of civic club representatives collected by DeNevers to New York for a
UN visit and planning session. Participating groups included Woonsocket’s United

---

29, 1961, Box 1, Folder 12, WUUN Collection. Christian Science Monitor reporter Mary Hornaday wrote
an article on the event, entitled “Bringing the UN Into The Home,” which was published in the March 10,
18, in Box 1, Folder 18, WUUN Collection.

88 Letter to Mrs. E.C. Lewis from Elizabeth T. (Mrs. George L.) Cain, February 18, 1961, in scrapbook of
United Nations Day in Port Jervis, New York, Box 1, Folder 18, WUUN Collection.
Church Women, YWCA, PTA, Business and Professional Women’s Club, Congregational Church Women, Garden Club, and Women’s Division of the Methodist Church, in addition to the Lions and the YMCA. The Woonsocket event was a much larger affair, scheduled over the course of what Woonsocket’s mayor proclaimed “UN Week,” from October 24 to October 31. The celebration featured a UN musical night; the planting of a “UN tree” in front of Woonsocket’s Quaker meeting house; special meetings and speakers hosted by a variety of the participating organizations; and numerous school programs, including essay and poster contests, library displays, and a UNICEF Trick-or-Treating event on Halloween. Woonsocket’s women’s clubs also opened a United Nations Center that same week, which registered 1600 visitors during the festivities and gave away three complimentary visits to the United Nations.

At the end of 1961, Dorothy Lewis reported to Women United’s officers on behalf of the observers who had been coordinating the Pilot Project campaign. Noting that “each experiment has been unique with a high percentage of success,” Lewis stated that there was “no doubt that as a result the UN became a more vital subject to hundreds, even thousands, of individuals through our efforts.” Although she theorized that it had perhaps been a mistake to pair Women United’s Woonsocket event with the traditional celebrations of United Nations Day in October, the larger purpose of the project—to create local interest in the UN and train local leadership to maintain that interest—had been achieved. She also hoped that Women United would prepare a “blue-print” to share with other groups interested in organizing the same type of event in other cities. In

---


90 Diane Reed, “1961: Brief Resume of Woonsocket Pilot Project,” Box 1, Folder 3, WUUN Collection.
addition, Lewis recommended that Women United plan a third pilot project for a "semi-
rural area or county" to be held sometime in April 1962.  

Clearly, Women United members were satisfied with their new method of taking
the UN to the local level. The organization had transcended their early hesitancy with
regard to direct action, and the UN observers hoped to continue using their expertise to
aid local civic groups in promoting the United Nations and its agencies. Yet, even as the
observers congratulated themselves on work well done, they were aware of a movement
gaining ground that threatened their carefully cultivated moderate reputation. On
November 1, 1961, one day after the close of Women United's Woonsocket Pilot Project,
roughly fifty thousand women in sixty cities across the country went on strike for an end
to atmospheric nuclear testing. In an effort coordinated by a small group of women in
Washington, D.C., housewives and working women walked out of their jobs and homes
to attend demonstrations, lobby local officials, and send telegrams to the White House
and the Soviet embassy calling for an end to the nuclear arms race. Word of the planned
demonstration was spread informally through a network of women's groups—including
Women United member organization the Women's International League for Peace and
Freedom—as well as by methods familiar to conservative activists everywhere: phone
chains, flyers, and chain letters. The demonstration made the national news and, within a
year, an organization had been formed from this loose confederation of strikers: Women
Strike for Peace (WSP).

---

91 Dorothy Lewis, "Report of the WUUN Special Projects by the Sub-Committee," Box 1, Folder 12,
WUUN Collection.

92 For more complete discussions of Women Strike for Peace, see Amy Swerdlow, Women Strike for
Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s (Chicago and London: University of
Just over a month after the November demonstration, Women United’s Steering Committee met to discuss the “Peace Marchers” and the implications of their demonstration. They noted that “apparently it was not just a Flash in the Pan, because it was getting better organized, extending into new territory, and seemed to be quite effective.” Yet Women United’s officers were uncomfortable with the upstart group. They felt that “instead of a new Women’s Organization for Peace being formed, they should be invited to join responsible organizations now working for Peace.” Pledging to watch the next demonstration, which had been scheduled for January, the officers agreed with Rosalie Loreto, representative of the Girl Scouts, that “we should proceed with caution and deliberation in a manner which would prove effective in Promotion of Peace, and hope that the Peace Marchers would do likewise.”

Women Strike for Peace would not accommodate this hope; they continued their confrontational protests right into a HUAC hearing. Yet WSP’s overt political style reflected a growing willingness among all kinds of women’s organizations to engage in aggressive lobbying tactics to make their political opinions known. Certainly the Minute Women, the DAR, and the General Federation had all developed more confrontational activist tactics over the fifteen years since the UN’s founding. Women United, on the other hand, had been extraordinarily careful to avoid the political implications of the UN, which they felt undermined their message, and to avoid interventionist activism, which they feared their member organizations might find difficult to accept. Rose Parsons’s 1951 campaign to undermine WOMAN, for fear that the group’s radicalism would reflect

---

93 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, December 13, 1961, Box 1, Folder 12, WUUN Collection.

94 See Swerdlow, Women Strike for Peace, chap. 5.
poorly on other women’s groups working for the UN, prefigures Women United’s discomfort ten years later with Women Strike for Peace. Much had changed in the intervening decade, however, and the peace strikers had their fingers on the pulse of American women’s activist style. Drawing on nonviolent direct action techniques employed by civil rights protesters, WSP captured the new mood in American political activism that would come to typify sixties protest movements. Women United simply failed to grasp this change and, as a result, limited the appeal and the relevance of their organization. Though the group continued to work in communities to foster UN activism, Women United remained a small, one-issue organization largely outside the mainstream of women’s activism. Their decline was accelerated by the continuing Cold War and by the increasing focus of many of their progressive member organizations, such as the YWCA and the National Council of Jewish Women, on domestic civil rights and women’s rights reform efforts.95

Like the General Federation’s foreign affairs programs, Women United’s organizational mission reflects a particular moment in American history when the United Nations resonated profoundly with a broad swath of American society. The UN observers who founded Women United believed that the internationalist ideals underpinning the United Nations were the key to global peace and stability; that women had a particular interest in promoting these goals; and that the way to promote them was to spread UN ideals to as many Americans as possible. They made this their vocation and brought women’s organizations together to sustain the effort. What they did not expect was just how fraught with domestic political implications their international organization would

become. Sidestepping controversy, Women United's members found it difficult to navigate a minefield where they believed the intimate connection between international and domestic to be the best hope for world peace and another cohort of very vocal Americans called it an insidious threat to national sovereignty. Moreover, the United Nations faced some serious challenges to forging peace among nations, the Cold War being the most immediate. In response to all this tumult, Women United attempted a very delicate operation: to promote the international organization without engaging with either its domestic political implications or its geopolitical challenges. This strategy drastically narrowed their audience. They could never convert opponents of the United Nations because these conservatives mobilized expressly to oppose Women United's central project: the promotion of UN loyalty in American communities. Their careful style of activism, on the other hand, became progressively less appealing to the pacifist women who might have supported this project. By not facing the politics of internationalism, then, Women United eventually navigated themselves to the margins of American political culture.

Conservative opponents of internationalism certainly felt marginalized, and to some extent they were. Their political perspective received its fair share of ridicule in the media and censure by national politicians and diplomats. These women nursed a profound sense that America had repudiated the governmental principles that made it exceptional, had sacrificed sovereignty and independence for international obligation and some vague hope for peace. New York Daughter Ethel D. Polk produced an article for the February 1961 DAR Magazine detailing the history of this abandonment of America's founding principle “of self-containment . . . and complete avoidance of meddling in the
affairs of foreign nations.” Citing George Washington’s admonition to avoid “political connection” with other nations, Polk laid the blame for the abdication of this posture firmly at the feet of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Tracing Roosevelt’s actions from 1939, when he approved a shipment of American planes to France, through the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences, Polk argued that “in these successive steps, in the short span of 1939 to 1945, the United States had come all the way from its traditional position of not meddling in the affairs of others to the position where it was deciding the ultimate destinies of the peoples of Europe and Asia.” “In a short 6 years,” she continued, “we had abandoned the policies of 140 years and risked American independence . . . .” Each successive president since Roosevelt had compounded the error, primarily by supporting the United Nations. If America was to regain its stance as a “strong, verile [sic], and free” nation, the only solution was “to about face, to relinquish our role of international meddler, . . . and to withdraw from the One Worldism of the United Nations.”

Many Americans, and particularly American politicians, seemed disinclined to adopt this perspective, so conservative women persisted in their efforts to alert the nation to the threats posed by foreign entanglements. In 1961 alone, the DAR produced an exposé of the role of NGOs (such as the League of Women Voters and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, among many others) in promoting the United Nations to American citizens; passed resolutions against disarmament and the formation of the Peace Corps; continued their campaign against teaching about the United Nations in American schools and colleges; and printed a booklet entitled “Two-Faced NATO,” which accused NATO of being part of a system of

regional governments administered under UN authority that would progressively create a world state. The Minute Women seconded the Daughters’ warnings about NATO and the Peace Corps, condemned the model UN in particular as a threat to America’s youth, and also aggressively attacked Kennedy’s choice of Adlai Stevenson, “a politician twice rejected by the people of the United States,” for UN ambassador.

Both groups persisted in connecting internationalist campaigns for world government to the integration campaigns of civil rights advocates. The DAR’s National Defense chairman Elizabeth Barnes warned her readers in the same two-part series on the UN that federal control of the education system would mean more UN materials in American schools and, further, that the first step in “communizing and socializing America” was “the elimination of States’ rights.” Thus, Barnes suggested, to mobilize against federal control and for states’ rights was to oppose internationalism as much as integration. Less obliquely, Minute Women national chairman Dorothy Frankston echoed the Southern States Industrial Council’s warning that UNICEF greeting cards “emphasize

---


99 Barnes, “From the Horse’s Mouth,” 188; and Barnes, “From the Horse’s Mouth—Part II,” 301.
racial mixing and U.N. one-world concepts."\(^{100}\) By thus pairing the two campaigns, conservative women’s clubs capitalized on the expanding mobilization of segregationists across the South and simultaneously filtered the segregationist movement through the lens of anti-internationalism, packaging racial prejudice with patriotic dedication to American independence.

By tying together all of these elements of conservative thought for clubwomen, leaders of conservative women’s groups encouraged their members to identify with a larger conservative political movement that increasingly cast itself in opposition to liberal Americans. In the final 1961 issue of the Minute Women’s national newsletter, the editor reran a piece from the Charleston, South Carolina, News & Courier that captured this coalescing sense of conservative political identity. Titled “The Establishment,” the piece sought to identify just who the “power elite” were that controlled American policy and politics. “The Establishment is FOR foreign aid, for integration, and for that bundle of soft internationalist policies common to the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations,” the piece argued, “It is a loose working alliance of the near-socialist professor and the internationalist eastern Banker.” According to the article, the establishment controlled “the great foundations” and encouraged a “bland bipartisan approach to national politics.” Yet just as important as the establishment were those who were not a part of it. “There is an anti-Establishment consensus in this country,” the article declared. “It is made up of the conservative rightwing Southerners and Westerners, militant anti-communists and foes of a strong central government.” Prominent members of this conservative coalition, according to the article, included Senators Strom

\(^{100}\) Dorothy Frankston, “Dear Minute Women.” Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (September–October 1961), 1, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.
Thurmond, Harry Byrd, and Barry Goldwater, as well as Douglas MacArthur and William F. Buckley. Opposition to the establishment also had “wide popular support at the grassroots level.” The piece concluded by urging “the broad mass of Americans” to “never give up” the fight against this power elite. Following the piece, the newsletter’s editor promised her readers that if any further information emerged on the establishment, they would be informed.  

Clearly, conservative women shared this sense of political alienation, as their frequently hyperbolic denouncements of the federal government and the United Nations illustrate. Together with this sense of political estrangement, however, came a motivation to organize women across the country to fight these collectivist trends and to find an outlet for their political perspective. In this way, opposition to the United Nations and its internationalist supporters fueled conservative clubwomen’s participation in American political culture. This opposition led conservative women to forge connections with one another and with local and national politicians, to lobby Congress, and to hone their activist skills. Moreover, as these organizing efforts gained ground in the sixties, they served the political efforts of Barry Goldwater, George Wallace, and Richard Nixon in their respective presidential campaigns. In addition, this network of conservative women that originally mobilized to oppose internationalism also sustained activists like DAR member Phyllis Schlafly and eventually aided her mobilization against the ERA. In this way, opposition to the United Nations acted for conservative women as a political vehicle, helping to forge a conservative female movement that paralleled the liberal women’s movement of the twentieth century and eventually gained political ascendancy.

Conclusion

Please Don’t Send Me a UNICEF Card: Foreign Affairs and the Feminist Movement

On February 23, 1965, DAR member Kathryn Fink Dunaway of Atlanta, Georgia, went before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to testify against disarmament. Identifying herself as “a mother, grandmother, and a conservative,” Dunaway warned the assembled senators that, unlikely though it might seem, “quietly, steadily, our Government officials are disarming the United States and putting our national security on an international peace force under an immensely changed and strengthened United Nations . . . .” In light of the continuing Cold War, Dunaway argued, this decision threatened American national security and national sovereignty, by giving control of American military resources to an international organization with powerful Soviet membership and reducing the nation’s ability to defend itself. “While the U.S. is unilaterally disarming, Russia is building up her military weapons,” Dunaway declared, “While the U.S. is pouring out billions of dollars in foreign aid to supposedly ‘neutralist’ nations, more and more of these nations are siding with the Communist bloc.” These geopolitical realities meant that, should Congress continue supporting disarmament measures administered by the United Nations, American citizens would soon find themselves without control of their country. “It is probable that there will soon be a communist, anti-colonialist majority in the United Nations,” Dunaway cautioned, “If the plan to turn all of our weapons over to the United Nations is followed, we will then, in fact, be under Communist military control.” Decrying what she labeled the “propaganda”
that called the United Nations “the only hope for world peace,” Dunaway concluded by urging the senators to discontinue America’s disarmament programs.¹

Dunaway was not the only member of the DAR testifying against disarmament that week. Alton, Illinois, Daughter Phyllis Schlafly had taken the floor the day before to condemn the continued funding of disarmament agencies. Like Dunaway, Schlafly began by identifying herself as “the mother of six children,” thereby invoking her maternal status first and foremost as the justification for her testimony. And, like Dunaway, Schlafly condemned disarmament programs as a capitulation to Soviet power and a threat to national security. “Only fools disarm in times of great national peril,” she told the Senate panel.² In addition to their opposition to disarmament, Schlafly and Dunaway shared other characteristics; both women were dedicated members of the Daughters of the American Revolution and had been participating in the Daughters’ campaign against internationalism and collectivism for years. Both women were mothers and, at least nominally, housewives, and both had been active in other civic organizations and Republican women’s clubs, in addition to their DAR service. Though Dunaway was somewhat older than Schlafly—she was close to sixty at the time of her testimony, while Schlafly was only forty—the two women emerged from a tradition established by twenty years of work on the part of DAR leaders to hone the skills of local activists who could publicize the DAR’s positions on foreign affairs to governmental officials and to the public at large. Schlafly had established her political credentials already, running for

¹ Transcript, Mrs. John A. Dunaway testimony before the United States Foreign Relations Committee, February 23, 1965, Box 8, Folder 3, Kathryn Fink Dunaway Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia (hereafter cited as Dunaway Papers).

² “Statement by Phyllis Schlafly to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 22, 1965, Regarding S. 672, a Bill to Continue the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency,” in Box 8, Folder 19, Dunaway Papers.
Congress in 1952 on a platform that condemned internationalism and collectivism in American society. Dunaway had not herself run for office, but she had actively campaigned for a number of politicians from Georgia and aided her husband in his successful bid for office in Georgia’s state House of Representatives. She had also worked against fluoridation of the Atlanta water system and had held two PTA offices in different school systems. The meeting of these two local activists during their Senate disarmament testimony was fortuitous; Dunaway went on to become one of Schlafly’s close acquaintances and the primary organizer for her campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment in Georgia, eventually coordinating the defeat of the measure in then-President Jimmy Carter’s home state. Their shared background of DAR foreign affairs work trained both of these women in political activism, brought them together, and helped shape their future campaigns against the burgeoning feminist movement.3

The meeting of Phyllis Schlafly and Kathryn Dunaway demonstrates the intimate ties between clubwomen’s postwar foreign affairs activism and the women’s activism of the sixties and seventies. Both liberal and conservative women channeled the energies they had devoted to foreign relations club work in the early years of the Cold War into their broader civic campaigns during these later years. Although the United Nations no longer formed the center of this activism for most of these women, the political skills clubwomen had gained through two decades of engagement with international politics and American foreign policy facilitated their civic campaigns as the feminist movement

---

and its conservative counterpart gained steam. The political education tactics employed by these women to promote their foreign affairs campaigns in American communities, from articles in club publications to letter-writing campaigns to telephone chains to informational seminars, sustained postwar networks of female activists into a new decade of political work. Moreover, the perspectives these women had developed over twenty years of observing the United Nations inflected their subsequent efforts to determine women’s role in American politics and society. The divide that developed between liberal and conservative women over issues of internationalism persisted and deepened as these women confronted domestic political questions of equal rights for women and civil rights for black Americans. Too, the varied experiences of conservative and liberal women’s organizations with foreign affairs activism shaped the ways these groups approached American politics for decades to come. Clubwomen’s responses to the merger of the foreign and domestic that had characterized the postwar years helped forge two different cohorts of female activists who would eventually clash publicly, and fittingly, over the UN-inspired 1977 National Women’s Conference in Houston, Texas.⁴

**Foreign Affairs Activism in the Sixties and Beyond**

Foreign affairs programs remained a standard part of liberal women’s club work in communities around the country in the early sixties. During these years, the UN observers of Women United made concerted efforts to counter anti-United Nations

---

⁴ Historian Marjorie Spruill is currently working on a history of the divide between feminists and antifeminists that occurred during and after the state and national IWY conferences in 1977. Although Spruill is correct in her contention that the debates over federal social policy that emerged during this conference helped shape the remainder of the American women’s movement, the division between conservative and liberal women was well-established even prior to the IWY conferences. This earlier division emerged, in part, from the foreign affairs debates of the postwar period.
activism in American communities, targeting their education work specifically at areas where UN opposition was strong. Reporting on a speaking tour in California, new WUUN president Diane Reed of the World Woman’s Christian Temperance Union declared “the Rightists,” as she dubbed her anti-UN opponents, “a noisy lot, and a nuisance.” Yet she also felt them to be a fundamentally disorganized cohort of activists. “There is little fear that there ever will be a definite coalition to strengthen them,” she counseled her WUUN peers. Reed suggested that converting community leaders was still the best method of countering the rightist threat. “If [community leaders] can be impressed with a sense of personal involvement,” she noted, “they are much more apt to identify themselves with a movement.” To direct these community leaders to the correct movement in support of the UN, Reed argued, Women United member organizations must communicate effectively with average Americans. “[It is only at the local level—not national—that the Rightists can be thwarted,” Reed concluded.5

WUUN women therefore persisted in their efforts to take the UN directly to the American people. They considered a variety of UN promotional options, including a play wherein clubwomen donned native costumes and performed as “village women” from India, Egypt, Bolivia, and Ghana, to advertise United Nations development programs.6 They also launched yet another community pilot project, this one in Woodstock, New York, in 1963. The outcome of this pilot project demonstrated the fundamental flaw in Women United’s methods. At first inspection, the April program seemed a success; as

---

5 Dr. Diane Reed, report on “Rightists’ Activities in Southern California,” esp. pp. 4, 14–16, in Box 1, Folder 4, Women United for the United Nations Collection, Collection No. 70-70-78-M200, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as WUUN Collection).

6 See description of “A Study in Shawls,” in “Do-It-Yourself Programs”; flyer for Wednesday, April 25, 1962, event at Carnegie Building Lounge; and script created by Rosalie Leslie Loreto, June 1, 1962, all in Box 1, Folder 5, WUUN Collection.
one WUUN member reported to Diane Reed, in spite of nice weather and a nearby golf
course, Woodstock’s school auditorium “filled up fairly well” and the crowd even
contained “a good proportion of men . . . of all ages.” “The audience seemed interested
and sympathetic,” she noted, as they listened to addresses by WUUN members on United
Nations programs and witnessed a panel discussion among UN representatives from
Jamaica, the Philippines, and Ghana, who Women United had brought to town. In the
end, WUUN observers departed Woodstock with a sense that they had been successful in
their attempt to give “the workers there encouragement in their efforts to combat Anti-
UN forces active in Woodstock and nearby communities.” Unfortunately, the UN event
proved less helpful to Woodstock’s homegrown UN proponents than Women United had
hoped. Ghanaian delegate Emanuel Agorsor’s appearance drew hostility from UN
opponents in communities surrounding Woodstock even before the event took place.
Four days prior to the festivities, one irate local man wrote a letter to the editor protesting
the appearance, at a taxpayer-supported school, of a representative of a nation that he
contended had “been a constant critic of the United States and a constant admirer of the
Soviet Union.” Agorsor’s comments at the WUUN event did little to temper this hostility.
In his address during the panel discussion, Agorsor reiterated Ghana’s belief that
communist China should be admitted to the United Nations, advocated “negotiations”
between the U.S. and Cuba to resolve differences, and asserted that all nations had the
right to “political and economic associations of [their] own choosing.” The local papers
published these remarks under a broad headline announcing “Ghana Delegate Urges

---

7 Copy of letter from Mrs. John Crawley to Mrs. Philip S. Reed, undated, Box 1, Folder 21; Meeting
Minutes, Steering Committee, May 8, 1963, p. 1, Box 1, Folder 13; and “U.N. Day Program to Draw
Crowds,” Record Press, April 18, 1963, clipping in Box 1, Folder 21, all in WUUN Collection.
Admission of Red China,” along with a picture of Women United member Dorothy Lewis seated at a table next to Agorsor. Rather than downplay the “political” aspects of the United Nations and undermine its opponents, then, Women United’s event did just the opposite; it provided Woodstock’s anti-internationalists with more evidence for their contention that the United Nations, and its supporters in America, served the interests of international Communism.

This event demonstrates the tension that plagued the Women United observers’ project from its inception. In the postwar period, the United Nations was bound up with American foreign policy interests and domestic politics in ways that proved impossible to untangle. Women United’s observers could not deny Soviet membership in the organization, nor could they obfuscate the fluid political affiliations of a growing number of unaligned member nations. Though they tried, Women United’s dedicated UN supporters could not divorce the international organization from its domestic political ramifications, and any action they took to promote it, particularly at the local level, necessarily served as organizing fodder for their “rightist” opponents. In addition, with war in Vietnam escalating, efforts to advocate international cooperation among Americans seemed increasingly futile, as Women United member Isabelle Friedman noted specifically of the group’s International Cooperation Year campaigns in 1965. “Most regrettably, the truth of the many International Cooperative accomplishments seemed to pale before headlines and broadcasts about casualty lists in gorilla [sic]

---

8 Agorsor also condemned South Africa’s apartheid policies, urged UN sanctions against that nation, and advocated “a complete end to colonialism,” as well as an end to atmospheric nuclear testing. “Ghana Delegate Urges Admission of Red China,” The Kingston [N.Y.] Daily, April 23, 1963, clipping in Box 1, Folder 21, WUUN Collection.
warfare and bombing sorties in Viet-Nam,” Friedman lamented.\textsuperscript{9} Although WUUN member organizations continued some community education projects as the sixties wore on, broad-based United Nations activism increasingly took a back seat to the reality of military conflict abroad and expanding domestic campaigns for African American and women’s rights. Many of Women United’s observers remained profoundly uncomfortable with the tactics of Women Strike for Peace and continued to suggest that they “be invited to join existing organizations” for fear that WSP might “become infiltrated with leftist ideas.” Yet a few WUUN members expressed support for WSP’s effective mobilization of American women. One member declared herself “pleased to see that women were waking up to the realities of today’s world.”\textsuperscript{10} Reflecting the ascendance of more progressive elements within Women United, the organization also made belated nods toward the American civil rights movement, encouraging their members to attend a National Council of Women conference on the role of women in civil rights efforts and hosting the female director of the African-American Institute at one meeting on women in Africa.\textsuperscript{11} Nevertheless, Women United’s moment was largely past. Their attempts to use women’s civic organizations to mobilize Americans in support of the United Nations reflected the postwar moment in which the idea was conceived and failed to resonate with Americans in a new domestic and international environment.

With their UN campaigns in decline, Women United’s member organizations refocused their activist efforts on the domestic reform campaigns of the 1960s,

\textsuperscript{9} Isabelle B. Friedman, “Women United for the United Nations and I.C.Y.,” Box 1, Folder 4, WUUN Collection.

\textsuperscript{10} Meeting Minutes, Steering Committee, January 10, 1962, and February 14, 1962, both in Box 1, Folder 13, WUUN Collection.

\textsuperscript{11} Meeting Minutes, Steering Committee, November 13, 1963, and December 11, 1963, both in Box 1, Folder 13, WUUN Collection.
particularly working to support John F. Kennedy's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). Kennedy formed the PCSW by executive order in December 1961, in response to pressure from women's organizations such as the National Association of Business and Professional Women (BPW) and from officials in the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor. With Eleanor Roosevelt as its first chair, the PCSW represented the culmination of a long campaign among American women's organizations to create a federal committee to address issues relating to women's status in American society. Members of the PCSW included representatives from a large number of women's groups, many of whom had also been represented in the WUUN. These groups included the National Councils of Catholic, Jewish, and Negro Women, the BPW, the AAUW, the League of Women Voters, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs, as well as female representatives from two labor unions. In spite of enduring conflicts among participating women over the ERA, on which the PCSW took no official stand, the Commission succeeded in producing a report in 1963 recommending a variety of changes to American society to promote equal treatment of American women and facilitate their ability to participate fully in public life.\footnote{Kathleen A. Laughlin, \textit{Women's Work and Public Policy: A History of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 1945–1970} (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 80–82; Cynthia Harrison, \textit{On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945–1968} (Berkeley and other cities: University of California Press, 1988), 109–65, 184–209.}

The Commission also inspired women's organizations to press for the creation of state-level commissions modeled on the PCSW. The BPW inaugurated the state campaign in 1962 but enlisted the help of state representatives of numerous women's civic organizations, including the General Federation of Women's Clubs, to lobby state governments. Ten state commissions were created by the time the PCSW submitted its
report, and every state had formed a commission by 1967. The work of women's clubs to support these state commissions relied on the same kinds of community education that had characterized their foreign affairs activism. National organizers relied on leading club activists at the state and local level to rally the members of women's organizations to press for the creation of state commissions. Once commissions had been created, some of these same clubwomen participated as members, while others lobbied commissions to address particular issues of women's equality. Regional conferences, hearings, and "town meetings" sponsored by state commission leaders informed women on such issues as equal pay and jury duty. Annual conferences of state commission representatives encouraged this emerging cohort of state activists to bring their feminist vision to the attention of federal officials. As historian Kathleen Laughlin has argued, in the end, it was the failure of governmental officials in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to address issues of sex discrimination brought forward repeatedly by state representatives that led to the formation of the National Organization of Women. Though these state commissions had little to do with foreign affairs, the mechanisms used to sustain them paralleled the foreign affairs work of liberal women's clubs.  

Though some members of the General Federation were intimately involved with this state commission work as the sixties wore on, attention to international affairs persisted in their national programs. Yet Federation discussions of the United Nations from these years contained numerous references to vocal public opposition to the international organization. One participant in a 1963 panel on "Women's Role in a Changing World" charged clubwomen with defeating "the Fear Merchants" in their attempts to take charge of voluntary organizations and school boards. A similar 1964

article in the *Federation Clubwoman* by U.S. ambassador to the UN Frances Plimpton pressed Federation members once again to be “ambassadors” to the American public for the United Nations. Declaring “the women of the United States, particularly the active, articulate and communicative clubwomen” to be “particularly well fitted to be Ambassadors of good will for the United Nations,” the piece explained that “the attacks on the UN” featured “a new look.” “They are shriller,” Plimpton contended, “more specific and more persuasive on the face of them” because they invoked the Cold War as evidence of the UN’s failure to create global peace and Communist membership in the UN as evidence of the body’s failure to advance American interests. Noting that supporters of the “far right . . . always have pen and paper immediately at hand to alert members of Congress and other public officials to dire threats to our security,” Plimpton urged Federation clubwomen to be similarly prepared to provide their governmental representatives with “reassurance and expressions of confidence from sensible people.”

In his 1964 address at the Federation’s national convention, longtime UN employee Ralph Bunche also remarked on the growth of UN opposition across the nation, and in California particularly, commenting that he found it “difficult to understand how anyone could really hate the United Nations” but that there were “some who do, or seem to, and who express this in activist ways, such as picketing and demonstrations.” Like Plimpton, Bunche emphasized to his Federation audience that “[g]ood understanding of the United Nations and intelligent support of its work and efforts” would contribute to world order and should be their goal. At this same conference, the State Department’s assistant secretary for International Organization Affairs answered clubwomen’s questions about the UN, which included queries about whether “it [was] necessary to be a patriot of your
country before being a citizen of the world” and whether the information he provided on the United Nations would be available “as ammunition to use when we get back home on folks that attack the U.N.”¹⁴ Evidently, Federation representatives continued to encounter UN opposition at the local level.

Despite the Federation leadership’s protestations to the contrary, however, Federation clubwomen appear to have been less successful at sustaining grassroots support for the United Nations than they once were. In 1963, the Federation’s UN observer Frances Burke Redick noted that Federation clubs had appointed “only 28 United Nations Chairmen . . . in 28 states.” Theorizing that perhaps other states had incorporated studies of the UN into their broader international relations programs, Redick implored clubwomen to send her the details of their UN support. Otherwise, she lamented, “I have no means of knowing what you have done.”¹⁵ Though many state chairmen reported consistent attention in local clubs to NATO and to social programs focused on international scholarships and overseas literacy outreach, by 1964, only ten states reported Federation clubs devoting specific programs of study to the UN.¹⁶ Federation representatives suggested the reason for this precipitous decline the following year, when the chairman of the international relations department revealed that, while “clubwomen seem to enjoy the discussion group activities” on international affairs, her state reports suggested that “the greatest deterrent to discussion groups is the fear of controversy within the group” and that the Federation must remind its members “to


¹⁵ Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1963, Box 46, pp. 135–36, WHRC.

discuss—not to argue." Clearly, conflict surrounding the United Nations discouraged individual Federation clubs from focusing their international affairs discussion on the global body. Though Federation leaders implored clubwomen to maintain an interest in the UN, fewer and fewer clubs appear to have devoted their energies to this particular aspect of foreign affairs. By the mid-sixties, much of the grassroots discussion of the United Nations had been ceded to the organization’s conservative opponents.

Nevertheless, the reports from state chairmen also demonstrate that foreign affairs more broadly conceived had become an integral part of the Federation’s local work by the 1960s. Numerous clubs held world affairs conferences, informed themselves on different geographical regions, especially Africa and Asia, and sought to promote Western Hemisphere solidarity by communicating with Latin American women. These programs undoubtedly satisfied a Cold War–inspired urge to promote American foreign policy. Yet they also illustrate that, in spite of their hesitancy on the United Nations in specific, Federation clubwomen had adopted general foreign affairs education as a part of the mission of American women’s clubs. Federation leaders consistently posited international awareness as the means by which Federation members could advance American interests and participate in the civic life of their nation. By the sixties, this perspective had become axiomatic for Federation members. Educating themselves and their neighbors on international questions allowed Federation clubwomen to fulfill their civic duty as they understood it. These campaigns created an informed American citizenry that clubwomen believed would help shape the nation’s foreign policy and elect representatives to execute this policy effectively. Though the Cold War, international turmoil, and domestic social and political change ultimately diluted the dedication of
local Federation clubs to the United Nations, the foreign affairs work inaugurated by the Federation’s UN programs survived, as did the local political engagement these programs fostered.

This dedication to international awareness, in turn, helped bolster the Federation’s growing advocacy for women’s rights, by forging connections among women nationally and internationally and by training the cadre of local activists who also sustained the state commissions on the status of women. Even the Federation’s discussion of their foreign affairs efforts in the early sixties regularly hinted at the burgeoning women’s rights activism in which some Federation women were taking an active role. In her 1962 introduction of the Federation’s new chairman of their United Nations division, Perle Mesta, international relations chairman Zaio Schroeder noted among her qualifications, not just a longstanding dedication to the United Nations, but also Mesta’s prominent work with the National Women’s Party in support of the ERA.17 The March 1962 Federation Clubwoman featured an article by R. Sargent Schriver on American women in the Peace Corps, which urged Federation clubwomen to use their “study programs” to encourage American women to join the Peace Corps and noted that the job of female peace corps volunteers was “exactly the same as that of the male Peace Corps volunteer . . .”18 By 1963, as the PCSW was preparing its report on the status of American women, the Federation’s national convention featured the aforementioned panel discussion on “Women’s Role in a Changing World,” in which participants urged Federation members

---

17 Convention Records (Proceedings–Transcripts), 1962, Box 44, pp. 897–98, WHRC.

to support foreign aid as "women's work" and to encourage women to vote—the traditional labors of the Federation's longstanding community campaigns—and simultaneously to expand women's employment in scientific and technological fields. The Federation's older international affairs work was, in short, being slowly suffused with a broader emphasis on American women's participation in public life on equal terms with men. 19

Liberal clubwomen were not alone in connecting internationalism to domestic campaigns for women's rights; conservative women posited this connection even more explicitly as the feminist movement gained steam in the 1960s. In response to President Kennedy's creation of the PCSW by executive order, the Minute Women's newsletter published an exposé of Kennedy's "latest trick," which the author argued was actually part of the crusade to encourage ratification of the Human Rights Convention. Suggesting that the Commission was populated by "Red-fronters and one worlders," the piece questioned Kennedy's suggestion that there were any factors inhibiting women's full participation in American society. "Had you felt any barriers?" the article's author demanded, "We had not and are perfectly contented to be left entirely alone." The author also expressed a fear that "this Commission may want to force us out to work where we do not want to be... [W]e don't need a Commission to establish our rights, for all our rights are clearly printed right in the Constitution and its Bill of Rights." According to this Minute Woman, then, being a strict Constitutionalist meant not only endorsing states rights and anticommunism, but also opposing any form of state-sponsored women's rights activism, which smacked of collectivism. "That's the deal," she declared in classic inflammatory fashion, "Eleanor is going to send us out to work just like the Russian

women.” In response to the suggestion that the Commission would “investigate our many social, political, and civil problems,” the piece noted that “[t]his smelled strongly of the UN, and sure enough, it’s the UN’s baby and JFK isn’t risking Congressional approval of his Status of Women.” The establishment of the Commission displayed a threatening exercise of executive power, the author implied, that circumvented the authority of the Congressional representatives to whom the Minute Women regularly gave their support. The piece also noted the parallel goals of the PCSW and the United Nations’ Commission on the Status of Women, which the author informed Minute Women was administered by the same UN body (the Economic and Social Council) as “the notorious Unesco and the equally socialist and vile one-world International Labor Organization.” These affiliations, the article argued, made the Presidential Commission just one more way international organs threatened America’s domestic life. “Of course, they want us to go to work so they can take over the indoctrination of our children—making them into one-worlders and zombies,” the author averred, concluding emphatically, “JFK has one surprise coming if he thinks all American women want to be ‘released’ from the burdens of the kitchen. *Wild horses could not drive this woman to work!*”\(^{20}\)

The author of this piece identified the PCSW as yet another agent of internationalism in American society and paired what she saw as the internationalist, collectivist goals of the United Nations with the women’s rights goals of the Commission. Rather than the advancement of women, she contended, the PCSW actually sought the indoctrination of American children and the subjugation of American citizens

to international control. By forcing women to work and removing their children from their control, the PCSW would undermine American family structure and, thereby, the American state. It would also trample on the "rights" of American women to stay home. A subsequent newsletter printed a list of the members of the PCSW and the organizations they represented, urging Minute Women to inform themselves and others on the backgrounds and affiliations of these individuals.\textsuperscript{21} In the face of emerging feminist activism, then, the Minute Women positioned themselves as opponents of both collectivism and what they contended were internationalist definitions of women's rights. They thereby connected their antifeminist position directly to their anti-internationalism.

This pairing would resurface among antifeminists in response to the feminist platform developed at the 1977 National Women's Conference of International Women's Year in Houston, Texas. DAR and STOP-ERA activist Kathryn Fink Dunaway, who served as a member of the Georgia Citizen's Review Committee for IWY, noted to herself after one DAR meeting that the "IWY's three main goals are (1) passage of ERA, (2) complete disarmament under strict international control, (3) the giveaway of Panama Canal." Dunaway thus joined the goals of American feminists with the UN-inspired efforts toward disarmament against which she had testified in the 1960s. In a form letter to be sent to congressmen from the Citizen's Review Committee, Dunaway and the Committee's state chairman, Betty Benning, elaborated on the insidious connection they perceived between American feminism, the International Women's Year meetings, and internationalism. Noting that the National Plan of Action developed at the Houston women's conference "grew out of the World Plan of Action adopted at the United

Nations World Conference on I.W.Y.,” Dunaway and Benning cautioned that the plan proposed by American feminists was “not concerned with foreign affairs or simply correcting legal inequities between women and men.” Instead, the two women argued that the National Plan constituted an attempt to implement a social revolution inspired by international collectivist forces that advocated “a new international economic order.” Further, American feminists had been granted a diplomatic affiliation that inappropriately paired their program for reform in American society with international relations.

“Although the National I.W.Y. Commission has operated out of the State Department, its legislative proposals all concern domestic issues,” Dunaway and Benning contended. Resurrecting the longstanding concern about the merger of the foreign and the domestic, the two women also suggested that the National Plan’s proposals exhibited a parallel centralizing tendency. Not only did the Plan indicate that global politics could be connected to domestic reform campaigns, it also gave excessive authority to the federal government. According to Dunaway and Benning, American feminists hoped to “extend direct federal government services into areas historically recognized as state and local” and to encourage “dependence of individual citizens upon the federal government.”

Like the conservative women of the postwar years with whom Dunaway had cut her political teeth, Benning and Dunaway suggested that the international had a profound power to affect the domestic that must be guarded against. Just as this belief facilitated conservative critiques of internationalists and civil rights activists in the fifties and sixties, so here Dunaway and her compatriot used it to cast aspersions on their feminist opponents.

22 “What Has Happened to Our National Defense?” handwritten notes, Box 2, Folder 18, Dunaway Papers; and letter from Betty Benning and Kathryn Dunaway to “Mr. Congressman” and “Mr. Legislator,” April 15, 1978, Box 2, Folder 3, Dunaway Papers.
That conservative activists like Dunaway employed this internationalist critique in the late seventies is hardly surprising; attacks on the United Nations and its internationalist proponents in American society enjoyed enthusiastic support among conservative activists throughout the sixties. In addition to attacking the PCSW as an internationalist conspiracy, the Minute Women sustained a lively critical discourse on a variety of internationalist projects throughout this decade. Organizations dedicated to promoting foreign policy awareness among American citizens, such as the Foreign Policy Association, the Institute on Pacific Relations, and the Council on Foreign Relations, received close attention. In 1963, the Minute Women produced an elaborate exposé of these organizations, which they argued represented a complex of American internationalists who sought to minimize the threat of communism, discredit vigilant anticommunists like the Minute Women, and promote “a program for . . . effecting America’s renunciation of its sovereignty to the U.N.”23 The Daughters of the American Revolution shared these concerns about the Council on Foreign Relations, passing a resolution in 1962 that declared that the Council, in concert with the Foreign Policy Association, was “attempting to indoctrinate the adults and youth of this nation in a program for World Government.” The Minute Women also targeted the Eleanor Roosevelt Foundation, founded after Roosevelt’s death in 1962, for its similar efforts at “strengthening the United Nations.”24 All of these organizations represented one method


by which internationalist ideas were spread throughout the American polity, and conservative women felt it their responsibility to counter these efforts.

As suggested by the 1965 Congressional testimony of Kathryn Dunaway and Phyllis Schlafly, campaigns against disarmament also formed a central part of the anti-internationalist campaigns of conservative women in the sixties. The DAR expressed firm opposition to disarmament proposals, calling these proposals a violation of the Second Amendment and contending that they would lead to control of the United States by the United Nations.25 Noting that Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina had labeled the State Department’s disarmament proposals an attempt to “turn over this country’s nuclear weapons to the United Nations,” the Minute Women newsletter reminded the group’s members that their organizations had a long history of this kind of anti-UN activism of which they should be proud. “Actually this is nothing new to the Minute Women and to many others who have been trying to expose the proponents of a UN Peace Force for lo these many years,” the newsletter commented smugly of Thurmond’s accusations, subsequently thanking the senator for “the publicity” he had given their cause.

Enumerating the group’s enemies in the disarmament debate, the Minute Women newsletter declared “[w]e don’t know a single left of center organization or person who is not solidly in favor of disarmament.” Women Strike for Peace and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom received their fair share of vilification for their strident advocacy of nuclear disarmament. “The misuse of the word ‘peace’ and the fallacy of strikes for ‘complete disarmament in a peaceful world’ must be exposed,” one

newsletter article avowed, urging Minute Women to counter the efforts of WSP and WILPF by writing their representatives in Congress and the editors of their local papers. “Perhaps our opposition believes we will sit back and do nothing to offset their actions,” the piece concluded, “Let’s show them they misjudge the strength and knowledge of Americans who stand for the U.S. Constitution and the continued sovereignty of this country against all enemies within and without.” Minute Women must continue the fight, particularly against those female foreign affairs activists they believed to be most deluded.

Some refocusing took place within the ranks of conservative female activists as the reform campaigns of the American civil rights movement made strides in the sixties. The Minute Women, for example, critiqued numerous women’s organizations who responded to President Kennedy’s 1963 invitation to attend a White House conference on civil rights. Though Minute Woman newsletter editor Florence Dean Post declared herself unsurprised to find representatives of WILPF and the National Council of Churches among those “bowing down to the flattery” of Kennedy’s invitation, she was startled to discover women from the DAR, the UDC, and the American Legion Auxiliary attending the meeting as well. Post could only theorize that “[g]ood women who attended [were] being used, knowingly or unknowingly, to lend respectability to anarchists and others whose interest is not in the continued sovereignty of these United States.”

---


27 Florence Post, “Dear Minute Women,” The Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (September-October 1963), 1–2, quotes on p. 2, Reel 76, M19, “Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection; In another newsletter, the Minute Women reprinted an article attacking Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., not for his domestic civil rights activism, but for what the author felt was an irresponsible and un-Christian foreign affairs position. According to the article, King, along with several other civil rights leaders, had urged
Post's last comment suggests, in combination with more overt assaults on civil rights activism, the Minute Women and other conservative activists regularly used the language of foreign affairs to critique civil rights supporters. Filtering these attacks through the prism of foreign affairs helped conservative activists sanitize them by suggesting that opposition to civil rights formed part of a responsible national defense position. If civil rights activists were one-worlders and communists who compromised national sovereignty, conservatives reasoned, all of their domestic activism must also be suspect.

In addition to these civil rights–related critiques, groups like the DAR and the Minute Women sustained their focus on educating their members about the United Nations as a particular agent of disorder in American society. Along with their work against disarmament, the Daughters continued to battle the use of UNESCO materials in public schools and added the Peace Corps to their list of internationalist threats to America's youth. They also continued to question the advisability of such regional pacts as NATO and to agitate against any expansion of World Court authority. The popularity of the Daughters' National Defense programs suggests that conservative activists like Kathryn Dunaway and Phyllis Schlafly found this foreign affairs activism compelling. In 1962, the National Defense Committee reported the addition of two thousand subscribers to their monthly mailing list and also noted proudly that twelve thousand copies of the National Defender foreign affairs bulletin were ordered each month. National defense leaders also bragged about the effectiveness of their lobbying efforts. "Another

Lyndon Johnson not to intervene in the Congo's affairs to rescue a Christian missionary being held captive by a group of rebels. The writer contended that this behavior compromised King's reputation as a Christian leader. Declaring it "a revelation" to those "seeking the truth" about King, the piece concluded that King had exposed himself as a "self-centered demagogue" and a dupe of communists. See "Christianity or Racism?" The Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc. (February 1965), 2, Reel 76, M19, "Minute Women of the U.S.A.,” Iowa Right Wing Collection.
innovation of these three years,” national defense chairman Elizabeth Chesnut Barnes noted in her final report, “was the emphasis on telephone committees in the chapters to convey messages from the National, State, and Chapter chairmen to the members. The effectiveness of these committees has been demonstrated repeatedly when legislation . . . was under consideration by the United States Congress.”

Though largely outside the political mainstream by this time, the Daughters’ foreign affairs community programs retained their vibrancy and appeal for women in their local chapters.

Cognizant of the ridicule that liberal internationalists like Ralph Bunche and WUUN president Diane Reed heaped on UN opponents, the Daughters often sought to bolster this cohort of local women. Justifying the group’s continued attacks on international organizing, new national defense chairman Sara Jones declared in one DAR Magazine piece that “ours is not a negative program as is so often and mistakenly asserted.” Instead, the Daughters sought only “the preservation of national sovereignty and solvency.” To counter any criticism DAR members might be encountering, in 1964 Jones circulated to the group’s members yet another recapitulation of the DAR’s historic positions on the United Nations. Calling her essay an attempt to provide Daughters, and “especially new members,” with “a more detailed answer to the often asked question: ‘WHY the DAR stand on the UN?’” Jones explained the genesis of the group’s current hostility to the international body. Her critique included discussions of the expansion of international Communism and the role of communists in the UN; the Korean War; the

---

passage of broad-ranging international treaties like the Genocide Convention; the organization’s failure to address such disasters as the Hungarian Revolution and persistent unrest in the Middle East; and most recently, disarmament campaigns. Advising her readers that “the strength and courage of clear-thinking, dedicated Americans” would be necessary to “lead this nation back to the Constitution,” Jones concluded that only when the U.S. abandoned the United Nations could the country “return presently jeopardized freedoms to its citizens” and “once more be the master of its foreign relations.” This was the goal of the DAR’s sustained campaign against the UN, Jones suggested, and DAR members should use this explanation in response to any questioning of their organization’s positions.29

DAR efforts to sustain their local chapters’ anti-UN activism seem to have been largely successful. As Don Critchlow shows in his biography, by the late sixties, Phyllis Schlafly had incorporated this anti-UN position into her broader critique of liberalism, contending that liberals possessed an unwarranted faith in the ability of international organizations like the UN or an expanded NATO to create and sustain global peace. Paired with her derision of liberal belief that the Soviet Union would behave rationally and honor commitments to peaceful coexistence, Schlafly’s attacks on the purported liberal desire for world government formed a central part of her conservative political vision.30 Kathryn Dunaway, too, sustained her interest in the United Nations throughout the sixties, collecting numerous articles from conservative publications, including the


30 Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism, 167–68.
DAR Magazine, on anti-UN campaigns and mailing informational packets to Congressional representatives. She opposed UNICEF greeting cards, collecting mailers that instructed the recipient not to send UNICEF greeting cards because of the communist affiliations and Muslim faith of the contributing artists. She served as her DAR chapter’s national defense chairman from 1970 to 1972 and also supported United States Day as an alternative to United Nations Day, serving as state chairman for the first United States Day celebration held in Georgia in 1975.31 As her incorporation of the DAR’s critique of internationalism into her efforts against feminists in the seventies illustrates, the Daughters’ foreign affairs education had made an able and engaged activist of Kathryn Dunaway. Conservative women around the nation followed this same path, from local patriotic club involvement to foreign affairs activism to political engagement. Their efforts sustained the campaigns of activists like Phyllis Schlafly, who came from this same tradition, and aided in both the conservative resurgence in the Republican Party and the antifeminist movement. These women also helped feed the hostility to the United Nations that has persisted in grassroots conservative politics up to the present day.

American Clubwomen and the Politics of Internationalism

The investment of middle-class American women’s clubs in the politics of internationalism during the postwar period shaped both the organizing history of American women and the foreign policy culture of the nation during these years. By

31 For mailings to Congressional representatives, see, for example, handwritten draft of letter to Georgia Representative Howard H. Calloway, undated, Box 8, Folder 21, and Calloway’s response, February 18, 1965, Box 1, Folder 14, both in Dunaway Papers. Immediately following this particular exchange, Calloway helped arrange Dunaway’s testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. For anti-UNICEF details, see “Please don’t send Me a UNICEF Card,” mailer, Box 8, Folder 10, Dunaway Papers; for details of DAR and United States Day activism, see November 9, 1975, packet addressed to Georgia Mother’s Committee, esp. “Civic Activities,” in Box 1, Folder 29, Dunaway Papers.
carrying their own awareness of the United Nations to their neighbors and communities, American clubwomen made the United Nations a central part of postwar political culture. Their sustained interest in the international body encouraged retailers to use the UN in marketing campaigns directed at female consumers; the State Department to draft clubwomen to act as foreign policy emissaries at home and abroad; and schools to incorporate UN debates into their curricula. Further, the information they provided through their world affairs conferences, their essay contests, their UNICEF trick-or-treat campaigns, and even their United States Day celebrations helped transform the United Nations into a political vehicle for Americans, gave the international body national political currency, and incorporated global politics into community affairs. As such, clubwomen’s perception of an intimate connection between the domestic and the foreign became self-actualizing; these women enacted this very connection with their community work. Simultaneously, foreign affairs activism pervaded women’s organizing, forging disparate foreign policy positions among American women with similar backgrounds and organizing traditions. These differing positions on the role of the United States in the world and the role of internationalism in American politics, which deepened as the Cold War escalated, caused a rift among the women’s clubs that had initially been unified in their support of the UN. Pitting clubwomen against one another in the foreign policy debates of the period, the foreign affairs positions these clubwomen developed brought them not only into global politics, but even more so into national politics. Club leaders capitalized on this investment to train their members in the tactics and techniques of political activism, creating a generation of local activists who would later turn their
organizing skills to the domestic reform campaigns, both liberal and conservative, of the sixties and seventies.

The foreign affairs activism discussed in this project is a phenomenon firmly rooted in the postwar period. Though certainly the pacifists and the isolationists of the interwar years contributed to its development, and though conservatives continued to use its language in their organizing efforts for decades, postwar American clubwomen conceived and nourished the most vital manifestation of this kind of activism. Inspired by the tumult of the Second World War and the new demands it made on the American people and on American government, as well as by the profoundly hopeful moment that encompassed the founding of the United Nations, middle-class American clubwomen infused their established conception of gendered citizenship with a new responsibility: the molding of responsible foreign policy through community education. By engaging with international politics, by understanding the nations and peoples of the world fully, and by spreading this awareness to as many Americans as possible, clubwomen believed they could chart a better course for their nation and the world. The advent of the Cold War altered these efforts, to be sure, but even this geopolitical conflict did little to shake clubwomen’s belief in the power of their community activism to shape the way their nation engaged with the world beyond its borders. In this sense, though the impulse toward community education came from a much older tradition of women’s club activism, the female members of the DAR, the General Federation, Women United, and the Minute Women were fundamentally postwar in their outlook. The intimate connection they perceived between the domestic and the foreign—their firm belief that it
was their civic duty to mold American foreign affairs consciousness—reflects the immediate postwar moment from which this activism emerged.

In spite of its postwar character, however, the foreign affairs activism of American clubwomen also represented the conclusion of a much longer phase of women’s activism. Conceived by a generation of middle-class clubwomen who had participated in the suffrage movement and progressive-era reform campaigns, postwar foreign affairs activism emphasized more traditional forms of women’s organizing, including community education and lobbying governmental officers through official channels, rather than the direct action techniques that came to typify the civil rights, antiwar, and feminist movements of the latter half of the twentieth century. Throughout the postwar years, women’s clubs on both sides of the internationalist debate used the same techniques to mobilize their members, drawing on a common history of women’s club work dating back to the nineteenth century and a common belief in the political role of women as protectors of home and community. This sense of shared heritage fueled the idea among both liberal and conservative women’s clubs that women should speak with a unified voice on the UN and foreign affairs, and the parallel notion that women would adopt this unified perspective if sufficiently educated. Ironically, though this drive for unity stimulated clubwomen’s education campaigns, it also nurtured their increasingly entrenched positions and their inability to speak effectively to one another. Clubwomen made some adjustments over the course of the postwar period, to be sure; as they became progressively more alienated from the Cold War internationalist consensus, conservative club activists in particular became more willing to be confrontational and controversial, embracing their outsider political perspective. Yet much of postwar clubwomen’s
international affairs work remained moderate and gradualist in its tactics, keyed to older conceptions of women’s civic duty to reform politics for the greater good of society and heavily focused on community activities. The declining effectiveness of liberal women’s clubs’ UN activism at the local level toward the end of the postwar period reflects, in part, their failure to adapt to the emergence of newer, more confrontational methods of political organizing during these years.

Nevertheless, as their community education campaigns had for decades, the foreign affairs campaigns of postwar clubwomen served a dual purpose; they fulfilled the civic duty of clubwomen to engage average Americans in the business of foreign policy and they afforded women’s clubs the opportunity to educate their own members about American politics. Aspects of this bifurcated mission worked well for the four women’s organizations considered in this project and for their peers in the postwar club movement. These groups helped integrate the United Nations into American political culture during the postwar years and simultaneously taught their members how to lobby Congress, how to coordinate community campaigns, and how to build national political networks. Yet basing their members’ domestic political education on international politics also proved troubling and, ultimately, divisive. After educating themselves on the United Nations and international affairs more broadly, clubwomen predictably developed differing opinions about American foreign policy. Though all four organizations perceived an intimate connection between foreign and domestic affairs, as the Cold War escalated and the United Nations grew in size and influence, these women divided over the specifics and advisability of this connection. This divergence broadened over the postwar period, nurturing two different cohorts of female activists in two different political traditions.
Liberal women's clubs displayed the most consistent investment in the United Nations project. These clubs felt it their duty to participate in shaping a peaceful postwar world and directed the energies of their large memberships to this project even during the UN's earliest planning stages at Dumbarton Oaks. When the State Department extended an invitation to several women's organizations to participate in the Charter conference, their sense of ownership of the international body increased, and club representatives took their position as NGO consultants seriously, lobbying for the inclusion of women's rights in the UN Charter and pressing for a focus on social and cultural problems in addition to political and economic ones. They also took full advantage of the Charter's provision allowing for NGO observers to attend UN sessions, appointing leading club members to these posts, using the information they collected to spread UN awareness to their members, and encouraging their local chapters to embrace the job of educating other Americans about the United Nations. In the early years of the postwar period, this activism thrived largely unchallenged, even as early postwar optimism deteriorated and the Cold War with the Soviet Union escalated. Yet, as the anticommunist fears of the fifties intensified, liberal women's clubs found themselves confronted with serious questions about the intimate connection they promoted between international and national interests.

Conservative women's clubs like the DAR began the postwar years cautiously optimistic about the United Nations as an international mediating body with little power to shape the domestic law of any of its member nations. Their community education programs reflected this guarded vision; DAR leaders advocated study and careful support of the United Nations to their members, along with close monitoring of the organization's
potential for expansion. Like the General Federation and their compatriots at the UN founding conference, the Daughters viewed it as the duty of their large organization of civic-minded women to help Americans process their nation’s new role as a global power. Yet their support for the UN was always tempered by their organization’s history of prioritizing national interests and American heritage. As the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States intensified and competition with the Communist world for the allegiance of post-colonial nations grew, DAR clubwomen feared that U.S. involvement in an international organization that also recognized the Soviet Union compromised American interests. They increasingly conflated the goals of the United Nations with the goals of international Communism. Simultaneously, the expanding power of the international body to affect American life, through treaties and military actions, provoked the Daughters’ established suspicion of entangling alliances. New women’s anticomunist clubs like the Minute Women added their voices to this critique, including United Nations in their list of collectivist influences on American society. Pairing these issues with their suspicion of domestic social changes, particularly civil rights reform and the broader expansion of governmental authority inspired by the New Deal, conservative women contended that the joining of American interests with international politics was fueling a host of societal transformations that they opposed. As such, the United Nations rapidly became, for conservative clubwomen, a threat to national security, national sovereignty, and domestic stability. By the time of the 1952 presidential election, women in the DAR and the Minute Women had elected to use the organizing power of their women’s groups to direct their nation away from expanding international interdependence.
Though certainly other leading liberal and conservative politicians shared these clashing perspectives on postwar foreign policy, the investment of American clubwomen in these geopolitical debates helped inject the debates into American culture. Women’s clubs developed elaborate programs to inform their own members and other Americans at the local level about the United Nations and the international issues it was charged with resolving. Ranging from lectures in local clubs to fundraising campaigns to radio programs to essay contests in local schools to community celebrations, the efforts of clubwomen to promote UN awareness contributed to the broader incorporation of foreign affairs concerns into the political culture of postwar years. Yet as clubwomen’s foreign policy positions diverged, so too did their educational programs. Anti-internationalist clubwomen focused more and more on the threat represented by the United Nations’ injection of the foreign into American society, while internationalist clubwomen persisted in their community promotion of dual loyalty, to the nation and the world. In so doing, both groups of American clubwomen contributed to the peculiar cultural ferment over world affairs that characterized the postwar years. Rather than debating simple opposition to communism, which the vast majority of the women in this project shared, these women participated in a more broad-ranging discourse on the extent to which America’s new status as a global power required the nation to invest itself in the international community, and on the precise role of American citizens in that political process.

In the wake of the 1952 election, clubwomen’s differences over foreign affairs questions became more entrenched. Conservative clubwomen used that political contest to rally their members in support of limiting the role of internationalism in American politics and society. Though many of these women initially felt that Eisenhower’s
election represented the triumph of their foreign affairs vision, they soon discovered that both political parties had embraced international engagement as the guiding principle behind American foreign policy. This fueled disenchantment in conservative women’s organizations with the federal government, particularly with its executive branch. As their indictment of the United Nations and internationalism became more strident, conservative women also became the target of vocal attacks in the media. Meanwhile, internationalist clubwomen struggled to adapt their mission to the changing realities of Cold War geopolitics, which fueled controversy within the United Nations and domestic suspicion of the international body’s American supporters. Though Eisenhower continued American involvement in the UN, internationalist women confronted more coordinated grassroots opposition to their UN activism, frequently sustained by their fellow clubwomen. In response to this anti-internationalist campaign, liberal clubwomen shifted their strategies in different directions. General Federation clubwomen increasingly married America’s Cold War project of countering communism with the nation’s involvement in the United Nations. The UN would facilitate American victory in the Cold War, Federation club leaders argued, and supporting the UN allowed American clubwomen to contribute to this triumph. Anxious to downplay controversy, Women United elected to emphasize the social and cultural programs of the United Nations and to highlight the positive effect the UN could have on the domestic life of its member nations. They felt this avoided the “political” issues that so inflamed opponents of internationalism, and thereby made the UN less controversial. Yet this emphasis highlighted the aspect of internationalism that most threatened conservative opponents of the global body: UN-sponsored disruptions of domestic tranquility by intrusive foreign
practices and ideas. As a result, Women United's programs failed to convert those Americans whose critique of the UN hinged on that link.

Domestic reform campaigns escalated this emerging tug-of-war between supporters and opponents of internationalism in American women's clubs. Civil rights activism in particular resonated with postwar opponents of internationalism, who feared that advocates of civil rights for black Americans would use the human rights provisions enshrined in the UN Charter and the power of international treaties to influence domestic laws to undermine American racial practices. The escalating anticolonial movement overseas fueled these fears, as the United Nations admitted greater numbers of third world nations with fluid political loyalties and broadened its critique of countries like South Africa with similar racial systems. Yet conservative women also readily blamed the United Nations for other manifestations of social change, from juvenile delinquency to changes in immigration legislation. Leaders in the DAR and the Minute Women incorporated a whole series of challenges to the American status quo into their critique of internationalism, arguing that the collectivist thinking espoused by UN supporters undermined America both abroad and at home. Uncertain and divided over these domestic questions, liberal clubwomen attempted to segregate them from their foreign affairs education programs. Hoping to elide the explosion of the civil rights movement in the latter half of the 1950s in the interest of organizational unity, leaders in the General Federation and Women United instead advocated international social programs and cultural exchange as the least controversial and most important way in which American citizens, and particularly American women, could support the United Nations and, thereby, American interests. This avoidance of domestic political controversy was only
partially successful; since postwar geopolitics, and particularly the Cold War, connected foreign affairs intimately to national affairs, the argument that cultural exchange and international aid were not "political" proved ineffective. That WUUN attempted to make this argument increasingly undermined the appeal of their local efforts. Though the General Federation did a better job of incorporating Cold War foreign policy aims into their international relations campaigns, their silence on the connection of internationalism to domestic social reform left the local analysis of this connection to conservative activists, who made the most of it in their UN critiques.

By 1957, when the DAR finally went on record to advocate American withdrawal from the United Nations, two distinct cohorts of clubwomen marshaling two distinct visions of America's relationship to the world were mobilizing their local clubs to educate American citizens. This led to a host of fascinating cultural duels over the United Nations, including battles over UN flags, the UNICEF Christmas card campaign, essay contests, school curricula, and department store displays. It also led clubwomen to relate in different ways to their nation's domestic political culture. Liberal clubwomen continued to marshal local support for the UN by emphasizing its social programs and to ally themselves with national policymakers by publicizing the global body as a vehicle for America's Cold War foreign policy. Conservative women, meanwhile, moved increasingly outside the political mainstream. Alienated from the federal government both because of its persistent internationalism and its growing support for domestic reform campaigns like the civil rights movement, these women forged alliances with conservative Congressmen and emphasized states rights and local control as the antidote to expanding international and national power. Both positions—the liberal and the
conservative—are reflected in later women’s activism, by liberal clubwomen’s early investment in the more institutional wing of feminist activism represented by the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, and by conservative women’s heavy contributions to the conservative takeover of the Republican Party and to the state-by-state campaign to defeat ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

One enduring irony apparent in these postwar campaigns is that the local UN activism to which both liberal and conservative women dedicated themselves during these fifteen years was, in the end, executed more effectively by the UN’s opponents—conservative women—than by its supporters. Though certainly the foreign affairs work of liberal women’s clubs trained their members in grassroots political organizing and interested them in the humanitarian elements of the UN’s mission, faith in the UN as a political repository for the spread of American democracy and a mechanism to promote world peace grew less and less popular among liberal clubwomen by the 1960s. Instead, even the most progressive of these clubwomen focused their political activism elsewhere, most notably on women’s rights and, to some extent, civil rights campaigns. Conversely, labeling the UN a political vehicle for the spread of collectivism in American society remained a persuasive conservative critique of Cold War liberalism. Conservative female activists continued to marshal this view in their grassroots campaigns, using it successfully to hold together national networks of local women’s groups established during the postwar years. The reasons for conservative women’s relative success with UN-based grassroots organizing lies primarily in their enthusiastic embrace of the domestic ramifications of internationalism. Precisely because conservative women sought to defend the domestic from foreign intrusions, they proved more adept at processing the
connection between the foreign and the domestic, the national and the international, than their counterparts in more liberal women’s organizations. Liberal women sought simultaneously to argue in favor of this connection between local circumstances, national policy, and international affairs, and to minimize the importance of its influence on certain aspects of American society, namely racial practices and military and financial obligations. As a result, when international affairs demonstrably affected the American populace, for instance during the Korean War or when American judges cited the UN Charter in their civil rights decisions, the position of liberal clubs, which ignored or minimized these effects, appeared less valid. And when the growth of international turmoil—the Vietnam War and anticolonial movements—as well as domestic social reform campaigns—the civil rights movement—made it clear that America’s new role in the world carried with it the prospect of increased global influence over American life, liberal women’s broadest promotion of the UN seemed increasingly naïve and anachronistic. Notably, the area where liberal women’s clubs most actively paired their UN work with domestic reform, namely in women’s rights efforts, is the piece of UN-based political organizing that survived most clearly among liberal clubwomen in the later decades of the twentieth century. In their promotion of women’s rights, liberal clubwomen more effectively used the politics of internationalism to their advantage, and their grassroots work seems to have been more sustainable.

As these experiences suggest, the UN education campaigns of postwar women’s clubs shaped the paths of these organizations in unanticipated ways. Though both conservative and liberal women’s organizations displayed at least superficial dedication to international organizing when the United Nations was founded, that consensus did not
survive. Becoming community foreign affairs experts and embracing the connection between the foreign and the domestic, clubwomen discovered, necessarily meant taking some position on their nation’s engagement with the world at large. The persistent tension between international and national interests plagued women’s organizations as they tied their political role in American society to the creation of a sound foreign policy and a stable global community. In the end, some clubwomen sought to avoid domestic politics entirely, some took the centrist Cold War line, and some became an active part of a conservative political counterculture. Yet, whether or not these groups of women succeeded in conforming America’s participation in world politics to their vision, certainly their pairing of political organizing with international affairs carried these women’s clubs into the political debates of the postwar years. In this way, foreign affairs activism became clubwomen’s political training ground between the end of the Second World War and the 1960s. Modeled on community education campaigns of an earlier period, these UN programs turned out to be inherently political, merging clubwomen’s grassroots organizing with national politics and fueling clubwomen’s participation in their nation’s political culture.

Yet clubwomen also contributed to the politicization of the United Nations in American communities. By positing UN awareness as a viable civic project, American women’s clubs took the first step toward injecting this global body into the everyday lives of American citizens. The programs that clubwomen subsequently created to promote their foreign policy perspectives carried debates about internationalism into American communities and gave them political, social, and cultural significance. America’s middle-class clubwomen thus became the agents of postwar foreign policy.
discourse, doing the work of conveying the intellectual foundations of divergent foreign affairs positions to the public. As their dedication to this work illustrates, clubwomen believed these UN campaigns to be a powerful method of civic engagement, the means by which Americans could contribute to a stable postwar world order. Their history of public reform and community education campaigns suited America’s middle-class women for the role of international relations emissary, and these women adopted that role enthusiastically. They adapted their older strategies to a new geopolitical environment, with varying degrees of success, and in the process transformed their own organizations and postwar American culture.
Bibliography

Archival Sources
Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, Calif., Collection of Underground, Alternative, and Extremist Literature

Charles W. Capps, Jr., Archives and Museum, Delta State University, Cleveland, Miss. Florence Sillers Ogden Papers


Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Tex. George S. Ebey Collection Ralph S. O’Leary Papers

Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. Kathryn Fink Dunaway Papers

Manuscripts and Archives Section, New York Humanities and Social Sciences Library, New York, N.Y., National Council of Women of the United States Records


Special Collections, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., Robert Silvercruys Papers

Women’s History and Resource Center, General Federation of Women’s Clubs National Headquarters, Washington, D.C., Program Records and Convention Records

Oral Histories

Court Cases


Perez v. Sharp, 32 Cal. 2d 711, 198 P2d 17 (1948)

Sei Fujii v. State of California, 38 Cal. 2d 718, 242 P2d 617 (1952)

Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. et al. v. Sawyer, 343 U.S. 579 (1952)

Periodicals
American Jewish Yearbook

Atlanta Constitution

DAR Magazine

General Federation Clubwoman

The Houston Chronicle

The Houston Post

The Minute Women of the U.S.A., Inc.

The Nation

The New York Times

The Progressive

Time Magazine

The Washington Post
Books


**Articles**


May, Elaine Tyler. “Commentary: Ideology and Foreign Policy; Culture and Gender in


**Official Documents**


**Theses and Dissertations**
