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Eleanor Roosevelt's Peculiar Pacifism: Activism, Pragmatism, and Political Efficacy in Interwar America

Dario Fazzi

¹ The U.S. has a long pacifist tradition, both religious and secular, which has represented one of the most fruitful soils for the development of transnational pacifism as a whole. Anti-militarism, non-violence, disarmament, and democratic internationalism have been the main arguments that the U.S. pacifist organizations have put forward. American women, in particular, have played a major role in shaping both the domestic and international debate on peace, and have managed to spread pacifist ideals by merging them with the promotion of social justice and human rights.

² Eleanor Roosevelt was not only an integral part of such a pacifist chorus, but she also represented one of its most influential voices, by bringing pacifist ideals to the highest level of the American political landscape and public debate. The main scope of this essay is to provide an account of her contribution to the shaping of American pacifism in the years between the two world wars. In doing so, this overview will survey three peculiar features of Eleanor Roosevelt's interwar pacifism, as to eventually define it as a truly modern one.

³ Eleanor Roosevelt's pacifism was the combined result of idealistic activism and political pragmatism. In the 1920s, Mrs. Roosevelt's attitude toward peace was a proactive one, leading her to join an American peace movement largely shaped by women and deeply involved in the promotion of internationalism and multilateral diplomacy. A decade later, when Eleanor Roosevelt became the U.S. first lady, her natural humanitarian inclination merged with such an activism and inspired what can be seen as her own peculiar New Deal, mostly focused on education and social and racial equality. Internationally, in spite of the war approaching fast, she kept promoting multilateral

disarmament and, contrary to the most radical features of American pacifism, she endorsed a democratic intervention to erase the threat of totalitarianism worldwide. Purely pragmatist, Eleanor Roosevelt identified utopianism as an untenable position in the light of the international rise of Nazi-fascism and communism. The rejection of utopianism, however, did not imply a disengagement from peace activism. According to the first lady, that activism was still crucial to spread a culture of peace and social justice at home and promote multilateral diplomacy and cooperation abroad.

⁴ In the early 1940s, Eleanor Roosevelt, who had already become a skilled politician on her own, managed to combine pacifist stances with the exigencies of national security. She pressed toward a greater U.S. involvement in European and world's affairs. In her opinion, isolationism and disengagement, in an era of global interdependence, were not viable options anymore. The ideals of freedom and equality had to be fulfilled in the national and international protection of human dignity. Later on, this became the core of her mission at the U.N. and the centerpiece of her promotion of transnational mutual understanding.

⁵ Accordingly, it is safe to say that Eleanor Roosevelt had a truly comprehensive view of peace, which she mainly described as a broader socio-political objective to be pursued both at home and abroad. In line with the tenets of classical U.S. liberalism, she praised multilateral diplomacy, international institutions, and cooperation as crucial stability and peace providers. She associated peace with such ideas as social justice, security, equality, and democracy. By doing so, she gave particular prominence to the role of peace education, thus emphasizing what is still considered to be one of the most distinctive traits of contemporary pacifism.

⁶ This essay will recon with the complex and multifaceted nature of Eleanor Roosevelt's commitment to peace, by reading her interwar participation in several anti-war rallies, meetings and conventions, and her writings on peace related issues and peace groups as part and parcel of her social and humanitarian inclination. In addition, this study will argue that Mrs. Roosevelt's pacifism was proudly pragmatic, meaning that while she was involved in defending and promoting peace, she did not endorse the principles of absolute pacifism. For instance, she criticized unilateral disarmament and praised multilateral diplomacy as the only method through which nations could settle disputes in a civilized manner. She considered herself as a "realistic" pacifist, because she believed that, under the strains of war, military preparedness was somehow inescapable. Finally, the essay will examine Mrs. Roosevelt's influential position at the White House, where as first lady she advocated for the promotion of international peace, thus transforming her humanitarian activism into a powerful political force within the administration and substantially changing the public image and perception of the U.S. first lady.

1. Peace Activism in the U.S.

⁷ In the immediate aftermath of World War I, American pacifist organizations' most urgent goal was to mobilize people against war; avoiding another immense catastrophe was their number one priority. The number and variety of organizations protesting against war and militarism encompassed both women's movements and religious and ethical pacifist associations. The American pacifist landscape was composed of movements and

campaigns that promoted neutrality, disarmament, internationalism, and non-violence at the same time and in a variety of ways.ⁱ

⁸ The roots of such a pacifist mobilization originated with the Spanish-American War and the U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines. American late-century interventionism merged the various groupings of American pacifism and eventually gave rise to the emergence of the U.S. Anti-Imperialist League. This was “a national movement with a mass constituency” that counted more than thirty thousand members and later became “the largest anti-war organization in American history.” The League was intended to defend many ideals that were considered part of the traditional American political milieu such as “political unilateralism, military independence and exemplary moral conduct.” In particular, the League depicted American imperialism as an extraneous element that ran counter to the underlying principles of American constitutional republicanism.ⁱⁱ

⁹ Amidst the preparation for World War I, a new organization emerged: the People's Council of America. It aimed at unifying the fragmented American peace movement and connecting it with workers, a recognition that the lack of workers' involvement had been of the main limits of the Anti-Imperialist League. It was a radical organization whose primary purpose was to denounce war as intrinsically unequal, economically dangerous – especially for the lower classes that did not receive adequate wages – and in utter contrast to professed American values, which promoted and protected economic and social justice. These slightly pro-socialist ideals immediately came under the lens of the administration, which countered with funding pro-war propaganda through the American Federation of Labor.

¹⁰ During the early 1920s, allegations of socialism and the Red-Scare paranoia marginalized the People's Council to the edges of the public landscape. Many other peace organizations suffered the same fate. Only religious movements were partly acquitted of this allegation and succeeded in keeping the pacifist spirit of reform alive. This was the case with the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization founded in 1917 by members of the Religious Society of Friends. Its members were moved by the religious idea of an “inner light” existing in every human being. This universal spark of God – according to Quaker views – should be enough to “take away the occasion for all wars,” almost by itself. Quakers, along with Mennonites, Amish, and Anabaptists, were the best-known religious pacifist bodies, or peace churches in the U.S., and they were among the most active groups in supporting conscientious objection during the first years of the twentieth century. Established in 1914, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, with its refusal of military conscription on grounds of conscience and moral revulsion, was another example of this trend.ⁱⁱⁱ

¹¹ The first national organization claiming for itself a secular image within the American pacifist landscape was the War Resisters League. Founded in 1921, it defined itself as a pacifist organization with no religious base or values, and campaigned for the promotion of liberal internationalism. War Resisters believed that international cooperation was the key to the abolition of war. They held that international and supranational institutions should help states settle their disputes, regulate their behaviors, and thus avoid the outbreak of other destructive wars. Accordingly, international treaties, as well as negotiation, arbitration and diplomacy, were all simultaneously among the main American pacifist demands of the early twentieth century.^{iv}

¹²The emergence and apparently steady growth of American pacifism in the interwar years, however, would not have been possible without the contribution that women and women's organization paid to it. Women were indeed among the most active members of the principal American peace organizations, and it was due to women's mobilization and activities that the various American peace movements gained political relevance and were efficiently organized. The struggle for peace meant for American women the opportunity to enhance the conditions of their lives, break the boundaries of the private sphere and participate as protagonists in the public arena, by both expressing a concerned motherhood and an aware citizenship. Leaders of the women's campaign, such as Emily Balch, Lillian Wald, and Jane Addams, promoted liberal ideals, workers' rights, international disarmament, and global institutions. Carrie Chapman Catt, for instance, played a central role in the organization of the first National Conferences on the Cause and Cure of War, which aimed to educate the larger American public, and especially women, to actively work for peace. Dorothy Detzer coordinated the national and transnational activities of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which stressed the importance of multilateral disarmament and peace. Jeanette Rankin co-founded the National Council for the Prevention of War, which was organized to press for neutrality legislation and multilateral disarmament.

¹³Either acting individually as liberal and radical freethinkers or mobilizing collective efforts through a series of organized movements and campaigns, women were on the frontline of peace promotion in interwar America. The nature of their message was intrinsically neutral and democratic; however, their social activism did not go unnoticed and became an easy prey for any sort of anti-socialist or anti-communist agitators. Women activists and pacifists were stigmatized, accused of promoting socialist propaganda, being communists, and generally branded as radicals. They were, however, all but banned from the public sphere and political discourse.^v

¹⁴Eleanor Roosevelt was an integral part of this pacifist – and too a large extent feminist too – wave. Her biographers and other historians have recognized this and have written on her social activism during the interwar period extensively.^{vi} Many have also stressed the influence World War I had on her political and intellectual formation.^{vii} The Great War and its consequences, indeed, boosted Eleanor Roosevelt's social involvement and made her public attitudes way more assertive than before. During an interview for her husband's 1920 Vice-Presidential campaign, for instance, she stressed the relevance of the League of Nations and the necessity for the U.S. to take part in it. Her criticism of American isolationism and support of social justice and pacifist stances were not particularly advantageous to her husband's electoral campaign, but they were part of her character.^{viii} As Joseph Lash, later recognized, "the War gave her a reason acceptable to her conscience to free herself of the social duties that she hated, to concentrate less on her household, and to plunge into work that fitted her aptitude."^{ix} Eventually, the Great War transformed her into a reliable social and political leader, "an accomplished, widely known, and admired public figure in her own right," one who was able to set her own agenda and to fight for her own social and political priorities.^x

¹⁵In the early 1920's, Eleanor Roosevelt's increasing political interests found a bold channel of expression in the New York League of Women Voters. The League, as Maurine Beasley has noted, played an important role in her political education, in making her a conscious citizen, and in improving her social skills.^{xi} While working for the League, Eleanor Roosevelt started to give public presentations, discuss social issues, and campaign

in favor of social legislation and other broad political objectives. While lobbying for women's right to vote, however, Mrs. Roosevelt was also very active in promoting anti-militarism and internationalism. Without agreeing with the most radical features of the many American pacifist organizations, she nevertheless found the rationale of their arguments fully comprehensible and acceptable. She participated in anti-war rallies, attended pacifist meetings and conventions, and wrote articles and pamphlets on peace issues and about the activities of peace groups. She also endorsed the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and hosted a women's peace movement conference at Hyde Park, with Carrie Chapman Catt as the keynote speaker.^{xii}

¹⁶In 1923 and 1924, Mrs. Roosevelt's commitment to peace soared. She helped organize the Bok Peace Prize competition, an award that was intended to galvanize and promote the American peace movement as a whole. The \$100,000 prize was reserved for "the best practicable plan by which the United States may cooperate with other nations to achieve and preserve the peace of the world." Esther Lape, a college professor, a publicist with a strong interest in international affairs, an activist of the New York League of Women Voters, and a close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt's, was appointed as the contest director. Mrs. Roosevelt worked hard to promote the competition. To this end she wrote a passionate article for the October 1923 "Ladies' Home Journal." Although isolationist elites criticized the prize, her experience in this effort confirmed Eleanor Roosevelt's commitment to the peace movement's ideals and illustrated her early involvement in international and multilateral cooperation.^{xiii} In 1924, when questioned whether war could ever be morally justified, she showed her deep conviction to the necessity for world peace once more, and admitted her own inability to see "why there should be any such thing as a righteous war."^{xiv}

¹⁷Naturally, Eleanor Roosevelt's ideas developed over the years and changed as external conditions changed too. In the late 1930s, she gradually shifted toward a more assertive position on U.S. military policy, but she succeeded in preserving the quintessential element of her pacifism anyhow, which was mostly represented by her full endorsement of multilateral diplomacy. The negotiated settlement of international disputes remained a centerpiece of American peace activism and a core belief of Eleanor Roosevelt's pacifism as well.

¹⁸American pacifism of the 1920s and 1930s made a strong appeal for world cooperation as the only possible solution to war and the only viable road for international peace and security. For this reason, Eleanor Roosevelt stressed many times that the U.S. had to participate in the League of the Nations. In 1935 for example, when an isolationist inclined U.S. Senate had to vote for the World Court treaty, Eleanor Roosevelt, though she knew that her appeal would very probably not receive the necessary legislative support, delivered a radio address in which she called for the ratification of that treaty. She believed that nations had to find a civilized, rapid way to settle their disputes. This also explains why she decided to contribute a chapter to Carrie Chapman Catt's book *Why Wars Must Cease*, and why, in 1938, she wrote *This Troubled World*, dedicating both of these analyses to the necessity of banning war and promoting world cooperation.^{xv}

¹⁹What Eleanor Roosevelt liked less, however, and what ultimately separated Mrs. Roosevelt's pragmatic pacifist approach from the utopian stands of American peace organizations, was the promotion of unilateral disarmament. "None of us believe that the United States can disarm alone," she stated in 1931. She was convinced that nations had to come together "not in fear, but in trust" and in that way they would be able to "settle

disputes in a more civilized manner."^{xvi} She sensed the international threats earlier than most Americans and felt the compelling need to qualify her involvement in the peace campaign accordingly. As the clouds of the war gathered, Eleanor Roosevelt remained "passionately committed to peace," even though she became everything but an absolute pacifist. She preferred to be defined as a "realistic" pacifist, meaning that she understood the necessity for military preparedness and conscription. In the end she was, as Blanche Wiesen Cook reminds us, "a practical idealist; an American internationalist, specifically an internationalist whose values were profoundly American. She was committed to the precepts of America as codified in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights."^{xvii}

²⁰ Thus, the failure of the League of Nations, the neutralization of all of the efforts to reach an international ban on war or to find forms of effective disarmament, and, eventually, the victory of power politics and rearmament, convinced Eleanor Roosevelt to keep her distance from the more idealistic faction of the peace movement. Confronting the rising of Nazism and Fascism, Eleanor Roosevelt came to dislike the calls for unilateral disarmament that permeated many pacifist organizations. She began to consider these claims dangerous and fruitless and, when the war broke out in Europe, she was completely persuaded that the United States would have to fight, "because fascism threatened the future of civilization."^{xviii}

2. Pragmatism and Politics

²¹ When Eleanor Roosevelt entered the White House, in March 1933, she was forty-eight years old and she had already become an exceptional figure in her own right. In an era when only one out of four women worked outside the home, she had led many local and national campaigns, organized events, managed businesses, established important social and political relationships, become a respected lobbyist and a skilled politician, raised a family, and finally, acquired great skills in coping with the press. Mrs. Roosevelt brought all of her peculiarities with her to her new office.

²² Historians have amply recognized Mrs. Roosevelt's ability to use her new position instrumentally or, as Allida Black says, "adroitly." This was one of the most intriguing aspects of Eleanor Roosevelt's life at the White House.^{xix} Due to her social activism and the breadth of her interests, Mrs. Roosevelt was able to use her new political position "to advocate for both individuals and causes in which she believed." In doing so, "she emerged as the conscience of the administration, [...] she transformed her personal need to be active and useful into a potent political force within [the] administration." Such a transformation made Eleanor Roosevelt "one of the strongest and most popular voices in Washington, in spite of critics who derided her nontraditional activism and alleged meddling in political matters."^{xx}

²³ Among the many causes the first lady decided to advocate, civil rights was politically the most slippery and perilous one, immediately followed by the discussion of war and peace. Eleanor Roosevelt, however, managed to address both of these themes with equal commitment. As historian Blanche Wiesen Cook argues, "there was nothing simple about her views on international relations during the 1930s." During her early years at the White House, indeed, Eleanor Roosevelt remained deeply involved in defending peace ideals and promoting peace values nationwide. This does not mean that she endorsed the principles of absolute pacifism tout court. Rather, she maintained a pragmatic approach

that permitted her to establish new ties and reinforce the old ones within the pacifist network.^{xxi}

²⁴ Mrs. Roosevelt supported peace both as an ideal and as a political objective, and she worked hard to simultaneously preserve peace and achieve it. Her personal beliefs induced her to host an official reception at the White House so as to celebrate the WILPF's twentieth anniversary, only a few weeks before Jane Addams' death in May 1935. Moreover, when the National Council for the Prevention of War invited the first lady to broadcast a radio message in support of its campaign, she accepted wholeheartedly and delivered a stirring speech explaining the reasons why she thought women should prefer peace to war. Mrs. Roosevelt reiterated the theme of a concerned motherhood many times after that occasion, as for instance in 1940, when she clearly stated that women did not wish to see their sons go to war again.^{xxii} Given her popularity, she easily became a widely known ambassador for peace. In a 1935 pamphlet titled "Why Wars Must Cease," for instance, she explained why she believed that war in the modern era was outdated: "an idea is obsolete if, when applied, it does not work. [...] There is no further use for war in business, or war between labor and capital or war between the rich and the poor. The time for unbridled competition, or war, is at an end, we must cooperate for our mutual good."^{xxiii} In "This Troubled World," she advocated for brotherly love as a way of living instead of a pure doctrine, and in one of the "If You Ask Me" columns, she championed the search for a common understanding in contrast to the rise of individualism.^{xxiv} "The basic thing," Eleanor Roosevelt stated, "is that individuals should want peace, should care about other human beings all over the world regardless of race, creed, or color, and should be determined that they will not seek for purely personal advantage, but will seek for mutual advantage."^{xxv}

²⁵ Following her personal inclinations, Eleanor Roosevelt continued to back and support pacifist organizations like the American Friends Service Committee, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the War Resisters League, even though she kept opposing fiercely the idea of unilateral disarmament that animated some of these groups. She maintained that an adequate defense was necessary "as long as we cannot have simultaneous disarmament." This position separated her from the most radical elements of the American peace movement. On several occasions, she tried to explain that she could differ with the pacifist organizations but still cooperate with them in a general drive for peace. "[T]he peace drive is a coming together of all organizations interested in peace to promote the spirit in this country. All those who speak and work for peace do not agree exactly as to the way in which peace shall be obtained. I happen to believe that adequate armament for defense is necessary. Others may not; but I can join in any demonstration, at least, which has as its object the will for peace."

²⁶ Such a moderate attitude was a peculiar element of Eleanor Roosevelt's approach to peace and she reiterated this stance both privately and publicly. In a letter of 1936, for instance, the first lady confessed to believing that "all armaments cause distrust between nations, but that disarmament must be international so that no one country leaves itself open to attack or invasion from another." In a speech that the *New York Times* reported on February 15, 1938, she added, "it is unfortunately true that we still live in a world where force is the only voice that carries conviction and weight with certain groups. I wish it was not so. I wish we lived in a world where reason and patience prevailed and that the money could be spent on other things. But now, today, it is undoubtedly necessary for us to have better equipment for self-defense."^{xxvi}

²⁷ Given these moderate stances, many tried to define Eleanor Roosevelt's approach to peace issues during the late 1930s as an ambivalent one. Frances Perkins, for instance, described her "as near pacifist as one can be and still be a realist." A correspondent of hers, Mrs. Oliphant called her "the number one pacifist in the land." Her friend and biographer, Joseph Lash defined her positions as both pacifist and anti-fascist. However, Eleanor Roosevelt had a precise idea of what her commitment to peace was. In a 1934 letter, she defined herself as a realistic pacifist. She needed to qualify her pacifism because of her fear of fascist expansionism, the rise of international tensions and the urgency to confront dictatorships. She also needed to be at the same time politically cautious and pragmatic because of all of the electoral campaigns in which FDR was involved. In June 1937, she added that "being a pacifist means that you do not see a fight, that you use every means in your power to prevent a fight [...] But if war comes to your own country, then even pacifists, it seems to me, must stand up and fight for their beliefs."^{xxvii} As soon as external conditions forced her to realize that unilateral disarmament and neutrality legislation, two of the main pacifists' demands, would not prevent war and could potentially threaten the American interests, she stressed even more the need for a pragmatic approach. When her personal views occasionally "ran contrary to official U.S. policy of neutrality toward conflict in Europe," she always maintained that her views were merely personal with no relationship to official policy.^{xxviii} Amidst a pivotal political struggle over the Lend-Lease proposal to Britain, she eventually spoke in favor of American actions and said that it was time the U.S. started "thinking about giving something," explicitly thinking of military assistance.^{xxix} By that time, however, America was already at war.

3. An Effective World Peace

²⁸ "We know what we have to face and we know that we are ready to face it." With these few words Eleanor Roosevelt counseled Americans in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor.^{xxx} It was her voice that announced to the nation that the war had finally come home. Due to FDR's physical disability, she had to embody the administration's war efforts throughout the country. Her presence had to inspire Americans and convince them that democracy would triumph over dictatorship. To this end, she gave assistance to the director of the nation's civilian defense program. On countless occasions, American soldiers all over the world had the opportunity to see her as a tangible sign of the White House presence. She paid many visits to hospitals where she copied the names and addresses of the wounded she encountered, so that she could write letters to their relatives once she returned home. The first lady thus became a symbol of national unity and throughout the war her popularity soared.^{xxxi}

²⁹ The war, however, not only gave Mrs. Roosevelt's personality and evocative rhetoric great prominence, it also accentuated her distinctive pragmatic pacifism. Amidst increasingly belligerent tones and pro-war campaigns, she was able to make the difficult trade-off between her public role and personal beliefs and pacifist stands. As Allida Black argues, Eleanor Roosevelt understood, "the complex relationships between war and peace," and always tried to explain the rationale behind the necessity of fighting dictatorships.^{xxxii} Already in 1939, when the war had just erupted in Europe, she noted that the world situation would inevitably affect U.S. domestic affairs and she warned her fellow citizens about the tensions and the psychological effects that the new conflict

would generate at home.^{xxxiii} She pragmatically defended the idea that the main goal for the U.S. in this war was to ensure an independent nation for American children.^{xxxiv} She expressed the desire to continue to live in an independent country based on individual freedom and equal opportunities.^{xxxv} She also advocated women's active participation in war mobilization, an element that she considered crucial in avoiding further negative consequences.

³⁰The first lady, indeed, fiercely promoted the deterrent value of preemptive mobilization: "Our only hope of keeping the peace which we so prize, is to prove before there is any involvement in war, that we are a unified nation for defense."^{xxxvi} She believed that the participation of the whole population in what she defined as a "people's war" would be the key to defeat Nazism and Fascism. What she was supporting was, in essence, a people's democratic revolution against tyranny.^{xxxvii} In a radio address in October 1941, she commended even the conscientious objectors for the dogged service they were providing in medical facilities.^{xxxviii} She asked every American to do the most efficient possible job in order to "shorten the horrible period" of war.^{xxxix} She reminded young people and ordinary citizens that the ultimate ends for which they were fighting were freedom and "a different and better future world."^{xl} Exquisitely realist as well as purely *exceptionalist*, the core of Eleanor Roosevelt's message was that the sooner the U.S. faced up to the fact that this war was its own war, the sooner American citizens would do the job which other men and women were doing all over the world.^{xli} That job, according to the first lady, was nothing less than defending democracy.^{xlii}

³¹Given her pragmatic pacifism and political realism, Eleanor Roosevelt existed in a quandary in which "the peace movement wanted her to be its voice within the administration and the administration expected her to defend its position with its anti-war critics."^{xliii} Since she did not want to gainsay FDR's pro-war stance, she decided, on the one hand, to defend practical causes such as conscientious objection and, on the other hand, to promote the general idea of world peace.^{xliiv} This last attitude occasionally rendered Eleanor Roosevelt a voice outside the chorus of the overt political realm and the public debate. As she later recalled, it was not enough to talk about peace, since "one must work at it."^{xliv} During the war, the cause of world peace became so central to Mrs. Roosevelt's public efforts that many historians, for instance Joan Hoff, use the expression "apparent incongruity" to describe her internal conflict between the necessity of fighting the war and at the same time promoting world peace.^{xlvi} That incongruity epitomized, instead, the search for a delicate equilibrium between Eleanor Roosevelt's pragmatism and idealism.^{xlvii} In the end, she accepted World War II as a route to the achievement of a stable international peace.

³²The first lady envisioned a better world after the war, a world centered on the role of people. This bottom-up approach slowly became her preferred perspective from which to imagine and design the post-war order. She defended citizens' right to hope and asserted that the future belonged to "those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."^{xlviii} Against the rise of arrogance and egotism, she proposed, and backed, an "enlightened self-interest" through which people of the world could understand that wars are detrimental to the whole of civilization.^{xlix} According to her opinions, there would be no victory without removing the "armed camps" in people's minds – those cultural barriers that kept individuals from mutual understanding.¹ She believed that the establishment of a universal language, as part of a universal understanding, would be a preliminary step and a "prelude to world peace."^{li} Replying to a boy who was looking forward "to the time

when the conflict will cease and the real problems of the world can be met by thought and brains," Mrs. Roosevelt remarked that American citizens had to keep themselves from hate, "and act with cool heads but warm hearts, both with our allies and with our enemies at the close of the war."ⁱⁱⁱ Finally, she placed great emphasis on the role of education, saying that it was one of the most vigorous boosters for peace.^{liii}

³³With the same passionate rhetoric she used to promote world peace, Eleanor Roosevelt addressed one of the most problematic foreign policy issues of the early 1940s – the problem of the post-war cooperation. According to the first lady, the U.S. had to realize that it was "no longer an isolated nation, but part of a family of nations" that needed to be restored to normal life.^{liv} On a number of occasions, she praised the importance of winning peace. In March 1943, for example, she attended a meeting in Philadelphia and listened to Governor of Minnesota Harold Stassen's speech with great interest. Stassen strongly advocated a "definite United Nations government" and a worldwide vision of winning what he called an enduring peoples' peace.^{lv} Although Mrs. Roosevelt confessed to having no particular formula for the way international cooperation should function after the war, she endorsed the idea of establishing a working United Nations Organization, which would be a "solid foundation for world peace."^{lvi} Such an idea, far from being purely idealistic, took into account the differences that persisted among the nations, and particularly those differences affecting the relations between the U.S. and Soviet Russia. She clearly stated that any plan for the future world order would have to include Russia, China and all those nations that wanted to wholeheartedly subscribe to the notion of cooperation. When New York congressman Arthur Klein introduced a plan that included the establishment of "closer cooperation between all nations" as an "extension of the good neighbor policy to all the world" along with measures for "social and economic improvement," she immediately endorsed it.^{lvii} She used both her political channels and her connections with social movements to promote international cooperation. As a member of the women's division of the Democratic National Committee, Eleanor Roosevelt asked her party to join the efforts of the League of Women Voters and those of several churches to discuss and formulate a proposal on world peace before the San Francisco conference.^{lviii} The very day before the convening of that conference, she stressed the significance of setting up an organization that would be a forum for discussion, and a place where future generations would have the opportunity to build a peaceful world.^{lix}

³⁴As first and most important result, Eleanor Roosevelt's pacifism, idealism, realism and humanitarianism all converged in the shape of her ideas for what the U.N. should be. She considered "food, or relief, or even aviation" as matters that had direct bearing on the establishment of a lasting peace.^{lx} To preserve peace, the new organization had to encompass a vast range of subjects, including rehabilitation, world labor problems, and world educational problems.^{lxi} Mrs. Roosevelt counted the FAO, the UNESCO, the U.N. health and labor organizations, and the Economic and Social Forum as the most important means to foster international cooperation. Her main interest was to build an organization that would be as efficient as possible. "[W]hen questions reach the Security Council, we must have an organization to enforce its decisions," the first lady liked to say.^{lxii}

³⁵Hence, the roots of her internationalism were not entirely idealistic. The centerpiece of her foreign policy vision was instead a mutual recognition of interests. Eleanor Roosevelt believed that the mutuality of interests, especially in practical fields, favored

international agreements. She expressed this idea in a heartfelt speech against the word tolerance, which, according to first lady's views, could hide fear and restrain people and nations from cooperating.^{lxiii} As regards the WHO and UNESCO, she said it was useless to support them if they were not intended to produce mutual advantages such as increasing the health standards in all nations or by improving the global educational level.^{lxiv}

³⁶ Accordingly, international defense of human rights had to become the principal way to achieve mutual gains. That was why the cause to which she was most committed was the issue of human rights. It was her attitude toward the promotion and the safeguard of human rights that helped President Truman solve one of his first dilemmas. In 1945, he confided to Secretary of State James Byrnes that he needed the support of two important liberals for the purpose of improving the public image of his administration, specifically Henry Wallace and Eleanor Roosevelt. The area of international affairs seemed a natural destination for such an outstanding and trustworthy figure as Eleanor Roosevelt. That was why Byrnes placed her name at the top of the list of delegates to the upcoming London conference of the United Nations.^{lxv} In December 1945, Truman appointed her as one of the U.S. representatives to the first session of the General Assembly, which was scheduled for Westminster Central Hall the following January. She decided to write of her gratitude in the pages of her *My Day* column where she confirmed her desire to learn, understand and work on the problems of the world in order to build a lasting peace. Mrs. Roosevelt felt a great responsibility in being the only woman delegate from the U.S. and promised to keep in mind the enormous sacrifices of the youth who had fought in war. After all, she was going to London fully convinced that the world had become, as Wendell Willkie said, "one world" and that only by recognizing this interdependence would it be possible to secure future generations from war.^{lxvi}

³⁷ Eleanor Roosevelt easily won large internal support in the U.S. for the U.N. and its mission to protect human rights. This was particularly true in the case of the varied American peace movements, which immediately praised her appointment. A quick survey of Eleanor Roosevelt's incoming correspondence in the aftermath of her nomination shows the contentment that many of the American peace movement activists found in her holding that position. Representatives of the American Association for the United Nations, labor movement spokespersons, and women's and religious organizations sent Eleanor Roosevelt letters of congratulations, suggestions, and memoranda.^{lxvii} One admirer called her "The Queen of Peace - Champion of the Common People - The First Lady of America." The press defined her nomination a "splendid choice" because of her ability to both represent common people and to understand the urgency of building a lasting peace.^{lxviii} In his comment, *Washington Post* columnist, Thomas L. Stokes, said that the people had gained a real spokesman, and that Eleanor Roosevelt would be more than a mere representative of the women of America. Although she would fulfill that role excellently, Stokes felt that she represented, "better than perhaps any other person, [...] the little people of this country and, indeed, of the world." She knew the common people's yearning for peace and security. She had promoted peace even when she had realized it was necessary to fight. Accordingly, she understood perfectly why it was of the utmost importance to prevent another war.^{lxix} Sitting at the U.N. in 1946, she was, quintessentially, the right woman in the right place.

4. Conclusion

38 Eleanor Roosevelt's approach to peace in the interwar year was a complex, at times ambivalent one. Although being fully engaged in sustaining her husband's brilliant political ascension and therefore necessarily influenced by political pragmatism and convenience, she was nevertheless able to set up a political agenda on her own, by giving particular prominence to such controversial and politically slippery causes as international cooperation and peace.

39 Eleanor Roosevelt's peace activism, perhaps more importantly, was constantly intertwined with her unceasing quest for social justice. It was during the interwar years, indeed, that she started developing the idea that peace – as a cogent political objective rather than as a mere aspiration – could only stem from and be achieved through equal opportunities. To her, peace was strongly and ultimately related to people's living conditions. That was the reason why caring about people's basic needs, as a way to reach a more equal and therefore peaceful society, progressively became the linchpin of Mrs. Roosevelt's interests and activities both as U.S. first lady and as a prominent member of the Democratic Party.

40 Mrs. Roosevelt's noticeable pacifism, combined with her unremitting social activism and her unmatched ability to cope with the mass media of her era, eventually transformed her into a reliable leader, and made her, at the same time, the perfect intercessor between the political elites and American pacifists.^{lxx} The combined result was the popularization of such a pragmatic approach to peace. Her stances, indeed, came to sound attractive not only to the most moderate exponents of the Popular Front, but also to those liberals in search for rational arguments against both the rampant hyper-nationalism of the right and the radical tenets of absolute pacifism of the extreme left. Accordingly, Eleanor Roosevelt made American pacifism perhaps less pacifist but politically more effective.

NOTES

i. The literature on American interwar pacifism is ample and varied. A classic is still Robert H. Ferrell's *Peace in Their Time: The Origins of the Kellogg-Briand Pact* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952). Robert David Johnson, in *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) explains how a few influential progressive senators helped realigning U.S. foreign policy with a longstanding antimilitarist and anti-imperialist tradition. Peter Brock and Thomas P. Socknat collected a series of essays, in a volume titled *Challenge to Mars: Pacifism from 1918 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), which provide numerous analyses on many of the interwar pacifism's most important features, from Christian pacifism to conscientious objection to women's activism. *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1999) by Cecelia Lynch focuses on the transatlantic bonds of American interwar pacifist groups. Leilah

C. Danielson, in "'In My Extremity I Turned to Gandhi:' American Pacifists, Christianity, and Gandhian Nonviolence, 1915–1941," in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, Volume 72, Issue 2, and Marian Mollin, in *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) turn their attention to the most radical facets of the American interwar pacifism. Radical connections between pacifists and socialists are also the main object of interests of Michael Kazin's recent *American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation* (New York: Vintage, 2011).

ii. See Charles De Benedetti, *The Peace Reform in American History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 3. On the ways in which American anti-imperialist perceived the idea of empire as opposed to the foundational ideal of freedom see Michael Cullinane, *Liberty and American Anti-Imperialism, 1898-1909* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

iii. Many Protestant denominations, such as Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Universalists and Unitarians, as well as many other secular organizations, influenced American Christian pacifism during the early twentieth century. See Michael True, "Christian Pacifism in the United States: A History and Development since the 17th Century", and Id., "The American Tradition of Nonviolence" in *Les Mouvements Pacifistes Américains et Français, Hier et Aujourd'hui: Actes du Colloque des 5, 6 et 7 Avril 2007 à l'Université de Savoie* (Chambéry: Université de Savoie, Laboratoire langages, littératures, sociétés, 2007); Id., *An Energy Field More Intense Than War: The Nonviolent Tradition and American Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); and Adin Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance* (Providence: Blackstone, 2003).

iv. See Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

v. See William Pencak, *For God & Country: The American Legion, 1919-1941*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989) and Dean J. Kotlowski, *Paul V. McNutt and the Age of FDR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).

vi. In the first volume of her seminal biography, Blanche Wiesen Cook dates Eleanor Roosevelt's reformism back to her school years, see Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Vol. 1: 1884-1933* (New York: Penguin, 1992). It was the experience of the Great War, however, that undoubtedly played a major role in fostering her commitment to peace.

vii. In the interwar period, Eleanor Roosevelt gradually became "a consummate practitioner of politics," see Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 3.

viii. See Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 2.

ix. See William H. Chafe, "Biographical Sketch," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 6. See also the classic Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers* (New York: Norton, 1971), 320-328.

x. "By 1928, Eleanor Roosevelt had clearly become a political leader in her own right. Once just a "political wife," she gradually extended that role and used it as a vehicle for asserting her own personality and agenda," see William H. Chafe, "Biographical Sketch," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 8. See also Elisabeth Israels Perry, "Training for Public Life: ER and Women's Political Networks in the 1920s," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 44.

xi. See Maurine Hoffman Beasley, Holly Cowan Shulman, Henry R. Beasley (eds.), *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 313.

xii. See Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 170.

xiii. Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 32-33 and Maurine Hoffman Beasley, Holly Cowan Shulman, Henry R. Beasley (eds.), *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia*, 67.

- xiv.** See Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 4.
- xv.** See William H. Chafe, "Biographical Sketch," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 7. "Eleanor expressed her changing views on pacifism in 'This Trouble World,' a forty-seven-page book that she published in 1938. It addressed issues of war and peace in a simple style easily understood by readers. A call for people to band together and work for peace, the slender volume broadened the discussion of pacifism to include international efforts by nations to settle disputes among countries through united actions such as the imposition of economic boycotts and, if necessary, military forces against aggressor." However and questionably enough, according to Maurine Beasley, this attitude was more "a repudiation of isolationism" than an "endorsement of American intervention," see Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 171 and 179.
- xvi.** See Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 4.
- xvii.** As Blanche Wiesen Cook argues in "Turn Toward Peace: ER and Foreign Affairs," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 108-109.
- xviii.** See Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Turn Toward Peace: ER and Foreign Affairs," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 114.
- xix.** See Allida M. Black (ed.), *Courage in a Dangerous World. The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt* (New York: Columbia university Press, 1999), 31. As many historians tend to recognize, Eleanor Roosevelt was a sort of extension of the presidency. She moved in directions where it was politically or practically inconvenient for the President to operate. Thus, she became an advisor, an assistant and sometimes a completely autonomous actor supporting and implementing New Deal policies. In this regard, see Mildred W. Abramowitz, *Eleanor Roosevelt and Federal Responsibility and Responsiveness to Youth, the Negro, and Others in Time of Depression* (New York: New York University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1970) 183.
- xx.** See Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 80 and 163.
- xxi.** See Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow*, 138.
- xxii.** *My Day*, August 29, 1940. This article came under FBI investigation because the newspaper that had published it, *The Guild Reporter*, was alleged of Communism and accused to foment "subversive movement," see Roosevelt Study Center, (RSC), Presidential Collections and Administrations, FBI-Files on Eleanor Roosevelt, 1934-1965, Report, File No. 100/70332, 10-23-1945: 7. Eleanor Roosevelt explained her ideas on the relationships between women and peace also in 1947, in an interview with Eleanor Roberts for the *Boston Sunday*, see Allida M. Black (ed.), *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers: Vol. 1. The Human Rights Years, 1945-1948* (Farmington Hills: Thomson Gale, 2007), 658-662. That theme was so persistent in her rhetoric that she used it again amidst the 1952 electoral campaign, when she tried to secure women's vote for Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson, see Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, October 22, 1952, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xxiii.** See Eleanor J. Bilsborrow, *The Philosophy of Social Reform in the Speeches of Eleanor Roosevelt* (Denver: University of Denver, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1957), 44.
- xxiv.** See Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 171 and 179 as quoted in note 17.
- xxv.** See Eleanor Roosevelt, *If You Ask Me* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1938), quoted in Eleanor J. Bilsborrow, *The Philosophy of Social Reform in the Speeches of Eleanor Roosevelt*, 43.
- xxvi.** See Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Turn Toward Peace: ER and Foreign Affairs," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 109 and 113. See also Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 12-13.

- xxvii.** See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, June 19, 1937, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>, and Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 14.
- xxviii.** See Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Turn Toward Peace: ER and Foreign Affairs," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 115.
- xxix.** See Mildred W. Abramowitz, *Eleanor Roosevelt and Federal Responsibility and Responsiveness to Youth, the Negro, and Others in Time of Depression*, 190.
- xxx.** See Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 186.
- xxxi.** See Harvey J. Kaye, *The Fight For the Four Freedoms: What Made FDR and the Greatest Generation Truly Great* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014)
- xxxii.** See Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow*, 138.
- xxxiii.** Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, September 13, 1939, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xxxiv.** Eleanor Roosevelt stated: "We have always been a proud and independent people. As a woman, I pray for peace not only now, but in the future. But I think we must look a little beyond next week if we expect to ensure an independent U.S.A. to our children. There is such a thing, too, as the moral values of a situation, and I do not think we are a nation that has given up considerations for right and wrong as we see it," see *My Day*, June 28, 1941, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xxxv.** See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, July 3, 1940 and *My Day*, June 28, 1941, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xxxvi.** See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, July 18, 1940, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xxxvii.** See Eleanor Roosevelt *My Day*, April 18, 1941, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xxxviii.** A few years later, Eleanor Roosevelt stated that the conscientious objectors were doing "heroic deeds" and were "fine people", see Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow*, 141. See also Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, June 21, 1944, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>. "In political terms, Eleanor's years at the White House showed how she put her own sense of morality into action," see Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt. Transformative First Lady*, 241.
- xxxix.** See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, January 28, 1942, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.
- xl.** See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, January 28, 1942, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>. Eleanor Roosevelt also stressed many times the importance of renewing the democracy at home in order to make the fight for democracy abroad worthwhile. She strove to give the war positive meaning, which was to preserve the freedoms of democracy abroad as well as to make democracy work at home, see Doris K. Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 30. These political demands are among the most peculiar elements of Eleanor Roosevelt's war and post-war liberalism.
- xli.** Eleanor Roosevelt was part of the American *exceptionalist* rhetoric to the utmost level. She believed that the U.S. had to pursue its destiny to bring freedom to the world: "Being a strong nation and having the greatest physical, mental and spiritual strength today gives us a tremendous responsibility. We can not use our strength to coerce, but if we are big enough, I think we can lead, but it will require great vision and understanding of our part," see Eleanor Roosevelt's letter to Harry Truman, November 20, 1945, cited in Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 48 and in Steve Neal (ed.), *Eleanor and Harry: The Correspondence of Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman* (New York: Lisa Drew Book, 2002), 45.
- xlii.** See William H. Chafe, "Biographical Sketch," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 23. See also Eleanor Roosevelt, "Keepers of Democracy," in *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, No. 4 (1939), in *Courage in a Dangerous World*, ed. Allida M. Black, 117-120. Eleanor Roosevelt's tireless commitment to democracy made

67% of Americans, according to a Gallup poll taken in spring 1940, well disposed toward First Lady's activities, see Doris K. Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*, 19.

xliii. See Allida M. Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow*, 139-140.

xliv. As regards conscientious objection, see also Eleanor Roosevelt's letters to President Truman, dated December 2, 1946 and May 13, 1948 and the subsequent Truman's replies on December 6, 1946 and May 17, 1948, in *Eleanor and Harry*, ed. Steve Neal, 84 and 143. On FDR's policy on war, peace, and foreign affairs in general, see David B. Woolner, Warren F. Kimball, David Reynolds (eds.), *FDR's World: War, Peace, and Legacies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

xlv. See the November 11, 1951 radio broadcast on the work of the U.N. that Eleanor Roosevelt delivered from the program "Voice of America," in Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Turn Toward Peace: ER and Foreign Affairs," in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 210. See also Anya Luscombe, "Eleanor Roosevelt as 'Ordinary' Citizen and 'Expert' on Radio in the Early 1950s, Sage Open, September 2014, <http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/4/3/2158244014551712>.

xlvi. See William H. Chafe, "Biographical Sketch", in *Without Precedent. The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, eds. Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, 23.

xlvii. See Maurine Hoffman Beasley, Holly Cowan Shulman, Henry R. Beasley (eds.), *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia*, 195. Talking about women's participation in pacifist organizations, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote: "They are still talking of world peace and what we can do to bring about peace in this world, in the hope that it can be accomplished at the present time and in the same way that peace groups have worked for many years. This is discouraging to me, for I feel that our situation in the world is so completely changed that old methods and old approaches must be changed in order to meet it," see Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, July 12, 1940, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

xlviii. See Leonard C. Schlup and Donald W. Whisenhunt (eds.), *It Seems to Me: Selected Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 2.

xlix. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, December 13, 1943, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

l. See Eleanor Roosevelt, "Must We Hate to Fight?," in *The Saturday Review*, July 4, 1942, in *Courage in a Dangerous World*, ed. Allida M. Black, 136.

li. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, November 18, 1940, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lii. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, June 4, 1943, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

liiii. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, May 23, 1944, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

liv. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, January 1, 1943, <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lv. See Harold E. Stassen, "A Proposal of a Definite United Nations Government," speech delivered at a joint session of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Branches of the Foreign Policy Association, January 7, 1943, in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, vol. IX, No. 10 (1943), 318-320.

lvi. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, March 13, 1943, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lvii. See Eleanor Roosevelt *My Day*, October 21, 1943, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lviii. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, February 22 1945, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lix. See Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 45, and Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, April 25, 1945, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lx. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, May 23, 1944, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lxi. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, April 25, 1945, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>. In the same occasion, Eleanor Roosevelt asserted: "For a long time we have been building points of contact where the United Nations could work on some specific thing in unison. The organization of food for the world, the organization of rehabilitation and relief, world labor problems, world

educational problems—all these have been stepping stones.” See also Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, December 18, 1945, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lxii. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, September 20, 1946, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lxiii. See Eleanor Roosevelt, “Tolerance is an Ugly Word,” in *Coronet*, July 19, 1945, in *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers: Vol. 1. The Human Rights Years, 1945-1948*, ed. Allida M. Black, 56.

lxiv. Eleanor Roosevelt clearly stated: “There would be no real reason for supporting the World Health Organization unless that support was going to increase the health standards of all nations. And there would be no real reason for all nations to take part in UNESCO unless each one was going to benefit eventually from the experience of the others in all the fields covered by UNESCO,” see Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, November 22, 1946, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lxv. See Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 48-49 and Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor: The Years Alone* (New York: Norton, 1972), 36. The decision to appoint Eleanor Roosevelt as one of the U.S. delegates to the U.N. General Assembly shows that the administration took into serious consideration her influence on public opinion, her reliability and her ability to shape electoral preferences. See also “Eleanor Roosevelt Accepts Appointment to the United Nations,” in *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers: Vol. 1. The Human Rights Years, 1945-1948*, ed. Allida M. Black, 158.

lxvi. See Eleanor Roosevelt, *My Day*, December 22, 1945, in <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/>.

lxvii. See a letter from Clark M. Eichelberger, representing the American Association for the United Nations (formerly known as the League of Nations Associations) – Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, to Eleanor Roosevelt, December 28, 1945, in RSC, Presidential Collection and Administrations, The Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt, 1945-1962, part 1, United Nations Correspondence and Publications (hereby after ER Papers, 1945-1962, part 1) Reel 1, 001, November-December 1945. See also a telegram from Dorothy Bellanca to Eleanor Roosevelt, dated December 21, 1945. The writer says: “Your nomination to General Assembly United Nations Organization is guarantee that American delegation will fight hard for principles of universal peace and amity among nations. It will go far to eliminate mutual suspicions which keep nations apart,” in RSC, ER Papers, 1945-1962, part 1, Reel 1, 001, November-December 1945, where it is also possible to find a letter from The Church Peace Union central committee to Eleanor Roosevelt, dated December 27, 1945. See a letter from William Dick Sporborg of the General Federation of Women’s Club, sent on December 28, 1945, where the author writes that he is “very glad on behalf of over two and a half million members to comply with your expressed desire to have the people of our nation let you, as one of the representative of the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly, know what the organized public opinion of our group, already articulated in its recorded stand for international cooperation through the U.N.O., hope may come out of the first meeting of the General Assembly in London,” in RSC, ER Papers, 1945-1962, part 1, Reel 1, 001, November-December 1945.

lxviii. See Clarence Gray to Eleanor Roosevelt, December 29, 1945, in RSC, ER Papers, 1945-1962, part 1, Reel 1, 001, November-December 1945; here, Eleanor Roosevelt is defined “The Queen of Peace – Champion of the Common People – The First Lady of America.” Thomas L. Stokes also wrote in the *Atlanta Sunday* on December 23, 1945 that Eleanor Roosevelt was “a splendid choice” for the administration and concluded: “she, better than perhaps any other person, can represent the little people of this country and, indeed, of the world. She has been their champion. She has spoken for them when it took courage. Better than most, she has a felling for them and their problems, despite the different strata from which she comes. She has their confidence. She knows of their need and longing for peace and security in their lives and homes, and knows what happens to them in depressions and wars, which it is the purpose of the UNO to eliminate. [...]”

She loved peace and was active in promoting it." See RSC, ER Papers, 1945-1962, part 1, Reel 1, 001, November-December 1945.

lxi. The article is in RSC, ER Papers, 1945-1962, part 1, Reel 1, 0923, L, January 1946. Here is a newspaper clipping, probably coming from the *Washington Post* and reporting an article by columnist Thomas L. Stokes, who states that, with Eleanor Roosevelt's appointment at the United Nations, "The People Gain a Real Spokesman."

lxx. See Dario Fazzi, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Anti-Nuclear Movement: The Voice of Conscience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

ABSTRACTS

In the interwar years, American women have played a major role in shaping both the domestic and the international debate on peace, by spreading pacifist tenets and merging them with the promotion of social justice and human rights. Leading figures of the women's peace campaign such as Emily Balch, Lillian Wald, and Jane Addams have lived their personal struggle for peace as an opportunity to enhance the universal condition of women's lives and at the same time promote workers' rights, international disarmament, and the empowerment of the international institutions. Eleanor Roosevelt was not only an integral part of this interwar pacifist chorus, but she also represented one of its most influential voices. Although her biographers have stressed the impact of this period on her political and intellectual formation, a systematic account of her contribution to the shaping of the American interwar pacifism is still missing and this is precisely the broad scope of my article. I will therefore define Eleanor Roosevelt's peculiar pacifism as one mostly characterized by a prominent inclination toward activism, a pragmatic attitude, and a compelling political efficacy.

INDEX

Keywords: Activism, and Jane Addams, Arthur Klein, Carrie Chapman-Catt, Dorothy Detzer, Eleanor Roosevelt, Emily Balch, Esther Lape, Harold Stassen, Interwar America, Jeanette Rankin, Lillian Wald, Pacifism, Pragmatism

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