LA VANGUARDIA FEMINISTA:

PAN-AMERICAN FEMINISM

AND THE RISE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 1915-1946

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Katherine Marie Marino
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Estelle Freedman, Primary Adviser

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Gordon Chang

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Zephyr Frank

Approved for the Stanford University Committee on Graduate Studies.

Patricia J. Gumport, Vice Provost Graduate Education

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Abstract

From 1915 to 1946, a vibrant movement of feminist activists and organizations from throughout the Western Hemisphere not only helped secure women's civil, political, and economic rights in the United States and Latin America but also advanced the creation of international "human rights." Drawing on research from over twenty archives in the United States, Uruguay, Cuba, and Chile, this dissertation is the first sustained, transnational study of Pan-American feminism. It charts the movement through its six most influential activists: Paulina Luisi (Uruguay), Ofelia Domínguez Navarro (Cuba), Clara González (Panama), Doris Stevens (United States), Bertha Lutz (Brazil), and Marta Vergara (Chile). Some well-known, others largely forgotten, these women, all recognized as national feminist leaders in their day, played a pivotal role in the creation of a movement for women's international rights. Their efforts propelled national campaigns for the vote, for equal work and equal pay, and for maternity legislation. They also created the first inter-governmental organization of women in the world, the Inter-American Commission of Women (1928); the first international women's rights treaty in the world, the Equal Rights Treaty (1929); and, later, the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women (1946).

These activists were vanguards as well in their agenda for "equal rights," which reached beyond the narrow focus on equal political and civil rights ascribed by the U.S. National Woman's Party. Rather, Latin American feminists shaped the meaning of Pan-American feminism by pushing a broad "equal rights" agenda that included not only political and civil rights but also social and economic welfare and multi-lateralism. At times, U.S. dominance hindered Latin American leadership in inter-American feminist organizations, but conflicts over these power dynamics resulted in a Pan-American feminism that bore the profound ideological stamp of Latin American regional politics when activists explicitly denounced imperialism and insisted on a more multi-lateral world. Culminating in the 1945 conference in San Francisco that created the United Nations, these Pan-American feminists played crucial roles in constructing the founding principles of international human rights.

Acknowledgments

Over the past years a number of generous friends, scholars, archivists, and librarians have helped shape this dissertation. It is a pleasure to acknowledge them here.

In some ways this project began when I was an undergraduate at Harvard and discovered the Schlesinger Library, the largest collection of materials on women's history in the United States. I was fascinated by the letters, diaries, and ephemera I found there, which provided subjects for numerous college papers. I had no idea that nearly a decade later I would find myself immersed in their archives again for my dissertation work. My first thanks goes to the Schlesinger Library, which has been a home away from home for the better part of the past fourteen years, and its exceptional archivists, including Jenny Gotwals and Ellen Shea. I am also grateful to those who believed in me back then: Jonathan Fortescue, Ruth Hill, Tim McCarthy, and Susan Ware. Taking Susan Ware's class on feminist biography my junior year of college revealed the power of biography as a window into feminist history. Since then, she has become someone I feel lucky to call a mentor and friend whose wise counsel has shaped my work. I am deeply appreciative of her important contributions to women's history, and I aspire to her narrative elegance in my writing.

This project evolved as a Ph.D. dissertation at Stanford University. The encouragement I received from Gordon Chang on a paper I wrote about Pan-American feminism in his "U.S. and the World" research seminar launched this dissertation topic. Since that time, his keen insights into the history of U.S. foreign relations and his wise guidance and unflagging support have made me a better scholar. Special gratitude goes to Zephyr Frank for sharing his love of Brazilian history, for teaching me how to think about Latin American history, and for his morale-boosting encouragement. I am most indebted to Estelle Freedman. She has been a wise, patient, rigorous, and conscientiously thoughtful mentor. I am appreciative of the freedom she gave me to cultivate my own voice, while always pushing me toward making stronger arguments, sharpening my analysis, and focusing on the forest rather than the trees. She has profoundly influenced the way I think and write about history, not only through her feminist scholarship, of which I can think of no higher model, but also through the deep convictions and engagement which she brings to every aspect of her life.

I am grateful to the insights, ideas, and critiques of a number of scholars, some of whom have read chapters or portions of them as conference papers or article drafts: Susan Besse, Sueann Caulfield, Nancy Cott, Sandra McGee Deutsch, Manu Goswami, Donna Guy, Annelise Heinz, Allyson Hobbs, Jill Jensen, Asunción Lavrin, Natalie Marine-Street, Francesca Miller, Michele Mitchell, Jocelyn Olcott, Corinne Pernet, Andy Robichaud, Karin Rosemblatt, Leila Rupp, Graciela Sapriza, Susan Ware, Leigh Ann Wheeler, Leandra Zarnow, and Kari Zimmerman.

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My travels, research, and writing were enabled by a number of grants and fellowships. At Stanford University, the Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research Dissertation Fellowship and the Andrew W. Mellon Dissertation Fellowship allowed me to write my dissertation over the past two years. Several grants from Stanford University enabled me to do research in New York, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Boston, Pennsylvania, and Havana, Cuba. A travel grant from the Society of Historians of Foreign Relations facilitated my trip to Montevideo, Uruguay. The Schlesinger Library Dissertation Grant provided a final three-week research stint there.

My dissertation would not have been possible without the generous help of numerous archivists and librarians. In addition to the librarians and archivists at the Schlesinger Library, I would like to thank Virginia Friedman at the Biblioteca Nacional de Uruguay; Sara Weber and David Dressing at the Hesburgh Library Special Collections of the University of Notre Dame; and Daniela Schüte González, the coordinator of *Memoria Chilena* at the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile. My gratitude also goes to the archivists of the Archivo General de la Nacion in Montevideo, the Archivo del Centro Republico Español at the Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación in Montevideo, the Instituto Nacional de Uruguay, the Hoover Institution, Stanford Library's Special Collections, the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives in College Park Maryland. Special thanks, as well, to Andrea Mary Binder for her research assistance at the American Heritage Center Library, University of Wyoming.

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Introduction

In June, 1945 a group of feminists descended upon the conference in San Francisco, California, that would found the United Nations.[1] Among the many who gathered and held high expectations for the budding new multinational organization, this particular group of activists specifically believed that women's equal rights would be fundamental to constructing a peaceful postwar world. It was due to their efforts that the founding charter of the United Nations included a provision for the "equal rights" of men and women and created what the following year became the UN's Commission on the Status of Women. These women, many of whom were delegates of their countries, were the first to push "women's rights" into the agenda of international "human rights."

Notably, the activists who drove the universalization of "women's rights" were not from the United States or from Western Europe, the vaunted cradles of feminism. They were from Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. One of them, Brazilian delegate Bertha Lutz, called their work a "Latin American contribution to the constitution of the world."[2] This regional grouping was not coincidental. The women brought to the UN conference an agenda they had been honing for three decades in inter-American networks. Their goals had been forged in the transnational crucible of Pan-American feminism.

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[1] This conference was called the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO).

[2] Bertha Lutz, Register of the United Nations Conference on International Organization Proceedings, Box 4, National Broadcasting Company sound recording of the proceedings of the second session of commission 1, committees 1 and 2 on 19 June 1945, Hoover Institute, Stanford, California.

From 1915 to 1946, Pan-American feminism was a movement that actively linked women's rights leaders and organizations from throughout the Americas in promoting international standards for women's rights. Working in coordinated campaigns that began after World War I, and coinciding with a new progressive Pan-Americanism, activists collaborated to move "women's rights" beyond the domestic realm and into that of international law. The movement produced a number of "firsts" in the history of international feminism: The first inter-governmental organization of women in the world, the Inter-American Commission of Women (1928), the first international treaty for women's rights, the Equal Rights Treaty (1928), and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (1946). It also propelled national campaigns throughout the Americas for the vote, for equal work and equal pay, and for maternity legislation.

Despite its profound legacies, Pan-American feminism is often overlooked in the narrative of interwar international feminism, which is typically told as a U.S.-Western European story. Seeing geopolitical tensions mapped onto the world of international feminism, historians have concluded that European and U.S. reformers dominated the movement in these years and that feminist activism did not truly become global until the 1970s and 80s.[3]

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[3] The history of international feminism in the interwar years has traditionally focused on Euro-American connections. Ellen DuBois, "Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific," *Pacific Historical Review* 69 (2000): 539-551 calls on historians to shift perspective of the woman suffrage movement away from American-European models and consider Latin American and Asian struggles in an international framework. Transatlantic feminist scholarship includes Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *The American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 1571-1600; Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Woman's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993); Carrie Ann Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: The U.S. Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Linda K. Schott,

Throughout Latin America, however, industrialization and the rise of women's education helped speed the emergence and cross-border collaboration of feminist movements beginning in the early 1900s. The horrors of World War I, alongside twentieth-century advances in communication and transportation, impelled a vibrant feminist internationalism not only in transatlantic circuits but in the Western Hemisphere, as well. Encouraged by the new progressive Pan-American movement that began after World War I, a number of Latin American feminists looked optimistically toward egalitarian collaborations with their U.S. sisters.

World War I shattered the ideal of European cultural superiority, opening a space for the "new" nations of the Americas to shape themselves into the nations of the future. A new Pan-Americanism began to tout the Americas' shared experiences of movement from colonialism to democracy and came to hold a promise for international collaboration. Pan-American meetings began to push for the equality of nations, social reform, and expanding democratic rights of citizens. For many female reformers in the Americas, a certain type of Pan-Americanism and liberal feminism became mutually reinforcing ideals, founded on principles of republican government, democracy, and equality. Feminism and a certain type of lofty Pan-Americanism each represented systems of beliefs about redressing abuses of power that varied widely depending on the person, organization, culture, and nation. Like liberal feminism, which sought to restore women's equality under national law, Pan-Americanism had a strong legal bent – seeking

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Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

to restore national equality under a developing system of international law. Built upon the hope that women could also transform international law, Pan-American feminism made demands for international standards in women's rights that would, in turn, pressure national governments to change their laws.

Many Latin American feminists who placed hopes in an egalitarian Pan-American feminism soon found that the movement that emerged revolved around a fundamental irony. It trilled its watchwords of mutuality, cooperation, and equality – both of men and women and of nation-states – but it was also often riven by a lack of substance behind those words within its organizations and inter-personal relationships. U.S. hegemony perhaps represented the congenital defect of Pan-American feminism – present at its birth and ineluctably shaping it in its early years. U.S. feminists who claimed cultural and racial superiority often dominated the leadership of budding inter-American organizations, and also blunted the broader agendas and anti-imperialist politics some Latin American feminists wanted the movement to uphold. Tensions over U.S. dominance, however, did not stop Pan-American feminism from growing, or even flourishing, and it did not stop Latin American feminists from attempting, often successfully and despite serious barriers, to shape it to their own ends.

I argue that despite U.S. hegemony in inter-American affairs and in the world of inter-American feminism, the movement was in fact transnational. A number of Latin American activists profoundly influenced the agenda of Pan-American feminism. Indeed, conflicts over U.S. dominance resulted in a Pan-American feminism that bore the profound ideological stamp of Latin American regional politics. In the face of U.S. feminist agendas that focused narrowly on "equal rights" for women, defined as equal political and civil rights, a number of Latin American activists insisted on a broader definition of the term. Many called for a concept of "equal rights" that included not only political and civil rights for women but social and economic rights, as well. They also viewed the equality of men and women as mutually constitutive with the equal rights of all nations. International multi-lateralism formed a key component in many of these feminists' definitions of Pan-American feminism, as they sought a movement that secured individual and collective welfare of the men and women of the Americas. This was the broad vision the UN activists brought with them to San Francisco in 1945 – it had been shaped by a Pan-American feminism rooted in social democracy, one that demanded international multi-lateralism and justice as well as "equal rights" for women.

"*La Vanguardia Feminista*: Pan-American Feminism and the Rise of International Women's Rights, 1915-1946," tells the story of that transnational movement from the perspectives of its six most vibrant leaders: Paulina Luisi from Uruguay, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro from Cuba, Clara González from Panama, Doris Stevens from the United States, Bertha Lutz from Brazil, and Marta Vergara from Chile. It examines how Pan-American feminism originated and changed within the network that these women, and many others, forged.

Some well-known, others largely forgotten, all of these women were recognized as national feminist leaders in their day. While not all were born into bourgeois families, all became members of the intellectual elite of their respective countries and a number of them were the first women to receive doctorates in their countries. Paulina Luisi was the first female doctor in Uruguay, and Clara González the first female lawyer in Panama. While many other feminists were important to the Pan-American movement and are included in these pages, these six women, who formed a dense network, were perhaps the most crucial to the sustenance of the movement during the years this work explores.

The dynamic relationships these women shared with each other, both collaborative and conflictive, provide a vital window into a movement that depended as much on interpersonal relationships as on ideology. As Donna Guy has noted, affective relationships and inter-personal dynamics were one of the central components of Pan-American social movements: "Egos could thwart international cooperation as quickly as cultural misunderstandings. These could be exacerbated by the class and racial differences of feminists. People and their…identities, not nations, made international groups function smoothly."[4] This dissertation focuses on these individuals and their relationships, utilizing them as a lens through which to telescope out into their national and international feminist activism. These women met each other at Pan-American conferences and through inter-American organizations, and they subsequently corresponded with each other. Their transnational meetings, correspondence, conferences, publications, and organizations, form the analytic center of the work.

By focusing on the interactions of these individuals from various countries and drawing on research from over twenty archives in the United States, Uruguay, Cuba, and Chile, this dissertation is the first sustained, transnational study of Pan-American feminism. It has benefitted from and contributes to the recent "transnational turn" in historical scholarship. The term "transnational" indicates a move away from the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis and examines the power dynamics of relations between individuals and other non-state actors from various countries. Delving into multi-national archival research, this literature explores how ideas and movements change when they move across national, ideological, and cultural borders. Some of the best works in transnational history not only demonstrate mutual spheres of influence but reveal how, through these processes, long-held shibboleths are transformed.[5] The story of Pan-American feminism, a movement for sexual equality that crossed national and cultural borders, holds a similar outcome, forcing a reexamination of "equality" and "rights," terms that form the cornerstones of feminism, as well as a reconceptualization of the term "feminism" itself.

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[4] Donna J. Guy, "The Politics of Pan-American Cooperation: Maternalist Feminism and the Child Rights Movement, 1913-1960," in *White Slavery and Mothers Alive and Dead: The Troubled Meeting of Sex, Gender, Public Health, and Progress in Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 55.

In the Americas in the years this dissertation covers, the term "feminism"/"*feminismo*" was a relatively new and mercurial one, its significance changing over time and locations. Coined in 1880 in France by suffragist Hubertine Auclert, "*feminisme*" traveled throughout Europe and the Americas, connoting a modern movement that usually not only espoused demands for women's political rights but also for female emancipation more broadly.[6] In the United States, use of the term "feminism" reached an apogee in the 1910s, bringing together a wide group of reformers and suffragists who demanded women's rights. The term became more fraught in the U.S., however, after the passage of the 1920 suffrage amendment and with the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by the National Woman's Party (NWP) in 1923. The ERA served as a divisive wedge between formerly unified feminist groups. Many progressive thinkers and social reform activists in the United States feared that this constitutional mandate promising to guarantee absolute equal rights under the law, regardless of sex, would strip female workers of hard-fought protective labor legislation. As a result, the meaning of "feminism" narrowed in these years to signify a somewhat small coterie of ERA advocates, who were usually white, middle-class National Woman's Party members.

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[5] On the importance of transnational history to women's history see the roundtable discussion, "The Future of Women's History: Considering the State of U.S. Women's History," in the *Journal of Women's History* (spring 2003). Recent pioneering works on black transnationalism include Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Sarah Seidman, "Venceremos Means We Shall Overcome," PhD Dissertation, Brown University, 2012. Other important conceptual contributions to transnational history include: Bethany Moreton and Pamela Voekel, "Vaya con Dios: Religion and the Transnational History of the Americas," *History Compass* 5, no. 5 (2007): 1604-1639; Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick and J.T. Way, "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 2008): 625-648.

[6] Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987),14-16.

Historiography of U.S. and international feminism of the 1920s and 30s has well documented this split but has also, to some degree, naturalized it by reproducing the terms of these debates in the dichotomous analytic categories it uses to understand feminism in these years. Namely, historians have affixed oppositional labels to the gendered ideologies of social reformers and activists of this era. Sometimes retroactively applying the term "feminist" to reformers who would not have used the term themselves although they did support women's rights, historians often describe activists of this era as torn between two feminist poles. They were either adherents of what is sometimes interchangeably called "individualist feminism" or "equalitarian feminism," upholding an equal-rights, class- and race-blind, gender-first ideology, or advocates of a "relational feminism" or "labor feminism," which associated protective legislation with a class-based defense of women industrial workers. These dichotomies have long described U.S. and Western European feminism, rooted in their own particular traditions of liberalism.[7] The conflict between "equality" versus "difference," or "gender-based" versus "class-based," feminism is not the only reason historians often provide for feminism's decline in visibility in the U.S. after the achieving of suffrage in the 1920s, though it is a central one. It is often viewed as one of the primary conflicts in international feminist circles of the period, as well.[8]

These dichotomies, marked in literature on international feminism of the interwar years, are reproduced in the small amount of scholarship on inter-American feminism.[9] This literature, seeing the politics of U.S. imperialism grafted upon women's encounters, has often identified Pan-American feminism as being dominated by U.S. women's Western liberal feminist visions and sets of conflicts, specifically the "equal rights" versus “protective legislation” debate. Because the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), which gave organizational form to Pan-American feminism from 1928 to 1939, was led by the National Woman’s Party member Doris Stevens, who championed an “Equal Rights Treaty” in these years, Pan-American feminism often becomes conflated with the IACW, and with the NWP and their divisive “equal rights” stance.

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[7] For more on feminism's paradox of equality and difference see Estelle B. Freedman, "No Turning Back: The Historical Resilience of Feminism," *Feminism, Sexuality and Politics: Essays by Estelle B. Freedman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 85-104.

[8] This period is often called the "doldrums" of feminism history. See Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[9] The growing body of literature on inter-American women's organizing includes: Megan Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922: Successful Suffragists Turn to International Relations," *Diplomatic History* 31 (2007): 801-828; Threlkeld, "'Woman's Challenge to the World': U.S. Women's Internationalism and U.S.-Mexican Relations, 1916-1939," PhD Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2008; Christine Ehrick, "Madrinas and Missionaries: Uruguay and the Pan-American Women's Movement," *Gender & History* 10 (1998): 406-424; Donna J. Guy, "The Politics of Pan-American Cooperation: Maternalist Feminism and the Child Rights Movement, 1913-1960," *Gender & History* 10 (1998): 449-469; Ellen DuBois, "Internationalizing Married Women's Nationality: The Hague Campaign of 1930," *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945*, ed., Karen Offen (London: Routledge, 2010): 204-216; Ellen DuBois and Lauren Derby, "The Strange Case of Minerva Bernardino: Pan American and United Nations Women's Right Activist," *Women's Studies International Forum* 32 (2009): 43-50; Esther Sue Wamsley, "A Hemisphere of Women: Latin American and U.S. Feminists in the IACW, 1915-1939," Ph.D. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1998; K. Lynn Stoner, "In Four Languages But with One Voice: Division and Solidarity within Pan American Feminism, 1923-1933" in *Beyond the Ideal: Pan Americanism in Inter-American Affairs*, ed., David Sheinin (Westport: Praeger, 2000); Francesca Miller, "The International Relations of Women of the Americas 1890-1928," *The Americas* 43 (1986): 171-182; Francesca Miller, *Latin American Women and The Search for Social Justice* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1991); Francesca Miller, "Feminisms and Transnationalism," *Gender & History* 10 (1998): 569-580; Asunción Lavrin, "International Feminisms: Latin American Alternatives," *Gender & History* 10 (1998): 519-534.

Many of the Latin American activists who formed the core players of Pan-American feminism, however, did not fall into one or the other dichotomous category of “individualist” or “relational” feminism. A broad group of Latin American reformers took on the term “feminism,” advancing their own visions that brooked no conflict between “equality” versus “difference.” For feminists in the 1920s and 30s in Latin America, where protective legislation for women was, generally, not the norm and where women’s political rights had largely not been secured, the terms “feminism” and “equal rights” had not taken on the fraught significance it had in the United States and some countries in Europe. Many Latin American feminists championed “equal rights” while also maintaining socialist and Communist commitments to women workers. As historian Asunción Lavrin has written about the complementarity of these strands of thought in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, “[t]here was no sharp cleavage or confrontational antagonism between these two interpretations [of socialist feminism and liberal feminism]…In fact, what was distinctive about Southern Cone feminism was its flexibility.”[10] While it would be dangerous to generalize “Latin American feminism,” which encompassed a diverse range of styles and approaches, the flexibility and hybridity that Lavrin notes in the Southern Cone was also alive in feminisms in the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, and elsewhere in Latin America, and was indeed distinctive from contemporaneous "feminism" in the United States.

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[10] Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 16.

The feminists from Chile, Argentina, Panama, Brazil, Uruguay, and Cuba, in these pages, for instance, argued against "protective legislation" policies aimed exclusively for women at the same time they called for expansions of the welfare state for "work and family" policies. A push among Pan-American feminists for "equal rights" for women alongside social democratic welfare measures grew more vocal during the 1930s when the Great Depression and the rise of fascism internationally caused a number of these feminists to identify with a Pan-American feminist Popular-Front movement. Believing more than ever that economic equality was central to women's rights and to democracy more broadly, many of them argued for women's "equal rights" in every realm except maternity legislation. These women used the term "feminism" to describe this broad range of goals, using the term with greater ease than their U.S counterparts. In this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, I use the word "feminism" as the various activists themselves would have used it.

What made "Pan-American feminism" even more of a flexible ideology and movement, and what made it distinctive from national women's rights movements, was its integration of international politics. Many Latin American feminists who used the terms "*feminismo americano*" and "*feminismo continental*," also believed that women's rights were mutually constitutive with national sovereignty.[11] While the experiences of

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[11] Rosa Borja de Icaza, *Hacia la vida* (Guayaquil: Imprenta I talleres municipals, 1936), 174; Elcira R. de Vergara and Clara de Vasquez, "Credencial del Partido Cívico Femenino,"

U.S. empire and hegemony differed in various countries, many in Latin America viewed a direct connection between women's citizenship and national sovereignty and believed that individuals, like nations, should be equal and self-determining. While some Latin American feminists hailed from countries that had not been subject to direct U.S. military rule, they often viewed themselves as a regional bloc, identifying with others from countries that had. Many integrated a broad anti-imperialist struggle in their Pan-American feminism. The role of U.S. hegemony in the world of inter-American feminist politics sometimes in fact sped the creation of these anti-imperialist goals. For these activists who developed anti-hegemonic Pan-American feminism, women's rights were not only homologous but essential to nations' rights. International relations were not tangential to their international feminism; rather, they were vital to it. Creating a more multi-lateral world frequently represented one of their core concerns.

By shedding light on the hybrid, flexible movement of Pan-American feminism, this project, then, not only attempts to reveal a more transnational history of international feminism during the interwar years but also attempts to bring together the histories of international feminism and inter-American relations of this period. While new scholarship has been excavating the intersections of gender and foreign relations history, histories of international feminism often remain somewhat disengaged from the history of international relations.[12] Yet, the two profoundly shaped each other. The feminists I

December 1938, Box 75, Folder 8, Doris Stevens Papers, 1884-1983 (Stevens Papers); MC546, Box 94, Folder 3, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[12] On the intersection of gender and foreign relations, see Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Gail Bederman, *Maniliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender*

examine were integrally connected to the diplomatic circles in their countries and were vital participants of the various international meetings of American states or Pan-American meetings, where Pan-American policies were discussed and tensions raised. Gender was central to these Pan-American forums; gendered concerns sometimes mirrored and other times clashed with official State-Department-led hemispheric goals. The dynamics between feminists and diplomats of this period, like those between U.S. and Latin American feminists, involved complicated relationships structured by power and hierarchy that were nonetheless mutually dependent. These interactions reveal a more multi-dimensional Pan-Americanism, which has generally been dismissed in historical literature both as a non-violent form of U.S. economic imperialism and as a series of private and governmental "interventions in the cultural field" that influenced North American relations with Latin America.[13] Although some scholarship has challenged this U.S.-dominant view in exploring how statesmen in Latin America utilized Pan-Americanism to their own ends, little work has been done on ways in which feminists negotiated such relationships.[14]

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and Race in the United States from 1880 to 1917 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[13] Ricardo D. Salvatore, "The Enterprise of Knowledge: Representational Machines of Informal Empire," *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, ed., Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 81. See also Mark T. Berger, *Under Northern Eyes: Latin American Studies and U.S. Hegemony in the Americas, 1898-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Donna J. Guy, "The Pan-American Child Congresses, 1916 to 1942: Pan Americanism, Child Reform, and the Welfare State in Latin America," *White Slavery and Mothers Alive and Dead: The Troubled Meeting of Sex, Gender, Public Health, and Progress in Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000): 33-51.

[14] See Millery Polyné, *From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan Americanism, 1870-1964* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010).

While this account centers on transnational exchange and the international structures that galvanized these exchanges, the Pan-American feminist movement vitally engaged the national realm as well. Indeed, Pan-American feminism became a lever that many activists used to gain credibility and traction in their respective national movements and to pressure national governments to pass legislation. It directly affected laws in the United States. The Equal Nationality Treaty that the IACW spearheaded and passed in the 1933 Montevideo Conference resulted in the passage of legislation during the Roosevelt administration granting more equal nationality rights to married women in the United States. It similarly affected other countries, which enacted nationality legislation for women and passed suffrage laws and legislation promoting equal rights and maternity leaves for women workers during the 1920s through the 40s.

Moving away from a U.S.-Western European-centric story of international feminism and deeper into the Americas thus also reveals that feminism was alive and well in Latin America during a period historians have typically characterized as the “doldrums” of feminism in the United States. It also reveals a more international picture of U.S. feminism at this time. In these years, while the U.S. feminist campaign fractured, many looked to Pan-American channels and to Latin America for inspiration. In 1934, for instance, Brazil, with its new and progressive Constitution guaranteeing women equal rights in a more comprehensive way than enjoyed in the U.S., became a much-touted model for the United States National Woman’s Party. Interactions with Latin American feminists may not have fundamentally changed U.S. feminists’ ideologies, but they did reveal new canvasses of possibilities, expanded their imaginations, and changed the terms of their collaborative endeavors, as Latin American feminists pushed their agendas. The interactions revealed in the following chapters between Doris Stevens, Marta Vergara, Paulina Luisi, Bertha Lutz, Clara González, and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, as well as a number of other activists from the Americas, explore these dynamics. Together, their stories uncover how these women, knit together in Pan American feminism, left a lasting mark on the history of women's rights.

To explore this dynamic history, Chapters 1 and 2 examine the origins and early development of Pan-American feminism. They introduce Paulina Luisi, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, and Clara González and reveal the role that each played in forging an anti-hegemonic Pan-American feminism. Chapter 1 examines how Luisi's goals for inter-American feminism strongly intersected with a developing Pan-American movement after World War I in Uruguay that promised more egalitarian relations for all countries of the Americas. Inter-American feminist cooperation began in earnest in 1922, with the League of Women's Voters' Pan American Conference of Women in Baltimore, Maryland, led by U.S. women's rights advocate Carrie Chapman Catt. Traditionally, the League of Women Voters and Catt have received credit for the Pan-American Association of Women (PAAW), later renamed the Inter-American Union of Women (IAUW), which grew out of the 1922 Baltimore Conference. This chapter, however, examines the pivotal role Uruguayan feminist Paulina Luisi played in the creation of the organization. Unlike that of Catt and the U.S. League of Women Voters, Luisi's agenda for inter-American feminism included not only women's rights and welfare but also a strong demand for social justice and a Pan-Americanism rooted in equality and mutuality across nations.

Chapter 2 explores the continuation of these ideals in the creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women in 1928 at the Sixth International Conference of American States held in Havana. U.S. women from the National Woman's Party and Cuban feminists collaborated in a women's rights campaign that led to the Pan American Union creating the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW). This chapter argues that the collaboration of U.S. and Cuban feminists in Havana was made possible both by the earlier efforts of Paulina Luisi and by a little-known Latin-American-feminist-led conference, the 1926 Congreso Inter-Americano de Mujeres in Panama City. At this conference, Cuban women's rights activist Ofelia Domínguez and Panamanian Clara González articulated the need for inter-American feminism to embrace a notion of "equal rights" that extended beyond individual women's rights and included a multi-lateral internationalism that respected the sovereignty of Latin American nations. In Havana, NWP feminist Doris Stevens and her U.S. colleagues echoed this Latin American rhetoric of "equal rights" in their collaborations with Cuban feminists.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine how these broad, multi-lateral goals became frustrated as the IACW developed narrowly under Doris Stevens's hegemonic chairmanship. Chapter 3 examines the early years of the IACW, from 1928 to 1933, revealing that although Stevens drew on a language of multi-lateralism in order to garner wide Latin American support for the new organization, she did not actually integrate mutli-lateralism for the Americas into the IACW ideology or practice. This fact became starkly apparent to Clara González, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, and Paulina Luisi, who were also disappointed with Doris Stevens's leadership and her narrow vision of "equal rights," that applied only to political and civil rights. Especially after the onset of the Great

Depression, these activists wanted to see the inclusion of women workers into the ranks of Pan-American feminism, and they wanted the goals of the IACW to encompass social and economic equality of women, as well. Domínguez and Luisi, in a budding epistolary friendship, fashioned their own Pan-American feminist alternative that integrated anti-imperialism and their concern with working women's rights.

Chapter 4 examines how these conflicts came to a head at the 1933 Seventh International Conference of American States in Montevideo, Uruguay. There, the IACW successfully pushed for passage of its Equal Nationality Treaty, and four countries signed the Equal Rights Treaty. However, these gains did not come without a fierce battle to define Pan-American feminism. At the conference, Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz, who disliked the U.S.-hegemonic leadership of the IACW and its narrow commitments to an "equal rights" agenda, allied with U.S. social reformer Sophonisba Breckinridge, who resented the "equal rights" campaign of the IACW. The two women collaborated with the U.S. State Department to try, ultimately unsuccessfully, to oust Doris Stevens from the IACW leadership and subvert its treaties. They also sought to promote social and economic welfare for mothers and children as a Pan-American feminist goal.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine how the politics of Pan-American feminism shifted dramatically in the mid-to-late 1930s with the rise of fascism in Europe and subsequent growth of Popular-Front movements, as well as the development of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Good Neighbor and New Deal policies. The common threat of fascism, alongside the Good Neighbor policies, to a large degree replaced earlier tensions related to U.S. imperialism. This historical conjuncture allowed for a more transnational politics of Western-Hemisphere collaboration, which began to unite broad swaths of activists on the left in Latin America with U.S. feminists and with the IACW. Now, the social democratic and mutli-lateral Pan-American feminism engineered by Latin American activists had an outlet, and Latin American feminists began to change the terms of the debate.

Chapter 5 focuses on the collaboration between Doris Stevens and Chilean IACW delegate Marta Vergara in the mid-1930s, examining how Latin American feminists and U.S. women in the IACW began to work together for a new agenda: equal pay for equal work and maternity legislation. The emergence of Popular-Front politics which helped to solidify a Pan-American feminist agenda, centered on democracy and women's equal economic opportunities, including maternity legislation. "Popular-Front Pan-American feminism" is the term I use to describe this alliance. Their agenda pushed for "equal rights" defined broadly as equal civil and political rights for working women, welfare for mothers, international peace and democracy, and multi-lateralism. Marta Vergara and others like her helped thrust "maternity legislation" onto the goals of the otherwise "equal-rights" focused IACW.

Chapter 6 explores another outcome of Popular-Front Pan-American feminist collaboration – revived woman suffrage movements. The right to vote became a central concern of a number of Popular-Front feminist movements, and this chapter examines how the IACW contributed to a Popular-Front suffrage campaign in Panama in the late 1930s. Here, led by Clara González, feminists utilized the IACW to make their demands, arguing that the vote was a democratic, international right for women according to the 1933 Montevideo Equal Rights Treaty. Despite the show of Popular-Front feminist solidarity, Doris Stevens was never a true advocate of the social democratic politics at the heart of the movement. The IACW still had a number of enemies – both among Latin American feminists who desired Latin American leadership of the organization and a further broadening of its goals, and among women reformers in the United States who opposed the NWP. In 1938 at the Eighth International Conference of American States in Lima, Peru, the U.S. State Department, allied with reformers in the U.S. Children's and Women's Bureaus and Labor Department, successfully removed Doris Stevens from leadership of the IACW. In part, they mobilized Latin American opposition against her by arguing that she was not truly committed to progressive or social democratic reforms.

Chapter 7 moves forward a number of years to 1945, when Bertha Lutz, joined by other feminists who had been involved in the Pan-American feminist movement, helped institute women's rights as a category of international "human rights" at the founding conference in San Francisco that created the United Nations. It traces the Pan-American feminist movement from Lutz's perspective during the war years and reveals how her work, along with that of other Latin American activists at the UN, represented a fusion of their goals: for mutli-lateralism, social justice, and equal rights for women.

Although the Latin American feminists portrayed in these pages often operated as a group and distinguished themselves from their U.S. counterparts by upholding a more hybrid and broader vision of Pan-American feminism, they were not a homogenous group. By focusing on a set of individuals and their interactions, these chapters attempt to capture the diversity of perspectives that went into building Pan-American feminism. The hope is for the reader to engage with these activists as individuals attempting to navigate social obstacles, limited distribution of power and opportunity, institutional problems, inter-personal relationships, and other struggles they encountered in forging a collective, transnational movement. They sought, in different ways, to combine their agendas for individual sovereignty with collectivism. In seeking universal standards in women's rights, they struggled not only to enact legislation that would cement gender equality under the law, but to create a world knit together by kinship and collaboration, as well. They embraced the term "feminism," and they spearheaded the notion that "women's rights are human rights." The transnational activism of "*la vanguardia feminista*" may not have altered the meaning of the term "feminism" at the time in the United States, but understanding their efforts may help us expand our definition of feminism today and ensure its future.

Chapter 1
The Origins of Inter-American Feminism, 1915-1923

On April 22, 1922, at the close of the three-day Pan American Conference of Women in Baltimore, Maryland, Clelia Paladino de Vitale, delegate from Uruguay, ascended the podium. Just moments before, the venerable U.S. suffrage veteran, Carrie Chapman Catt, honorary president of the U.S. League of Women Voters (LWV), which had organized the conference with the sponsorship of the U.S. State Department and Pan American Union, had urged Latin American women to fight for suffrage.[1] De Vitale, now facing approximately 1,500 women and men in the convention hall, proposed one engine for such a fight: a Pan American Association of Women. She asserted that such an organization would "strengthen the ties that should unite women of our continent" by promoting women's social, civil, and political rights.[2] The proposal came from her organization in Uruguay, the *Alianza Uruguaya para el Sufragio Femenino* (the Uruguayan Alliance for Women's Suffrage) and had been authored by Alianza founder and president Paulina Luisi. Inspired by international feminism, their proposal reflected a belief that women throughout the world shared unfair disadvantages relative to men, and that women, united by the same cause, could forge solidarity across national boundaries.

The cause for which they fought, however, was not only women's rights but also for a Pan-Americanism rooted in equality and mutuality across nations. De Vitale gave her speech at a time when U.S. imperialism in Central America and the Caribbean was on the rise, but it was also, somewhat paradoxically, a time of earnest hopes for a more just union of the Americas. Luisi and de Vitale wanted to enshrine this new concept of Pan-Americanism in their women's organization, which would call for democracy for all women, and within and among nations.

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[1] "Lady Astor Gets Great Ovation in Baltimore," *New York Tribune*, April 23, 1922, 3.

[2] "Proposición de la Alianza Uruguay para el Sufragio Femenino sometida a la consideración de la conferencia Panamericana de Mujeres," undated, Caja 257, Carpeta 4, Archivo de Paulina Luisi, Archivo General de la Nación, Montevideo, Uruguay (PL-AGN).

De Vitale did suggest that the LWV officially lead the Pan American Association of Women, given the U.S. women's recent national suffrage victory. But she also declared that the Association would not be run by an unchecked U.S. power: "The alarmists tell us that, in entering this association with you, we would be absorbed immediately, and that you would exercise your hegemony over us. But," she continued, "I do not believe this."[3] Rather, de Vitale explained, much evidence revealed that a new type of Pan-Americanism was forming. In fact, she said, "I can declare with justice that the country that I have the honor to represent is that which has advanced the most in this direction." Quoting Uruguay's president, Dr. Baltasar Brum – a leading voice for a new, multi-lateral Pan-Americanism, free of U.S. hegemony – she read:

> Pan-Americanism implies the equality of all sovereignties, large or small, the assurance that no country will attempt to diminish the possessions of others and that those who have lost any possessions will have them rightly returned to them. It is, in short, an exponent of deep brotherly sentiment, and of a just aspiration for the material and moral aggrandizement of all the peoples of America.[4]

Paulina Luisi shared these aspirations, telling de Vitale before her trip to the United States that she hoped the women's organization they envisioned "achieves the recognition it deserves in the Hearts of all the women of America who fight for solidarity and for friendship of all people of all races."[5]

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[3] Clelia Vitale, "Discurso Ante la Conferencia Pan-Americana de Mujeres en Baltimore," Abril 1922, Caja 257, Carpeta 4, PL-AGN.
[4] De Vitale, "Discurso Ante la Conferencia Pan-Americana de Mujeres en Baltimore," PL-AGN. She is quoting from Baltasar Brum, "American Solidarity."
[5] Luisi to de Vitale, March 1922, PL-AGN.

Luisi and de Vitale's proposal gave crucial organizational form to what would later become a Pan-American feminist movement. Their proposal was immediately accepted, and in 1922, delegates and LWV members created the "Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women" (PAAAW), with Catt self-appointed Honorary President and Luisi named Honorary Vice President. In 1925, under the presidency of Brazilian women's rights leader Bertha Lutz, the re-named Inter-American Union of Women focused on removing legislative discrimination against women and advocating "continental solidarity" throughout the Americas.[6] In 1928 the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW) replaced these earlier groups, engaging the energies of women throughout the continent in a fight for equal rights.

Curiously, Paulina Luisi never had much to do with the PAAAW once it was created. Her enthusiasm for Pan-American feminism markedly waned after the 1922 Baltimore Conference, and she did not collaborate actively with U.S. women in Pan-American endeavors for a little over a decade. Not until the late 1930s, with the outbreak of World War II, did Luisi once again promote "Pan-American feminism" as a form of sisterhood between U.S. and Latin American activists.

Why did Luisi, author of the PAAAW, turn away from Pan-American feminism so soon after the fruition of her goal? What happened to her dream of "the women of America who fight for solidarity and for friendship of all people of all races"? This chapter sets out to answer these questions by tracing Luisi's trajectory and her sometimes ambivalent relationship to Pan-American feminism. In doing so, it utilizes her as a portal into the development of a specific type of "Pan-American feminism" in the early 1900s, one that called for, in de Vitale's words, "the close cooperation of all the people of the American continent." Luisi's politics also reveal the challenges inherent in achieving true multi-lateralism in inter-American feminist organization.

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[6] Bertha Lutz, *D. Bertha Lutz: Homenagem das senhoras brasileiras a illustre presidente da União inter-americana de mulheres* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. do *Jornal do Commercio*, de Rodrigues & C., 1925), 15.

This story of how hopes for a multi-lateral Pan-Americanism influenced Luisi's belief in Pan-American feminism, and how she struggled to propel this vision into what later became a Pan-American women's movement, has gotten lost in the slim history of inter-American feminism, which emphasizes above all the intractable problem of U.S. hegemony as a barrier to collaboration.[7] Such accounts sometimes leave the impression that Latin American feminists did not themselves advance their own visions of liberal feminism as a basis for a common enterprise with U.S. women, when in fact many did. Perhaps more problematically, these accounts of one-sided dominance also leave little room for understanding how Latin American feminists in fact helped originate and then shaped Pan-American feminism.[8]

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[7] The history of international feminism in the interwar years has traditionally focused on Euro-American connections. Ellen DuBois, "Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific," *Pacific Historical Review* 69 (2000): 539-551 calls on historians to shift perspective of the woman suffrage movement away from American-European models and consider Latin American and Asian struggles in an international framework. Transatlantic feminist scholarship includes Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888-1945," *The American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 1571-1600; Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Woman's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993); Carrie Ann Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: The U.S. Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Linda K. Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[8] Megan Threlkeld attributes the creation of what became the Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women to Carrie Chapman Catt. Megan Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922: Successful Suffragists Turn to International Relations," *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 5 (November 2007): 819. Christine Ehrick, who has shed important light on

Evidence from both the United States and Latin American countries during the early 1900s, however, reveals a more complicated and collaborative history of the relationship between Pan-Americanism and feminism. Despite the arrogance of many U.S. feminist leaders, and despite U.S. imperialism in the geo-political and international feminist realms, a number of Latin American feminists supported the Pan-American women's organizing that began to flourish in these years. One of the most influential of these Latin American feminists was Uruguayan Paulina Luisi.

Founder of both the Uruguayan National Council of Women (CONAMU) and the Uruguayan Women's Suffrage Alliance, and internationally renowned for her leadership in what was known then as one of the most progressive countries in Latin America, Luisi became the symbolic "mother" of feminism in Latin America. In many ways, she was also the "mother" of Pan-American feminism. Pan-American connections structured her activism from the beginning of her career as a reformer and helped sustain her national and international feminist activism in Europe and with U.S. contacts. From the early 1900s to 1923 she was involved in nearly every major forum for Pan-American women's activities, from the Pan American Scientific Congresses (1908-09), to the Women's Auxiliary (1915), to the Pan American Child Congresses (1916). Although scholars have recognized her national leadership and international work in Latin America and Europe,

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Paulina Luisi's Uruguayan, Pan-Hispanic and international feminism, has told a similar story, from a different vantage point. She explains the way Luisi perceived the ethnocentrism and "missionary" impulse of U.S. feminist Carrie Chapman Catt and the common ground Luisi found with other Latin American feminists who opposed U.S. imperialism. Christine Ehrick, "*Madrinas* and Missionaries: Uruguay and the Pan-American Women's Movement," *Gender and History* 10, no. 3 (November 1998): 406-424.

the role of Uruguay's Pan-American projects and her international feminist ideals in advancing Pan-American feminism deserve closer attention.[9]

Luisi's Pan-American feminism drew on a broader diplomatic Pan-Americanism that U.S. and Latin American statesmen and intellectuals advocated, which envisioned a more multi-lateral, living embodiment of its espoused democratic ideals. Luisi crafted an ideology that upheld equality of the nations of the Americas as much as it upheld equality of men and women of the Americas. This chapter reconstructs the early years of Pan-American feminism through Paulina Luisi's leadership, revealing the tensions that grew out of her endeavors to foster this vision of international mutuality. The first part of the chapter shows how the broader rhetoric of a Pan-Americanism based on multi-lateralism and on person-to-person interactions opened a space for women to organize from North and South in the Women's Auxiliary of 1915, a group Luisi would join. The second part examines how Luisi first began to utilize Pan-American forums as a way to promote women's rights in Latin America and solidify the international ties feminists shared by the Southern Cone nations of Argentina and Chile. She believed a Pan-Americanism that culturally valued Latin America over Europe could provide a platform for democratic and feminist reform. The third part examines Luisi's extension of this view to a Pan-American activism inclusive of the U.S., showing how, parallel to her nation's developing multi-lateral Pan-American diplomacy, she sought to develop relations with U.S. women. Luisi began to focus on Pan-American feminism as crucial for one key reform: the vote for women.

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[9] Paulina Luisi's national activism is examined in Christine Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak: Feminism and the State in Uruguay, 1903-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Asunción Lavrin, "Paulina Luisi: Pensamiento y escritura feminista," in *Estudios sobre escritoras hispanoaméricanas en honor de Georgina Sabán Rivero*, ed., Lou Charnon-Deutsch (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1992); Graciela Sapriza, "Clivajes de la memoria: para una biografía de Paulina Luisi," in *Uruguayos Notables: 11 Biografías* (Montevideo: Fundación BankBoston, 1999): 257-256. Sources that explore Luisi's international activism are Cynthia Jeffries Little, "Feminism and Moral Reform," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 17, no. 5 (November, 1975): 386-397 and Ehrick, "*Madrinas* and Missionaries."

Despite her strategic uses of Pan-Americanism and her faith in international feminism, however, she found her U.S. counterparts did not always share her goals of mutuality. U.S. and Western European ignorance and dismissal of Latin American feminism, noted by Luisi at a meeting of the International Alliance of Women, paved the way for the tensions that arose at the 1922 Baltimore Conference of Women. The fourth part of the chapter examines both the contradictory goals of the LWV and the hegemonic discourse they employed at the conference. In spite of these tensions, Luisi and de Vitale sought to utilize their proposal at the meeting to forward a Pan-American feminism that resisted U.S. hegemony. Soon after, the 1923 International Conference of American States revealed another case of Pan-American feminism in Luisi's model: Latin American efforts to shape inter-American feminism in the context of multi-lateral goals and a struggle against U.S. hegemony.

The New Pan-Americanism: Multi-lateralism and the Participation of Women

In 1906, Chilean diplomat and jurist Alejandro Álvarez suggested a new definition for "Pan-Americanism." The term had originally appeared in the political lexicon in 1882, when U.S. Secretary of State James Blaine proposed the first International Conference of American States. This meeting, ultimately taking place in 1889, created the D.C.-based Commercial Bureau of American Republics, precursor to the Pan American Union. Quickly, "Pan-Americanism" became associated with the

Monroe Doctrine, the policy initiated in 1823 that deemed any European incursion into North or South America as warranting U.S. intervention, and U.S. economic hegemony. However, at the 1905-06 Latin American Scientific Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Álvarez gave new meaning to the term. It would signify a union of the Americas based on a common international law, and not based on U.S. hegemony.[10]

Since their inception in the late 19th century, Latin American Scientific Congresses provided meeting places for a growing cadre of mostly male, but also a small number of female, professional educators, scientists, jurists, and doctors. Drawn from the expanding metropolises of Latin America, they met to exchange ideas on social welfare, medicine, hygiene, and international law. Now Álvarez proposed that the next Latin American Scientific Congress in 1908-09 in Santiago, Chile, should be a "Pan-American" event and include the United States.[11] He also suggested that the assembly recognize "the existence of an 'American' International Law…and recommend its study in the universities of the New Continent." The Congress accepted both proposals.

At the Santiago Congress, Álvarez explained "Pan-Americanism" in greater depth. He promoted the idea that "bonds naturally exist[ed] between the states of the Americas because of their situation on the same continent" and their desire to "settle uniformly, as far as possible, the principal international problems common to all of them." Pan-Americanism meant continental solidarity based on an "American" international law, which would hopefully produce peace.[12] This form of international law incorporated many of the precepts of European liberal internationalist thought that had been percolating since the late nineteenth-century, including arbitration or peaceful settlement of disputes, and applied them to the Western Hemisphere. Álvarez argued that Latin America had a rich history of international law, seen in Bolívar's early attempts to form a Latin American Union upon independence from European rule. The Pan-Latin confederation of which Bolívar dreamed may have been a utopian fantasy, but a Pan-American confederation was not. Latin America and the U.S., Álvarez held, shared a history of overthrowing European colonial rule and embracing republican, democratic forms of government. It naturally followed that the U.S. and Latin America would share a common system of international law.

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[10] Alejandro Álvarez, "Latin America and International Law," *The American Journal of International Law* 3, no. 2 (April 1909): 327.

[11] Álvarez, "Latin America and International Law," 353. He introduced this resolution in the Committee on Social and Juridical Sciences. More on Álvarez can be found in Martii Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 302-322 and in Christina Duffy Burnett, "Contingent Constitutions: Empire and Law in the Americas," (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2010), chap. 4.

Álvarez did, however, recognize the unparalleled power of the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere, and his Pan-Americanism reflected, too, a belief that Latin America had no choice but to join in a relationship with the U.S. However, during a period following a steep rise of U.S. intervention in Latin America – the Spanish American War (1898), U.S. control over Cuba and Puerto Rico and Panama's secession from Colombia under U.S. influence (1903), and the U.S. control over the Dominican Republic's customs houses (1905) – his formula for international law sought to curb U.S. encroachment in Latin America. While not calling for a complete overhaul of the Monroe Doctrine, Álvarez sought extension of its application to the "better constituted" countries of Latin America (by which he most likely meant what were known as the A.B.C. countries, the politically and economically most powerful at the time --

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[12] Álvarez, "Latin America and International Law," 327.

Argentina, Brazil, and Chile).[13] In other words, he asked the U.S. to relinquish some of its hegemony and share it with Latin American countries deemed "advanced" or "well constituted."

The success of Álvarez's Pan-American vision depended on it being more than an arid set of legalist definitions. To become meaningful it required an exchange of ideas, person-to-person contact, education, and influence of public opinion. This belief in the power of educating minds was a staple in progressive internationalist thought. As another internationalist and Pan-American enthusiast, H.G. Wells, put it "the task of bringing about that consolidated world state which is necessary to prevent the decline and decay of mankind is not primarily one for the diplomats and lawyers and politicians at all. It is an educational one. It is a moral based on an intellectual reconstruction…"[14]

Álvarez's ideas were widely disseminated, both in Latin America and in the U.S. As legal historian Martii Koskenniemi writes, he became "a figurehead of a 'new' international law that spoke with a non-European voice," one that sought to bring international relations into the realm of international law and emphasized the role of social facts and justice in each.[15] In 1912, Álvarez co-founded with influential U.S. international lawyer James Brown Scott the American Institute of International Law, a private organization composed of five publicists from each of the American nations. Despite criticisms, Álvarez's idea of Pan-Americanism became hugely prominent, as did the collaborative, inter-personal form of Pan-Americanism he envisioned. Advances in communications and transportation sped the exchange of publications and people, and promoted Pan-American conferences, spearheaded by both U.S. and Latin American elites, such as the Pan American Scientific Congresses, Pan American Child Congresses, Pan American Journalist Conferences, and Pan American Conferences of International Law. In 1910, the International Bureau of American Republics (the 1902 iteration of Blaine's earlier Commercial Bureau of American Republics) was renamed the Pan American Union, and the *Pan American Bulletin* it published became a clearing-house for information on all of these cultural, educational, economic and political dialogues between the U.S. and Latin America. Appearing in both English and Spanish, it was followed by other publications like *Inter-America* magazine, also with bilingual editions distributed in major cities throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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[13] Jorge L. Esquirol, "Alejandro Álvarez's Latin American Law: A Question of Identity," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 19 (2006): 932.
[14] H.G. Wells, *The Salvaging of Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1921), 21.
[15] Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer*, 302.

In the U.S., political scientist Joseph Byrne Lockey noted in 1920 that "Pan-Americanism" had made its mark on public discourse, "constantly recurring in newspapers and periodicals…gradually it is also finding a place in works on international law and diplomacy."[16] Between 1915 and 1930 a flood of books attempting to define Pan-Americanism, understand its history, and predict its portents for the future.[17] By 1925, Lockey hazarded a six-point definition of "Pan-Americanism": independence from Europe; representative government; territorial integrity; law instead of force; non-intervention; equality; and cooperation.[18]

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[16] Joseph Byrne Lockey, *Pan-Americanism: Its Beginnings* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 2.
[17] Roland Greene Usher, *Pan Americanism: A Forecast of the Inevitable Clash Between the United States and Europe's Victor* (New York: Century Co., 1915); John Bassett Moore, *Henry Clay and Pan-Americanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915); The World Peace Foundation, *The New Pan Americanism* (Boston: The World Peace Foundation, 1916); Samuel Guy Inman, *Problems in Pan-Americanism* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1921).
[18] Joseph B. Lockey, "The Meaning of Pan-Americanism," *The American Journal of International Law* 29, no. 1 (January 1925): 116-117.

World War I provided the formal push for this new sort of "Pan-Americanism" within the Woodrow Wilson administration. Increased public rhetoric about a "union of the Americas" closely mirrored the dramatic rise in magnitude of trade between Latin America and the U.S., which increased, as a result of the war, by more than 100 percent between July 1, 1914 and June 30, 1915.[19] Wilson announced a Pan American treaty at the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress, held in Washington D.C. from December 1915 to January 1916, which had been transformed into a full-dress diplomatic congress because of the war. The president called for a union of the Americas to guarantee absolute political independence and territorial integrity, and to settle all disputes in the Western Hemisphere by investigation and arbitration. He also proposed a formal, political structure to give meaning to Pan-American community and collective security that closely resembled Álvarez's multilateral definition of the Monroe Doctrine.[20] "The states of America are…cooperating friends," Wilson said, "Pan-Americanism…has none of the spirit of empire in it. It is the embodiment, the effectual embodiment of the spirit of law and independence and liberty and mutual service."[21] With war, chaos and violations of international law rampant in Europe, a united Western Hemisphere could now model for the world true peace, democracy, and equality among nations.

Although Wilson spoke the same language of "Pan-Americanism" as Álvarez, his motivations differed. As Benjamin Allen Coates has pointed out, during this period "the U.S. was far more concerned with promoting the idea of multi-lateralism than it was with actually complying with it."[22] U.S. marines occupied Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1916 and 1917, in flagrant disregard for norms of international law in the Pan-American sphere that the U.S. itself had promoted.[23] In 1915, though, the rhetoric of a just international law and the endorsement of peaceful arbitration and non-intervention by the U.S., raised the expectations of many, including a group of pacifists for whom these two ideals had long been goals. U.S. reformer Jane Addams later recalled how Wilson's Pan-American treaty had boosted her hopes that the United States would now embrace the high ideals of a Pan-American pacifist internationalism. [24]

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[19] Mark T. Gilderhaus, *Pan American Visions: Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 37.
[20] Gilderhaus, *Pan American Visions*, 49.
[21] Quoted in Lockey, "The Meaning of Pan-Americanism," 109.

The new Pan-Americanism also laid the groundwork for the direct involvement of women, for whom peace and inter-personal communications were long believed to be natural proclivities. During the 1915-1916 Pan-American conference, a "Women's Auxiliary" conference took place. Women had participated in the Latin American and First Pan American Scientific Congresses, but they were now relegated to the rafters when the Second Pan American Conference became a "diplomatic" one. Eleanor Lansing, wife of Secretary of State Robert Lansing, along with wives of other officials in the U.S. state department, made an effort to gather together these now-excluded professional women with the wives of the Latin American diplomats in the U.S.[25] The conference included discussions of education, child welfare, and women's contributions to internationalism. Despite the absence of "feminism" or "women's rights" on the agenda, the conference itself included a number of prominent Latin American feminists, including Amanda Labarca from Chile and Blanche Z. de Baralt from Cuba, as well as U.S. women involved in suffrage and social reform. Among the 200 women from the U.S. who attended the conference were suffragists Zona Gale and Maud Younger and social reformers Grace Abbott, Jane Addams, and director of the U.S. Children's Bureau Julia Lathrop. Lansing, who had learned Spanish as a child when her father John W. Forster was the U.S. minister to Mexico, translated speeches from both Spanish and English.[26]

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[22] Benjamin Allen Coates, "Transatlantic Advocates: American International Law and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1898-1919," (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2010), 226.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1922), 53.

[25] Mrs. Robert Lansing to Julia C. Lathrop, December 16, 1916, Container 1, Folder 1, The Records of the Pan American International Women Committee (PAIWC), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LoC).

This conference, declared by the *Washington Post* to be "the first time that a woman's branch of the Pan American congress has met in conjunction with the male delegates," promoted a new, multi-lateral Pan-American ideal in line with that espoused by the diplomatic meeting.[27] Argentine educator Ernestina Lopez explained in Spanish that with the war it was no longer appropriate for American nations to look to Europe for "inspiration," since European "ideas and aims, differ in many respects from the democracy which we flatter ourselves we maintain here in this western world." "As Pan-Americans," she said, "we should seek to understand our own neighbors of our own continent," which would "help powerfully to develop and encourage the growth of our social and economic possibilities."[28] A Miss C. P. Mason expanded upon this point: "The war has turned the hearts and minds of all the Americas toward a permanent peace…Bonds of commerce, banking, and transportation are inadequate. A spiritual understanding and purpose are also required to found a Pan America which shall stand the test of time."[29]

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[26] "Mrs. Robert Lansing…has perfect command of the Spanish language, having learned the foreign tongue in her girlhood while living with her father, John W. Forster, who was the American Minister to Mexico for many years." ("Women Also for Unity," *Washington Post*, December 29, 1915, p. 4)
[27] "Women Will Meet Today," *Washington Post*, December 28, 1915, 4.
[28] Ernestina A. López De Nelson, "Panamericanismo y Educación," *Proceedings of the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), 474.

Speakers emphasized women's unique roles in promoting a Pan-American peace, revealing a gender ideology that connected womanhood with community, social bonds, and collaboration. Jane Addams argued that "natural intercourse" among people from different nations would go a long way to resolving problems, since "natural intercourse, of social life versus political life, has largely been in the hands of women" thus her sex had a particular "obligation." Gatherings like the Women's Auxiliary, she said, promoted a "new type of internationalism…founded upon genuine understanding, which is better affection and good will, and…respect."[30]

This meeting led to the promotion of the Comité Internacional Panamericano de Señoras, or the Pan American International Women's Committee (PAIWC).[31] Dubbed the "Women's Auxiliary" by its members, it embodied what its U.S. executive secretary, Mrs. Glen Levin Swiggett, hoped would be an "organized and cooperative movement among the women of the American Republics…working as a strong international factor for economic and social betterment."[32] Made up of five members of each nation in the Western Hemisphere, the PAIWC received the support of the U.S. State Department and the Pan American Union, although it remained "unofficial," and not formally affiliated with the PAU.[33] The organization met periodically for a number of years, usually coinciding with the Pan American Scientific Congresses with the two-pronged objective of promoting "the betterment of women," and of "striv[ing] for a common understanding and a common action on the part of the democracies of the western hemisphere."[34]

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[29] "American Women Unite," *Washington Post*, January 5, 1916, 5.
[30] Mrs. Glen Levin Swiggett, *Report on the Women's Auxiliary Conference held in the city of Washington, U.S.A., in connection with the Second Pan American Scientific Congress, December 28, 1915- January 7, 1916* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 60.
[31] "Women Also for Unity," *Washington Post*, December 29, 1915, 4
[32] Mrs. Robert Lansing to Julia C. Lathrop, December 16, 1916, Container 1 (Folder 1), PAIWC.

One of its active members and president of its Uruguayan section was Uruguayan social reformer, doctor, and suffragist Paulina Luisi. Luisi had not attended the 1915-16 meeting of women in Washington, D.C., but her name had been on the roster of attendees of the First Pan American Scientific Congress in Santiago in 1908-09, where Álvarez had spoken about Pan-Americanism, and she had been invited to the 1915-16 meeting.[35] Lansing and Swiggett, both of whom wrote in Spanish, had struck up a correspondence with Luisi following their meeting in 1916, and they urged her to become their Uruguayan representative, which Luisi accepted.[36] In 1922, Luisi would cite the Women's Auxiliary as part of the inspiration for her proposal for a Pan American Association of Women. But in these earlier years, Luisi was also formulating her own ideas about Pan-American feminism with a group of Latin American feminists from Argentina and Chile. She later would help propel a specific definition of Pan-American feminism, that drew from the basic precepts of the Women's Auxiliary but was ultimately more radical, calling explicitly for women's equal political and civil rights and for equal rights of all nations.

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[33] John Barrett to E. B. Swiggett, November 19, 1919, Container 3, PAIWC.

[34] "Latin American Women Greeted," *Washington Post*, June 15, 1918, 7. (Swiggett sent a copy of this newspaper article to Luisi, in PL-AGN)

[35] Swiggett, *Report on the Women's Auxiliary Conference*, 64.

[36] Eleanor Lansing to Paulina Luisi, June 28, 1916; Eleanor Lansing to Paulina Luisi, November 1, 1917; E.B. Swiggett to Sras. Dra. Paulina Luisi, Carmen Cuestas de Nery y Anita M. de Monteverde, June 12, 1918, Caja 253, Carpeta 6, PL-AGN.

Paulina Luisi and Pan-Americanism's Promise for Latin American Feminism

Internationalism and feminism were part of Luisi's upbringing. Born in 1875 in Argentina to European immigrants – her mother of Polish descent, and her father an Italian citizen – Luisi and her family moved to Paysandú, Uruguay shortly after she was born, and then to the capital, Montevideo, when she was twelve. Her parents were unusually progressive, anti-clerical, and supportive of their daughters, who excelled in areas traditionally off-limits to women. Paulina became a physician, her sister Clotilde the first female lawyer in Uruguay, and her sister Luisa a famous poet. Both of these sisters would join Paulina in feminist activism and would participate in Pan-American conferences.[37] Later in life, she would explain that her father, a socialist, reformer, and educator, had "implanted in [my] conscience an uncontainable desire for justice and liberty."[38] After earning a teaching degree in 1890, Paulina became the first woman in Uruguay to earn a bachelor's degree (1899), and to earn a medical degree (1909), later becoming the head of the gynecology clinic of the Faculty of Medicine at the National University in Montevideo.

Despite Luisi's exceptional career, she was also representative of a growing number of elite professional women, social reformers, and feminists in South American countries in these years. As Asunción Lavrin explains, "[Luisi's] professional career is almost a stereotype of the intense and passionate activity that developed within the first professional generation [of women] in Latin America."[39] During the mid to late nineteenth century, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration had altered both political institutions and the conditions of everyday life in many Latin American countries, particularly in the Southern Cone and Brazil, encouraging the rise of democratic constitutions, a middle-class, and a move toward secularism. It was from this host of changes that an educated group of women, first as school teachers and then, increasingly, as professionals, emerged.

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[37] Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak*, 95; Luisa attended the First Pan American Child Congress in Buenos Aires in 1916 and the Second Pan American Child Congress in Montevideo in 1919, "Luisa Luisi," *Uruguayans of Today* (The Hispanic Society of America, 1921), 307-8; Alejandro Andrade Coelle, "Esthetic Education," *Inter-America* 5-6 (1922): 393.

[38] Quoted in Little, "Feminism and Moral Reform," 390.

This coterie of teachers and professionals, eager to promote education for women, became leaders of the first attempts to create liberal feminist organizations in South America, and conceived of themselves internationally. Women reformers from a host of countries, especially Chile and Argentina, forged networks around their common goals of equal political and civic rights for women, including equal access to education and the professions, equal property and citizenship rights, and the vote.[40] They made key connections with each other at regional meetings such as the Latin American Scientific Congresses and at the 1910 Buenos Aires First International Women's Congress.[41]

It was her attendance at the First Pan American Scientific in Santiago, Chile (1908-09), and the Buenos Aires First International Women's Congress (1910) that introduced Luisi to this world of liberal feminist reform in the Americas. There she met a number of women, including Chilean educator Amanda Labarca (who also later became a member of the Women's Auxiliary) and several Argentine women's rights leaders – the physician Dr. Petrona Eyle, pacifist Alicia Moreau, educator Sara Justo, and Elvira

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[39] Lavrin, "Paulina Luisi," 159, also quoted in Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak*, 94.
[40] Ehrick, "*Madrinas* and Missionaries," 407.
[41] The 1910 Buenos Aires First International Woman's Congress was organized by the Argentine Universitarias president, Julieta Lantieri Renshaw, Miller, *Latin American Women*, 173.

Rawson Dellepiane. All four became Luisi's close friends and frequent correspondents. In addition to equal rights for women, their concerns in the early 1900s included labor, public health, and child care. Like other Latin American feminists and many social reformers in the U.S., they critiqued social injustices generated by industrial capitalism such as child labor and the exploitation of women in the workplace, and sought strong state action in support of mothers and children. Their goals reflect, as noted by Francesca Miller, that Latin American feminism maintained an "insistence on social justice and the preservation of the feminine."[42]

As a physician with a specialty in obstetrics and gynecology, Luisi held what Christine Ehrick calls an "essentially genital" view of sexual difference. In a 1911 article, Luisi stated that "man and woman are nothing but two forms of the same being, equipped only with the differences that the preservation of the species requires." However, Luisi also believed that men imposed a dangerous sexuality on women that was disruptive to society as a whole and that contributed to single motherhood and the births of illegitimate children. Aside from equal legal and political rights for women, her overriding campaign in Uruguay and internationally was for an equal moral code, or single sexual standard. This idea governed her work against regulation of prostitution and her goal of incorporating sex education in the public school system.[43] The state, Luisi believed, should play a strong role in policing the male sexual impulse and in protecting mothers and children. She did not, however, single out the female worker as object of protection; she believed that male and female workers should be protected equally.[44]

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[42] Miller, *Latin American Women*, 109.

[43] It drew her to her League of Nations work as a technical expert in the Committee against the Trafficking of Women in 1923 and undergirded her argument for universal laws in terms of paternity testing.

Luisi and her cohort consciously explained their feminist ideals as growing out of the European Western liberal tradition, through the nineteenth-century revolutions in their South American nations. Luisi often quoted French feminist Olympe de Gouges's 1791 *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen*, which extended the universalism of the French Revolution to call for women's rights.[45] Luisi also drew from examples of social justice feminism in Europe, naming as her role model the nineteenth-century British social reformer and feminist Josephine Butler, who worked for a "single moral standard."[46]

Luisi and her friends also shared with many of their European and U.S. feminist counterparts a belief in a teleological history of civilization and progress, whose most recent chapters included the education of women and women's rights. They shared similar racial and cultural assumptions, seeing a measure of a nation's civilization as tethered to its status of women; deeming the Middle East, Asia, and Africa as lower on civilizational rungs; and also believing that, within their countries, it was the role of educated, middle-class reformers to "uplift" their less fortunate, educated, and well-off sisters. Some of these assumptions Luisi's close friend, Argentine feminist Alicia Moreau, made explicit when she explained her belief that "two types" of women in

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[44] Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak*, 101.
[45] Paulina Luisi, "Declaración de derechos de la mujer y la ciudadana," por Olímpica de Gouges, Sección 3, Serie 3.1, Fondo Paulina Luisi, *Facultad* de *Humanidades y Ciencias* de la Educación, Montevideo, Uruguay (PL-HCM); For more on the feminism of Olympe de Gouges, see Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Harvard University Press, 1996), 19-56.
[46] Paulina Luisi, *Otra voz clamando en el desierto* (Montevideo: n.p.), 1948.

Argentina "represent[ed] two stages in the evolution of the Argentine woman." The first was the "Hispano-Colonial type." Catholic and hidebound, she "is the direct descendant of the woman born in a home formed by the union of the Spaniard and the Indian, a home ruled entirely by the father." The other type, in which Moreau classified herself, was the "Argentine-European, sprung from the homes transplanted to this side of the sea by the current of immigration." This woman was more likely to be a secular feminist and social reformer.[47]

Though Luisi's parents were immigrants, Luisi herself was not, and though she would always cite European feminist role models, she was also a proud advocate for an autochthonous and self-consciously internationalist Latin American feminism, particularly during World War I. In the context of a shattering of European cultural superiority, and in an increasingly anti-imperialist and democratic world, Luisi began to emphasize the specific "Latin" contributions to democracy and reform. She articulated the social reform and feminist benefits that Latin America offered the world in the opening speech of the 1916 First Pan-American Child Congress in Buenos Aires, a meeting organized by Argentine women and following from the 1913 Argentine National Child Congress. Here Latin American women reformers gathered to discuss sociology and education, as well as ways to utilize state reforms to improve the lives of women and children. This second "Pan-American" child conference, not sponsored by the government, included mostly women reformers from Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile, as well as a handful from the U.S. The Pan American Child Congresses would grow to become a staple of Pan-Americanism.[48]

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[47] Moreau expressed these ideas at the 1920 Pan American Physicians Congress, see A.S.B., "Women of the Argentine," *The Woman Citizen* 4, no. 30 (February 14, 1920): 867-868.

In her 1916 speech, Luisi laid out her developing view of Pan-Americanism as a principle that culturally elevated and bound the Americas, particularly the Spanish-speaking countries, in social justice and reform. Europe was embroiled in a war that only made more remote any chances for improvement in women and children's lives. Meanwhile, Latin American women from nations whose democratic revolutions had overthrown the shackles of "old Europe" were now gathering to exchange ideas about women's and children's rights and welfare. Because their nations were at peace, their ideas had a good chance of being made into law. Strengthening international connections across the Americas and among the women reformers of America, would secure both peace and progressive reform: "We have to unite to curse the scepter of war because our [work] is above all a work of Life and progress that can only thrive in the shade of the tree of Peace!"[49]

Of the nations already embracing democracy and progressive reform, Luisi said, Uruguay was taking the lead. "Small country, just a pin point on the map of the globe, but a giant spirit which vigorously encourages the Latin soul" she exclaimed. She referred here to "Batllismo," a program of advanced social legislation, named for José

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[48] "First American Congress on Child Welfare," *School and Society* 4 (September 9, 1916): 398-399. Later in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, they would engage U.S. reformers like Sophonisba Breckinridge and Child Bureau director Katherine Lenroot. See Donna Guy, "The Pan American Child Congresses, 1916 to 1942: Pan Americanism, Child Reform, and the Welfare State in Latin America," *Journal of Family History* (1998); see also Donna Guy, "The Politics of Pan-American Cooperation: Maternalist Feminism and the Child Rights Movement, 1913-1960," *Gender & History* 10, no. 3 (November 1998): 449-469.

[49] Paulina Luisi, "Sesión de apertura del 1º Congreso americano del Niño," 1916. Sección 3, Serie 3.2, PL-HCM.

Batlle y Ordóñez, president of Uruguay (1903 to 1907 and 1911 to 1915) that had led to active state promotion of welfare of women, children, and workers in Uruguay. The country had become known as the first "welfare state" in Latin America when, in 1910, the National Public Assistance Law created a government body to insure the right of universal care, long predating the U.S. social security system.[50] During Batlle's second term, Uruguay founded free public schools and became the first Latin American country to enact eight-hour work day legislation for both male and female workers and to have a Ministry of Labor and Industry.[51] Batlle adopted the 19th-century socialist principle that a measure of civilization for a country could be found in the level of advancement of its women. He promoted education of women and helped found the first women's university in Montevideo.[52]

Uruguayan female social reformers and a growing group of teachers both reaped the benefits of this state apparatus and helped shape it. Luisi took an active role in social welfare policy during this time, and with other women fought for the recognition of the rights of illegitimate children. As a result, from 1909 to 1914, Uruguay's laws recognized that hereditary rights of out of wedlock children admitted them into the courts and increased grounds for allowing investigation of paternity.[53] All of these accomplishments, Luisi believed, further underlined a widening gap between Europe and the Americas. As she explained at the Pan American Child Congress:

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[50] Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak*, 71.
[51] Ehrick, "*Madrinas* and Missionaries"; Milton I. Vagner, *Uruguay's José Batlle y Ordoñez: The Determined Visionary, 1915-1917* (Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2010): 3, 41-55.
[52] Ehrick, "*Madrinas* and Missionaries."
[53] Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak*; Walter Howard Alanis, Santiago Altieri, Mercedes Otegui Carrasco, *Family Law in Uruguay* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Kluwer Law International, 2011), 128.

> …while the brains of Europe dreamed of social achievements, our country made them; while philosophers and sociologists of the old world discussed regulation of labor for women and children, investigation of paternity, legitimacy of children, our country legislated and made them more than aspirations – they are enshrined in the legislative code of our country.[54]

Drawing comparisons between the countries of Europe and Uruguay revealed that her Latin American nation was in fact more civilized.

The Congress of Uruguay, Luisi reported, was now discussing the most controversial of women's aspirations: their political rights. This was the next stage of the fight for Latin American women, and she believed unity of women of the Americas could help mobilize an international suffrage movement. Several years later, continuing her commitments to a Pan-American social welfare and child reform, Luisi hosted the Second Pan American Child Congress in Uruguay in 1919. But Pan-Americanism also helped her sharpen her sights on women's suffrage. In late 1916, upon returning from the Pan American Child Congress, Luisi founded the first Uruguayan suffrage organization, the Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Uruguayos (CONAMU).

"*La* leader *de las sufragistas*": A Turn to U.S.-Identified Pan-Americanism

Although Luisi's Pan-Americanism initially focused on the bonds among the Spanish-speaking Southern Cone nations, it gradually included the United States. This change occurred as a result of Uruguay's pro-U.S. diplomacy during World War I, the strength of a multi-lateral Pan-Americanist rhetoric that made way for inclusion of Uruguay and Latin American countries, and the strategic importance she believed the U.S. could hold in the fight for women's suffrage in Uruguay. Despite Luisi's public championing of an inter-American feminist activism in tandem with the U.S., her recognition that U.S. feminists themselves did not perceive a similar mutuality would taint Luisi's hopes and become a roadblock in her Pan-American feminist vision.

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[54] Luisi, "Sesión de apertura del 1º Congreso americano del Niño," PL-HCM.

Luisi's developing ideas of feminist solidarity with U.S. reformers paralleled Uruguay's diplomatic acceleration of a Pan-American relationship with the U.S. during World War I. Several months after the U.S. entered the war, in April, 1917, Uruguay made known to the continent a "Decree of American Solidarity." It proclaimed that "an attack on the rights of a country of the continent ought to be considered by all as personal and to provoke in each of them a uniform and common reaction."[55] This decree inspired official telegrams of congratulations and Pan-American support from Bolivia, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, and a host of other nations. In October, 1917, when Uruguay joined other Latin American countries in severing economic and diplomatic ties with Germany, U.S. Secretary of State Lansing celebrated "the altruistic attitude assumed by the Republic of Uruguay…" saying that its decree translated "Pan Americanism" from "merely a word…[into] a potent force for mutual defense and for a world peace."[56]

The type of Pan-Americanism Uruguay promoted was influenced by the multi-lateral ideals of Álvarez and by Uruguay's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Baltasar Brum, elected president in 1919. Brum became one of the most vocal adherents of a Pan-Americanism that could restore greater equality to the Americas. Envisioning a future "Grand Tribunal of America" that would mark "the most transcendental event in the history of the world," Brum predicted that such an institution would resolve conflicts "in peace and honor," respect "all sovereignties, small and great, [which] occupy the same plan in the universal concert," and show the Americas to be unlike Europe, free of "imperialism or oppression."[57] Uruguay's status as a small country, ranking in cultural if not economic status with the A.B.C. nations, without a neo-colonial relationship with the United States, all might help explain the official eagerness to support a Pan-American relationship with the U.S. However, Brum's words were also undergirded by an earnest belief in a liberal internationalism. It was a point of national pride that Uruguay's President Batlle had proposed a league of nations at the 1907 Hague Conference on International Law, and now possibilities of a more equal relationship between the U.S. and Latin America, and a union of all the nations of America bound by a common international law, seemed more likely.

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[55] Uruguyan Chancellery, *Memorias del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores*, vol 2 (September, 1916-February 15, 1918), 438-440.
[56] Quoted in R. Ronza, "The Latin American Nations and the World: Pan-American Tendencies in South America," *Inter-America* 5 (1922): 202.

Luisi drew on and utilized Baltasar Brum's Pan-Americanism and the distinguished international status of Uruguay to fashion and promote her own unique vision of Pan-American feminism. For Luisi, the world war was accelerating the connections between democracy, individual liberties, and women's rights. During these years she began to set her sights on suffrage, which, she believed, would not only recognize women's absolute equality with men and their "full humanity" but would also help women change the world by enabling them to enact reforms that served mothers, children, and world peace. As she said in 1919, "suffrage is something more than a right; suffrage is an instrument of combat, it is a probability for success, it is an instrument of defense and a way to triumph; in a word, suffrage is a weapon in the social struggle."[58] In Luisi's view, women's rights were not only congruent with the visions of peace and international federation that Brum was expounding; they were a necessary component of such a peace.[59]

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[57] Baltasar Brum, *La Paz de América* (Montevideo: Imprenta Nacional, 1923), 7-8.

During the war, Luisi saw the U.S. positioning itself anew in the world as a force for democracy, and in support of Uruguay's official promotion of Pan-Americanism, she increased her contact with U.S. women in the Women's Auxiliary. She began to correspond a great deal with Swigett and Lansing, who, together with their husbands, had close connections to foreign diplomats from Uruguay, some of whom Luisi considered friends and colleagues, including Baltasar Brum.[60] Luisi also organized a Pan-American committee of the CONAMU, which was a local subsidiary of the Women's Auxiliary. Although the Women's Auxiliary did not promote woman suffrage, Luisi believed their commitment to "women's advancement" and the liberal democratic principles of Pan-Americanism in general could help her create a Pan-American basis for feminism and specifically for women's suffrage.

In November, 1917, news that Uruguay's constitution was approved with a mechanism for enacting woman suffrage catapulted Paulina Luisi and her suffrage organization CONAMU into the international eye. The Constitution gave women voting rights, pending ratification by two-thirds of both legislative houses. It made Uruguay, as Francesca Miller has noted "'in theory, the first of all Western Hemisphere nations to recognize female suffrage,'" even before the United States.[61] The organ of the International Alliance of Women, *Jus Suffragi*, and the organ of the U.S. Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, *The Suffragist*, both reported on the constitution.[62] In 1919, Luisi celebrated the vibrant suffrage movement underway in Uruguay, remarking in *Acción Femenina* that:

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[58] Paulina Luisi, *Movimiento Sufragista: Conferencia leída en el Augusteo de Buenos Aires, el 21 de Febrero 1919, a pedido de la Unión Feminista Nacional Argentina* (Montevideo: Imp. "El Siglo Ilustrado," de Gregorio V. Mariño, 1919), 6.
[59] A statement Luisi saved written by her father in 1918, and which she later cited as a strong influence, help us understand Luisi's own views on liberal internationalism. Her father, an adherent to the international body of Freemasonry, called for a "Universal International Federation." Understanding the economic conditions that led to war, he wrote that he had long "dreamed of the possibility that all the nations a vast economic league," a socialist confederation of nations, "where, in place of opposition of interests, there would be the principle of association." "La Respuesta de Mi Padre," 11 March 1918, Sección 1, Serie 1.12, PL-HCM.
[60] E.B. Swiggett to National Council of Women, c/o Dr. Paulina Luisi, January 17, 1918, Caja 253, Carpeta 6, PL-AGN.

> In these three short years of existence, the name of Uruguay has quickly become known in the feminist circles of the entire world…Uruguay was the first country in South America to initiate a women's suffrage movement; its women have dared to raise their voice for the recognition of their political rights; the first among South American women, they have addressed the established Powers of their country to demand their citizenship rights.[63]

Now, with both Uruguay and the United States making measurable progress in their suffrage movements, Luisi saw Uruguay and the United States as *together* taking the lead in the Western Hemisphere forwarding democracy through women's rights. Hoping that both nations' models could help mobilize new suffrage campaigns throughout Latin America, Luisi developed a Pan-Americanism that promoted connections with the U.S. as a way to advance global democracy and women's rights. In a speech she gave in Buenos Aires in 1919 sponsored by the Unión Feminista Nacional and that organization's president, Luisi's friend Alicia Moreau de Justo, Luisi articulated the commonality of the democratic political tradition in the Americas, as distinct from Europe. The growth of America's role in the world after World War I held a portent of hope for woman suffrage in the Americas, including the United States. Referring in glowing terms to Wilson's conversion to and public endorsement of women's suffrage in September 1918, she said that now the "eyes of the world were anxiously fixed on the glorious nation that flourishes to the North of our continent." At this time, when "the Chief of the American Nation is the arbiter of the destinies of humanity, [such a declaration] acquires the value of a beautiful prophecy, a vibrant promise that we hope very soon to see become a reality."[64] Baltasar Brum, who had just been elected Uruguay's president was, she said, "on so many points comparable to Wilson [and] is a staunch supporter of the emancipation of women."[65]

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[61] Miller, *Latin American Women*, 98.
[62] "Suffrage in Uruguay" *The Suffragist* 6, no. 9 (1918): 4.
[63] Luisi, *Acción Feminina*; Ehrick, "*Madrinas* and Missionaries."

Changes to women's status would not just be led by men in power, however; Luisi pointed to the essential role that women in the U.S. had played in fostering national and international feminism. Luisi reserved particular praise for Carrie Chapman Catt, as founder and Honorary President of the International Alliance of Women, which promoted women's rights and world peace, and for earlier suffragists in the U.S., Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Detailing the history of U.S. women's efforts, reading excerpts from Stanton and Anthony's two-volume *History of American Suffrage* Luisi said, "they have initiated the struggle, they have achieved the first victory, they have given an example that I hope in not the not distant future will be imitated by us, their sisters of the Southern Continent." Invoking a "wave" metaphor for the women's movement, Luisi spoke of the U.S. and European women organizing first, noting that "the wave advances, and sooner or later, the tide reaches our beautiful shores."[66] Later that year, to focus on suffrage, Luisi would form the Uruguayan Alliance of Women as a national branch of the IAW.

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[64] Luisi, *Movimiento sufragista*, 28.
[65] Ibid., 32.
[66] Ibid., 34.

Luisi's pro-U.S. Pan-Americanism was shared by many of her Argentine and Chilean counter-parts. In 1919, Sara Justo, Alicia Moreau de Justo, and Petrona Eyle began to collaborate with Luisi in plans for a Pan-American suffrage conference to be held in July, 1921 in Buenos Aires, to discuss the civil and political status of women. (Moreau and Eyle also had connections to women in the U.S., and Moreau in October, 1919 traveled to New York City to attend the International Conference of Women Physicians at the Young Women's Christian Association.[67]) They wanted the conference to be led by Carrie Chapman Catt and sponsored by John Barrett, then director of the Pan-American Union, in part because they recognized the leverage these North Americans provided. When Sara Justo wrote to Luisi that "clearly the Pan American conference would be a great thing," she mentioned Catt and Barrett's influence. Alicia Moreau wrote to Luisi that "if we have support of the North Americans, [the conference] will go well."[68] It seems as though Catt supported the idea, for in December, 1919 the organ of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the *Woman's Journal* wrote of the planned congress, as did Katherine Dreier, a U.S. artist traveling in Buenos Aires who served as a liaison between the Argentine feminists and Catt in organizing the conference.[69] Although the 1921 Buenos Aires Pan-American Suffrage conference did not take place, it is likely that the LWV's 1922 Pan-American Baltimore Conference was in part the fruition of the earlier efforts to convene made by Luisi, Moreau, and Justo.

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[67] The LWV publication *The Woman Citizen* noted that Moreau de Justo had gone on a "long mule-back ride" across the "Andes passes during the South-American winter and took ship up the Western coast to California" to make it to the conference since Eastern ships were not running due to the war. "That is, she crossed the continent twice, and traversed a large section of the western hemisphere in order to confer with her colleagues on public morality. Dr. Moreau's own contribution was an address on the White Slave Traffic." From "How Latin American Women Are Gaining," *The Woman Citizen* 4, no. 22 (December 20, 1919): 601, 613.

[68] Sara Justo to Luisi July 26, 1919, Carpeta "J," BLPN; Alicia Moreau to Luisi, March 30, 1919, Carpeta "M," BLPN.

Correspondence about the planning of the conference suggests that for all of their admiration of Catt's leadership, Luisi and her Argentine friends were not certain that Catt's politics were entirely in line with their own social justice-infused and multi-lateral approach. Petrona Eyle wrote to Luisi about a pacifist and anarchist woman from the U.S. who had visited her in Argentina and had told her that "in North America there are many grades/levels of socialism," and that "Sra Chapman Catt is conservative and that there are many others [women] much more progressive."[70]

Luisi too had doubts about Catt; namely, Catt's lack of knowledge of and esteem for Latin American feminism. In her 1919 speech in Buenos Aires, Luisi shared a report about feminism that Catt and Dutch IAW member Aletta Jacobs had written after surveying women's movements throughout the world. They had been surprised to find vibrant feminist activism in China, India, Egypt, and other "countries that we consider much less civilized than ours," Luisi said. However, Catt had found women's rights activism lacking in Latin America: "'In all the world,' exclaims, Mrs. Chapman Catt," Luisi said,

> 'there are suffrage associations, with the exception of Greece, Spain, Turkey, the black Republic of Liberia and all the South American nations!' I demand an exception for Uruguay whose suffrage association I had founded in 1916…as a member of the two great international associations for the demand of all women's

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[69] Katherine Dreier, *Five Months in the Argentine from a Woman's Point of View, 1918-1919* (New York: F.F. Sherman, 1920), 257.

[70] Eyle to Luisi, August 22, 1919, Carpeta "E," BLPN; Eyle admired the woman's politics and told Luisi that she had attended the 1919 conference in Zurich, where Jane Addams and other women had created the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

> rights, political as well as civic and economic: the International Council of Women and the International Alliance for Women's Suffrage."[71]

Catt's denial of the existence of Uruguay's suffrage gains and networks surely infuriated Luisi, particularly when Catt and Jacobs had not even bothered to travel to South America as part of their survey.

Luisi's experience at the International Alliance of Women meeting in Geneva in 1920 seemed to confirm Catt's dismissal of Latin American feminist efforts.[72] There Luisi received a bitter reminder of the way much of the Euro-American world perceived Latin Americans. Brum had sent Luisi as the only South American woman delegate to the League of Nations, where she met in person some of the individuals she had corresponded with on the IAW. From June 6 to 12, Luisi met Carrie Chapman Catt for the first time, as well as British feminists Eleanor Rathbone, Margery Corbett Ashby, and Chyrstal Macmillan. That summer saw the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted woman suffrage, and capped off a list of suffrage achievements throughout countries in Western Europe. As Leila Rupp has explained, at this meeting the Alliance became divided between the "haves" and the "have nots." Delegates at the conference representing countries that had passed enfranchisement proposed that the Alliance should change its stated mission to something other than women's suffrage.[73]

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[71] Luisi, *Movimiento Sufragista*, 13.

[72] Luisi saved a photograph of the event, numbering and identifying the women in the photo; it shows her with twenty-three other women; she is flanked by Eleanor Rathbone, Margery Corbett Ashby, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Chyrstal Macmillan: Ginebra, 1920, 1st Congreso Alianza Inst de Mujeres, Archivo de Paulina Luisi, Museo de la Biblioteca Nacional, Montevido, Uruguay (PL-MBN).

[73] See Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 23.

This proposal incensed Luisi, the only official Latin American representative in attendance, and the only representative of a "non-emancipated" country (i.e. where women still did not have the vote). Though the 1917 Uruguayan Constitution included a mechanism for enacting women's suffrage, the measure had not yet passed. She vented her frustrations over the Alliance's proposal in a report she made to the Alianza in Montevideo upon her return from the conference:

> Having been granted political rights in the vast majority of member countries, many delegates deemed that the mission of the Association had been accomplished, demonstrating with this proposal, the low concept in which the international feminist world has of Latin countries! In effect, these are the only countries that, with Eastern countries, keep women in a state of inferiority. Very lively and passionate discussions threatened to divide the Alliance…declaring emancipated countries had nothing further to do and leaving the most backward (Latin) countries to their fate. At last, not without struggle, the International Alliance prevailed and was left standing.[74]

Ultimately, the IAW decided to broaden its goals, maintain the fight for suffrage where it did not exist, and adhere to a range of issues by forming commissions on the nationality of the married women, suffragist propaganda, the civil status of women, the protection of infancy, the equal moral standard, the traffic of women, women's work, and equality of salary. However, Luisi noted in her report, "the work of some of these commissions didn't interest the Uruguayan delegate, given that the issues under study, like nationality, illegitimate children, equality of salary in public jobs, investigation of paternity – have already been resolved in the Uruguayan legislation in a favorable way. So I stated in an official speech."[75] It was the area that her country and others in Latin America had not yet resolved – woman suffrage – that Luisi most wanted to see as part of the IAW's continuing agenda.

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[74] "Congreso de la Alianza I. para el Sufragio Femenino: Informe presentado por la Dra Paulina Luisi sobre su realización, 1920," Caja 257, Carpeta 3 PL-AGN.

[75] "Congreso de la Alianza I. para el Sufragio Femenino: Informe presentado por la Dra Paulina Luisi sobre su realización, 1920," Caja 257, Carpeta 3 PL-AGN.

Luisi also said in her official speech that the Alianza should make a priority of including more Latin American organizations. In addition, she asked that *Jus Sufraggi*, which was then published in English and French, be made available in Spanish. Luisi had been engaged with members of the Alliance on both of these points in the preceding years, but she was frustrated with the lack of real progress.[76] In her report to her Montevideo organization she noted that there were "only 2 delegates from the American Continent: the U.S. and Uruguay." But she was also irritated both by too much time spent on "North American methods and [by] the fact that the International President Carrie Chapman Catt only speaks English."[77]

An article in the popular Argentine magazine *Caras y Caretas*, published after she returned from the Congress, called Luisi "la 'leader' de las sufragistas," acknowledging her renown among and connections with the great British and U.S. English-speaking feminists. The article explained that the two significant hopes for feminism in Uruguay were Luisi's attendance at the 1920 IAW conference in Geneva and the election of the progressive "feminist" Baltasar Brum for president. Not revealed in that article were Luisi's lingering interpersonal feelings of resentment. Pride at having attended the 1920 Geneva conference and what this prestige could do for women's rights in Uruguay and South America mingled with Luisi's growing disenchantment about Euro-American feminists' perceived superiority.

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[76] Sheepshanks to Luisi, June 12, 1919; Sheepshanks to Luisi, September 19, 1919, Carpeta "S," PLBN.

[77] "Congreso de la Alianza I. para el Sufragio Femenino: Informe presentado por la Dra Paulina Luisi sobre su realización, 1920," Caja 257, Carpeta 3 PL-AGN.

Thus, when Luisi received word through friends in Argentina and through her government about a Pan American Conference of Women in 1922, to be sponsored by the State Department and the Pan American Union, it was a further blow that she had received no direct word from the LWV. In December, 1921, Uruguay's state department sent Luisi a letter they had received from Jacobo Varela Acevedo, Uruguay's diplomat in Washington. Varela relayed that the president of the conference, LWV president Maud Wood Park, had met with and told him about a conference that would occur in a few months. Its purpose included "the study of the current situation and necessary means to improve the woman" and discussion of "education, the woman in industry, dispositions against the traffic of women, civil rights and political status, etc." Park, he reported, had "earnestly endeavor[ed] that our country, through the intermediary of our women's organizations, send one or two representatives." When he had explained to her that Uruguay's civil legislation clearly "demonstrated the elevated position of the woman in our society," Park had "revealed great interest, saying that [Uruguay]…would be a valuable contribution" and urging the intervention of the president to appoint a delegate to the conference.[78]

Catt had indeed written to Luisi to personally invite her; her letter dated November 21 did ultimately arrive, but Luisi wrote to Catt in January expressing her frustration that she had found out about the conference two months after her government had been contacted.[79] Not receiving an invitation was probably particularly grating to Luisi, since the idea of a Pan American women's conference had initially been the brainchild of herself and feminists in Argentina. She told Catt that she would be unable to attend, after having been away for so long in Europe, and with a medical conference to travel to in the near future. "I don't know English," she added, "Remember dear Mrs. Catt that I could not converse with you in Geneva?"[80]

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[78] Jacobo Varela Acevedo to Juan Antonio Buero, 22 December 1921, PL-AGN.
[79] Catt to Luisi, November 21, 1922, PL-AGN.

Although Luisi would be absent from the conference, she wanted the Alianza to be strongly represented. She utilized her contacts with the government to help enlist a woman, Clelia Paladino de Vitale, from the Alianza, who had traveled to the United States before and who spoke English.[81] De Vitale would address the delegation about Women's Civil Rights in Uruguay, but Luisi also had a surprise in store for the conference. At a meeting of the Alianza, Luisi drafted with their input a proposal for the formation of a Pan American Association of Women. The statement's preamble read that this recommendation was "in complete agreement with the principles sustained by Uruguay and magnificently expressed by the Excellent President of the Republic, Dr Baltasar Brum, the most enthusiastic leader of American solidarity."[82]

By referencing Brum's principles, Luisi was not acting on orders from Brum, or only fostering links with the state department and president for the sake of currying their favor; she was forwarding a particular Pan-American ideology of resistance and multi-lateralism to which she herself subscribed. The refinement of Brum's Pan-American beliefs over the first years of his presidency inspired Luisi. The League of Nations covenant had, in its Article 21, acknowledged the legitimacy of the Monroe Doctrine, which angered many Latin American statesmen; however, Baltasar Brum boldly suggested the creation of a Pan-American League of Nations which would refigure the Monroe Doctrine as a hemisphere-wide policy. In 1920 he advanced this clearly in a speech on “American Solidarity” given to students at the new law school at the University in Montevideo. For Brum, Pan-Americanism was “not a North American creation nor…an exclusive idea of Monroe’s. It [was] a thought…entertained by the heroes of the Latin-American struggle for independence.”[83] While undoubtedly “in the past the policy of the United States may have been unjust and harsh toward some of the Latin countries,” he believed bygone actions should not be “an obstacle to a definitive rapprochement.” His idea of an American League of Nations, what he called an “American Association of Countries,” would make the Monroe Doctrine multilateral, and in the process curb U.S. hegemony and spread power equally among Latin American countries.[84]

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[80] Luisi to Catt, January 16, 1922, PL-AGN.
[81] Uruguayan Deputy of Exterior to Luisi, January 28, 1922; Uruguayan Minister of Exterior to Luisi, February 14 1922; Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Relations to Luisi, February 25, 1922, PL-AGN
[82] "Proposición de la Alianza Uruguay para el Sufragio Femenino sometida a la consideración de la conferencia Panamericana de Mujeres," undated, Caja 257, Carpeta 4, PL-AGN.

Brum, also a fervent supporter of women’s rights, had collaborated with Luisi over his 1921 bill to Congress that asked for the amendment of all women’s rights on an equal basis. Luisi and Brum found ideological frisson in their commitments to Pan-Americanism and feminism. Luisi’s plan to create a “Association of American Women” was largely influenced by Brum’s proposals as well as her beliefs in international feminism. Just as Baltasar Brum called for a Pan-Americanism that acknowledged Latin-America’s contributions to international law and that critiqued the U.S.’s overweening influence in the Pan-American realm, Luisi wanted to encourage collaboration with women in the U.S., but also to critique their overweening influence in the international feminist world.[85]

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[83] Brum, “American Solidarity.”
[84] Ibid.

Luisi's efforts in disseminating her proposal reveal her seriousness of her intentions. After sending it to de Vitale, who promised to deliver it, Luisi specifically requested that de Vitale *not* agree to any plan from another association without the express approval of the executive committee of the Alianza first.[86] Luisi also urged the sponsorship of her proposal by male diplomats, including the Uruguayan representative in Washington, Jacobo Varela Acevedo, and by the U.S. state department. "Uruguay should be the one that does it, she wrote to Varela, "the smallest but the first!"[87] Luisi also wanted her letter to be stamped with the authority of the minister of foreign affairs. She sent a copy to Norman Armour, the *chargé d'affair* of the United States in Montevideo, asking that he be sure to present it, for she felt confident that "if presented by Your Excellency it will carry with it the ample spirit of solidarity which characterizes our countries."[88]

Luisi also sent a copy of the proposal to the League of Women Voters president Maud Wood Park, organizer of the conference, attaching to it a copy of Baltasar Brum's speech "American Solidarity," translated into English.[89] Her action was one of resistance as well as solidarity. It offered a way of leveraging and legitimizing South American women's efforts, while simultaneously forging a connection with a U.S. and Pan-American organization that would garner greater authority for their South American women's rights goals.

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[85] "Proposición de la Alianza Uruguay para el Sufragio Femenino sometida a la consideración de la conferencia Panamericana de Mujeres," undated, Caja 257, PL-AGN. While de Vitale would be in the U.S., Luisi asked her to visit E.B. Swiggett and Eleanor Lansing, and Luisi wrote to them, saying that de Vitale would have the pleasure of visiting them and sending the cordial greetings of the Alianza and of herself, Luisi to E.B. Swiggett, January 13, 1922, PAIWC, LoC.
[86] Luisi to de Vitale, March 17, 1922, PL-AGN.
[87] Luisi to Don Jacobo Varela Acevedo, March 1922, Carpeta V, PL-BN.
[88] Luisi to Norman Angour, March 1922, LWV Papers, LoC.
[89] Luisi to Maud Wood Park, undated, LWV Papers. (Same copy exists in PL-AGN.)

The Elusive Search for Inter-American Mutuality: The 1922 Pan American Conference of Women in Baltimore and the 1923 International Conference of American States in Santiago

Despite Luisi and Brum's dreams for a Pan-Americanism based on mutuality, and despite growing rhetoric that preached multi-lateral relationships among the U.S. and Latin America forged particularly by women, in practice these dreams remained elusive. Early Pan-American interactions, including the 1922 Pan American Conference of Women and the 1923 International Conference of American States, reflected U.S. assumptions of superiority and hegemony, as well as Latin American resistance and influence. They also revealed Latin American women's outreach and negotiation, balancing their multi-lateral Pan-American ideal with constant struggles against U.S. hegemony.

The 1922 Pan American Conference of Women in Baltimore, promoted by the League of Women Voters, came at a moment of transition for the young organization, so soon after achieving the primary goal of suffrage but when the future of U.S. feminism appeared uncertain. In 1920, during the final meeting of the North American Woman Suffrage Association, Carrie Chapman Catt had founded the LWV to help guide newly-enfranchised women in the exercise of their responsibilities as voters. The League also established broad goals, including equal status for women under the law and prevention of war through international cooperation.[90] As Megan Threlkeld has pointed out, Catt also believed this would be a vital time to utilize the LWV's leadership position in the U.S. to help spread women's rights in other countries, particularly those of Latin America. As Catt wrote after the suffrage victory, "the women of the North are freed from the most grinding of the old limitations and desire with the purest and most philanthropic motives to extend a friendly hand of co-operation to the women of South and Central America."[91]

Catt's words, clearly conveying an altruistic "missionary impulse" and perceived U.S. superiority, reflect the broader Pan-American ethos that engines like the Pan American Union were promoting in the U.S. during these years. While progressive in their stances on mutuality, exchange of ideas, and opposition to military intervention in Latin America, this Pan-Americanism nonetheless maintained a belief that Latin American countries were "backward" and would benefit from the U.S.'s civilizational gifts that could be made possible through trade and U.S. investments, modernization, and social movements like feminism and temperance.[92]

Despite the Pan American Union's ethnocentrism and beliefs in U.S. uplift, their ideals of a more equal Pan-Americanism did represent a progressive shift in public consciousness. At the time Baltasar Brum himself noted that "an immense majority of the North American people incline to a just and friendly policy toward the nations of the continent."[93] Women's groups such as Jane Addams' WILPF and even the more conservative League of Women Voters absorbed and promoted these ideals, including opposition to U.S. military intervention in Latin America. In their paper the *Woman Citizen*, the LWV questioned the utility of the hegemonic application of the Monroe Doctrine and critiqued the policy known as "dollar diplomacy," noting that keeping Latin American nations in debt to the U.S. inadvertently propped up dictatorships.[94] Such stances gave Latin American and U.S. reformers ideological common ground. But these articles did not reflect a coherent view on the Monroe Doctrine or "dollar diplomacy" within the LWV.

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[90] Megan Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922," 804.
[91] Carrie Chapman Catt, "Summing Up South America," *The Woman Citizen* (June 2, 1923): 7-8.
[92] For a description of Pan American Union's Pan-American ethos under director Leo Rowe see David Barton Castle, "Leo Stanton Rowe and the Meaning of Pan Americanism," *Beyond the Ideal: Pan Americanism in Inter-American Affairs*, ed., David Sheinin (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 34-5.

Nor were the motives of U.S. feminists in collaborating with Latin American women "purely philanthropic." The specific idea to hold a Pan-American Women's Conference came from Lavinia Engle, a Maryland LWV member who wanted the meeting to aid the post-war economic recession in the U.S. by furthering trade with Latin America.[95] She explained that the conference would provide the League with publicity, promote inter-American peace, and be fully in line with Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover's plans to advance trade with the region. Engle expected that the LWV could enlist the support of the State Department under the Harding administration, then in the process of implementing a policy of dollar diplomacy.

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[93] Brum, "American Solidarity"; This shift has been charted in Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), who discusses the role of WILPF and other "progressive" adherents to Pan-Americanism in opposing dollar diplomacy, 129-132.

[94] J W Garner, "*The Monroe Doctrine," The Woman Citizen* 5:16 (1920): 430-431; Elizabeth Babcock, "The United States and Latin America," *The Woman Citizen* 7, no. 13 (November 18, 1922): 20; Alice Stone Blackwell, "*The Monroe Doctrine: The other side"; The Woman Citizen* 8, no. 15 (1923): 17, 28.

[95] Lavinia Engle to Maud Wood Park, [1921] Series II, Box 16, LWV; Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922," 805.

In 1921 LWV President Maud Wood Park explained these goals to U.S. Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes, appealing to the idea "that the friendship and cooperation growing out of such a conference would help materially the relations of these Pan American nations."[96] Of the "distinct advantages" expected from the meeting, Park listed three:

1. Promotion of peace and friendship through better understanding.
2. Promotion of social welfare by study and cooperation.
3. Promotion of commercial relations between the Port of Baltimore and Pan-America.[97]

Hughes responded immediately and favorably that the State Department would instruct its diplomats in Latin America "to communicate to the Governments to which they are accredited this invitation from the National League of Women Voters…" These officials would help secure delegates to attend the conference, through invitations from the State Department. While he wrote to Park that "the Government of the United States will not itself be officially represented at the projected conference," Hughes would in fact take active part in the conference, speaking at a session of the conference held in Washington, D.C.[98]

Formally, the LWV appealed to the international feminist ideals by framing the conference as an opportunity to "bring the women of the United States into friendly relations with the women of South America, Central America, Mexico and Canada" and to foster conversation on a range of topics, including "education, child welfare, women in industry, prevention of traffic in women, suffrage, and international friendliness and reduction of armaments." At the same time, cooperation with the U.S. State Department and an official U.S. diplomatic Pan-Americanism remained central to the conference. Over the six months leading up to the April, 1922 event, the LWV worked to coordinate their efforts with the Pan American Union, the State Department, and Ambassadors and Charges d'Affairs of various countries throughout the hemisphere.

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[96] Maud Wood Park to the Secretary of State, October 5, 1921, LWV.
[97] Statement of Plan for proposed Pan-American Conference of Women, Series II, Box 16, LWV.
[98] Charles E. Hughes to Maud Wood Park, October 6, 1921, Series II, Box 16, LWV.

Belief in the superiority of U.S. feminism also pervaded the conference, both in design and in practice. Although the LWV sought the participation of representatives from "leading organizations of women" and "individual women [in Latin America] who are interested in the project," they designed the agenda without input from Latin American feminists.[99] It reflected the priorities of the LWV at the moment, as well as what they perceived should be Latin American priorities. The sessions included "Education," "Women in Industry," "Prevention of Traffic in Women," "Child Welfare," "The Civil Status of Women," and "The Political Status of Women." The wording was chosen carefully. Notably, the agenda did not include "equal rights" for women. The National Woman's Party had recently announced their intention to pursue an "Equal Rights Amendment," which the LWV adamantly opposed on the grounds that it would eliminate protective legislation for women workers. Each session, as they planned it, would include a keynote speaker from the U.S., such as Grace Abbott of the Children's Bureau, Mary Anderson of the Women's Bureau, and Valeria Parker of the United States Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board. One or two women from Latin America would be on each panel, as well.

Not surprisingly, U.S. dominance and reactions to it emerged during the conference, notably so in the session on the "Civil Status of Women" in which de Vitale participated. On the last day of the three-day conference, Mable Walker Willebrandt, United States Assistant Attorney General, started the session by explaining that the differences in civil rights between women from the South and North stemmed from differences in law. Latin American law drew from the Napoleonic Code, while most U.S. states adopted Anglo-Saxon common law. Although the latter legal tradition had imposed narrow restrictions on women's civil autonomy, Willebrandt remarked, in the Anglo-American countries of Canada, the United States, and England, feminists had organized to restore women's legal independence. Women in the United States, for instance, had gained their property rights and right to their own wages between the 1840s and the 1890s. According to Willebrandt, these rights still had not been uniformly achieved in Latin America.[100]

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[99] Draft letter to Ambassadors, Ministers, and Charge d'Affaires [undated], Series II, Box 16, LWV.

This negative view of Latin American women's legal status did not fall on deaf ears or on a meek audience. De Vitale remarked in a letter to Luisi that Willebrandt's comments prompted a vigorous discussion and debate, in which she herself participated. De Vitale stood up and recounted the numerous ways that Uruguay and that the Uruguayan women's movement had secured a great deal of civil equality for men and women. As the LWV records of the meeting note, "Mrs. de Vitale explained that Uruguay has the eight-hour day for both sexes, old age pensions, free education including text books and equipment, women admitted to higher education; the mother is the guardian of the children unless unfit when the court appoints, but the guardianship is invariably given to a woman. Married women retain their own names. In case of divorce the advantage is to the wife. No capital punishment. No poor houses and little poverty. Laws well enforced…"[101] Notably, the list includes broad social justice and welfare goals, reflecting the aspirations that fostered Uruguayan feminism. It also rejected the notion that her country was "backward." Even if they had not achieved women's property rights, Uruguayan women had in fact achieved many more social reform goals than had U.S. feminists.

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[100] The following year, Catt would characterize South American civil law under the Napoleonic Code as: "the property of married women passes to the control of their husbands; wives must live where and how their husbands dictate; the children belong to the husband, and should a wife, tortured beyond endurance, escape and try to earn her living, the wages she earns may be claimed by a drunkard and disloyal husband," Catt, "Summing Up South America." Carmen Diane Deere and Magdalena León have revealed, however, that Napoleonic Codes were not in fact responsible for married women's property rights in Latin America. In their article "Liberalism and Married Women's Property Rights in Nineteenth-Century Latin America" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 2005, the authors argue that the French Napoleonic tradition, while influential regarding property, economic, and commercial law, was not as influential in married women's property rights in Latin America as the colonial Luso-Hispanic legal tradition.

After listening to these achievements, Willebrandt challenged de Vitale. She asked, as de Vitale later told Luisi, "how it was that, Uruguay, despite its advanced reforms, still had not incorporated into legislation the full civil rights for women." De Vitale explained that despite efforts by the Uruguayan feminist movement and the support of President Brum and his Colorado Party for "a bill revising all laws to grant equality between men and women," full civil equality had not been granted because "it had been obstructed by conservative political parties."[102]

Later that day, de Vitale was given greater breadth to speak about the Uruguayan feminist movement and laws when she addressed the conference. In an eloquent speech, she laid out the proposal of Luisi and the Alianza to form a Pan American Association of Women. Connecting it to earlier efforts of the Women's Auxiliary, she explained it would be an extension of the goals formed at the 2nd Pan American Scientific Congress in Washington in 1915, but would "give it a state of greater prestige and permanence." She explained, “I am firmly convinced that the creation of a Pan-American Association of Women would be of great benefit for all of us; that is, it would intensify the relations and would be of incalculable value for the women of the content, and by extension, for the men, as well.”[103] De Vitale explicitly raised the issue of U.S. women’s hegemony and then denied it, explaining that “alarmists” feared their immediate absorption upon uniting in an organization in which “you would exercise your hegemony over us.” She explained that she doubted this, and then promoted Baltasar Brum’s Pan-Americanism of equality and mutual leadership. “We hope,” she said, that the Pan American Association “will benefit our women and will consolidate the American Peace of the peoples speaking English and Spanish… a peace that we hope will be permanent for the times to come.”[104]

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[101] Minutes of the Congress, Series II, Box 16, LWV.
[102] Clelia de Vitale to Luisi, from Montevideo, September 11, 1923, PL-AGN.

The LWV and other female delegates at the conference leapt upon the idea of a Pan American Association of Women. Carrie Chapman Catt, who had considered similar plans, led a discussion of design and agenda for the organization. The LWV journal reported later that “within two days there was in the world the Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women.” Missing from the LWV journal’s report was any of the substance of de Vitale’s speech, a copy of which sits in Paulina Luisi’s archives in Montevideo. The official report implies that the League members did not grasp de Vitale’s point about U.S. dominance. In self-congratulatory terms, the League underscored above all the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt. Although “the suggestion had come from Uruguay,” the report noted, “the enthusiasm came from the Baltimore getting-together and the actual supervision of organization from Mrs. Catt – whose wise statesmanship and ripe guidance are as essential to such a gathering as a program."[105] The newly formed association named Catt honorary president, Luisi honorary vice-president, Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz president, and Panamanian Esther Niera de Calvo vice-president. The specific agenda, directed mostly by Catt, outlined the mission of the Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women in eight points focusing on education, family law, married women's wages, and suffrage. The last goal was "To promote friendliness and understanding among all Pan American countries with the aim of the maintenance of perpetual peace in the Western Hemisphere. [106]

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[103] Clelia Vitale, “Discurso Ante la Conferencia Pan-Americana de Mujeres en Baltimore,” Abril 1922, Caja 257, Carpeta 4, PL-AGN.
[104] Ibid.

Despite the aspiration for understanding, the Latin American women continued to chafe against continuing U.S. co-option of Pan-American agendas. These tensions recurred in March 1923 in Santiago, Chile, at the Fifth International Conference of American States. A gathering of the Pan American Union, whose boards were composed of the diplomatic representatives of the Americas in Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Secretary of State who acted as Chairman, this meeting would test the broad ideals of Pan-Americanism promoted so diffusely during the war. As at the 1922 Baltimore conference of women, delegates from Latin America came prepared to challenge U.S. dominance, to make more robust a new Pan-American system, and to push for a multi-lateral recognition of the Monroe Doctrine. Among the central motions at the Conference was Baltasar Brum's "Uruguay proposal" to revise the Pan American Union completely by transforming it into an American League of Nations. One U.S. attendee noted of the proposal that "[i]f the United States could be brought within the orbit of a Pan-American covenant, danger from aggressive tactics on the part of the Washington Government would be minimized."[107]

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[105] Mildred Adams, "All the Americas meet at Baltimore*," The Woman Citizen 6*, no. 25 (1922): 10, 12.

[106] "The Provisional Pan-American Association for the Advancement of Women." LWV. The list was: "1. To promote general education among women; 2. To secure higher standards of education in all schools for women; 3. To secure equal guardianship of fathers and mothers over their children; 4. To secure the right of married women to control their own wages; 5. To secure equal guardianship of fathers and mothers over their children; 6. To encourage organization, discussion, and public speaking among women and to secure freedom of opportunity for all women to cultivate and use the talents which God has endowed them; 7. To educate public opinion in favor of granting the vote to women or to secure the vote for women; 8. To promote friendliness and understanding among all Pan American countries with the aim of the maintenance of perpetual peace in the Western Hemisphere."

The U.S. delegates, however, came to the conference unwilling to alter the Pan American Union radically and refused to accept Brum's American League of Nations proposal. These rejections, as well as a statement from the head of the U.S. delegation, Ambassador Henry P. Fletcher, that the "Monroe Doctrine was a unilateral doctrine, for which the United States had been and must continue to be, the one responsible party," incited the ire of many Latin American diplomats. Such statements offered definitive proof for many that the U.S. had embraced a Pan-Americanism of international law in name only and was not willing to form a true union of the Americas or to engage in Pan-Americanism on an equal basis.[108]

Nonetheless, a number of Latin American delegates attempted to reform the Pan American Union by addressing political and social issues. Expanding the concerns under its remit, would, in effect, make the Pan American Union, at least, "a more truly representative international body." If the Pan American Union could not be reformed to be an American version of the League of Nations, at least it could look more like the

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[107] Clarence Henry Haring, *South America Looks at the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 115.

[108] Samuel Guy Inman, *Pan-American Conferences and Their Results* (Austin: Reprinted from *Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly* 4, no. 4, March, 1924), 42-3; O. Edmund Smith, *Yankee Diplomacy: U.S. Intervention in Argentina* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1953), 14.

League of Nations, which had taken up social issues in its creation of the International Labor Organization and other organizations.[109] With this idea in mind, delegates from Chile proposed creating permanent commissions in the PAU for economics, labor, hygiene, and education. In this context of reform, Guatemalan delegate and journalist Máximo Soto Hall proposed a permanent PAU commission to examine and promote women's rights.[110]

The League of Nations had addressed "women's issues" in its commission on the traffic of women and children. Soto Hall's proposal went further by asking that the Pan American Union fully endorse women's rights and include women in its sessions. Deviating from the League of Nations, it marked a turning point in international advocacy of women's rights. Five years later, Soto Hall's proposal would pave the way for the creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women, the first inter-governmental body of women in the world, which would for many years after give organizational form to Pan-American feminism.

Just as Luisi had promoted the Pan American Association of Women, Soto Hall was now advocating a body within the Pan American Union with similar motivations – forwarding women's equal rights and promoting the equal rights of all nations. Soto Hall and Luisi's vision of Pan-American feminism, though not identical, were both rooted in Brum's notion of a Pan-Americanism of multi-lateralism, peace, social reform, democracy, and women's rights.

Both Soto Hall and Luisi's motions at the separate conferences were received by Latin American feminists as presaging a new future for women's rights in their countries.

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[109] Haring, *South America Looks at the United States*, 49.
[110] Inman, *Pan-American Conferences*, 41.

As Chilean feminist and friend of Luisi, Amanda Labarca, later recalled of Soto Hall's revolutionary proposal to include women's rights within the Pan American Union, the widespread joyous and enthusiastic "response this triumph achieved beat even that obtained in 1919-20 by the North American suffragists."[111]

Similarly, Luisi and de Vitale's proposal at the 1922 Baltimore Conference influenced other Latin American feminists who had attended. For example, a few days after the close of the conference, the Costa Rican delegate Sara Casal de Quirós, inspired by both Luisi's call for a Pan American Association of Women and de Vitale's report on Luisi's efforts through the Alianza, wrote to Luisi while she was still in Baltimore. "It's been very satisfying for me to know that in Uruguay there is a person as altruistic as you and who devotes her great talents for the good of humanity," de Quirós began. "Encouraged by your goodness, I am writing to beg you to send me all your publications that may be useful in Costa Rica, San Jose."[112] The Costa Rican government had charged de Quirós to reorganize the women's prison there, and she would put to use all of the knowledge she had gained in Baltimore. When she returned home, she planned to form a league of women's interests and a feminist newspaper. The following year, she helped found the Liga Feminista Costarricense (Costa Rican Feminist League).[113] In 1924 de Quiros wrote a long article in Costa Rican newspaper *La Opinión* about how the 1922 Baltimore conference had sparked a Pan-American feminist movement. Her article was part of a suffrage campaign de Quiros was championing in the wake of the Costa Rican president's recent recommendation to extend voting rights to women in a constitutional amendment. Titled "Tribute of Costa Rican Feminism to Its American Champions," it identified leaders of the Pan-American feminist movement with photographs: U.S. LWV honorary president and acting president Carrie Chapman Catt and Maud Wood Park, Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz, and Uruguayan Paulina Luisi. De Quirós made special reference to Luisi, as well as to Baltasar Brum, whose words promoting women's equal rights she quoted. That women's rights were tied to national prominence in international affairs, and that Uruguay was a leader in both, emerged in de Quiros's vision: "If Costa Rica gained women's suffrage," she wrote, "it would be for the isthmus what Uruguay is for South America."[114]

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[111] Amanda H. Labarca, *Feminísmo contemporaneo* (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1947), 50.
[112] Sara de Quirós to Luisi, April 30, 1922, P-Q Folder, PL-BN.
[113] Steven Palmer and Gladys Rojas Chaves, "Democrats and Feminists," *The Costa Rican Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds., Steven Paul Palmer, Iván Molina Jiménez (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 158.

The 1922 Baltimore Conference, the creation of the PAAAW, and the 1923 Fifth International Conference of American States, signaled the organizational blossoming of Pan-American feminism. At the same time, these conferences revealed the shaky ground beneath a Pan-Americanism rooted in international law and equality. U.S. dominance continued, and U.S. agendas continued to negate the very mutuality that "Pan Americanism" preached.

The disjoint between the ideals and practice of Pan-Americanism irritated Luisi, and the dismissal of Brum's proposal at the 1923 Conference also likely disappointed her deeply. Pan-American feminism would continue to advance in the 1920s – both Bertha Lutz and Esther Niera Calvo in particular attempted to publicize and promote the PAAAW and their visions of inter-American feminism. However, Luisi herself turned away from Pan-American feminism. After 1923 she served as Vice president of a new inter-American feminist organization, one limited to women from Spanish-speaking countries, the League of Iberian and Hispanic American Women (LIH). In this role, Luisi continued her deep concern with U.S. women's hegemony in the inter-American feminist sphere. Her new organization strongly linked resistance to U.S. hegemony with feminism.

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[114] "Homenaje del feminismo costarricense a sus abanderadas de América," *La Opinión*, November 2, 1924, Caja 257, Carpeta 5, PL-AGN.

Luisi's story here reveals the crucial groundwork for the eventual emergence of a Pan-American feminist movement several years later, through the 1928 creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), the world's first inter-governmental organization of women. Scholars have identified disparate precursors to the IACW: the Women's Auxiliary Pan-American meeting in 1915, the LWV Baltimore Pan American Women's conference in 1922, and Guatemalan delegate Máximo Soto Hall's successful proposal to promote women's rights in the Pan American Union at the Fifth International Conference of American States in 1923 (which enabled the establishment of the IACW five years later). However, no history has yet convincingly linked these separate events (which involved different casts of characters) into a coherent story of the formation of Pan-American feminism. Luisi's ideology and the network she embraced provide the framework with which to understand all of these events. Her vision of a Pan-American feminism that called for equal rights for men and women *and* that promoted equal rights for the nations of the Western Hemisphere provides the connective tissue between feminism and Pan-Americanism in these years.

Despite her own lack of active collaboration with U.S. feminists in the 1920s, she continued to influence ideas about Pan-American feminism as a form of mutuality that opposed U.S. hegemony. She promoted her vision through her friendships with those

Latin American feminists who did collaborate with U.S. feminists. Years later, in the mid-1930s, when the scepter of international fascism gave feminists from the Americas a common enemy, Luisi would unite once more under the banner of Pan-American feminism, to promote the Inter-American Commission of Women's commitments to equal rights for women throughout the hemisphere. In the meantime, her withdrawal from cooperation with U.S. feminists reveals the movement's ongoing and inherent tensions.

Chapter 2
“Equal Rights” for All, 1926-1928

Ofelia Domínguez Navarro had reason to be disillusioned with Pan-Americanism. A small child in 1898 when the Spanish-American War broke out, she witnessed over the course of her young life Cuba’s autonomy erode as U.S. military and political control over the island grew. She watched Cuba win putative independence at the cost of the ignominious 1901 Platt Amendment, which ceded to the United States Guantanamo Bay as a naval base as well as an open-ended authority to intervene in the island. A socialist feminist who later became a Communist, Domínguez recalled in her memoirs how socialism had first “fermented” for her as a young teacher in the rural community of Jorobada; there she saw first-hand the plight of sugar cane workers. It was then that she started to draw connections between the U.S. state department, local elites, foreign corporations, and impoverished laborers.[1] Now, on the eve of the 1928 International Conference of American States in Havana, U.S. Marines in Nicaragua killed hundreds as they tried to rout the revolutionary Augusto Sandino. This latest chapter of U.S. dominance threw into sharp relief the apparent hypocrisy of a U.S.-sponsored Pan-Americanism advocating “peace and justice.” Domínguez no doubt agreed with the mounting condemnation throughout the hemisphere of “yankee imperialism.”[2]

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[1] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, *50 años de una vida* (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971), 49.

[2] For reports of the Latin American press condemning U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua see “Marines Kill 14 in Nicaragua Fights,” *New York Times*, January 12, 1928, 1; “Nicaragua: Reconciliation Society Secretary Says Sandino Would Be Martyr if Killed,” *Havana Evening Telegram*, February 1, 1928; “Can Coolidge Win Latin America?” *Literary Digest* 96, no. 4 (January 28, 1928): 1; Greg Grandin, “Your Americanism and Mine: Americanism and Anti-Americanism in the Americas,” *American Historical Review* 111 no. 4 (October 2006): 1051; See also Richard V. Salisbury, *Anti-Imperialism and International Competition in Central America, 1920–1929* (Wilmington, Del., 1989), 131–156.

Nonetheless, despite her skepticism, in 1928 Domínguez published an article in Havana's *La Prensa* in which she revealed her hopes for a universal Pan-Americanism of equality. Her inspiration for solidarity came not from Martí, Marx, or Lenin, but rather from the U.S. National Woman's Party (NWP). At that moment, five NWP members were working with a number of women's groups in Havana to demand an Americas-wide Equal Rights Treaty. This treaty promised to achieve equal political and civil rights for women throughout the Western Hemisphere. Domínguez was a member of Cuban feminist organization Club Femenino, which was then swept up in a national suffrage battle. Several years earlier the Club represented Cuban women at an inter-American women's congress where Domínguez proposed a similar measure that would remove all juridical differences between men and women in the Americas. For her, this collaboration between Cuban and U.S. women in promoting an Equal Rights Treaty presaged an alternative, more democratic and progressive, Pan-Americanism, one not shackled to Washington's ambitions or to U.S. superiority.

In her article, Domínguez defended the work of NWP members Doris Stevens and Jane Norman Smith and their Equal Rights Treaty: "The serious and reasoned proposals that Sras Smith and Stevens have presented to the Conference have not been acts of arrogance," she insisted. "We [Cuban women] bolster, with all the enthusiasm of our good will…the noble actions of this generous group of women who came to ask the delegates of the Pan American Congress for their greatest efforts for the liberation of women of the whole continent."[3]

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[3] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, "Harán Valer sus Derechos en la Sexta Conferencia las Mujeres de Cuba," *La Prensa* (Havana, Cuba), January 22, 1928.

Domínguez was one of many Cuban feminists to embrace the NWP members and the fight for an Equal Rights Treaty at the 1928 Havana Conference. The NWP cut an impressive swath through many women's groups in Havana. Their collaboration with Cuban women gained them an informal hearing at the conference, at which four U.S. women and four Cuban women spoke. Although the Pan American Union did not pass an Equal Rights Treaty, a new inter-American feminist group emerged, the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW). Formally composed of women delegates from all of the twenty-one nations, the U.S. NWP would ultimately steer its plans, with an agenda of "Equal Rights" for women throughout the Western Hemisphere.

This chapter explores the basis on which an anti-imperialist, socialist feminist from Cuba like Ofelia Domínguez Navarro found common ground with women from the NWP at the 1928 Havana Conference. It argues that the NWP's Equal Rights Treaty fit seamlessly with a vision for women's absolute equal civil and political rights that Domínguez and a number of other Latin American feminists had already articulated. In addition, the NWP members portrayed themselves as different from many in the United States who believed Latin American women were "unfit" for the franchise or somehow inferior to North American women. Despite their designs to steer a Pan-American feminist agenda, the NWP whole-heartedly embraced a universal notion of women's equal rights for U.S. and Latin American women alike – for their civil and political equality with men under the law – and actively sought out Cuban women's cooperation on this platform. Finally, in the context of an expansionist U.S., particularly during the Nicaragua crisis, the call for "Equal Rights" came to signify to many in Latin America not only women's rights but also national rights to independence.

This analogy between women's citizenship and national sovereignty was powerful: individuals, like nations, should be equal and self-determining. In the context of the 1928 Havana Conference, however, when Latin American delegates came armed with proposals to undercut U.S. hegemony and imperialism, along with the low view some in the U.S. held of Latin American women's rights specifically, it became more than a metaphor. Women's rights and national rights could be mutually constitutive. A threat to one was a threat to both. The Pan-American feminism that NWP and Cuban women forged at the conference carried forward the notion that a nation was not sovereign unless its women were equal citizens. Latin American women's equality represented the equality of the Americas. While in Havana, these feminists argued that their Equal Rights Treaty inherently called not only for the equal rights of men and women, but for the inherent equality of Latin American and U.S. women and of all nations of the Western Hemisphere.

This analysis of the 1928 conference as embracing a broad, anti-hegemonic Pan-American feminism runs counter to conventional wisdom about the National Woman's Party, Cuban feminism, and inter-American feminism. The small literature on the 1928 Havana Conference and the formation of the IACW reveals it to be a one-way story of U.S. domination by the NWP and their imposition of an Equal Rights Treaty, an alien import from the north, on Cuban feminists.[4] Cuban feminism on the other hand is often portrayed as being a piece of "Latin American feminism" – maternalistic and communitarian – which was oppositional to a "U.S. feminism" – individualistic and tethered to an "equal rights" discourse. As K. Lynn Stoner has said of distinctions that emerged between U.S. and Latin American feminists: "Latin American feminists emphasized women's rights as mothers, wives, workers, and community builders, but not as men's equals."[5] Such oppositional feminist goals, the story goes, as well as U.S. feminist superiority and dominance, sundered any real inter-American praxis and certainly meant that the NWP imposed an Equal Rights ideology from above in the 1928 meeting.

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[4] Accounts that have taken the view that the NWP imposed their agenda on Cuban feminists include Rosemarie Pegueros, "Flowers without Rain: International Diplomacy and Equality for Women in the Americas at the Sixth Inter-American Conference (January 16-February 20, 1928)," (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 1998); Gladys M. Jiménez-Muñoz, "'A Storm Dressed in Skirts': Ambivalence in the Debate on Women's Suffrage in Puerto Rico, 1927-1929," (PhD Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1993); and Esther Sue Wamsley, "A Hemisphere of Women: Latin American and U.S. Feminists in the IACW, 1915-1939," (PhD

While these contrasts between U.S. and Latin American feminism stem from broad differences in the rights traditions of the U.S. and Latin America, they are also overly schematic and occlude instances of fruitful dialogue and collaboration.[6] The idea that Latin American feminists did not conceive of themselves as men's equals denies the

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Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1998). These accounts do not place the 1928 activism in the wider context of anti-hegemonic Pan-American feminism crafted by Latin American women.

[5] Stoner, "In Four Languages But with One Voice: Division and Solidarity within Pan American Feminism, 1923-1933," in *Beyond the Ideal: Pan-Americanism in Inter-American Affairs*, ed., David Sheinin (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 80. The distinction between an "individualistic" U.S. feminism and a "relational" Latin American feminism has been supported in Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Christine Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak: Feminism and the State in Uruguay, 1903-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 10; Guy, "The Politics of Pan-American Cooperation," 453; and Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 21-22. (Often "individualistic" and "equalitarian" types of feminism are viewed as synonymous and as U.S.-specific.)

[6] Greg Grandin characterizes the distinctions in US/Latin American rights traditions thus: "Put crudely, Spanish Americans and Brazilians came to hold individual rights relative to the establishment of the public common good and territorial sovereignty as absolute. In the United States, the terms were reversed; U.S. politicians defined individual rights as inherent and inalienable, and qualified state sovereignty on responsible public administration that could protect those rights." Greg Grandin, "The Liberal Traditions in the Americas: Rights, Sovereignty, and the Origins of Liberal Multilateralism," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (February 2012): 70.

rich tradition of "Equal Rights" many Latin American feminists did embrace while maintaining simultaneous commitments to a social justice and community-focused agendas. In fact, as the previous chapter revealed and as this chapter will show, Latin American feminist leaders like Paulina Luisi, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, and Clara González promoted notions of universal equal rights for women, which they connected to notions of equal rights for all American nations and to a collaborative multi-nationalism. A growing language of liberal Pan-American internationalism in Latin America was influencing the language of other rights movements like feminism and helping bring to the fore a language of "equal rights," equipped with multiple meanings. Their aspirations for equal rights were forged in a transnational, Pan-American crucible. For them, "equal rights," was not just limited to individual women's rights, but involved a multi-lateral internationalism that respected the sovereignty of Latin American nations. U.S. feminists from the NWP did not have to push their equal rights agenda on Cuban feminists for Cuban feminists had already crafted their own. NWP feminists in fact borrowed from their Cuban counterparts' language regarding the multiple possibilities of Pan-American feminism. Understanding this dynamic challenges both the limitations historically placed on Cuban feminism as well as the exceptionality of U.S. feminism in the international realm.

By placing the 1928 conference in the larger context of Pan-American feminism and U.S.-Latin American relations, and by drawing from archival research from both Cuba and the United States, this chapter demonstrates that collaboration of U.S. and Cuban feminists in Havana was not an isolated incident. Nor did the NWP initiate the idea of an Equal Rights Treaty or of Pan-American feminism. Rather, their collaboration represented a long culmination of hopes for a type of inter-American feminism of mutuality, even anti-imperialism, that Latin American feminists had originated.

This chapter first explores how several years before the conference, Ofelia Domínguez and Panamanian feminist Clara González articulated the need for inter-American feminism to embrace equal rights for all women in the Americas as well as all nations of the Americas. It then shows the continuation of this vision at the 1928 Pan American conference in Havana, when the NWP members fashioned themselves into the "sisters" of Cuban feminists at a time of fraught inter-American relations. While the NWP viewed the rhetoric of equal rights for the nations of the Americas simply as an analogy, and as a means to the end of rights for women, for many Cuban feminists, this chapter argues, it represented both the means and the ends. The lack of substance behind the NWP's intentions for Pan-American feminism would quickly emerge in the wake of the 1928 conference and creation of the IACW (this NWP stance and the conflicts that resulted are examined in the following chapter). However, it is important to understand the transnational crucible and much broader visions – of social justice, multilateralism, and equal rights for the Americas – that guided the creation of the IACW before it embraced a more narrowly-conceived feminism.

Recovering the important international "equal rights" conceptualizations of Latin American feminists of the 1920s also sheds light on the roots of what would ultimately become international "human rights" discourse twenty years later. The NWP has been credited with having crafted in its Equal Rights Treaty "perhaps the first 'human rights' treaty…that attempted to establish an international norm of non-discriminatory treatment for a broad category of humanity, cutting across all national lines." Latin American feminists, however, first conceived these notions.[7] Their efforts reveal the deeper roots of Pan-American feminism and its impact on conceptions of international women's rights.

Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Clara González, the 1926 Congreso Inter-Americano de Mujeres

On June 25, 1926, in the conference hall of Panama City's Instituto Nacional, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro set forth her vision of inter-American feminism. A few hundred women sat in the audience of the Congreso Inter-Americano de Mujeres, representing women's groups from the Caribbean and Central America, as well as several from South America and the United States. Domínguez called for one law for all the Americas, demanding that women and men have the same civil rights. She believed that Latin American women's rights could forward a more progressive internationalism.[8]

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[7] Diane Elizabeth Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights: The Equality Treaties Campaign of the National Woman's Party and Reactions of the U.S. State Department and the National League of Women Voters (1928-1938)," (PhD Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1999), 6. Samuel Moyn argues in *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), that "human rights" as international legal rights belonging to individuals did not become a concern of most international lawyers until the 1970s. Looking at the way Pan-American feminists, international lawyers and participants in international conferences supported international women's rights provides an important exception to this view. This contribution Pan-American feminists made to "human rights" has also been overlooked in recent scholarship that reveals the unique impact Latin American male statesmen had in the international human rights agenda, such as Mary Ann Glendon, "The Forgotten Crucible: The Latin American Influence on the Universal Human Rights Idea," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 15, no. 27 (2003); Paolo G. Carozza, "From Conquest to Constitutions: Retrieving a Latin American Tradition of the Idea of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (May 2003): 281-313; and Grandin, "The Liberal Traditions in the Americas."

[8] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, "La Mujer Ante El Codigo Civil que Rige en Cuba, Tema para el Congreso de Mujeres en la Republica de PANAMA," Caja 675, No 18, Archivo de Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Donativos y Remisiones, Archivo Nacional, Havana, Cuba (Henceforward ODN, AN).

Domínguez's vision took on particular importance during a time when Pan-American feminism seemed to be foundering on the shoals. Only four years had passed since the League of Women Voters (LWV) originated the Pan-American Conference of Women in Baltimore which had created the Pan American Association of Women (PAAW) under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt. In the meantime, increased U.S. intervention in Latin America was exposing gaping holes in the fabric of the PAAAW. So were belittling comments Catt made about Latin American women. After traveling through Latin America in 1923 to assess the status of women and support the PAAAW, Catt published several articles, in which she decried the "slowness" of Latin American women and culture, and questioned Latin American women's readiness for political organization.[9] Aside from Brazil and Uruguay, where women had formed robust suffrage organizations, Catt doubted that women in other Latin American countries would push for suffrage anytime in the near future. She blamed their slowness on entrenched Catholic traditions and other cultural differences that separated "South America" from all the other continents in the world, where she saw more active demands for suffrage. Catt expressed her dimming faith in the success of any Pan-American feminist movement.[10]

Catt's stinging commentary became well-known among feminists in Latin America. Some read her views in *Current History*; others read them in an interview in a

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[9] Catt visited Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Panama, and Cuba.

[10] For even more unvarnished comments on Latin American culture, see "Diaries, 1922-23, Tour of Europe and South America," Reel 2 (containers 3-4), microfilm, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LoC). In a final report she gave to the LWV, she wrote, "SOUTH AMERICA - This continent has the least modern women's organizations of any of the six. I did not find in S America one woman with the comprehension, the energy and the firm resolve to lead the woman movement, which has marked a type fairly numerous in the United States, England, Holland, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries for many years," "Report of Carrie Chapman Catt, On South America and European Trip, 1922-1923," Reel 2, Catt Papers.

1923 edition of *Feminismo Internacional*, the Spanish-language, New York-based organ of the Liga Internacional de Mujeres Ibéricas e Hispanoamericanas (the organization of which Paulina Luisi had become vice president that year).[11] Catt even spoke of differences in "Latin" culture when she lectured at various women's groups in Cuba and elsewhere.[12] Emma López Sena of Cuba's Club Femenino and her compatriots were not pleased with Catt "talk[ing] down" to them on her visit.[13]

Catt's aspersions led to a real disillusionment among some Latin American feminists with a Pan-American feminism led by the LWV. Tensions emerged at the 1925 PAAAW conference in Washington, D.C. hosted by Catt and the LWV. Since Catt's interests in Pan-American feminism had waned, she had proposed the meeting to decide the future of the PAAAW – whether to terminate it or move it to the hands of Latin American feminists who would lead it. At the outset of the conference, Catt said that she believed an organization would be impossible because of the cost and difficulty of travel. She also implied that the slow and resistant movement toward political rights for women in these countries presented another sizable factor against its perpetuation. Ultimately, however, due to active leadership by Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz and Panamanian feminist Esther Niera de Calvo, the PAAAW turned into a permanent organization, the

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[11] Carrie Chapman Catt, "Anti-Feminism in South America," *Current History* (September 1923): 1028-1036; Carrie Chapman Catt, "Summing Up South America," *The Woman Citizen* (June 2, 1923); Elena Arizmendi, "Una entrevista con Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt," *Feminismo Internacional*, 1 n. 9 (September 1923): 1, 9.

[12] For example, when speaking in Havana, Cuba, in January, 1924, Catt spoke of the distinctness of women's movements in "Latin" culture, "Mrs. Chapman Catt Con Sus Colegas de Cuba," *El Mundo* (Havana), January 30, 1924, Archivo de Maria Collado, Donativos y Remisiones, Archivo Nacional de Havana, Cuba (Henceforward MC, AN).

[13] López Sena's comments quoted in a letter from Jane Norman Smith to Alva Belmont, January 20, 1929, Folder 102, Jane Norman Smith Papers (Smith Papers), Schlesinger Library, Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Inter-American Union of Women (IAUW), with Catt as the nominal "honorary president," Lutz as president, and Niera Calvo as Vice President.[14]

When the members of the IAUW nominated Mexican feminist Elena Torres to be Vice President of the North American section, she flatly refused. Torres, a feminist and Communist, had attended the 1922 Baltimore conference ready to discuss the turbulent relations of the U.S. and Mexico. She had been greatly disappointed by Catt and the LWV's refusal to consider her proposal to discuss issues of oil, land, immigration, the border, and exploitation of Mexican laborers at the hands of American mining companies.[15] Now at the 1925 conference, Torres laid bare the way inequalities between U.S. and Latin American women prevented real collaboration. She also spoke about how widespread condescension engendered by U.S. women toward Latin American women made further collaboration difficult. Most likely referring to Catt's humiliating comments about Latin American women, Torres called attention to "the attitude of Anglo-America toward Hispanic-America." She explained that it would be "impossible" for "Hispanic-American women" to make such a great "compromise" as to work with

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[14] "Officers and Delegates to the Second Conference of the All America Association for the Advancement of Women;" "History of the Pan American Conference of Women, Pan-American Association for the Advancement of Women, Inter-American Union of Women, April 1922 – April 1926," Series II, Box 50, League of Women Voters Papers (LWV Papers), LoC; "Minutes of the Pan American Conference," Series II, Box 50, LWV Papers.

[15] The experience of Elena Torres and other Mexican feminists at the 1922 Conference is discussed in Megan Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922: Successful Suffragists Turn to International Relations," *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 5 (November 2007): 818-826. "Poverty and the exploitation of workers, which were not a central issue in formal U.S.-Mexican relations, were the cornerstone of Torres's memo. Citing reports from the Mexican Department of Industry, Commerce, and Labor, she argued that poor Mexicans were inordinately affected by the Mexican policy of the United States. U.S. authorities had no respect for the lives of Mexican refugees and immigrants, Torres contended, while foreign ownership of mines left workers vulnerable to exploitation." (Threlkeld, 822-823)

U.S. women on such unequal footing, without a "camaraderie born of equal economic situations and with the threat of Anglo-American imperialism."[16]

Though the IAUW went forward, Catt's lack of interest in Pan-American feminism hindered its growth. In November 1925, Esther Niera de Calvo, professor of psychology at the Woman's College of Panama and president of the *Sociedad Nacional para el Progreso de la Mujer*, proposed that the IAUW sponsor an Inter-American Congress of Women in Panama City, alongside a centenary celebration of Simón Bolívar. She impressed upon Catt that it would be a "great event, an opportunity to do some work for our cause," and praised her for being the "spiritual force" for the women of the Americas.[17] Responding three months later, Catt wrote that she "[could] not think of going to Panama" because she would be attending the meeting of the International Alliance of Women in Paris that summer. Also deeply disappointing to Niera de Calvo, Catt made no effort to send another member of the LWV.[18] One of the few women from the U.S. who attended was Emma Bain Swiggett, executive secretary of the Pan American International Women Committee, who agreed to attend as the representative of the LWV.

Despite Niera de Calvo's frustration at the lack of U.S. participation, she garnered a robust representation of women from Central America and the Caribbean, particularly from Panama and Cuba.[19] Niera de Calvo believed that the meetings of the IAUW would help "stimulate the friendship and understanding among the nations of the American continent with the object of maintaining justice and peace in the western hemisphere."[20] Her specific hope for the conference was that it would establish a Pan-American women's library in Panama, holding "all valuable books and articles written by women as well as all publications relative to women's work and development."[21]

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[16] Elena Torres, "Canales interocéanoicos: Panamá, Nicaragua," *Reportorio Americano* 23, no. 14 (October 10, 1931): 224.

[17] Esther Niera de Calvo to Carrie Chapman Catt, November 25, 1925, Series II, Box 50, LWV Papers.

[18] Catt to Niera de Calvo, February 15, 1926, Series II, Box 50; Niera de Calvo to Sherwin, April 26, 1926, Series II, Box 54, LWV Papers.

Several of the women who attended the conference, however, had bigger and bolder goals for a new type of Pan-American feminism that would aid national women's rights movements in Latin America. They wanted an unequivocal call for women's equal political and civil rights and for a unity of Pan-American feminism, countering U.S. hegemony and imperialism both in the world of international feminism and international diplomacy. These were the agendas of Panamanian feminist Clara González and Cuban feminist Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, twenty-eight and thirty, years old, respectively. The activism that González and Domínguez had already accomplished in their countries discredited Catt's supercilious assumptions about Latin American women's political readiness and revealed feminist visions far more expansive and radical than most held in the United States at the time.[22]

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[19] List of delegates to Panama conference, undated, Box 3, The Records of the Pan American International Women Committee (PAIWC), LoC.

[20] Esther N. de Calvo, "Congreso Inter-Americano de Mujeres," Panama: Imprenta Nacional, 1926, Series II, Box 50, LWV Papers.

[21] "Women in South and Central America Called in Congress for First Time in History: Panama Will be Scene of Initial Gathering of Delegates from Latin American Nations," *Panama Times* (June 6, 1926); N. de Calvo, "Congreso Inter-Americano de Mujeres."

[22] The only secondary source I've found that discusses the 1926 Panama Conference is Yolanda Marco Serra, "El Movimiento Sufragista en Panamá y la Construcción de la Mujer Moderna," *Historia de los movimientos de mujeres en Panamá en el siglo XX* (Panamá: Panamá Instituto de la Mujer de la Universidad de Panamá, 2002), 99-104.

Clara González, born in 1898 in Remedios in Chiriquí, the westernmost province of Panama that borders Costa Rica, grew up with modest means and put herself through night school. In 1922 she became the first female lawyer in Panama after completing a law school thesis on "women under Panamanian law" – *La Mujer ante el Derecho Panameño*.[23] An exhaustive study of the juridical situation of women's civil, legal, penal, and political rights in the country under the Roman law system, and the first of its kind, her analysis became widely known. Its success impelled González to organize a new women's organization to fight for women's juridical equality and suffrage.[24] In late 1922, González co-founded a feminist group called "Renovación" and in 1923 she helped form a separate political party and organization, the Partido Nacional Feminista (PNF), which historians credit with the "birth of feminism" in Panama.[25] Over the first several years of its existence, this group successfully changed standards in women's welfare, education, and political rights.[26] The PNF established a night school for women and pushed for several civil rights enacted into law in 1925, including women's rights to administer their property; represent themselves in court; act as witnesses to wills and other legal documents; and be admitted to the bar. Due to PNF activism, divorce was allowed on grounds of mutual consent and the marriage law was revised in 1925. Instead of wives owing their husbands "obedience," husbands and wives now owed each other "mutual protection and consideration."[27]

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[23] Yolanda Marco Serra, *Clara González de Behringer: Biografía* (Panamá: Edición Hans Roeder, 2007), 70-2; Clara González, "La Mujer ante el Derecho Panameño," 1922, *Clara González: La Mujer del Siglo, Selección de Escritos*, ed., Anayasi Turner (Panamá: [s.n.], 2006).
[24] Marco Serra, *Clara González*, 75.
[25] Line Bareiro, Clyde Soto, Centro de Documentación y Estudios, *Ciudadanas: una memoria inconstante* (Asunción, Paraguay: Centro de Documentación y Estudios, 1997), 69. In the past seven years, one biography on Clara González and one collection of her writings have been published: Yolanda Marco Serra's *Clara González de Behringer: Biografía* (2007) and *Clara González: La Mujer del Siglo, Selección de Escritos*, ed., Anayasi Turner (2006). There is no English-language work that describes González's importance to feminism in Panama or to the Pan-American feminist sphere.
[26] Marco Serra, *Clara González*, 88.

González identified as a socialist and a feminist. Profoundly influenced by German philosopher August Bebel, she believed that legal and political equality for women served as the fundamental lynchpin to all of their other rights. Witnessing how World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Mexican Revolution impelled vibrant political debates and robust social movements of workers and anarchist varieties, she tethered her feminism to anarcho-syndicalist ideals. González sought to promote the rights of all workers, especially women workers, and to address the socio-economic disparities of Panamanian society. Well aware of the economic troubles in her country that stemmed from a neo-colonial relationship with the United States, she had a wide vision for the political goals of feminism and socialism.[28] Seeing the ways U.S. intervention impinged on the rights of citizens, she believed that the rights of citizenship and rights of national sovereignty could not be separated.

When Esther Niera de Calvo invited González to the 1926 conference in Panama, she looked to it as an opportunity not only for Pan-American feminism but particularly for Hispano-American feminism. Hispano-American women were united by the peculiar relationship they shared with the United States and, at this moment, by their lack of political rights. "This event… must mark, without a doubt, a truly transcendental event for the women of our continent engaged in the liberation of the women of the world," González wrote in PNF organ *Revista Feminista*. This meeting could reinforce Bolívar's dream of 1826 for a Hispano-American unity of sentiment and purpose in demanding social justice. The conference would synthesize two types of demands women had: "those of international character," and "another of local character." She spoke of the "propitious opportunity" the 1926 congress would provide in strengthening the bonds of Latin American women, in "the creation of a political, hispanoamerican unity." She hoped to represent not just affluent women but those from Panama of "different backgrounds" and those "with more or less understanding of the struggle in the pursuit of the social ideal, of justice."[29]

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[27] Clara González, "La mujer Latin-Americano ante la conquista de sus derechos politicos," *La Ley* 2, nos. 16, 17, 18 (1926): 892-893.
[28] Marco Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 82-86.

In Cuba, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro had similar hopes for the 1926 conference. Much like González, she believed in a particularly Hispano-American fight for women's equal rights indelibly connected to international workers' rights, social welfare, and social justice. Born in 1894 in Las Villas, Domínguez's parents were active participants in the Cuban War for independence (1895-1898). As she later recalled, the plight of sugar cane workers awakened in her a deep social consciousness and understanding of U.S. imperialism: "From my preaching parents I knew something of the American pressure, of its exploitation and development of a capital monopoly through the sugar industry. But the presence in living flesh of these realities, in the midst of the rich cane fields that I now had in sight, fueled my sense of human responsibility early on."[30] Also like González, Domínguez believed that law could be the lever for social change. She became a lawyer and criminal attorney for destitute women and prostitutes.

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[29] Clara González, "El Congreso Interamericano de Mujeres," *Orientación Feminista* 3 no. 6 (May 1926): 5-7, reprinted in *Clara González,* ed., Turner, 151-3.
[30] Ibid., 49.

Domínguez's interests in feminism began out of a concern for illegitimate children and single mothers, and she gradually came to encompass a belief in equal civil and political rights for women. In 1923 she joined the Club Femenino when she attended the First National Congress of Women in Cuba. The Club Femenino distinguished itself among women's groups in Cuba for its broad agenda for women workers, unmarried mothers, illegitimate children, and for its challenges to church and family morality.[31] Indeed, Domínguez caused waves at the 1923 meeting by insisting on paternity testing and the rights of illegitimate children. She redoubled her commitments to women and workers in the 1925 Second National Congress of Women.

Just before the 1926 Panama Congress, political life in Cuba was becoming tumultuous. Gerardo Machado had won the 1924 election on the platform of "Cuba for the Cubans" with a promise to abrogate the Platt Amendment. At the 1925 National Women's Congress he promised women the vote, but his commitment proved to be only lip-service. Over the course of 1925, Machado moved away from his goals to interfere in the Platt Amendment and squelched any dissent, targeting instead the newly formed Communist Party in Cuba as well as several feminist groups. Ofelia Domínguez Navarro was an active dissident, joining labor unions and student movements in protests against the imprisonment of Communists.[32] She held firm to a belief that equal rights for women under the law would be a powerful way to mediate in the fight for social justice.

When Hortensia Lamar, the president of Club Femenino, presented Domínguez and another Club member, Enma López Seña, with Esther Niera de Calvo's invitation to the 1926 Congress, Domínguez viewed it as an opportunity to demand equal rights for all women in the Americas. As keynote speaker for the session on "Women before the Law," Domínguez prepared a speech calling for the absolute equal civil rights of men and women.[33] In a letter written just prior to the meeting, Hortensia Lamar urged her acolyte, "above all, Ofelia, for Cuba and for the woman, it is necessary that this proposal lacks nothing, and there is no one better than you to present it; so make an effort."[34]

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[31] K. Lynn Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 67; Domínguez later recalled; "I felt really impressed with the broad cultural, educational, and social program that they presented me with, as well as with their projects and achievements," Domínguez Navarro, *50 años de una vida*, 79.
[32] Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 69-71; Domínguez, *50 años*.

Domínguez ultimately carried to the conference a vision for a Pan-American feminism that followed on the heels of Paulina Luisi's equation of equal rights for Latin American women with equal rights for the Americas. Although there is no direct evidence, it is likely that Domínguez was aware of Paulina Luisi's own anti-hegemonic inter-American feminist goals. Hortensia Lamar had asked Domínguez to present a speech on Paulina Luisi's behalf, since Luisi was also unable to attend the conference, to discuss her investigation into the paternity of illegitimate children and the rights of unmarried mothers, a topic that personally resonated with Domínguez.[35]

Domínguez began her own speech about women's rights at the conference by talking about U.S. imperialism and the failures of World War I. The war, she explained, had brought only destruction and pain to women and workers throughout the world; it had not established the self-determination for all nations that its proponents, namely

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[33] Historian Lynn Stoner has written extensively about Ofelia Domínguez Navarro in terms of her influence on feminism in Cuba, however no one has examined her influential role in the 1926 Conference, or the significance of this conference for Pan-American feminism. K. Lynn Stoner, "Ofelia Domínguez Navarro: The Making of a Cuban Socialist Feminist," *The Human Tradition in Latin America: The Twentieth Century*, ed., William H. Breezley and Judith Ewell (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1987), 119-140.
[34] Hortensia Lamar to Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, 26 May 1926, Caja 673, No 1, ODN, AN; Lamar to Domínguez, June 2, 1926, Caja 673, No. 1, ODN, AN.
[35] Domínguez and Luisi later became good friends and wrote to each other a great deal later, in the 1930s. (See Chapter 3)

Woodrow Wilson, had promised. Alluding to U.S. economic and military incursions in Central America and the Caribbean, Domínguez said that the U.S., "the most generous and noble Nation of the Universe, that gave the clarion call of liberty to all oppressed people, emerged as a tyrant when it became strong and victorious."[36]

The only way in which the dream of self-determination had become real after the war, Domínguez pointed out, was that women's political rights had been recognized and granted in England and in the United States. Women's suffrage represented the one fulfillment of social justice, the one truth to emerge from Wilson's "beautiful dream" of self-determination for all peoples. By working on behalf of their nations during the war, women gained new recognition. Domínguez connected the extension of full rights to women to an internationalism based on the self-determination of all people. After reviewing the civil rights women in Cuba had gained over the past decade – the 1917 divorce law, among others – she concluded by urging the women present to solidify their demands into one goal for all the Americas: "a law which will vest in women all the civil rights that men have…a law so simple that it would have only this article: that the woman be considered capable of the exercise of all the civil rights grant[ed] the man, there shall exist no difference between man and woman in the exercise of those rights."[37] Domínguez's suggestions received hearty applause and won the endorsement of those in the audience.

After Domínguez spoke, Clara González supported Domínguez's linkage of women's rights and inter-American justice, then built on it by proposing that women demand a law guaranteeing their equal political rights, as well. In a long speech, titled "The Latin-American women before the conquest of their political rights," González targeted the "prejudice that the Hispanic-American woman is unprepared for the exercise of citizenship," (perhaps in reference to Catt's disparaging comments). She explained that Hispanic-American women had long worked for the benefit of their nations, both in the private realm as mothers of children who would be citizens and in the public realm through organizations for civic betterment. Hispanic-American women, she said, had a long and distinguished feminist tradition that dated back to seventeenth-century Mexican poet Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz and to women like Juana Manuel Gorritti, an Argentinian who served as a battlefield nurse in the nation's nineteenth-century Revolutionary war. Like Domínguez, González tethered women's rights to the legal equality and multi-lateralism of the independent states of the Americas. More liberal and equitable Pan-American relations, or what she called "the renovation of the ideological orientations regarding the international relations of the people of the Americas," were evident. Furthermore, their success, which relied on ideals of equality and justice, was tethered to the "complete emancipation of women."[38]

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[36] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, "La Mujer Ante El Codigo Civil que Rige en Cuba, Tema para el Congreso de Mujeres en la Republica de PANAMA," Caja 675, No 18, ODN, AN.
[37] Ibid.

To make women's political emancipation a reality, González explained, "it is necessary that the American women be organized in one group which will harmonize and form ideals that will enable them, by means of joint action, to obtain their political, economic, and social liberation," she explained.[39] Calling for "a free, uniform and extensive action in the effort to obtain…her political rights which are due her," she recommended “the removal from the legislation of all the American countries judicial discriminations against women.”[40]

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[38] Clara González, "La mujer Latin-Americano ante la conquista de sus derechos politicos," 892-893.
[39] Ibid.

González’s holistic vision of one “equal rights” law that would encompass civil and political rights caused debate in the conference among those who did not believe that Latin American women were ready for the vote. Some protested that women would be too swayed by the church. A Miss Tornero from Bolivia argued that “women had not been educated to the proper uses of the ballot; that the average woman would vote for a man on account of his personal appearance.” Domínguez replied that such thinking was absurd. She advanced the argument that it was just as reasonable to contend that men did not always vote according to their convictions, but frequently sold their votes outright to the highest bidder.[41] When the proposal came up for a vote, a Miss Munera of Colombia stated her opposition to women’s suffrage in Latin America. She asked that the women from the U.S. who were present refrain from voting on the measure since they already had their political rights. Swiggett, as LWV representative, explained that should she be allowed to vote, she would support women’s suffrage, but that she also believed that it was a “national problem which must be decided by each nation individually” and hence she would refrain from voting. Domínguez was infuriated by Swiggett’s lack of support and connected it to U.S. imperialism and an ethnocentrism that viewed Latin American women as inferior. Domínguez later revealed in her memoirs that Swiggett, upon being asked why she had refrained from voting, had “said, verbatim, ‘We are not yet convinced Latin American women are prepared to exercise political rights,’” a comment Domínguez laconically deemed “ominous.”[42] Despite Swiggett and other womens’ lack of support, the movement for women’s equal civil and political rights passed.

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[40] González, “La mujer Latin-Americano ante la conquista de sus derechos politicos,” 892-893.
[41] “‘Ecos del Congreso Interamericano de Mujeres,’ Las dos últimas sesiones del Congreso Interamericano de Mujeres,’” Caja 675, No 18, ODN, AN; K.P.P., “The Woman’s Page,” *Panama Times*, June 26, 1926.

The themes of Latin American autonomy in the face of U.S. dominance emerged even more vividly the following day, when Clara González proposed a resolution that women take a stand for fair and just negotiations between the U.S. and Panama over the Panama Canal. This would mean supporting “equal rights” in its broadest application. At the time Panama was in the midst of negotiations over whether the United States would maintain sovereign authority over the Canal Zone.[43] González and others wanted to see the lion’s share of sovereignty reside in Panama. She had asked Domínguez for advice before presenting this motion, revealing that she wanted to make the suggestion even though she knew it would not prevail, and Domínguez had promised to support her.[44] Based on the idea that “American women are and ought to be vitally interested in the establishment of the fraternity of all America on the basis of equality and justice,” González proposed that

> the women who are vitally interested in the new generation of this new world, hope to see, before all, in the negotiations that Panama is now making with her sister nation, the United States of North America, the most beautiful expression of American fraternity in relation to the new Canal Treaty as a demonstration of the altruistic spirit between the people of a big nation in their co-operation with those of smaller ones, in the interests of human solidarity and international harmony. This should constitute the greatest aim and aspiration of civilized people.[45]

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[42] K.P.P., “The Woman’s Page,” *Panama Times*, June 26, 1926; Domínguez, *50 años*, 89.

[43] L.H. Woolsey, “The Sovereignty of the Panama Canal Zone,” *The American Journal of International Law* 20, no. 1 (January, 1926): 117-124. See also John Major, *Prize Possession: The United States and the Panama Canal, 1903-1979* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 184-187.

[44] Domínguez, *50 años*, 90.

[45] K.P.P., “The Woman’s Page,” *Panama Times*, June 27, 1926.

As Domínguez later recalled in her autobiography, González's words had the effect of a "hot coal" which quickly lit a fire in the congress. President Ester Niera de Calvo interjected to suggest much more general wording that did not specifically refer to the Panama Canal: "To send a fraternal message to all the women of America requesting their influence in their respective countries, in order to obtain fraternity among the nations of America until they reach the desired universal peace."[46] Domínguez was surprised that her own compatriot, Emma López Seña of Club Femenino, supported Calvo's muted resolution and opposed González's motion. Discussion of the Canal Treaty should be dropped, López Seña explained, because it was a "purely local" question outside the remit of an internationally-minded Inter-American Congress of Women. A number of other women present – Giminez, Concha de Pinilla, Ayala, and Cisneros – supported López in this interpretation.

Ofelia Domínguez Navarro violently disagreed. "The proposition is not personal nor is it of just a local character," she explained, "The fate of the Republic of Panama relates to those of all the American Republics; the Panama Canal, this breach in the bowels of the generous and hospitable Isthmus, concerns a continental problem, rather, a global one, and all issues that relate to it should interest all the people of this New World."[47] In her view, the Panama Canal, borne of U.S. imperialism, was like an ulcer in the small intestine of the Isthmus, impacting the whole digestive tract of the Americas.

Domínguez's exasperation increased when López Seña responded that she was amazed that as a Cuban, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro would speak out against the U.S., since the Cubans had so much to thank them for after U.S. participation in their war for independence. Domínguez in turn emphatically denied that Cuba should feel grateful for the U.S. intercession, particularly when the U.S. became involved only "when the fruit was already ripe." She reviewed the history of Cuba's status as a neocolony of the United States after the Spanish American War and the subsequent U.S. military occupation. As a Cuban she felt it necessary to struggle against U.S. imperialism wherever it existed in the Americas. She found any idea of gratitude for "Yankee aggressions" morally "repugnant to the political consciences of the people of the continent."[48]

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[46] K.P.P., "The Woman's Page," *Panama Times*, June 27, 1926; "Ecos del Congreso Interamericano de Mujeres," Caja 675, No 18, ODN, AN.

[47] Domínguez quoted in "Ecos del Congreso Interamericano de Mujeres," Caja 675, No 18, ODN, AN.

As she predicted, González's motion was voted down in favor of Niera de Calvo's wording, but the debate that flourished at the 1926 Panama Conference afforded Domínguez a strong platform to voice her conception of anti-hegemonic Pan-Americanism. After the congress, she and González became good friends, writing each other long and affectionate letters. They had spoken out in firm support of women's equal civil and political rights, which they linked to Latin America's international equality. A strong moral commitment to principles of equal rights, widely conceived, undergirded both aspirations.[49]

This commitment to a supple definition of equal rights and the mutually constitutive nature of women's rights and national sovereignty gained even more urgency when U.S. figures like Carrie Chapman Catt continued to deny Latin American women's inherent equality. In Catt, U.S. imperialism gained the face of a white-haired, seventy-year-old Anglo-American suffragist. Her statement in the *New York Herald Tribune* in

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[48] Domínguez, *50 años*, 90-91.

[49] González to Domínguez, July 22, 1926, Caja 673, No 1, ODN, AN. Other later correspondence between the two women exists in Ofelia Domínguez Navarro's archive in the Instituto de Historia, Havana, Cuba. (See Chapter 3)

January, 1929, became her most damaging and ludicrous aspersion. Catt claimed "the women of South America are a 'menace' to peaceful relations between this country and the Latin republics." She explained that "South American women" who "do not have any educational background for the understanding of [international problems]" attended "large state functions and mingle[d] with diplomats where they hear all sorts of international problems discussed" but they did not do anything about them.[50]

Catt's words became infamous: "*La mujer hispanoamericana es una amenaza para las amigables y pacíficas relaciones de los Estados Unidos y la América del Sur*." They reverberated across the continent. In Havana, radical Cuban feminist Mariblanca Sabas Alomá wrote an article in the journal *Carteles* stating "I hope that the fears of Mrs. Chapman Catt are soon confirmed, if the 'friendly and peaceful relations of the United States with all the American Republics'…means the occupation of Nicaragua, the Panama canal…Cuban sugar, Mexican oil, gold mines of Peru, Chilean salt mines, etc., etc."[51] Ofelia Domínguez's feminist organization at the time, the Alianza Nacional Feminista, published a formal letter denouncing Catt's comments. In New York, Puerto Rican feminist Clotilde Betances Jaeger published an article in response, insisting that women not just from South America but also from Central America and the Caribbean had a central conception of peace, but it was a differently-conceived peace than Catt's. It was one that promoted the freedom of the Americas.[52]

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[50] Emma Bugbee, "Women Thank President for Peace Aid Pact," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 19, 1929, 2.

[51] Maria Sabas Alomá, "Efectivamente, Sra. Chapman Catt," *Feminismo: Cuestiones Sociales, Critical Literaria* (La Habana: Editorial "Hermes," 1930), 165-170.

[52] Clotilde Betances Jaeger article quoted in Sabas Alomá; Domínguez, *50 años*, 89; Elena Torres recalled Catt's comment in her essay, Elena Torres, "Canales interocéanoicos: Panamá, Nicaragua," *Reportorio Americano* 23, no. 14 (October 10, 1931): 224.

Doris Stevens, the U.S. National Woman's Party, and the Creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW)

On January 24, 1928, Pilar Jorge de Tella, representative of Cuba's "Club Femenino," delivered her plea for freedom of the Americas. She urged the two hundred women crowded into the assembly room of the Asociación de Repórteros in Havana to fight for an Equal Rights Treaty at the Sixth International Conference of American States taking place at the same time. Jorge de Tella connected this fight to a greater Pan-Americanism that celebrated the equal value of Latin American women. Very possibly making reference to Catt's comments that disparaged Latin American women, she said, "We urge the women of the continent not to consider valid the specious concept that the Latin American woman is incapable [of exercising political rights]…" "Implied in that classification," she said, "is the idea of subaltern difference [*diferencia subalterna*], undeserved and unjustifiable, that creates two Americas…[and] the absurd judgment that the North's civilization is superior and that of the South inferior…"[53]

Jorge de Tella acknowledged the collaboration of five women from the NWP – Doris Stevens, Jane Norman Smith, Muna Lee, Alice Park, and Helen Clegg Winters. She assured the audience that the "two Americas" could become one, and that these women were united with Cuban women like "twin sisters" in combating any notion of Latin American inferiority. They had come "in a gesture of constructive altruism" and "noble disinterestedness" to collaborate with women in Havana in a goal for a more just

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[53] Untitled speeches by Pilar Jorge de Tella, January 24, 1928, Doris Stevens Papers, 1884-1983 (Stevens Papers); MC546, Box 94, Folder 3, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Pan-America.[54] Maria Montalvo de Soto Navarro, founder and president of Cuba's Partido Nacional Sufragista, reinforced this assessment: "Here in this work for women and by women, a labor disinterested and tireless is being born the true Pan Americanism."[55]

Doris Stevens, the leader of the NWP delegation, revealed in a letter the next day "I dam[n] near cracked with sheer triumphant emotion. The meeting was electric. The whole audience arose and cheered. The dam[n] press gives no idea of the enthusiasm here. The auditorium…was packed to the limit."[56] But Stevens was slightly mystified that the NWP's work in Havana was something "they [Cuban women] insist on saying that North Americans did disinterestedly."[57] Their activism in Havana, what Stevens would call the NWP's "First International Action," was anything but "disinterested." It would ideally not only promote equal rights internationally and help Cuban women gain suffrage, but also help the NWP's national battle of pushing an Equal Rights Amendment through U.S. Congress.

What Cuban feminists meant by "disinterested," of course, was somewhat different. They saw in the NWP a group not specifically influenced by or representative of the U.S. government. The NWP women had come to Havana independently without the invitation of either of their governments, and they were going to battle with Cuban feminists against the U.S. State Department representatives in Havana who were unwilling to support either the women's Equal Rights Treaty or their plea to speak in front of the Congress. The Pan-American feminism they embodied – one that called for an Equal Rights Treaty and that validated the equality of all the women in the hemisphere – reinforced goals Cuban feminists had already been struggling for and highlighted the hypocrisy of Washington's Pan-Americanism. During a time when Latin American public opinion was greatly agitating against the U.S. policy of intervention, so clearly illustrated in the war against Sandino in Nicaragua, the NWP's opposition to its own government and its calls for equality gained broader, more radical significance. Their collaboration with Cuban women evinced for many the promise of a new, anti-hegemonic Pan-Americanism and feminism of equality.

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[54] Untitled speeches by Pilar Jorge de Tella, January 24, 1928, Stevens Papers.
[55] Maria Montalvo de Soto Navarro quoted in NWP Press Release, untitled, January 26, 1928, Box 94, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.
[56] Stevens to Jonathan Mitchell, January 25, 1928, Box 24, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[57] Stevens to Alice Paul, February 10, 1928, Box 70, Folder 18, Stevens Papers.

The NWP had not gone to Cuba with this noble and far-reaching agenda. Their agenda was to promote the Equal Rights Treaty that Alice Paul had drafted for the purpose of the Havana conference and to bring Cuban women on board. That two of the NWP women who went to Havana – Muna Lee and Alice Park – were indeed outspoken opponents of U.S. intervention in Latin America, helped to raise the NWP profile in Cuba. But Doris Stevens, the leader of their delegation, and Jane Norman Smith, who did most of the planning and organizing of the month-long trip, were not anti-imperialists. Stevens had even assumed that the U.S. State Department representatives would back their Equal Rights Treaty at the Pan American Conference. She believed, "the United States will be the most advanced country represented at the Congress" because it was the only country in the hemisphere that had granted women political rights.[58] This belief in U.S. leadership extended to its role in the international feminist movement, as well, even though the delegation knew they would need to collaborate with

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[58] Stevens to William K. Vanderbilt, December 29, 1927, Box 36, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

Cuban feminists, whom they realized would not be eager to take on the NWP as their leaders. Aware of the tensions roiling U.S.-Latin American relations, they went to Havana with a plan to supplicate Cuban feminists in a spirit of kindness and equality and get them on board with their Equal Rights Treaty.

To their surprise, on their arrival, they found a pre-existing Pan-American feminism of Equal Rights at large among Cuban feminists. As Doris Stevens later said of the meeting on January 24 with Cuban feminists, "I felt as if a great forest fire had swept through me and left me a charred tree…We were supposed to be taking them, [but] they had, as a matter of fact, utterly devoured us."[59]

In the process of their collaboration with feminists in Cuba and with the male delegates at the Pan American Congress, and in the context of the tensions in U.S.-Latin American relations, the NWP members in Havana began to speak a language of Pan-American feminism that matched that which Domínguez and González had promoted before them. It contained the same expansive definition of equal rights for all women and for all nations. Ultimately, however, what represeted a deeply principled ideal for Domínguez and González, was simply a language of expediency for the NWP.

The NWP and Cuban feminist organizations had enjoyed limited contact as far back as early as 1917, when the NWP was founded as the "militant wing" of U.S. feminists in the midst of the U.S. suffrage battle. Pilar Houston, member of the Club Femenino in Cuba and wife of a U.S. businessman, had established contacts with the NWP and even spoke as its representative at the 1923 National Congress of Women in

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[59] Stevens, "International Feminism is Born," and Stevens, "Support of Cuban Women," Box 70, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.

Havana. She supplied the NWP with information about the Club Femenino and about feminism in Cuba published in *Equal Rights*, the NWP organ. In 1924, *Equal Rights* noted that the "feminist movement" in Cuba "is assuming large and important proportions," and reported that there were a number of women who subscribed to *Equal Rights* in Cuba and were "enthusiastic readers."[60]

In 1927, *Equal Rights* noted that women in Cuba were on the brink of attaining their political rights. Earlier that year, Machado had appointed his own new constitutional assembly, unilaterally extending his presidential term from four to six years and banning all political parties other than the Conservative, National, and Liberal parties. He had also added a proposal for woman suffrage, leaving responsibility for the approval or rejection with the constitutional assembly. Although he did this more as a gesture to counter charges that his government was undemocratic since it repressed labor, students and Communists, and to gain feminist support, the suffrage proposal brought women's rights closer to fruition.[61]

The NWP celebrated how Club Femenino agitated for women's rights while also challenging President Machado's undemocratic government. Calling it the "most energetic in its support of the cause of woman in the island republic," *Equal Rights* applauded the Club's militancy in the face of Machado's repression. It reported on correspondence Pilar Houston had supplied about its ninth anniversary banquet in the summer of 1927. Machado had sent police to watch their proceedings, so Houston "furnished each member with a tiny souvenir, either in the shape of a hatchet, hammer, axe, knife, pistol, saw, or some other implement of 'warfare,' with which presumably to attack the policemen who were so 'anxious' the women should not do anything radical."[62] They eagerly drew parallels between the NWP, which grew out of the "militant wing" of suffragists in their fight against the U.S. government, and the Club Femenino, which albeit in a different context, appeared to be doing the same in the face government repression.

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[60] Another U.S. woman, Edith B. Newman, a NWP member who lived in Havana as a translator, also supplied the NWP with information they published. Edith B. Newman, "Appreciation from Cuba," *Equal Rights* 11, no. 16 (May 31, 1924): 123; Over the following years, between 1924 and 1928, *Equal Rights* published information sent by Newman about the growth of suffrage and feminist organizations in Cuba. "Feminist Notes: the Woman's Suffrage Party of Cuba," *Equal Rights* 11, no. 31 (September 13, 1924): 242; Pilar Houston to NWP Feb 27, 1928, NWP Papers Reel 38; In this letter Houston recalled how in May 1926 she had gone on a trip to Washington DC as a Cuban Red Cross representative, visited NWP headquarters and paid dues for the Club Femenino. In 1926, Pilar Houston visited the National Woman's Party headquarters while in the United States and became a member of the National Woman's Party's International Advisory Council, its only Latin American member, "Cuba Now on International Council," 13, no. 22 *Equal Rights* (July 17, 1926): 184.

[61] Stoner, *From the House to the Streets*, 72, 109, 111.

The links Houston had forged between Club Femenino and the NWP, and the knowledge that the NWP sympathized with the Club's goals, were likely influential in directing Flora Diaz Parrado to the National Woman's Party when she was in Washington, D.C. for several professional conferences in December, 1927. Diaz Parrado, founder of the Camaguey branch of the Club Femenino and a lawyer, met first with editor of *Equal Rights*, Katharine Ward Fisher, and then with Alice Paul. She told them about the upcoming Pan American conference, also known as the Sixth International Conference of American States to be held in Havana the following month, in which women's rights were on the agenda.[63]

Diaz Parrado explained that proposals made by Guatemalan delegate Máximo Soto Hall at the last meeting of the Pan American Union in 1923 had assured that future conferences would include women and that the Pan American Union would study women's rights and promote equal civil and political rights. However, although women's civil rights would be under consideration at this 1928 conference, political rights were not currently on the agenda, and no women had yet been invited to attend the conference as delegates. She was not in favor of Machado's presidency, she explained, and had no influence with her government; she had asked the Ministry of Interior in Cuba about the appointment of women delegates but had made no headway.[64] Regardless, Diaz Parrado believed that women from the U.S. could be politically useful. She urged Fisher and Paul to consider mobilizing members of the NWP to attend the conference as official delegates and promote women's equal civil *and* political rights.

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[62] "Feminism in Cuba," *Equal Rights* 14, no. 9 (June 18, 1927): 147

[63] [Margaret Lambie] to Jane Norman Smith (hereafter JNS), 16 December 1927, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

Alice Paul deemed the Havana Conference "a very great opportunity… [which] we ought not to let…go by unutilized."[65] It would be the perfect way to revive both the NWP's national campaign for an Equal Rights Amendment, which was dying in Congress, as well as their international campaign for Equal Rights, which was also languishing. In 1925, Paul and honorary NWP president and donor Alva Belmont had formed the International Advisory Committee as a pressure group of prominent women leaders from around the world (though they were mostly from Western Europe) who would utilize their suasion in the international realm to promote "equal rights." The opposition they faced in the U.S. for their ERA by those who favored protective labor legislation for women redoubled in the international realm. Since its founding in 1919, the International Labor Organization (ILO) had promoted protection standards for women employed at night, or in mines or the lead paint industry. Women's groups like Carrie Chapman Catt's International Alliance of Women supported the ILO. The International Alliance had also, in their 1926 meeting in Paris, rejected the NWP's application for membership, leaving the NWP grasping for international consolidation.

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[64] [Margaret Lambie] to Jane Norman Smith, December 16, 1927, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.
[65] Alice Paul quoted in Jane Norman Smith to Mabel Vernon, December 26, 1927; Katharine Ward Fisher to Jane Norman Smith, December 30, 1927, Reel I, Series 38, NWP Papers.

Paul saw the Pan-American sphere as a potentially much more productive realm than Western Europe for their international Equal Rights campaign. The U.S. was not a member state of the League of Nations but had clout and leadership in the Pan American Union. As Alice Paul said, "It is a wonderful opportunity for us to start serious international work, because our country belongs to the conference on equal turns with the other countries, and we would not have the difficulties that confront us…at Geneva."[66]

By early January, 1928, they had not had success convincing Pan American Union director Leo Rowe to appoint women as official delegates to the conference or to change the agenda to include women's political rights, but the NWP decided to send an "unofficial delegation" anyway. Máximo Soto Hall's successful 1923 resolution, they believed, revealed the clear intentions of the Pan American Conference to have women present.[67] The committee would consist of Jane Norman Smith, chair of the NWP's executive body, the National Council; Doris Stevens, who had just undertaken to chair the NWP's International Relations Committee; Helen Clegg Winters; Muna Lee Muñoz de Marin, who would join them from Puerto Rico; and Alice M. Park, a member of the

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[66] Alice Paul quoted in Jane Norman Smith to Mabel Vernon, December 26, 1927, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

[67] Alice Paul to Anita Pollitzer, December 28, 1927, Box 126, Folder 7, Stevens Papers; Margaret Lambie to JNS, December 22, 1927; Katharine Fisher to JNS, December 22, 1927; Katharine Ward Fisher to Jane Norman Smith, January 6, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

California Branch of the NWP who was also a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

In late December, Alice Paul had begun formulating a treaty for "Equal Rights," believing "[A treaty] would give equal rights to all women on the American continents and much faster than it could ever be won country by country."[68] On the eve of their train departure to Florida, where they would then take a steamer to Havana, Stevens and Smith received from Paul a "Proposed Treaty on Equal Rights for Men and Women," later known as the "Equal Rights Treaty." Stevens recalled this would be "the first treaty…proposed by women on behalf of women."[69]

Armed with this treaty to liberate all of the women in the Americas, Jane Norman Smith, Doris Stevens, and Helen Clegg Winters arrived in Havana on January 9. They did not find the ready support of Cuban women. The following day they went to visit the Club Femenino and found the headquarters deserted. Pilar Houston had alerted the Club of their arrival, but the president Emma López Sanchez was ill, and Smith was told that the Club Femenino members "preferred to wait until we arrived and told them what we wanted." [70]

Despite the Club Femenino's ties with the NWP through Pilar Houston, the Club Femenino members were likely suspicious of the NWP, perhaps wondering if they were coming as handmaidens of U.S. empire. In December, 1926, United States marines had invaded Nicaragua, and had gradually escalated their troops. By the eve of the 1928 conference, U.S. intervention in Nicaragua was described by many throughout the continent and in Europe as the greatest international crime of the present day, and U.S.-Latin American relations as "at the most critical point in the history of this hemisphere."[71] The Latin American press decried the Colossus of the North and Yankee imperialism to a greater degree than ever before. As a U.S. journalist reported from Havana, "For many Nicaraguans and Latin Americans generally, Sandino has become a symbol representing the struggle of the small, weak republics of this hemisphere against the mighty United States."[72] Just prior to the conference, Sandino had scored a series of impressive military victories against the U.S., galvanizing official efforts to obtain from the U.S. a commitment of nonintervention in Latin America's domestic politics.[73] Delegates from various countries were coming to the conference armed with proposals for mutli-lateralism and to speak out against U.S. actions in Nicaragua.[74]

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[68] Alice Paul to Anita Pollitzer, December 28, 1927, Box 126, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.
[69] Doris Stevens quoted in Muna Lee, "Report of the Work Done by [the] Committee on International Action of the National Woman's Party, U.S.A., at the Pan-American Conference on Behalf of Rights of Women, 21 Feb 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.
[70] Jane Norman Smith to [Margaret] Lambie, January 18, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

Members of the NWP, aware of the tensions roiling U.S.-Latin American relations, realized that their sudden appearance in Havana at the 1928 Conference to promote an Equal Rights Treaty might create suspicion and vitriol among Cuban feminists. Because their planning of the trip was so last-minute, they decided not to contact their Cuban counterparts before going to Havana in favor of explaining their work to them in person. Jane Norman Smith remarked on the fact that the NWP had "apparently been asleep about the resolution for the last five years," and that their sudden

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[71] *New York World* article quoted in "Can Coolidge Win Latin America?" *Literary Digest* 96, no. 4 (January 28, 1928): 1.
[72] "Nicaragua: Reconciliation Society Secretary Says Sandino Would Be Martyr if Killed," *Havana Evening Telegram*, February 3, 1928.
[73] Grandin, "Your Americanism and Mine," 1051.
[74] In order to quell the anti-American sentiment, President Coolidge was planning to travel to the conference, an unprecedented move for a U.S. president.

"last minute" plan for an Equal Rights Treaty in Havana, and of "tell[ing] these women what to do" would be "nervy."[75] She realized that they "might offend these South American women if we should take the leadership and urge them to do something which we hadn't accomplished ourselves."[76] Katharine Ward Fisher agreed with this plan and added that she hoped they would show sensitivity and openness in consideration of what Latin American women wanted:

> I hope some way will open of showing a willingness to cooperate with Latin American women, and get their point of view. That will mean a great deal, it seems to me, for the future. I am certain from the way you have written that you are not intending to put over a campaign for the Woman's Party…So…I shall expect some steps to be taken toward uniting with the most forward looking women of South and Central America.[77]

Thus, upon arriving in Havana the NWP consciously made an effort to present themselves as sisters to the Cuban women and collaborators in a struggle, not "teachers" or missionaries for uplift. The NWP crafted a letter they sent out to Cuban feminist organizations upon their arrival that women's subjugation was a worldwide phenomenon. Taking a stark contrast to Carrie Chapman Catt's position of questioning Latin American women's readiness for equality, they explained not only that women from Latin America and the U.S. were equally deserving of all the same political and civil rights, but that U.S.

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[75] Jane Norman Smith to Katharine W. Fisher, December 31, 1927, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

[76] Jane Norman Smith to Margaret Lambie, January 2, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

[77] Katharine Ward Fisher to Jane Norman Smith, January 6, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers. Diaz Parrado also requested a similar spirit of cooperation to the NWP women traveling to Havana. In a speech she gave at NWP Headquarters on January 1 on the occasion of Lucretia Mott's birthday celebration, she revealed a history of Cuban feminists, and female writers and artists, emphasizing the need for mutual understanding of very different cultures if successful collaboration was to happen. She also wrote letters of introduction and gave the NWP women advice on where to stay and who to contact when they reached Havana. Flora Diaz Parrado, "Lucretia Mott," *Equal Rights*, 389; [Margaret Lambie] to Jane Norman Smith, December 22, 1927, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers; Jane Norman Smith to Katharine W. Fisher, December 22, 1927, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

women were just as subjugated, if not more, than women in Latin America. "In not a single country of North or South America do men and women enjoy equal rights before the law," they explained. Instead of mentioning U.S. women's suffrage rights, they listed all the states in the U.S. in which married women's earnings belonged to husbands, in which guardianship and inheritance laws were unequal, and in which a woman could not enter a contract or go into business without her husband's consent. Thus, they needed the support of Cuban feminists to help *them* attain equal rights, an equal rights that would also more broadly "grant…justice to the women of Pan-America."[78] Cuban feminists translated, read, and distributed this letter.[79] In speeches, too, Jane Norman Smith explained that she wanted to emphasize that the women from the U.S. had come "not to instruct the women of Cuba but to seek their cooperation." "We [women of the United States] have equal political rights," Smith said, "but that is all we have. We are in the same boat," she said, "Aid us in securing our civil rights."[80]

Upon their arrival, the NWP also established campaign "headquarters" in the sitting room of Stevens's hotel room, which they decorated with U.S. and Cuban flags to promote solidarity. Here they received Cuban women, the press, and other visitors. Jane Norman Smith recalled that "The sitting room was usually crowded with people and no work could be done there."[81] So Stevens's bedroom was also used as an office for a stenographer and a few other clerical workers.[82] A purple, white, and gold National Woman's Party flag, as well as a Cuban flag and flags of all twenty-one of the republics, waved from their balcony.

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[78] Stevens, Winters, and Smith, "The Pan-American Conference and Equal Rights for Women," [undated], Box 94, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[79] Cuban feminist Maria Cabrera de Fdez. Espinosa translated the article into "¡Ahora, o Quizás Nunca!" Habana, Enero 18 de 1928, Caja 663, No 17, Archivo Maria Collado, Archivo Nacional de Habana, Cuba.
[80] National Woman's Party Press Release, January 26, 1928, Stevens Papers, Box 94, Folder 1.
[81] "Memorandum Attached to Statement of Jane Norman Smith in re Receipts and Expenditures for Pan American Conference," New York, March 24, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.

The image of NWP feminists working in solidarity with Cuban women was abetted by the fact that the U.S. State Department, it was soon revealed, opposed the NWP's efforts. U.S. envoy Charles E. Hughes, former secretary of state, turned out to be one of the greatest official opponents of the Equal Rights Treaty. When Doris Stevens and Jane Norman Smith went to see Hughes on one of the first days they arrived, they received peremptorily dismissive treatment from him.[83] He protested their demands for an Equal Rights Treaty on the grounds that women's rights were under domestic and not international jurisdiction and used the excuse that the United States did not want to "dictate to other nations." NWP member Alice Park, who was also in Havana to protest the U.S. government's actions in Nicaragua, quickly pointed out the hypocrisy in Hughes' advocacy of U.S. intervention in Latin America and his supposed ethical opposition to "dictating to other nations."[84]

Hughes had come to the Havana Conference to defend Washington's policy of intervention in Latin America and to oppose any policy that defied the State Department's narrow definition of international law, including the feminists' equal rights treaty. There was a broad similarity between the efforts of a number of Latin American delegates who had come to the conference armed with proposals to undercut U.S. hegemony and intervention and the efforts of the feminists proposing an Equal Rights Treaty – both groups were attempting to effect radical transformations in the international law of the Pan American Union.[85] In different ways, each was seeking one code of international law for all of the Americas that would make the Pan-American Union an international power overseeing the fair treatment of every nation.

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[82] Doris Stevens, "Support of Cuban Women;" Stevens to Miss Isabel K. MacDermott, March 29, 1928, Stevens Papers.

[83] On January 19, Stevens, Smith and Winters met with Charles Evan Hughes, who, Smith recalled "treated us more or less like little children;" Jane Norman Smith, Untitled Memo about meeting with Charles Evan Hughes, January 19, 1928, Box 84, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[84] Alice Park gave several speeches in Palo Alto and in San Francisco, California, upon her return from the 1928 conference in which she discussed Hughes's hypocrisy on U.S. intervention in Latin America versus promotion of women's rights, John D. Barry, "What a Woman Noted at Havana Conference," *San Francisco News*, April 9, 1928; "Socialist Symposium: Alice Park and her Havana Experiences," *San Francisco Labor World*, March 30, 1928, Box 25, Alice Park Collection, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

With the NWP's politic appeals to be the collaborators and not teachers of Cuban feminists, their flamboyant campaign headquarters decked in Cuban and U.S. flags, and their oppositional stance to the U.S. state department, Cuban feminists warmed to them. They saw in the Equal Rights Treaty a broad ideological similarity to what they had been fighting for. Cuban feminists began to join the NWP members in making personal visits to various delegates and lobbying to allow them to represent their demands in a plenary session of the conference. Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, who wrote an editorial praising the efforts of the NWP women, attempted with several others to lobby Antionio Sanchez Bustamante to grant the women a hearing.[86]

The established feminist groups in Havana, including the Partido Democratica Sufragista; the more conservative, Machado-supporting Partido Nacional Sufragista; and the more progressive Club Femenino, hosted lunches and talks for them. On January 21, at the Club Femenino's lunch for the NWP, Pilar Houston explained the links that had long tied the Club Femenino and NWP and explained that the NWP women were there "for the good of all the women of the American continent." Another Cuban feminist, Señora de Lores, praised the NWP women and their common struggle for equal rights.[87] Helen Clegg Winters spoke about how much they appreciated the unique nature of the Club Femenino in promoting women's rights and how U.S. women were working side-by-side with Cuban women, helping each other obtain equality. Houston then urged her fellow Club Feminino members to give a standing ovation for Doris Stevens, whom she introduced as a militant feminist from the United States, famous for her book, *Jailed for Freedom*, detailing her struggles against the U.S. government. Stevens stood and spoke in English, with a translator, praising the successful efforts of Cuban feminists to promote equal rights for women and men.

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[85] A number of male delegates came with proposals that announced national sovereignty as well as a multi-lateral internationalism, and Latin American public opinion was supporting these changes in international law as an urgent anti-dote to U.S. hegemony and intervention.
[86] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, "Harán Valer sus Derechos en la Sexta Conferencia las Mujeres de Cuba," *La Prensa* (Havana, Cuba), 22 January 1928**;** Lobbying log, undated, Box 93, Folder 20, Stevens Papers.

At the Havana conference, the NWP delegation leader Doris Stevens came to embody the purity of the NWP's emancipatory agenda for Cuban feminists, which was somewhat ironic given Stevens's own lack of anti-imperialist ideology. Two other NWP feminists in Havana – Muna Lee and Alice Park – did have a real desire for a non-hegemonic Pan-Americanism. Lee, who lived in Puerto Rico, was married to Puerto Rican poet and nationalist Martin Muñoz de Marin. She spoke earnestly of feminism and Pan-Americanism as standing for sovereignty and equality. Together the two ideals would create "a real union of the nations through women…the imperishable effort toward understanding, toward freedom, toward the greater humanity."[88] Alice Park, sixty-six at the time of the conference, was in Havana not only as part of the NWP delegation but as a representative of WILPF, to hand-deliver letters opposing the U.S. armed intervention in Nicaragua, as well as a reporter for a syndicated press service.[89] She was also a member of the All-America Anti-Imperialist League, a transnational group originally formed in response to the Spanish-American war and recently resuscitated in 1926 in response to U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.[90]

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[87] Poros Vales, "Una Asamblea Sufragista en el 'Club Femenino de Cuba,'" *Bohemia*, [undated], 30, Subseries D, 100F+B.1v., Stevens Papers.
[88] Muna Lee, "Citizens of a New Earth," *Equal Rights* 3, no. 13 (February 27, 1926): 18-19. Muna Lee translated poetry and literature of a number of Latin American writers for U.S.

However, it was Stevens, described by her peers as a charismatic speaker and a canny organizer, who became the symbol of the NWP's work in Havana. Stevens was already famous at the time in the United States for her suffrage activism alongside Alice Paul. Her credibility for being a rebel against the U.S. government was enhanced by the fact that she had gone to jail for her suffrage activism. Born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1888, Stevens worked after college as a high school teacher, then as a full-time organizer with the National American Woman Suffrage Association and then co-founder of the Congressional Union to promote the federal suffrage amendment. She immortalized her activism in her 1920 book *Jailed for Freedom*, describing her brief imprisonment for picketing in 1917 and how "organized militant political action" had paved the way for the woman suffrage amendment.[91] During this period Stevens lived in bohemian Greenwich

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publications. See Jonathan Cohen, ed., *A Pan-American Life: Selected Poetry and Prose of Muna Lee* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

[89] Alice Park went as a reporter for "a syndicated press service out of Chicago serving 115 labor and radical papers in the U.S." Alice Park Autobiography, unpublished, Box 29; "Women's League Asks Coolidge to End Fighting," *New York World*, January 27, 1928, Box 24, Park Collection.

[90] See letters from All-American Anti-Imperialist League dated February 5, 1928 and March, 1928 in Box 12, Park Collection. In February, 1928 the All-America Anti-Imperialist League tried to raise funds to buy bandages and medical supplies for Sandino's army in Nicaragua.

[91] Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920), vii; Leila J. Rupp, "Feminism and the Sexual Revolution in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of Doris Stevens" *Feminist Studies* 15, no. 2 (Summer, 1989): 289-309 discusses Doris Stevens's sexual

Village and maintained what Leila Rupp calls "vaguely socialist politics."[92] Though Stevens did not have the long-standing commitment to Pan-Americanism that her colleagues Muna Lee and Alice Park did, she understood the tensions in inter-American relations that stemmed from U.S. hegemony and intervention. She also recognized the usefulness of the metaphor of equality for women and equality for all nations. Rupp considers Stevens "a symbol of feminism and New Womanhood in the teens and twenties" in the United States.[93] In 1928, Stevens burst onto the international stage as a leader of the NWP. In Havana, she also became a symbol of Pan-American feminism and, more broadly, of equality for the Americas.

The Spanish-language newspapers in Havana reserved special praise for Stevens, portraying her as a leader of a new type of feminism of the Americas and as among the "intellectual vanguard of North American women."[94] Through Stevens, the NWP emerged an altruistic group, separate from the more inimical forces of U.S. capitalism

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politics and feminism; for more on Doris Stevens see Mary Kathleen Trigg, "Four American Feminists, 1910-1940: Inez Haynes Irwin, Mary Ritter Beard, Doris Stevens, and Lorine Pruette," (PhD Dissertation, Brown University, 1989).

[92] Rupp, "Feminism and the Sexual Revolution," 292.

[93] Ibid., 290.

[94] Jane Norman Smith had worried before sending Doris Stevens to Havana that her status as a divorced woman might invoke the "prejudice" of people in a Catholic country. However, although one at least one newspaper article commented on the fact that Stevens was divorced, much of the Spanish-language press praised Doris Stevens as being among the "intellectual vanguard of North American women," and praised her for her high-minded values for justice and women's liberation. Jane Norman Smith to Mabel Vernon, December 30, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers (Cuba and a number of Latin American countries had in fact passed laws for civil divorce, since the late nineteenth century; Cuba's law passed in 1917.) U.S. Spanish-language paper, "Ask Equality of Rights" in *La Prensa* (New York), January 12, 1928 that mentioned "Miss Doris Stevens is the divorced wife of the well-known lawyer of New York, Dudley Field Malone." (copy of English-language translation of "Ask Equality of Rights," *La Prensa* January 12, 1928 in Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers)

and imperialism represented by the U.S. State Department.[95] Several articles raved about *Jailed for Freedom*, interpreted by one as documenting her efforts in the "campaign for the liberation of women and for peace."[96] A long and fascinating profile of Stevens published in *El País* described her efforts and the NWP headquarters in the Hotel Seville as a sharp departure from the venal activities of the Pan-American Conference. The activities elsewhere in the hotel served as a metaphor for the conference proceedings – foolish, commercial, and above all a reflection of U.S. empire: "waiters running this way and that, carrying enormous…bottles of champagne or rum. Laughter, pointless comments, the smoke of Pall Mall or Chesterfield [U.S. cigarette brands]…populates this environment where the majesty of the 'dollar' exerts its formidable empire." Meanwhile, however, upon taking the elevator up to Stevens's suite, number 312, the author explained, "suddenly everything changes." With a Cuban flag next to the door, Cuban and U.S. women worked together, feverishly, with "enthusiasm." The author praised the feminists' wide concepts of "liberty and human equality" and bemoaned that they found no counterpart in the rest of the Pan American conference proceedings.[97]

At a meeting in the Reporters Club in Havana on January 24, advertised widely the week before, Cuban feminist leaders gathered over two hundred women; speeches by both Cuban and NWP women yoked together a rhetoric of equal rights of women with equal rights for all nations.[98] In the context of U.S. State Department's refusal to consider Latin American delegates' proposals to alter international law in favor of multi-lateralism and national sovereignty, Doris Stevens portrayed the Equal Rights Treaty as part of this broader effort: "A new international code is being born here…we wish to make this hemisphere a new world in fact, not theory, for women as well as men…" She announced that "no nation, no continent has the right to deny us our rights. They are our human rights!"[99]

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[95] "En la Conferencia Panamericana Será Estudiada la IGUALDAD de DERECHOS Para la MUJER," *La Prensa* (Havana), January 21, 1928, 2; "La Vanguardia Intelectual de Mujeres Norteamericanas Esta Segura de que su Voz Sera Escuchada en el Seno de Conferencia," *La Prensa*, January 22, 1928; Maria Collado, "Por la Mujer y Para la Mujer," *La Discusión*, S.A., January 20, 1928.

[96] "En la Conferencia Panamericana," *La Prensa*, January 21, 1928, 3.

[97] "'Hasta Para El Amor es Necesaria la Igualdad Política – Miss Stevens,' *El País* (Havana), January 29, 1928.

At the end of the meeting Pilar Jorge de Tella proposed that women fight for one standard of equal rights for all women of the Americas. The NWP's Equal Rights Treaty was signed by a host of woman's organizations: the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Damas Catolicas, the Damas Revolucionares y Emigradas, the Club Femenino, the National Suffrage Party, and others. The women also agreed to demonstrate for women's rights by marching in Havana's streets several days later on the anniversary of the birth of José Martí, founder of the Cuban Revolutionary party and hero of Cuban liberation. On January 28, over two hundred women, including the NWP delegates, marched to the statue of José Martí in the Central Park in Havana.

The march symbolized their inter-American collaboration, led by a Cuban woman holding a Cuban flag and a U.S. woman holding an American flag. Following them were women carrying their club's banners, with Maria Montalvo de Soto Navarro in the lead, bearing the banner of the Federación Nacional de Asociaciones Femeninas de Cuba, and after her representatives from the Club Femenino, National Sufragist Party, the Patriotic

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[98] Lantern slide, "Gran Asamblea de Mujeres," from Teatro "Fausto," Habana, Cuba, Stevens Collection.
[99] Doris Stevens's speech, January 24, 1928, Stevens Papers.

Suffragist League, and the Temperance Club, as well as others, carrying their banners. Next came twenty-one women wearing sky-blue bands across their chests with the names of the twenty-one republics of the Americas. After them marched a woman holding a banner with a quote from Martí, "Woman should have the same right to vote as men have," and finally the five women from the NWP closed the march. The procession, which spanned several blocks, ended with a huge banner that bore another of Martí's quotes: "Justice Admits No Delay, and he who delays its fulfillment turns it against himself." After one woman placed an enormous wreath at the foot of the statue, a man hired by the NWP released 2,000 carrier pigeons as symbols of peace. [100] A Cuban feminist later recalled how the parade symbolized a wide-reaching Pan-American feminism: "The feminist march made on the birthday of the Apostle of our country has unique significance…[It was] the first time we women met publicly to represent our sisters of this Hemisphere to do something for our common good. As a Cuban woman, I am proud this important event for so great an ideal happened in my beloved land."[101]

These actions, as well as the feminists' continued lobbying and the appeal of their metaphor of equal rights for women and equal rights for the Americas, succeed in ultimately gaining an unofficial hearing for women on February 7. A number of Latin American delegates as well as entire delegations declared themselves heartily in favor of an open meeting.[102] Notably the list – Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Cuba, Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Paraguay – did not include the United States.

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[100] Alice Park Diary, January 28, 1928, Box 12, Park Collection. Her diary entry for January 29, 1928 also includes a newspaper clipping from *Havana Post* about the women's march; Dr. Margarita López, Secretary of Federación Nacional de Asociaciones Femeninas de Cuba, "A Significant Note in the Tribute to Martí," [undated], Box 93, Folder 19, Stevens Papers; Doris Stevens, "Support of Cuban Women," March 29, 1928, DS to Miss Isabel K. MacDermott; Jane Norman Smith to Mabel Vernon, January 28, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers; JNS to Clarence Smith, 29/30 January 1928, Folder 66, Box 2, Smith Papers.

[101] Señora Serafino R. d Rosado, Treasurer of Club Femenino of Cuba, "La Parada Feminista, Mis Impresiones," undated, Box 71, Folder 2, Stevens Papers.

Many of the individuals who most helped the women gain a hearing had advocated anti-interventionist policies and had seen their proposals get shut down by the U.S. delegation. Only a few days before the hearing, on February 4, Argentinian delegation chief Honorio Pueryerrdón boldly challenged U.S. military intervention in Latin America, defending the sovereignty of each nation state, and calling "diplomatic or armed intervention, whether permanent or temporary…an attack against the independence of states and…not justified by the duty of protection nations, as weak nations are, in their turn, unable to exercise such a right."[103] This was the sort of challenge to U.S. authority that the U.S. delegation had feared, and Charles Evan Hughes quickly quashed Pueryerrdón's proposal. It was Pueyrredon of Argentina who seconded the motion for the women's hearing, which enabled them to appear. Dr. Varela Acevedo, president of the Uruguayan delegation and ex-Minister of Uruguay in Washington, who had promoted Baltasar Brum and Paulina Luisi's vision of Pan-American feminism at the 1922 Baltimore Conference, initiated the motion for the women's hearing.[104]

Doris Stevens clearly recognized that she could utilize this moment of charged anti-imperialism at the conference in her favor. Her lover, *New Republic* writer Jonathan Mitchell, writing to her from New York, encouraged her to maximize on the metaphor of

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[102] Dr. Enrique Olaya Herrera, Colombian Minister in Washington; Dr. Bustamante, the Cuban president of the Conference; Dr. Ferrara of Cuba; Dr. Amézaga of Uruguay; Dr. Alfaro of Panama, Dr. Guerrero of Salvador, Dr. Garcia of Mexico.

[103] David Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States at the Sixth Pan American Conference (Havana 1928)* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1991), 1.

[104] Muna Lee de Munoz Marin, "Correspondence, Pan-American Women," 12, no. 3271 *The Nation* (March 14, 1928): 295.

"sovereignty" in her speech at the hearing – to "take a rap at the US" for denying the sovereignty of both Latin American nations and women:

> All the NY papers are filled for tomorrow with Pueyrredon's speech attacking the US. Naturally I'm cheering for Pueyrredon for showing up these stupid stuffed shirts up. But what I was wondering about was this – whether it would be nice to take a rap at the US in your speech before the plenary session. Along the lines [of] the US professing to welcome women as partners yet denying them opportunities – political, professional, industrial. I should think if this keeps up, this sovereignty business, the temper of the session would be such that the Lats would be ecstatic, and it would be…elegant news.[105]

Indeed, on February 7, 1928, in the Aula Magna (Great Hall) of the University of Havana, Doris Stevens drew a link between Latin American nations rebelling against being told what to do "for their own good" and women rebelling against men for doing the same to them:

> Enlightened women are in revolt against acts done for their good. We want no more laws written for our good and without our consent. We must have the right to direct our own destiny jointly with you…Since the beginning of time men, with the best intentions, no doubt, have been writing laws for our good; since the beginning of time brave and valiant women have been abolishing these same laws written for our good.[106]

Stevens was not the only one to utilize this metaphor. Seven other women spoke, uniting demands for women's equality to equality throughout the Americas, for workers of the Americas, and for small nations.[107] Addressing the packed hall of over two thousand people, Dr. Julia Martínez spoke of the interrelatedness of women's rights and "Cuban sovereignty" – what did it mean for Cuba to be "sovereign" if women did not have equal rights?[108] Muna Lee explicitly compared the dependent situation of women to the dependency of Puerto Rico:

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[105] Jonathan Mitchell to Stevens, February 4, 1928, Box 24, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[106] Stevens's speech, Stevens Papers.

[107] Jane Norman Smith to Mabel Vernon, February 28, 1928, Series I., Reel 38, NWP Papers; Stevens, Smith, Lee, Pilar Jorge de Tella, Maria Montalvo de Soto Navarro, Dr. Julia Martinez, and Dr. Angela Mariana Zaldivar, and Plintha Woss Y Gil from the Dominican Republic, spoke.

> Our position as women, amongst you free citizens of Pan America, is like the position of my Porto Rico in the community of American States. We have everything done for us and given us but sovereignty. We are treated with every consideration save the one great consideration of being regarded as responsible beings. We, like Porto Rico, are dependents. We are anomolies before the law.[109]

Pilar Jorge de Tella furthered a feminism of social justice when she spoke that day on behalf of not only the Club Femenino, but also of the women workers in the Gremio de Despalilladoras (the Tobacco Stemmers' Guild) the largest organization of working women in Cuba, representing 1500 women. *El País* noted that "For the first time a women's organization of a worker character has been represented in a suffrage act."[110]

Lee and Stevens also countered notions of U.S. women's superiority. Lee explained that their ideal was "a Pan-Americanism that includes everyone, that excludes no one, that deliberately chooses to set aside class differences...No woman in America believes that she should have disproportionate advantage over her sisters to the north or the south." Stevens explicitly challenged the assumption that Latin American women were not equipped for the vote and pointed out the difference between the egalitarianism of herself and NWP members versus the opinions about Latin American women of some in the U.S., including, implicitly, Carrie Chapman Catt:

> one of our compatriots [has said] that equal rights may be all right for the women of North America, but that the women of Latin America are not yet ready for them. We women resent and disbelieve in any hint of sectional superiority…We

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[108] Dra. Julia Martínez speech, Habana, February, 1928, Stevens Papers.

[109] Muna Lee's speech to delegates, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers. Puerto Rican newspaper, *El Mundo*, noted that "for the first time the status of Puerto Rico was mentioned in a plenary session of the Pan-American conference." "El 'status' de Puerto Rico planteado incidentalmente ante la Conferencia Pan-americana," *El Mundo* (Puerto Rico), February 9, 1928, 1.

[110] "Representadas las obreras en la Conferencia" *El País* (Havana), February 7, 1928.

> do not believe that the men of North America are called upon to be tender protectors of the women of Latin America. We do not look with approval upon this attempt to divide women. Our subjection is world-wide. The abolition of our subjection will be accomplished by world-wide solidarity of women.[111]

Although only a handful of the delegates at the conference voted for the Equal Rights Treaty, which did not pass, the women achieved much. For the first time in history, women addressed an inter-governmental conference to speak on behalf of women's rights. [112] Also, the Pan American Union voted to establish an inter-governmental organization, the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW). It would consist of one female delegate from every country of the Western hemisphere and would have an office in the Pan American Union headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Many Cuban women celebrated these feats, hopeful that they would help motivate the passage of women's suffrage there and optimistic about the establishment of a Pan-American feminism that would survive the 1928 meeting – one of mutuality and common good. The Club Femenino hosted the NWP women for a good-bye lunch the day they left Havana, expressing their desire to continue their praxis in the future. Doris Stevens announced that "the women of the Americas will never retreat from the ties made at Havana."[113]

Their international collaboration impacted the national women's movements in both the U.S. and Cuba. In Havana, feminists reenergized their push for suffrage. In May, 1928, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Pilar Jorge de Tella, and Hortensia Lamar, gathered with a cohort from the Club Femenino to petition the president for the right to vote. In September, Ofelia Domínguez and Pilar Jorge de Tella helped merge a number of groups to form a broad-based feminist group, the "Alianza Nacional Feminista," which would uphold a "united front for the vote." Although it did not achieve the vote, by the end of 1928, it became among the most active and influential of Cuba's feminist organizations. [114] Elena Mederos González, a member of the Alianza who became the IACW's representative in Cuba, recalled that the February 7 session in the Aula Magna had helped incite the activism necessary to the creation of the Alianza: "it was a milestone in the history of feminism and a seed sown in the progress of Cuban women, contributing perhaps more than any other sole event to their realizing all they lacked. Many of us hearing the fervent words spoken by women of different countries… words that inspired faith in a future that could only be reached by joint action…Many of us awoke."

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[111] Doris Stevens speech February 7, 1928, Box 91, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

[112] Hill notes, "never before had women formally addressed an inter-governmental conference to speak on behalf of the rights of women as human beings and not in a specific capacity as mothers or workers." Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 44.

[113] Stevens, "Showing Solidarity of American Women," Box 70, Folder 15, Stevens Papers.

Back in the United States, the NWP promoted itself as the rebellious force that had intervened in the conference and formed the IACW. In the spirit of the solidarity its members had forged with Latin American women and men disgruntled with the prevailing Pan-American system of U.S. domination, Muna Lee published an article in the *Nation* in which she proudly proclaimed that "Sandino was kept out of the Sixth Pan American conference, but the Woman's Party of the United States got in." [115] While they praised the contributions of Cuban women, whom they realized were far from the

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[114] Elena M Gonzalez speech at the 1930 Meeting in Havana, Box 11, Folder 13, Stevens Papers, 1st Conference IACW - …speeches… February 1930; Lillian Mederos de Baralt to Doris Stevens, November 13, 1928, Box 60, Folder 5, Stevens Papers, describes the newly-formed Alianza as "rapidly becoming powerful and has great chances of success;" Stoner, *From the House to the Street*, 73.

[115] Muna Lee de Munoz Marin, "Correspondence, Pan-American Women," 12, no. 3271 *The Nation* (March 14, 1928): 295.

"shrinking, conservative [and] timid," stereotypes and "far more aggressive than we are," they also viewed the NWP as the leader of a Pan-American feminist movement.[116] Doris Stevens proudly proclaimed that "international feminism was born in Havana" and official NWP bulletins emphasized the leadership the NWP had taken in the conference.[117]

In the spring of 1928, when the Pan American Union named Doris Stevens to be the IACW chairman many Cuban feminists expressed their congratulations and high hopes for her continuing a Pan-Americanism in the spirit of the 1928 Havana Conference. Ofelia Domínguez still had great expectations for the organization, which had enlisted her good friend and co-collaborator at the 1926 Panama conference, Clara González, to be one of the first commissioners of the Inter-American Commission of Women, representing Panama. They maintained faith that the IACW would continue a spirit of equality and justice for the Americas, one that Domínguez and González had promoted back in 1926 in Panama. This was the sort of confidence Maria Montalvo de Soto Navarro had when she wrote to her friend Doris Stevens in 1929, asking her, as a Pan-American sister and as the leader of the IACW, to help Cuban women ask US companies to lower tariffs and to help promote Cuban national agriculture and industry, for the sake of the suffering Cuban economy and independence.[118] There is, however, no record of Stevens's response to Montalvo.

It appears that Montalvo may have been all too right when she had viewed the NWP as "disinterested" back in 1928. The leaders of the IACW and the NWP were never truly interested in anything that did not have to do with "equal rights" as they defined it – women's equal political and civil legal rights. They were perhaps more progressive than their compatriot Carrie Chapman Catt, in that they did believe that Latin American women deserved the same rights that U.S. women did, but they never intended to actually implement an "equal rights" agenda for Latin American freedom more broadly. For the NWP, the language they invoked at the conference, the supple use of "equal rights," had been a means to an end.

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[116] Jane Norman Smith to Mabel Vernon, January 26, 1928, Series I, Reel 38, NWP Papers.
[117] Doris Stevens Press Release 1928, Stevens Papers.
[118] Maria Montalvo de Soto Navarro to Doris Stevens, August 21, 1929, and Alianza Nacionalista Feminista, "Al Pueblo de Cuba," August 21, 1929, Box 60, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

In the historiography of U.S.-Latin American relations, the 1928 conference is usually seen as a turning-point – either the nadir of U.S.-Latin American relations after which they improved, or the starting-point of the Good Neighbor Policy, after which the U.S. declared a policy of non-intervention and non-interference in the affairs of Latin America.[119] For Pan-American feminism, the creation of the IACW was not only a turning-point but also something of an ending-point. It was the culmination of several years of hopes for a Pan-American feminism of mutuality and anti-hegemony between U.S. and Latin American feminists – visions that had been steered by a number of Latin American feminists, including Paulina Luisi, and by Ofelia Domínguez Navarro and Clara González at the 1926 Panama Conference. When the NWP took control of the IACW, however, it set forth an agenda that alienated a number of its former adherents. Its strict emphasis on women's equal civil and political rights during times of national upheaval – including the Great Depression and the rise of workers' and Communist movements – alienated many Latin American feminists who had previously found hope in their rhetoric of equal rights among nations.

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[119] Grandin, "Your Americanism and Mine."

Chapter 3
The Politics of Pan-American Feminism, 1928-1933

From July to October, 1928, the U.S. National Woman's Party (NWP) distributed a press photograph along with their announcement of the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW). Readers of the U.S. National Business Women journal *Independent Woman*, the New York Spanish-language weekly *Gráfico*, the Panama daily *Gráfico*, and other publications throughout the U.S. and Latin America, saw an image of two women cordially conversing in the shade of coconut trees.[1] The women were Doris Stevens, the U.S. Chairman of the Commission and a NWP member, and Panamanian delegate Clara González, a vibrant feminist leader in her country. They sat in the tropical courtyard of the Washington, D.C.-based Pan American Union building that now housed the IACW.[2] Stevens and González, the first constituents of what would be a twenty-one-member organization, one from each republic of the Western Hemisphere, were already getting down to business. The IACW's objective, as defined by the NWP, would be to advance uniform and equal political and civil rights for women throughout all the Americas. With modern hairstyles and clothes complementing their unorthodox feminist work, González and Stevens represented new faces of a Pan-Americanism founded on equality, not dominance. They suggested a Pan-American feminism of unity and friendship among women of the New World.

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[1] Muna Lee, "Woman's Place in the Sun: An Inter-American Commission Will Seek it by Developing Uniform Laws for Women in this Hemisphere," *Independent Woman*, October 1928, 434; "Sufragio Femenina," *Gráfico* (New York) July 29, 1928, 5; "El Feminismo Avance!" *Gráfico* (Panama City) August, 1928.

[2] The courtyard of the Pan American Union, covered by a glass roof, was a year-round botanical garden of coconut trees, as well as banana, rubber, and fig plants. In 1910 President William Taft planted what became the famous "Peace Tree," there; it was a graft of a rubber and fig tree to represent the fusion of cultures the Pan American Union represented. Robert Alexander González, *Designing Pan-America: Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 67-69.

The photograph, however, obscured a great deal. The IACW would take several years to collect its other Latin American commissioners, of whom Clara González would not be typical. She was one of the only Latin American delegates who could afford to work in the Washington, D.C. headquarters, mostly populated by volunteer U.S. NWP members. On a fellowship from the Panamanian government to study law and penal institutions for women and delinquent youth at New York University, González traveled between New York City and Washington, D.C. from 1929 to 1930. In spite of being in charge of IACW legal research, she like the other women who worked in the Commission, including Stevens herself, did not receive a salary. Though the Pan American Union gave the IACW office space, it provided no funding.[3] Over the course of her time there, González became deeply disenchanted with Doris Stevens and the NWP's unilateral leadership of the Commission, which integrated little to no input from Latin American feminists. González found the IACW's agenda focused too narrowly on "equal rights" as the U.S. National Woman's Party defined it: obtaining equal political and civil rights for women under the law. While González heartily advocated these legislative goals, she believed a Pan-American feminist agenda should be more inclusive of working women, particularly during the profound social and economic displacements of the Great Depression, and should also critique U.S. hegemony in the inter-American realm. But she would repeatedly find her attempts to draw chairman Doris Stevens's attention to issues aside from equal political and civil rights, or to increase Latin

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[3] Yolanda Marco Serra, *Clara González de Behringer: Biografía* (Panamá: Edición Hans Roeder, 2007), 97-8.

American representation in the IACW, rebuffed. Indeed, the friendly rapport in the photograph proved to be artful NWP propaganda, more fictional than real.

González's disappointment with the IACW over its first five years reflected a broader consensus throughout Latin America. A number of leading Latin American feminists would levy harsh critiques against its uni-lateralism and narrow goals under Doris Stevens's leadership. Assertively and strategically, they attempted to reconfigure a Pan-American feminism of more expansive "equal rights." They embraced not only legislative change but a broader, more idealized social and political agenda, which included economic and social justice for women and children as well as international multi-lateralism. Above all, they sought to fuse a respect for shifting local political contexts throughout the Americas with a Western-Hemisphere-wide commitment to collective solidarity. Demanding to be heard, and turning to each other in correspondence and friendship, they developed a more vital base for their feminist activism in the Americas.

This chapter examines how the IACW provoked a number of Latin American feminists to deepen their critiques of a U.S.-centered and solely equal-rights-based agenda, and, in the process, influenced the politics of Pan-American feminism. Here, "politics" refers both to the competing ideological goals of Pan-American feminism, as well as to its internal dynamics. Indeed, the way the IACW organized itself, chose commissioners, structured meetings, affiliated itself with and/or distanced itself from governments, and operated internally, provided the bases for many of the criticisms Latin American feminists leveraged against it. These internal politics of the IACW reinforced for many that the organization was not committed to a broad notion of "equal rights."

The debates and friendships among the individuals who organized and led Pan-American feminism, provide a vital window into a movement that depended as much on interpersonal relationships as on ideology.

Just as González's disappointments with the IACW could not be seen in her photograph with Stevens, however, her and other Latin Americans' alternative vision for Pan-American feminism are not evident from the U.S. archives of Doris Stevens or the National Woman's Party. Most scholarly work on the IACW draws from these archives to trace how the NWP forwarded new international laws concerning women's rights from 1928 to 1933. During these years, Doris Stevens and the IACW pioneered an Equal Rights and Equal Nationality Treaty and led a campaign for married women's nationality rights at the 1930 League of Nations' Hague Codification Conference. While important accounts of international activism, these histories, usually drawn only from archival material in the United States, are silent or speculative about whether the IACW lived up to its promise of drawing together a multi-lateral Pan-American feminist movement among women of the Americas. They also do not integrate the vibrant challenges the IACW received from Latin American feminists who held markedly different aspirations for Pan-American feminism.[4]

This chapter attempts to fill that void by examining the first five years of the IACW through the lens of transnational feminist organizing. It tells the story of the initial years of the organization not only from the perspective of chairman Doris Stevens but also from those of Uruguayan feminist Paulina Luisi and Cuban feminist Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, a friend of Clara González. Despite Stevens's attempts to cast the IACW as a semi-autonomous group of women, collaborating on equal terms for feminism, social justice, and international equality, Luisi and Domínguez recognized the IACW's insincerity in this mission for multi-lateralism. Disappointed with Doris Stevens's leadership and narrow vision, they contested the IACW's exclusive claim over Pan-American feminism, even as they recognized the significance of its work for women's international legal equality. Through their networks of Latin American activists, and through a friendship with each other, Luisi and Domínguez worked as a team to fashion a Pan-American feminist alternative. Their mutual history with U.S. hegemony served to strengthened their commitment to a broader multi-lateral Pan-American feminism that gave primacy to international collaboration and local politics and expanded beyond political and civil laws. Unlike the photogenic image of fellowship between González and Stevens in the Pan American Union building in 1928, the friendship between Luisi and Domínguez was not contrived. It grew from shared Pan-American feminism politics – support for their tumultuous national political contexts, flexible notions of women's rights that included working women, and opposition to U.S. hegemony.

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[4] Ellen Carol DuBois, "Internationalizing Married Women's Nationality: The Hague Campaign of 1930," *Globalizing Feminisms: 1789-1945*, ed., Karen Offen (London: Routledge, 2010): 204-216; Beatrice McKenzie, "The Power of International Positioning: The National Woman's Party, International Law, and Diplomacy," *Gender & History* 23, no. 1 (April 2011): 130-146; Diane Elizabeth Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights: The Equality Treaties Campaign of the National Woman's Party and Reactions of the U.S. State Department and the National League of Women Voters (1928-1938)," (PhD Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1999).

Doris Stevens and the "Non-Political" Agenda of the Inter-American Commission of Women

In April, 1928, just months after the Havana conference, NWP organ *Equal Rights* proudly proclaimed that the sponsorship of the IACW by the Pan American Union made the group the first inter-governmental organization of women in the world. The IACW marked an unprecedented step forward for international feminism: "For the first time in the history of the world, an international group composed of representatives of governments has empowered women to sit as a permanent committee to study the status of women and to recommend measures to make men and women equal before the law."[5] However, aware that many in Latin America disdained the Pan American Union because of its U.S. dominance, IACW chairman Doris Stevens also emphasized the IACW's independence from the Union and from the U.S. government more broadly. In these early days of its formation, she wanted to garner wide Latin American support.

Stevens could claim independence from the Pan American Union (PAU) with some truth. Although the Pan American Union had formally "fathered" the IACW and would help facilitate the naming of the initial seven delegates, Union director Leo Rowe was not eager to lend it much additional support. Unwillingly, he did provide the IACW with office space in the Colombus Room of its Washington D.C. headquarters; however Stevens and her colleagues were only able to claim the space after nearly a year of haggling for it.[6] The PAU offered the IACW no funding. Finding itself "a sort of illegitimate child which the [Pan American Union] had come to recognize in spite of itself," as future Chilean delegate Marta Vergara later put it, the IACW acquired its capital from wealthy individuals, such as NWP patron Alva Belmont as well as, beginning in 1931, the Carnegie Endowment for Peace.[7]

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[5] "Doris Stevens Heads Pan-American Women's Committee," *Equal Rights*, April 14, 1928, 77.

[6] Doris Stevens to Jonathan Mitchell, June 20, 1928, Box 24, Folder 4; Stevens to Betty Archdale, February 14, 1929, Box 60, Folder 14, Doris Stevens Papers, 1884-1983 (Stevens Papers); MC546, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Lack of financial support from the Pan American Union, however, freed the IACW from associations with the Union and its politics. In newspaper articles and press releases, the IACW propaganda department emphasized that they worked without Union funding and were a "non-political" and "non-partisan" group.[8] Stevens would capitalize on this idea of financial and political independence from U.S. interests in her first public act as IACW chairman: disruption of the Kellogg-Briand Peace Treaty signing in August, 1928.

In the optimistic post-World-War I period that gave unprecedented faith to international institutions and treaties, many in the United States and Europe believed the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Treaty – the famous renouncement of war as "an instrument of national policy" – near sacred.[9] Stevens, on the other hand, tended to agree with those who deemed it superficial and called it an "international kiss."[10] She and Alice Paul saw it as an auspicious opportunity to bring international attention to the new IACW and its Equal Rights Treaty. Paul suggested that on Stevens's way to a League of Nations meeting in Geneva where she would consult with European feminists about the upcoming Hague Codification Conference in 1930, Stevens might take a detour to France for the signing of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty. Stevens's efforts in Europe, both women hoped, would help propel the IACW Equal Rights agenda into the League of Nations' upcoming codification conference on international law. Since the Kellogg-Briand peace treaty signing in France would occur just before the League of Nations meeting, Stevens planned to ask the treaty signers to also endorse the Equal Rights Treaty. Whether the male delegates agreed to support the treaty or not, such an event would announce the IACW to the world.[11]

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[7] Marta Vergara, *Memorias de una mujer irreverente* (Santiago: Zig-zag, 1961), 95; IACW Cash Books, 1929-1931, Box 98, Folder 1; Statements of Receipts and Disbursements, February 17, 1929-October 15, 1933, Box 99, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

[8] "Panama Has 27-Year-Old Portia," *Baltimore Sun*, July 22, 1928; "Women Labor Without Pay to Help Sex," *New York Telegram*, July 30, 1928.

[9] "Briand-Kellogg Pact Renouncing Warfare Signed by 15 Nations," *Washington Post*, August 28, 1928, 1; "15 Nations Sign Treaty Written by Briand-Kellogg Renouncing Aggression," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 28, 1928. The Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact resulted from the suggestion of French foreign minister Anatole Briand suggesting that his country and the United States sign a pact outlawing war between them. Zara S. Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919-1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 572-4.

[10] Missouri Senator James Reed called it an "international kiss," which became a much-quoted description of Kellogg-Briand. Steiner, *Lights that Failed*, 573. Stevens's soon-to-be husband James Mitchell ridiculed the Kellogg-Briand peace pact in correspondence with Stevens, August 26, 1928, Box 24, Folder 4, Stevens Papers. Later, Mitchell would write that the Kellogg-Briand treaty "assum[ed]… a make-believe world, in which governments are not nationalistic, greedy for power and economically selfish." Jonathan Mitchell, *Goose Steps to Peace* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1931), 271.

In Paris in the days before the signing, Stevens rallied a group of feminists from the U.S. and Europe to insist that U.S. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, French foreign minister Aristide Briand, and other delegates, grant a joint hearing on the IACW's Equal Rights Treaty. Kellogg demurred, and newspaper articles abounded censuring Stevens's actions as in scandalously bad taste.[12] Public remonstration, however, did not stop Stevens from leading nine women in a demonstration for equal rights outside Chateau Rambouillet, the French President's private residence where Kellogg and other treaty-signers lunched. When asked to leave, the women retaliated by trying to break through the guards in front of the palace. Newspapers reported that

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[11] Stevens to Lady Rhondda, August 16, 1928, Box 89, Folder 2, Stevens Papers.

[12] "Mrs. Kellogg Criticizes Women's Tactics in Paris," *New York Sun*, August 27, 1928; "Mrs. Kellogg Raps Plan of Feminists," *Evening Post*, August 27, 1928; "Feminists' Plea in Paris Rebuked by Mrs. Kellogg," *New York American*, August 28, 1928; "Mrs. Kellogg's Rebuke Angers Feminists," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 28, 1928.

Stevens led these efforts, attempting to barrel through the guards herself three times and organizing a "flank attack." Police arrested and jailed Stevens and her cohort, making first-page news around the world. The women remained in custody only three hours during which time they stood at the jailhouse windows dropping Equal Rights Treaty pamphlets to cheering supporters below.[13]

While many, including some of her fellow members of the NWP, believed Stevens's tactics shocking and distasteful, others found them heroic for underscoring the progress of Latin American equality on the world stage.[14] From Washington, D.C. Panamanian IACW delegate Clara González compared Stevens's actions and arrest in Rambouillet to her leadership months earlier in Havana, where Latin American delegates had embraced the Equal Rights Treaty. González told the press that "the arrests are unequivocal proof that the old world is behind the new in its attitude toward women and their rights. We Latin American women are proud to proclaim a splendid response by

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[13] One newspaper article reported that Stevens "tried to crash through the lines of bronzed and steel helmeted poilus and was politely turned back…she made a flank attack and was ordered away by an officer. Once more she attempted to break through the lines and this time the police seized her and her cohorts and marched them off to the police station where, through the iron bars of a first floor window she harangued the multitude in both French and English and flung armfuls of pamphlets to her boisterous audience below," "Doris Stevens Seized During Palace Riot," *New York American*, August 29, 1928. A selection of the press surrounding the event includes: "10 Women Arrested at Dinner to Envoys," *New York Times*, August 29, 1928, 1; "Feminists Raid Pact Envoys And Doris Stevens is Jailed," *New York Evening Post*, August 28, 1928, 1; "Algunas feministas han sido arrestadas ayer cerca de París," *La Prensa* (New York), August 29, 1928; "Arrests Ten Feminists in Riot," *Los Angeles Herald*, August 28, 1928, 1; "U.S. Feminists Jailed Trying to Invade Peace Pact Treaty," *Washington Post*, August 29, 1928; "Women's 'Equal Rights' Storm," *The Daily Mail* (London), August 29, 1928; "Votes for Women," *The Argus* (Melbourne), August 29, 1928; "Equal Rights Scene in Paris," *The Courier* (Brisbane), August 29, 1928; "Women Advance Equality Rights," *The Paris Times*, August 28, 1928; "Numerosas Sufragistas Fueron Arrestadas en Rambouillet, Francia," *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), August 29, 1928; "Domergue Agasajo a los Delegados," *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), August 29, 1928.

[14] Alva Belmont to Alice Paul, October 23, 1928, Box 84, Folder 16; Jane Norman Smith, "Excerpts from letter, Mrs. Belmont to Miss Paul," August 29, 1928, Box 39, Folder 139, Alice Paul Papers (Paul Papers), 1895-1977, MC 399, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Latin-America to a treaty for equal rights."[15] Statements like these claimed the position of revolutionary vanguard for the IACW, contrasting an old, reactionary, unmistakably imperialist Europe to the new, free Americas.

Still other Latin Americans in the international realm expressed pleasure with what they saw as the same feminism of inter-American justice and opposition to U.S. hegemony that had pervaded the women's rebellious protests in Havana. Stevens's actions seemed to epitomize objections to U.S. Secretary of State Kellogg as much as to women's inequality. Kellogg was not popular in Latin America. As head of the Governing Board of the Pan American Union, he had overseen U.S. interventions in the region, including the violent onslaught of marines in Nicaragua. Many Latin American intellectuals and statesmen believed Kellogg and Briand to be, as one Puerto Rican writer put it, "pit[iable]…buffoons," and their peace treaty a ludicrous contradiction.[16] The international Communist party had staged demonstrations in Paris before the Peace Treaty meeting to protest U.S. imperialism. In this light Doris Stevens's activism took on anti-U.S. or at least anti-Kellogg implications. A Communist paper, the *New York Worker*, claimed Stevens's actions as their own in the fight against imperialism, calling her arrest in France "the first military victory won by the Kellogg Peace Treaty."[17]

Though anti-imperialist convictions did not drive Stevens in Rambouillet, she was a canny politician. Proceeding from France to the League of Nations meeting in Geneva, she capitalized on such interpretations of her actions to advance support for the Equal Rights Treaty. In Geneva, Stevens collaborated with Orestes Ferrara, the League of Nations delegate from Cuba whom she had met in Havana earlier that year. Pleased with Stevens's demonstrations in France, he ardently championed her mission to include women as plenipotentiaries in future international conferences. Ferrara, "insists on introducing me as 'the young woman who was arrested in Paris for disturbing Mr. Kellogg,'" Stevens reported to the IACW secretary in Washington, D.C., "This seems to delight all the Latin Americans. I gather that Mr. Kellogg is not one of their pets."[18] Ferrara introduced her proposal, which the legal committee of the League of Nations Assembly subsequently approved, granting the appointment of women as delegates to the following year's Conference for the Codification of International Law at The Hague. This event would mark the first time women would participate as plenipotentiaries in any League of Nations meeting.[19]

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[15] Clara González quoted in "Votes for Women, Paris Demonstration," *The Argus* (Melbourne, Australia), August 30, 1928. González also quoted in "Doris Stevens Jailed in France for Rights Protest," *Washington Herald*, August 29, 1928, 3.

[16] Clotilde Betances Jaeger quoted in Marisabas Aloma "Efectivamente, Sra Chapman Catt," *Feminismo*, (Editorial Oriente: Santiago de Cuba, 2000, original pub date 1930), 172.

[17] Transcription of untitled *New York Worker* article, September 3, 1928, by Alice Park, in letter from Alice Park to IACW, September 28, 1928, Box 84, Folder 16, Stevens Papers; "Police of Paris Out in Force to Curb Reds," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 29, 1928.

Stevens's actions in Rambouillet lived on as concrete evidence that the IACW would not be part and parcel of the Pan American Union. Anti-imperialist Máximo Soto Hall, the originator of the 1923 proposal that had given life to the commission, praised the NWP leadership of the IACW in the belief that they would "do the work of peace…; fraternity…; [and] equality, without which justice cannot exist."[20] At a Washington, D.C. luncheon in 1931 Senator Pierre Hondicourt of Haiti toasted Stevens for her arrest at

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[18] Stevens to Elsie Ross Shields, September 20, 1928, Box 90, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[19] "Women Win at Geneva," *New York Times*, September 14, 1928.

[20] "Woman's Party Welcomes Dr. Soto-Hall," *Equal Rights*, June 29, 1929, 164. The year before Soto Hall published a book critiquing U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua, Máximo Soto Hall, *Nicaragua y el imperialismo norteamericano* (Buenos Aires: Artes y Letras, 1928).

Rambouillet two years earlier, and Stevens rejoined with a toast to Hondicourt, a "fellow political prisoner," who had been imprisoned in Haiti by U.S. marines.[21]

Perhaps the most explicit endorsement of the IACW for its independence from U.S.-led Pan-Americanism came from a group of young Latin American students in the United States. Committed to "the liberation of the Latin American people," the New York Chapter of the Federación Latinoamericana (an organization to which Clara González belonged) gave the Commission their formal endorsement because of its ideological autonomy from the Pan American Union. The Union and its conferences, they explained, promoted "the sinister alliance which…exists among all the…special interests," and embraced the "sordid ambitions which have guided…some strong nations…against our people…with nefarious results."[22] The fact that the Commission had emerged from a conference of the Pan American Union could not "detract prestige from the cause [of the IACW], nor lessen the importance or sympathy on the part of the Latin American people," the statement insisted. "The vindication of women's rights is really a fight of universal principals," and "just causes cannot be obstructed…on account of the circumstances of their origin."[23]

Without explicitly making opposition to U.S. hegemony part of the IACW agenda, Stevens's emphasis on distance from the Pan American Union encouraged the generous visions of many who optimistically imagined a multi-lateral group advocating women's rights would also fight more broadly for equality in the Americas. The IACW enjoyed the support of those who held these views. However, the Commission would never mount a broader fight for the Americas or explicitly critique U.S. hegemony. For Stevens, Rambouillet did not mean an alternative, anti-hegemonic Pan-Americanism; it meant promoting women's civil and political rights, and, now that they had an entrée to the upcoming Hague Codification Conference, nationality rights for married women.

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[21] "Memorandum for Miss Muna Lee," November 3, 1931, Box 79, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

[22] Clara González to Doris Stevens, December 27, 1929, Box 84, Folder 7, Stevens Papers; see also Clara González, "The Inter American Commission of Women Honored. Latin American Federation Praises Its Work and Offers Fullest Support," undated, Box 84, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

[23] "Message Received from the Latin American Federation by the Inter American Commission of Women on Their First Conference in Havana, February 23, 1930," dated February 12, 1930, Box 71, Folder 11, Stevens Papers.

Stevens and Alice Paul decided that independent nationality rights for married women would be the first campaign of the IACW. Despite the Cable Act of 1922, women in the United States still did not have equal nationality rights. Stevens and Paul had long thought the ideal moment to push for these rights would be at the Hague conference, where nationality and domicile issues were being considered. As early as June, 1928, before most IACW delegates had been appointed, they consulted James Brown Scott, international lawyer and co-founder of the American Institute of International Law, and Isabel K. MacDermott, Leo Rowe's assistant at the Pan American Union, and decided that Nationality Law would be the first topic of study for the IACW. Now that women's entrance to the League of Nations conference had been secured, they proceeded with their plans.[24] Nationality law would allow them to promote the IACW as representing the more progressive Americas in contrast to hidebound Europe. Already in four countries in the Western Hemisphere – Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay – a woman did not forfeit her nationality upon marrying an alien, and these countries' nationality laws had no distinctions based on sex.[25]

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[24] Stevens to González, September 5, 1928, Box 84, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

[25] The Soviet Union joined the list in 1930. Part of the reason a number of Western Hemisphere countries did not distinguish nationality laws based on sex was because many of these countries

Stevens saw nothing wrong with or inherently unequal in her and Paul unilaterally determining this agenda for the IACW, before any of the Latin American IACW delegates had been enlisted. She believed her leadership exactly what the IACW needed to advance its mission for the freedom of women. As a veteran of a successful woman suffrage campaign in the United States, Stevens felt uniquely capable of representing women throughout the Western Hemisphere who had not yet won the right to vote.

Stevens's skills as a savvy organizer were only matched by her faith in herself as a torchbearer for progressive historical change. The grandness of her self-image can be glimpsed through the personal letters from her paramour Jonathan Mitchell, who, without irony, compared her to such historical greats and canonized saints as Jean-Jacques Rosseau, Woodrow Wilson, Vladimir Lenin, Martin Luther, and Joan of Arc.[26] Stevens's sense of individual capacity was tethered to her sense of proper feminist strategy. Key to any social movement's success, she believed, was an individual leader's drive, dogged

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determined nationality by the rule of *jus soli*, or place of birth. These countries, which were receiving large immigrant populations determined nationality by *jus soli* as a means to stop the sustenance and reproduction of different nationalities within their borders. (Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 118) For histories of nationality law and women in the U.S., see Candice Lewis Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own: Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and Nancy Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (December, 1998): 1440-1474.

[26] Mitchell to Stevens, February 5, 1928, Box 24, Folder 4, Stevens Papers: "It's like when Martin Luther lifted up his low German voice; when J.J. Rosseau spoke from Geneva. They spoke and the hearts of men leaped all over the world. They knew suddenly that the pomp of the church, in Luther's case, and of the state, in R.'s case, were really tripe. They knew suddenly that they let themselves be slaves…Because you are tackling the oldest, deepest, most bitter despotism in the world, so your speech and your stand is the noblest. Your speech will make Woodrow's 14 Points, sound like advocacy of Apple Week, and Brighter Homes…You're the true St. Joan." Of her speech at Rambouillet, he wrote her, "Historic. Sweetest person, history is going to date from your speech to the pleniopotentiaries." He called her actions "the advent of a signal…the coming of a girl, the like of whom has never before been seen in international conferences…a woman who comes stripped of woman's traditional magical qualities, who comes as a diplomat only, to exercise power in the settlement of the world's affairs." Mitchell to Stevens, August 22, 1928, Box 24, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

persistence, and transgression of rules. Hero worship functioned more broadly as NWP strategy. As Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor have noted, "the phenomenon of leader-follower relationships was important" to the "unapologetically hierarchical" NWP.[27] Many believed that Stevens possessed uncommon oratorical and organizational skill and derring-do, and wanted to follow her lead. A letter that Viscountess Rhondda, president of the British egalitarian Six Point Group, wrote to Stevens after Rambouillet speaks to the almost mythological premium placed on Stevens's capacities as a heroic leader:

> The more I think of [Rambouillet], the more it seems to me a mistake – a cheap jack sort of thing - & yet you were succeeding in making people feel it was quite dignified & all right – hypnotizing them really…Your powers are only just short of magical…I've never seen any organizing in the world to begin to touch it – it's that capacity for throwing the whole of yourself into one channel, rushing towards one aim; & that there's nothing left of you to see, or hear, or think except towards what you mean to get - & you can exhaust yourself past all human possibility & yet continue to think clearly, & keep your mental & nervous balance. It's almost unbelievable – a kind of absolute self-immolation.[28]

Stevens's magnetism and political and organization prowess, combined with the hierarchical NWP structure, contributed to her promotion among the IACW as single-handedly responsible for its success. As Betty Archdale, a young British feminist who worked with the Commission in Washington, D.C. wrote in a speech, "It is impossible to put into words the debt women owe to Miss Stevens…Who can doubt that under her leadership the Commission will raise the status of women to a position of equality on this whole hemisphere?"[29] This unalloyed admiration for Doris Stevens, however, did not represent the opinions of many women in the Americas, who resented Stevens's leadership of Pan-American feminism and believed her incapable of speaking for them.

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[27] Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, *Survival in Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 102.
[28] Viscountess Rhondda to Doris Stevens, August 27, 1928, Box 35, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.
[29] Betty Archdale, "The Inter American Commission of Women," undated, Box 60, Folder 14, Stevens Papers.

Paulina Luisi and the IACW

One feminist who believed she owed no debt to Doris Stevens was Uruguay's Paulina Luisi. Luisi had retreated from Pan-American cooperation with U.S. feminists after being disappointed by U.S. League of Women Voters (LWV) domination at the 1922 Pan-American Conference in Baltimore. In the following six years, she had busied herself with the Uruguayan suffrage battle, her work on the Committee on the Traffic of Women and Children in the League of Nations, and the International Alliance of Women, which took her on frequent trips throughout Europe. At the same time, she was also developing stronger Pan-Hispanic feminist convictions through her work with the *Liga Internacional de Mujeres Ibéricas y Hispanoamericanas*, founded by Mexican feminist and author, Elena Arizmendi. Luisi and Arizmendi's friendship had blossomed amidst their shared disappointment with the 1922 LWV Pan American Conference. In 1923 Arizmendi founded the *Liga*, enlisting Luisi as its Vice President and Spanish feminist Carmen de Burgos as its President. Inspired by the increasingly popular concepts of *hispanismo* and *la raza* as a means of uniting all Spanish-speaking people against U.S. hegemony, the *Liga* provided an alternative to U.S.-led Pan-American feminism. It took up a multi-pronged stance for the liberation of the Americas as well as for women's rights.[30]

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[30] For an excellent study of the Liga see Christine Ehrick, "Il femminismi ispanici, pan-americani e atlantici, fra le due guerre," *Genesis: Revista Della Società Italiana della Storiche.* 8, no. 2 (2009): 41-64. Ehrick suggests the term "South Atlantic Feminism" as a "useful shorthand to

In August, 1928, just before the events in Rambouillet, Arizmendi wrote to Luisi that she believed the IACW had no real desire to be multi-lateral or to embrace the interests of Latin American women. Women in the United States may have gotten the vote, she told Luisi, they had not "purified their politics." The NWP's attempt to fashion a Pan-American feminism was no better than those made by the League of Women Voters before them:

> Who better than I knows the motives and the way in which they [women in the United States] develop their propaganda in favor of the domain that they want to have over the Latin woman. Currently, there are two big parties of political women in the arena: the League of Women Voters and the National Woman's Party of the U.S. Both fight for supremacy, and this they want to accomplish by doing something that is favorable to the politics of their country.[31]

Arizmendi had been skeptical of Doris Stevens's motives as soon as she had heard about the speeches Stevens and Jane Norman Smith gave at the 1928 Havana Conference. In a *Revista de la Raza* article she had condemned them for being "vain" and for not recognizing the much earlier efforts of Latin American feminists who had long been fighting for women's equality.[32] However, the fact that the government diplomats affiliated with the Pan American Union would be nominating the representatives of the IACW signified to Arizmendi "a new insult to our intellect and a new violation of our rights.[33]

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describe a category of counter-hegemonic feminist communities that challenged or at least sought to circumvent North Atlantic feminist hegemony." (42-43) See also Gabriela Cano, *Se llamaba Elena Arizmendi* (Mexico, D.F.: Tusquets, 2010).

[31] Arizmendi to Paulina Luisi, August 15, 1928, Carpeta "A," Archivo Paulina Luisi, Biblioteca Nacional, Montevideo, Uruguay (PL-BN).

[32] Elena Arizmendi, "Dos Documentos," *Revista de la Raza* 14, no. 149-150, *December, 1927-January, 1928 p. 56.*

[33] Ibid.

Beginning in July 1928, Arizmendi wrote to NWP and IACW member Muna Lee protesting this policy. She insisted "[i]t will never be the governments who will give guarantees of a strong alliance among us women, but quite the contrary, because such an alliance does not fit in with their plans. We ought to avoid having them interfere in the formation of an institution which attempts to defend woman from the abuses and injustices which the governments commit against her…"[34] Muna Lee attempted to placate Arizmendi by maintaining that government-elected or not, "[a]ll women who work for the betterment of women are working at the same time for the betterment of men, of children, of the whole world." A writer of poetry and translator of Spanish poetry and literature, Lee took this opportunity to quote from Ruben Diario's *Los Cisnes* (The Swans), "*…y en diferentes lenguas es la misma canción*" ("in different tongues it is the same song").[35]

In response, Arizmendi shot back: "'*La canción es la misma en todas partes; pero algunas la cantamos en diferentes tono*." ("The song is the same in all parts, but some of us sing it in different tones.") Arizmendi now confronted the issue of U.S. hegemony more explicitly, pointing out that "to carry faithfully into practice the slogan of your party: 'equal rights'" did not just mean guaranteeing women's equal political and civil rights. It meant true multi-lateralism and independence from governments. "Regarding the proposal of Mrs. Stevens, to form a single party [representing] the feminism of all America, headed by her, that wants to rely solely and exclusively on the Governments,"

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[34] Elena Arizmendi to Muna Lee, July 24, 1928, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

[35] Lee to Arizmendi, August 6, 1928, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers. She also sent Arizmendi a favorable review she had written about Arizmendi's recently-published novel *Vida Incompleta*, translations of Spanish poetry she had written, as well as copies of the NWP organ *Equal Rights*.

Arizmendi wrote, “there is nothing sensible: No thinking feminist, could approve being subject to the vagaries of politics...”[36]

Arizmendi then wrote to her friend Paulina Luisi, who, in Uruguay read about Arizmendi’s travails with the IACW. Despite her complaints about the organization, Arizmendi was willing, she explained to Luisi, to be “friends” and “show them that…in Latin America they don’t have enemies.” Arizmendi recognized the unprecedented prestige of the IACW and that links with it could benefit the *Liga*. But being friendly aside, she made clear “this is not to say that we want to be imposed upon by them in our national events.”[37]

Luisi shared Arizmendi’s ambivalence. She too regarded the IACW and its official connection to the Pan American Union with suspicion. But she also recognized that the IACW secured a meaningful forum for feminist initiatives at the international conferences of American States. Having been engaged in the Uruguayan suffrage battle for several decades, Luisi wanted to utilize the prestige of the IACW and its Equal Rights Treaties to further the cause for women in her country and more broadly in Latin America. The next International Conference of the American States in 1933 would be taking place in Montevideo, Luisi’s home city. Being affiliated with the IACW would ensure her influence in this conference. On the other hand, Luisi worried about the limitations of the IACW agenda. Its focus on civil and political rights did not seem broad enough to encompass what she perceived to be Latin American women’s most pressing needs, especially now with the Great Depression beginning to be felt in Uruguay and throughout Latin America. These feminist needs included not only suffrage but also mothers' and working women's rights and welfare; positions of equal leadership in inter-American organizations; and opposition to U.S. dominance.

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[36] Arizmendi to Lee, August 14, 1928, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.
[37] Arizmendi to Luisi, August 15, 1928, Carpeta “A,” PL-BN.

Luisi had the opportunity to air some of these apprehensions directly to Stevens when the two women happened to meet in Berlin in August, 1929. Stevens's Berlin visit to formally announce the IACW's new "Equal Nationality Treaty" coincided with the annual meeting of the International Alliance of Women and with the founding meeting of a new equalitarian group, Open Door International.[38] Aware of Luisi's prominence, leadership, and support for women's rights, Stevens approached her about lending her support to the IACW with the hope that she would want to be the Uruguayan delegate.[39] While Luisi expressed her desire to collaborate with the group and later joined its "nationality committee," she voiced her real doubts about the IACW under Stevens's leadership. As she later recalled, she warned Stevens against promoting a Pan-American feminism that replicated, as Luisi put it "the Monroe Doctrine according to the formula 'All America for the North Americans.'"[40]

Stevens remembered their conversation quite differently. Since Stevens did not speak Spanish, nor Luisi English, perhaps they spoke to each other in French, the language in which they wrote to each other.[41] Whatever language they used, the substance of Luisi's concerns got lost in translation. As Stevens's later correspondence reveals, she did not recall Luisi's charges of U.S. hegemony or even her desire to collaborate with the IACW – to Stevens the defining feature of their interaction was Luisi's unfriendliness. Luisi's "hostility quite overwhelmed me," she later recalled to Alice Paul; "She quite terrified me in Berlin," Stevens wrote to their Chilean contact at The Hague.[42] Alice Paul, who worked with Luisi in the League of Nations, told Stevens that although Luisi was "not friendly" to the commission, she had wanted to be involved in the IACW and "seemed exceedingly indignant that she had not been appointed." Luisi believed that if Stevens had really wanted her appointed she would have asked the Uruguayan government to do so.[43]

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[38] The Treaty read: "The contracting parties agree that from the going into effect of this Convention there shall be no discrimination based on sex in their law and practice relating to nationality."

[39] Stevens to Alice Paul, March 16, 1932, Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[40] Paulina Luisi to Margarita Robles de Mendoza, May 2, 1935, Caja 252, Carpeta 6, Archivo de Paulina Luisi, Archivo General de la Nación, Montevideo Uruguay (PL-AGN) Her phrase "America for the North Americans" is a reference to the Monroe Doctrine's "America for the Americans" clause, which Latin Americans tended to interpret as "America for the US." See Greg Grandin, "Why Stop at Two? *London Review of Books*, October 29, 2009, 33-35.

[41] See for instance, Luisi to Stevens, August 15, 1932; Stevens to Luisi, June 20, 1934, Box 76, Folder 13; Stevens Papers.

Meanwhile, in the United States, Luisi's friend Elena Arizmendi became outraged by the news that many of the women being named commissioners to the IACW had intimate connections to their governments. Haitian delegate Teligny Mathon was the sister-in-law of Luis Borno, president of Haiti; Salvadorian delegate María Alvárez de Guillén-Rivas was wife of El Salvador's Minister of Public Health; Colombian María Elena de Hinestrosa was the wife of a leading Colombian lawyer who had connections with the U.S. State Department. The other women appointed at that time – Clara González from Panama; Ernestina Lopez from Argentina; and Lucila L. de Pérez Díaz from Venezuela – had all participated in the cause of women's rights through their writing and conference participation, although only Clara González could truly be called a national leader in this realm. Arizmendi expressed her concerns in a letter to Stevens that the

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[42] Stevens to Paul, March 16, 1932; Stevens to Marta Vergara, May 25, 1932, Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[43] Alice Paul to Doris Stevens, April 2, 1932, Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

> women with whom you have associated, educated as they are, have never struggled in favor of the cause for women, and for this reason they do not mean anything before the eyes of Spanish feminists. This stand of yours, does not favor the women's rights, nor does it strengthen the relations…between the women of the United States and those of Spanish countries…[44]

Stevens admitted to her friend and collaborator on the IACW Adelaida Artola Allen, an international lawyer from Mexico who lived in New York City, that aside from Clara González she was unsure how actively feminist the other delegates were. But she believed this mattered little. She asked Artola to visit Arizmendi in person and relay the message that the female delegates would not be the only Latin American women affiliated with the commission. Because there would be "local committees" the IACW planned to form in each republic to work with their named commissioner, "if the governments fail to adopt the kind of person [for the IACW] whom she would think most desirable, the work in each Republic can still be buttressed by…local committees…" Thus, it would not only be an elite inter-governmental organization; it would also ideally reach grassroots feminist support in various countries. Stevens also agreed wholeheartedly "with the idea that the United States must not impose anything upon the Latin American women." She directed Artola, "[M]ake it clear to her [Arizmendi] that we will be a joint Commission of 21 Republics, and that whatever we do will have to be agreed upon by all the twenty-one representatives."[45] In Stevens's eagerness to appease Arizmendi, she may not have realized these two notions were somewhat contradictory – she was insisting that the twenty-one representatives would *not* be the only ones to steer the IACW agenda, while also maintaining that the twenty-one representatives would, together, decide on all important decisions. Artola reported back to Stevens that

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[44] Arizmendi to Stevens, January 29, 1929, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.
[45] Stevens to Adelaidea Artola de Allen, February 12, 1929, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

Arizmendi was very charming and encouraged Stevens to meet her in person so they could discuss their shared goals for Pan-American feminism.[46]

However, Artola also told Stevens that Arizmendi had just formed a new, alternative organization, the *Paises Americanos Unidos*, that would "link…the women of our continent."[47] An off-shoot of the *Liga Internacional de Mujeres Ibéricas y Hispanoamericanas*, the *Paises Americanos Unidos* represented Arizmendi's idea of an anti-hegemonic Pan-American feminism and a non-governmental alternative to the Pan American Union and to the IACW. The organization set itself apart from the Pan-Americanism of Wall Street and of inter-American diplomacy.[48] Its goal, Artola explained to Stevens, "is not only to work for the rights of women but also for their protection and recognition and for the betterment of relations and cooperation of all the American countries."[49]

Aware of Stevens's prestige, and perhaps to test her real commitment to the cause of anti-hegemonic Pan-Americanism, Arizmendi placed Stevens's name, without permission, on the *Paises Americanos Unidos* letterhead as the U.S. representative of the organization. There her name joined those of other prestigious individuals in the Pan-American realm: Uruguayan president Baltasar Brum was listed as its president;

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[46] Artola de Allen to Stevens, March 29, 1929, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Domingo Collazo, "Mujeres Notables de Hispanoamerica, Elena Arizmendi," August 26, 1929, unidentified publication, Carpeta "P," PL-BN. The only secondary literature I have been able to find that mentions the organization is Joaquín Cárdenas Noriega, *Vasconcelos visto por la Casa Blanca* (México D.F.: Editoras de Comunicación, 1980), 242, and Joaquín Cárdenas Noriega, *American Diplomacy in Mexico, 1929, According to the National Archives* (Cuernavaca: Centro de Estudios Históricos Americanos, 1988), 214. These sources explain that in 1929 the Paises Americanos Unidos sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State asking the U.S. not to intervene in the presidential election between José Vasconcelos and General Ortiz Rubio.

[49] Artola de Allen to Stevens, March 29, 1929, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz as its vice president (there is no confirmation of whether these individuals gave their assent either).[50]

When Stevens received a letter in the mail that listed her as U.S. representative, she was concerned that her name had been used without her permission, particularly for an organization which had a questionable "political color" in its clear anti-governmental and anti-U.S. stance. Immediately Stevens withdrew her name from the organization which had, as she wrote, been "thrust upon me unawares." In a letter to Artola she articulated her vision of Pan-American feminism – it was defined strictly by "equal political and civil rights" for women in the Americas and little more. A firm line should be drawn, she explained, between "feminism" and "politics:" "As you know I am strictly nonpartisan and have no political affiliations. All my affiliations are purely feminist. The moment a feminist allows herself to be drawn from one side to another in a controversy which is temporary, her usefulness to feminism, it seems to me, is impaired."[51]

This single-minded commitment to "feminism" unmoored from other political or social commitments had long served the NWP strategically. Years before, under Alice Paul's leadership, NWP-precursor the Congressional Union lobbied congressmen of all political stripes for the U.S. national suffrage amendment, their only political allies being those who supported that one goal. While some individual members of the NWP did uphold multiple commitments – to social and racial justice, to peace, to anti-imperialism – the NWP itself deemed such concerns side-issues. The organization never discussed or defended African American civil rights or equality, despite pleas from African American women and groups to do so.[52]

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[50] Emma Boehm Oller, Department of Propaganda, Países Americanos Unidos, to Stevens, March 30, 1929, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

[51] Stevens to Artola de Allen, May 9, 1929; Stevens to Emma Boehm Oller, May 9, 1929, Box 61, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

Like Alice Paul, Stevens believed that such issues were "political," or secondary diversions from the primary focus on women's "equal rights." From "equal rights" for women under the law, political justice more broadly, she believed, would flow. The establishment of these rights for women would eventually lead to the liberation of all people – black, white, poor, wealthy, North American, Latin American. Stevens long believed that "one of the finest statements in political theory" was John Stuart Mill's idea that the end of the state was the "greatest development of the most faculties of the most individuals." Conceiving of individual rights as the paramount goal of American democracy, Stevens called herself a "classic" or "classical libertarian." Such a philosophy underscored her primary cause: getting women's equal rights on the books.[53]

Stevens either did not fully comprehend, want to comprehend, or perhaps care that the primary benefactors of such "equal rights" legislation would be women like herself who populated the NWP – middle-class to affluent, educated, white women. And in the context of the IACW, international politics, like domestic politics, signified little more than continuously moving parts that could be utilized to promote "equal rights." Stevens may not have agreed, in principle, with U.S. interventions in Latin America, but she always geared her critiques of U.S. policies in Latin America toward her greater cause. For example, at the 1928 Havana conference she had rhetorically compared Latin American nations being "protected" by the United States to women being "protected" by men, and had capitalized on the support such statements had won her from anti-U.S. Latin American camps.[54] But as IACW chairman she was not willing to actually take a signal position defending the rights of Latin American nations.

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[52] Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballatine Books, 2002), 82-85. Nancy F. Cott, "Feminist Politics in the 1920s: The National Woman's Party," *Journal of American History* 71 (June 1984): 66-67.

[53] Doris Stevens made these notes about John Stuart Mill's philosophy as an aside in her Columbia University class notes related to Robert MacIver's course on political philosophy, 1930, Box 12, Folder 4, Stevens Papers. As early as 1926 Stevens used the phrase "libertarianism" as a philosophy to defend women's right to money for housework. This money, she suggested, should come from husbands' salaries, though, not from the state, Stevens's notes on "Debate, Hays vs. Stevens," February 4, 1926, Box 40, Folder 22, Stevens Papers. In 1939 she called herself a "classic libertarian" because she was an "equalitarian," Stevens to Flora de Oliviera Lima, June 23, 1939, Box 62, Folder 12, Stevens Papers.

The IACW would draw not only from the ideology of the NWP but also from what Nancy Cott describes as their "top-down" strategy of appealing first to those highest in power and closest to the levers of legislative change.[55] With Equal Rights Treaties as the Commission's only goal, international diplomats became their prime objects of suasion. Because of this philosophy and top-down strategy, Stevens saw no problem allying the IACW more closely with the representative governments of the Pan American Union, including the U.S. government, if it advanced passage of "equal rights" treaties. Such a strategy, however, would preclude any alliance with an oppositional group like Arizmendi's *Países Americanos Unidos*.

In February, 1929, Stevens reached out to the U.S. State Department to ask for funding and sponsorship of the first official meeting of the IACW, suggesting it could take place in Washington, D.C. She also asked PAU director Leo Rowe to appeal to the State Department on their behalf. Francis White, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, responded to Stevens that the State Department was "deeply sympathetic to the purposes and commendable activities" of the IACW. However, since the organization was “Inter-American in character,” their conference should be “held under the auspices of the Pan American Union” rather than the U.S. State Department.[56] An internal State Department memo that White sent to Wilbur J. Carr, the Assistant Secretary of State, however, revealed less sympathy for the purpose of the commission – “women in this country have full political equality with men and therefore, as concerns the United States, the matter is already settled…” – as well as a more thorough explanation of the political reasons the State Department would not host the IACW meeting. The State Department should not affiliate itself so transparently with the IACW or the Pan American Union.[57] “The Pan American Union,” he explained, “is looked at with great suspicion throughout Latin America as being under the domination of the United States…The more independent we can try to make it [the Pan American Union] seem, the more it redounds to the credit of the Pan American Union.”[58]

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[54] See Chapter 2.
[55] Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 68.

Despite the lack of State Department support, Stevens successfully allied the IACW more closely with the Pan American Union and its government representatives. When, in May 1929, the Cuban government extended an invitation through the PAU to the Inter-American Commission of Women to hold its first plenary meeting in Havana the following year, Stevens unilaterally decide to change the procedure for appointing the remaining fourteen commissioners.[59] Originally, they were to be elected by the first seven IACW members. After conferring with Leo Rowe, however, Stevens decided the fourteen should be chosen by their governments, as the first seven had been. She explained that the commission would be stronger if all its members were elected the same way, without the inconsistency of having "some appointed by the Governments, as were the first seven, and others appointed unofficially."[60] Stevens believed closer connections to government diplomats in the Pan American Union would give the IACW greater prestige and "would make the governments feel more responsible for the work undertaken by the Commission."[61] In Washington she began interviewing diplomatic officials from the remaining fourteen American republics asking them to appoint delegates before the Havana plenary assembly in February 1930 and sometimes suggesting names herself.

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[56] Francis White to Stevens, March 8, 1928, RG 43, 710. F, National Archives II, Collge Park, Maryland.

[57] Memo from White to Carr, February 15, 1929, RG 43, 710. F, National Archives II.

[58] Ibid.

[59] “Agreement Between the Director General, The Assistant Director of the Pan American Union and the Chairman of the Inter American Commission of Women – May 9, 1929,” Box 65, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

Paulina Luisi's name was not among those Stevens suggested. Evidence reveals that Stevens never encouraged Uruguayan diplomat in Washington, D.C., Jacobo Varela, to enlist Luisi to represent Uruguay. Uruguay's spot remained vacant.[62] From Luisi's perspective, Stevens's neglect to promote her as commissioner for Uruguay confirmed her conviction that the IACW leadership denied the voices and desires of Latin American women.[63] In November, 1930, Luisi wrote to Elena Arizmendi that "As respects Sra Stevens, I have known for a long time what can be expected from her and her group."[64]

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[60] Doris Stevens, "Inter American Commission of Women," memorandum, May 9, 1929, attachment from Stevens to James Brown Scott, memorandum, November 30, 1929, Box 90, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[61] Doris Stevens, from Minutes of February 17, 1930 Meeting in Havana, Box 71, Folder 12, Stevens Papers.
[62] Instead, the Uruguayan spot on the IACW went unfilled for many years, as Stevens waited for the Uruguayan consul in the United States, Jacobo Varela, to nominate his wife for the position.
[63] Doris Stevens to Alice Paul, March 16, 1932, Box 92, Folder 5; Stevens to Paul, April 22, 1932, Box 60, Folder 11; Luisi to Stevens, August 25, 1932, Box 76, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.
[64] Luisi to Arizmendi, November 26, 1930, Carpeta "de P. Luisi," PL-BN.

Around this time, Luisi had received from Arizmendi a copy of the newsletter of the *Paises Americanos Unidos*, which was continuing its ideological battle with the IACW. In the newsletter, an article written by Domingo Collazo, Secretary General of the Board of *Paises Americanos Unidos* and a prominent Puerto Rican nationalist living in New York praised Arizmendi's vision for a Pan-American organization not marred by economic interests or dependent on government connections. Rather, hers was one that favored women's rights, international equality, and anti-imperialism. Applauding Arizmendi's broad Pan-American feminist vision, her renown as a writer, as well as her modesty, gave the author an opportunity to fulminate against the IACW. "[Arizmendi] does not let the publicity of the press get to her head, like so many other so-called 'feminists' LIKE DORIS STEVENS,"[65] This barb referred not only to Doris Stevens's enjoyment of the limelight but also to how she and the IACW utilized the press to promote a multi-lateral and non-hegemonic ideal that it failed to carry out.

This critique of Stevens likely pleased Luisi, but it did not satisfy her. She very much wanted a viable challenge to Stevens and the IACW in the form of a robust inter-American organization. Over the next years she became increasingly dismayed that the efforts of Arizmendi were unsuccessful in building a significant counter-weight to the IACW.[66] The *Paises Americanos Unidos* did not flourish as a widely-known inter-American organization. The *Liga* prospered among some Latin American groups, but, as

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[65] Underline and all-calls in the original. Domingo Collazo, "Mujeres Notables de Hispanoamerica, Elena Arizmendi," unidentified publication, August 26, 1929, Carpeta "P," PL-BN. Thank you to Albertina Antognini for helping me translate this passage. For information on Domingo Collazo, see Lorrin Thomas, *Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 44-48; and Virginia Sánchez Corrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 172, 245, 249.

[66] Luisi to Robles de Mendoza, May 2, 1935, Caja 252, Carpeta 6, PL-AGN.

Luisi later reported to a friend in Mexico, it never actually drew up rules and regulations to make it an official international body.[67] Furthermore, Arizmendi's slow and halting correspondence often frustrated Luisi.[68] Ultimately, Luisi would turn to others who were also motivated by their dissatisfaction with the IACW to forge an alternative inter-American feminism, including a Cuban activist who would become her good friend and *correligionaria*, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro.[69]

Ofelia Domínguez Navarro and the IACW

In February, 1930, on the eve of the first meeting of the IACW conference in Havana, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro awaited the arrival of Doris Stevens and the other delegates and NWP members.[70] It had only been two years since Domínguez had vocally supported the birth of the IACW in Havana in 1928. But since that time, she had become concerned about the Commission's capability to address the worsening political and economic climate in Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America. Starting in 1929, coinciding with the world economic crisis, President Gerardo Machado had begun a new dictatorship in Cuba, which propelled the nation into a protracted period of oligarchic rule and tyranny. By 1930, as Gillian McGillivray explains, "almost everyone on the island began to resent Cuba's combined state of depression and dictatorship."[71] Now at a luncheon the Alianza Nacional Feminista hosted for the arrival of Stevens and the IACW delegates, Domínguez greeted them on behalf of the Alianza. She lauded Stevens and the Commission's efforts for equal rights to date but also explained that women workers' needs must be part of the Pan-American feminist cause, as well.[72]

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[67] Luisi to Robles de Mendoza, May 2, 1935, Caja 252, Carpeta 6, PL-AGN.

[68] Luisi to Arizmendi, November 26, 1930, Carpeta "de P. Luisi," PL-BN.

[69] *Correlgionaria* is how Luisi addressed Domínguez in her letters; it means a person of the same political beliefs. Luisi to Domínguez, August 27, 1930, Caja 673, No 16, Archivo de Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Donativos y Remisiones, Archivo Nacional, Havana, Cuba (Henceforward ODN-AN).

[70] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, *50 años de una vida* (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971), 132-4.

[71] Robert Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 58; Gillian McGillivray, *Blazing*

Not only did her pleas for women workers fall on deaf ears, but Domínguez was also disappointed over the course of the conference to learn about the unilateralism of Doris Stevens in the IACW inner workings. She gained these insights through Clara González, IACW delegate from Panama and her friend from the 1926 Panama conference, and from Aida Parada, the Chilean IACW delegate whom González introduced to Domínguez. Twenty-six year old Parada, member of the feminist group, Unión Femenina de Chile, and a primary school teacher, had been sent by the Chilean government to Teacher's College of Columbia University in 1927 to study education for several years.[73] Clara González, who had befriended Parada in New York City while the two studied there, had been responsible for helping secure Parada's selection as IACW delegate.[74] While the plenary conference took place in Havana, these three women met together separately in the privacy of Domínguez's home to air their shared grievances about the Commission. Both González and Parada admired the IACW's advocacy for women's civil and political equality, but were troubled by the lack of Latin American representation.

Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, & State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 190.

[72] Domínguez Navarro, *50 años*, 132-134.

[73] "Experimental schools in Santiago, Chile," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, 73, no. 12 (December 1939), 743.

[74] Clara González to Stevens, December 27, 1929, Box 84, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

The Havana conference threw the hierarchical leadership of Doris Stevens into sharp relief. During its proceedings, which lasted several days, González and Parada voiced their concerns and suggested resolutions that might pave the way for greater multi-lateralism in the organization. Stevens continually undercut these attempts. Parada, in an effort to expose the lack of participation of the Latin American delegates, asked Stevens to explain to everyone how the original seven commissioners participated in the Nationality Committee's work. Stevens responded that of the Latin American delegates only Clara González had taken an active role.[75] The day before, Stevens had explicitly instructed all the women present not to be discouraged about, or even to discuss, the fact that there were still so few Latin American delegates in the IACW. At that time they had only secured eleven of the twenty-one delegates. "Will you all remember each time you are speaking…that you are pleased to be here," she instructed the delegates at a meeting that included only IACW commissioners, "that you are honored to be appointed, and because it is the first time in history that women have been appointed by governments to improve their own positions?…It is supremely important…" Stevens urged the women not to mention the problems the IACW had experienced in getting started:

> Do not tell the world how slowly twenty-one countries moved, but it is the fact among ourselves, but we must not be discouraged by that. A few people have moved the world before and a few people can again. Please do not emphasize our faults. In other words, say that it is perfectly wonderful – it is…[T]here has been Clara Gonzalez and myself, all practically there was to start the Commission with – and if you knew what it meant to see eleven people sitting here as a result of a common effort."[76]

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[75] "Business Session of the Inter-American Commission of Women on Tuesday, February 18, 1930 at 11:00 am," Box 71, Folder 11, Stevens Papers.

[76] Minutes of the Executive Meeting of Officers, February 17, 1930, Box 71, Folder 11, Stevens Papers.

At the IACW business meeting, González and Parada called for a resolution that would ask all of the governments of the Americas, as well as the Pan American Union, to contribute economically in support of the Commission. If the IACW was an inter-governmental organization, they reasoned, the governments should financially support their delegates. Such funding might make it possible for more Latin American members to participate at the IACW headquarters and have a greater say in the workings of the Commission. Stevens, however, interjected. She recognized the difficulty posed by the current lack of funds but insisted that it had been difficult to get any financial support whatsoever from the Pan American Union. She denied the request to ask the governments formally and advised the IACW to go forward in a non-committal way of approaching sources for funding as their needs arose. The resolution of Parada and González never made it into the final resolutions.[77]

Stevens also discarded another of Clara González's recommendations that Ofelia Domínguez Navarro examine the conference's rules of procedure. At the preliminary meeting of officers, Stevens announced a set of rules that had been drawn up for the conference by U.S. international lawyer James Brown Scott. When Clara González noted that it would be better for female lawyers to draw up their protocol of procedure, suggesting her friend Ofelia Domínguez for the job, Stevens demurred. Stevens explained that she would be glad to have Domínguez read and approve the existing rules but would not allow anyone to draw up new ones. Stevens explained that they were short on time, and the rules' primary function would be to limit the meetings' discussions to their “feminist,” i.e. equal rights, agenda. As Stevens said, “We have had people that wanted…to come and talk about various things, to talk about peace, and anything but feminism…”[78] “Feminism” as she defined it meant the Equal Rights Treaties.[79]

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[77] Business Meeting of the Inter American Commission of Women, February 20, 1930, Box 71 Folder 12, Stevens Papers.

If Stevens had allowed Domínguez or other Cuban feminists to look at the rules of the proceedings, it is likely they would have tried to add women workers to the agenda, or may have attempted to achieve more fair and transparent procedures. It is also possible some would have argued for inclusion of discussion of U.S.-Cuban relations, particularly the U.S. role in the Cuban economy and sugar tariffs. After the stock market crash in 1929 Cuba’s single-crop export economy deteriorated; the value of the island’s sugar production was plummeting and would drop from nearly $200 million in 1929 to just over $40 million in 1932. A number of Cuban feminists had written to Stevens in the period before the Havana plenary conference requesting that the IACW intervene in trying to prevent the rise of duties on sugar from Cuba.[80] Amalia Mallen de Ostolaza, president of the Partido Nacional Suffragista reminded the IACW of the longstanding relationship between the U.S. and Cuba and sent literature that pointed out that Cuba relied on low tariffs from the U.S. for its economic health. Several months after the Havana conference, the U.S. government would pass the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act, which increased the duty on Cuban sugar, favoring sugar producers in U.S. states and territories of Louisiana, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and further hurting the

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[78] Minutes of Executive Session, February 17, 1930, Box 71, Folder 12, Stevens Papers.

[79] The IACW also politely gave thanks to their benefactors, Machado and the American Institute of International Law.

[80] Amalia M. Mallen de Ostolaza to [Alice Paul], January 3, 1929; Amalia M. Mallen de Ostolaza to “Secretary of National Woman’s Party,” January 31, 1929; Amalia M. Mallen de Ostolaza to [Alice Paul] March 2, 1929, Box 82, Folder 9, Stevens Papers. Richard Gott, *Cuba*, 134-5; McGillvray, *Blazing Cane*, vi.

Cuban economy.[81] Based on the silence of the archives, and on several Cuban women's repeated requests to Stevens and the NWP for a response to their entreaties, it seems that Stevens and her colleagues believed this question to be out of their remit as a feminist organization.

While some limitations on conference discussions were necessary, the meetings proceeded without even so much as a reference to the new realities wrought by the Great Depression or the political turmoil of Cuba.[82] Indeed, the IACW proclaimed Machado, who had sponsored the conference, a "feminist president." Havana newspapers likewise praised both the IACW work for the Equal Nationality Treaty which was on the agenda of the upcoming Hague Codification Conference of 1930 as well as the speech Stevens gave on the subject.[83]

For Domínguez, González, and Parada, however, "feminism" represented a broader political and social movement that included, yet expanded beyond, women's equal rights under the law. All three women linked strong nationalist and social welfare agendas with their goals for women's equal political and civil rights. As Parada wrote to Domínguez following the conference, "feminism" *was* "politics." Parada explained that she agreed with the U.S. socialist and philosopher Will Durant, who "includes feminism together with socialism and democracy, etc. as part of politics."[84] Politics – democracy, social welfare, anti-imperialism – were not causes to be siphoned off as distractions from the central goal of feminism. Rather, these broader political visions of social justice were the central goals of feminism.[85]

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[81] Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, Fourth Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 190-191.

[82] James Brown Scott to Stevens, May 14, 1929; Scott to Stevens, May 27, 1929, Box 90, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

[83] "Congreso de Mujeres, Opiniones sobre el Alcance de la Conferencia," *El País* (Havana), February 18, 1930, 1; "Labor de Hoy del Congreso de Mujeres," *El País* (Havana), February 18, 1930; "No Debe Perder Nunca la Mujer su Nacionalidad," *El Heraldo de Cuba* (Havana), February 19, 1930; "La Comisión Inter-Americana de Mujeres Desarolló Ayer Una Labor Muy Fecunda Durante Sus 2 Sesiones," *Diario de la Marina* (Havana), February 19, 1930.

Their common vision of inter-American feminism helped these three women forge a strong friendship at the conference. Critiquing U.S. hegemony was central to this vision. They recognized that U.S. intervention came in many forms – it was not just about military or economic might; it was about cultural, intellectual, and social movement dominance, as well. After the conference, Parada wrote to Domínguez from Panama where she was meeting with some of Clara González's friends. Referring to a U.S.-sponsored university being built in the Canal Zone, she told Domínguez: "Here [U.S.] influence will be major and decisive, the war is not fought with bullets; it is a cultural war, the most powerful."[86] The imposition of Stevens's feminist agenda similarly represented to them a cultural form of U.S. hegemony.

Ofelia Domínguez openly shared these opinions in an interview she gave *El País* following the conference. In an article titled "The Latin Americans Enjoyed the Role of 'Extras' in the Recent Conference of Women," Domínguez explained that Latin American women had been sidelined both from the proceedings of the conference and in the constitution and organization of the IACW. The Latin American delegates,

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[84] Aida Parada to Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, March 23, 1930, Caja 673, No. 2, ODN-AN. Clara González to Ofelia Domínguez, February 1, 1930 and March 3, 1930, Archivo de Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Archivos del Instituto de Historia, Havana, Cuba (OD-AIH).
[85] Ibid.; Parada was referencing the section of Will Durant's 1926 book *The Story of Philosophy* "…monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, socialism, anarchism, feminism – these are the dramatis personae of political philosophy." From Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosophers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930), 4.
[86] Parada to Domínguez, March 23, 1930, Caja 673, No. 2, ODN-AN.

Domínguez noted, enjoyed no integral leadership or equal participation in the organization, in part because of lack of financial support for them: "Governments, because of [troubles in the] economy or indifference respecting these problems, have shown themselves remiss in offering financial aid to the commission. On this account, not a single one of the delegates has been able to stay permanently in Washington D.C. so as to cooperate actively." Her information, she reported, had been supplied by IACW delegates Clara González and Aida Parada.[87]

Furthermore, any efforts Latin American women had made to address these issues had been quashed by Doris Stevens. While Domínguez praised Stevens's tenacity and "rare energy" as a feminist leader, particularly on nationality rights, she denounced Stevens's "dictatorial character" and racism:

> [Stevens] as an individual of her race, [when] finding herself collaborating with Latin Americans, because of a prejudice deeply rooted in the atmosphere of her people, knows how to smile with cordial superiority as no idea that is contrary to her convictions is presented. When this happens, the spirit of her race speaks through her mouth and the gentle phrase and ample smile is substituted with the imperious action and arbitrary imposition of her own agenda...[88]

Domínguez cautioned Latin American feminists to resist the implicit message of American superiority. She explained, "[When U.S. women] make…their personality stronger and more precise, they reaffirm their conviction of superiority the more we diminish our own." No organization run on such an unequal dynamic could represent the true "equal rights" of Latin American women, Domínguez argued. "Working "under…[the] direction" of women from "North America," she insisted, "demonstrates once again our condition of being a subject people to the empire of strength, of treaties enforced on us."[89]

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[87] "'Las Latinoamericanas Disfrutaron el Papel de Comparsas en la Reciente Conferencia de Mujeres,'" *El País* (Havana), February 28, 1930.
[88] Ibid.

Because of this hegemonic leadership, and because narrow goals for civil and political equality did not support the current pressing economic and social needs of Latin American women, Domínguez called for an alternative group of Latin American feminists: "I believe that all efforts carried on as Latin Americans or as people of our country, will finally be more useful to our ultimate goals than lending our cooperation to these congresses."[90]

When Doris Stevens learned of this article from Elena Mederos de González, Cuban IACW representative and a member of the Alianza, Stevens immediately suspected that Domínguez was actually airing complaints on behalf of Clara González. Stevens explained to Mederos that she and Alice Paul had perhaps upset González when they reprimanded her for making an error in their nationality report which "if it had gone unnoticed in our printed report, would have caused us infinite embarrassment…I mention all this because it seems likely that Dominguez speaks for her as well as for herself."[91] However, she said "You know how much we all deplore the division of American women into classifications of North American and Latin American women. We are all American women with the same aspiration and with the same inferior legal position, and together we shall change the situation."[92]

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[89] "'Las Latinoamericanas Disfrutaron el Papel de Comparsas en la Reciente Conferencia de Mujeres,'" *El País* (Havana), February 28, 1930.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Stevens to Mederos de González, March 8, 1930, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[92] Ibid.

As much as Stevens wanted to dismiss Domínguez's comments, Domínguez was giving voice to a new and significant feminist group rising in Cuba against the government and against the U.S. After losing an election to become president of the Alianza Nacional Feminista and redirect their efforts toward working women's needs, Domínguez split away from the Alianza, the group she had earlier helped found. In May, 1930, months after the IACW conference, Domínguez, emboldened by her support from Parada and González, founded a new radical feminist organization distinguished by the collaboration of women workers and intellectuals – the Unión Laborista de Mujeres. As K. Lynn Stoner has characterized this organization, "it identified poverty, gender exploitation, and North American capitalist imperialism as the sources of women's oppression."[93] Their motto signified their expansive notion of Pan-American feminism: "Before international law we will fight for peace and for the social rights of working women; before domestic law for the civil equality and the right of suffrage without any restriction or limitation."[94] As Domínguez would later explain in her memoirs, her words of greeting to the IACW at the Havana luncheon in February 1930 had been the last words Domínguez uttered on behalf of the Alianza.[95]

Believing that her new organization could help promote the interests not only of Cuban women but Latin American women more broadly, Domínguez wrote soon after its formation to Paulina Luisi for advice and support. Domínguez had never met Luisi, but, as she explained in her letter, she had admired Luisi ever since delivering Luisi's speech in her absence at the 1926 Pan-American Conference in Panama. She believed they shared the same vision for inter-American feminism: one that opposed U.S. hegemony and privileged the independence of Latin America while also proclaiming the equality of Latin American women, and one that gave attention to the needs of women workers during a time of economic turmoil. Addressing Luisi as her "Teacher," she explained that "[m]y struggle in feminism, although I am young, has been intense." Domínguez outlined the divisions that had arisen because of the Great Depression between the wealthier women in the Alianza and those concerned about working women's rights. She said that her own group, the Unión Laborista de Mujeres was composed of both working women and intellectuals who wanted to "work and interpret feminism in a modern sense."[96]

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[93] K. Lynn Stoner, "Ofelia Domínguez Navarro," *The Human Tradition in Latin America, The Twentieth Century*, eds., William H. Beezley and Judith Ewell (Wilmigonton: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1987), 129.

[94] Letterhead of Unión Laborista de Mujeres, January 1, 1930, Leg 675, No 7, ODN-AN.

[95] Domínguez Navarro, *50 años*, 159.

Fifty-five year-old Luisi responded to Domínguez with a long, warm letter that conveyed her full praise of and enthusiasm for Domínguez's new organization. Luisi encouraged the "beautiful work" Domínguez had undertaken with the Union Laborista de Mujeres. She was also touched by the "almost…'filial' manner" in which Domínguez had addressed her and saw real connection between the ideals they both held dear: "You cannot imagine the joy that your letter has brought me, so affectionate, so sincere, so 'fraternal,' written by a young enthusiast like you to an old fighter who is beginning to feel some of the fatigue of thirty-three years of work." Recognizing in Domínguez the same goals for Pan-American feminism that Luisi held, she hoped their interactions could help forward some of those ideals. "I read in your letter a faith in your Heart, an enthusiasm, a desire for noble struggle, for ideals won…I hope that this first letter of yours…starts a happy series of correspondence with my dear sisters of Cuba."[97] Ending her missive with "a long and affectionate hug," Luisi then sent a more formal message from the Alianza Uruguaya giving the Union Radical de Mujeres de Cuba their official support.[98] This was the first of many exchanges between the two women in what would become a robust epistolary friendship of inter-American feminism.

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[96] Domínguez to Luisi, June 4, 1930, Carpeta "D," PL-BN.

View from the Left: Domínguez and Luisi in Conflict with the IACW

A Pan-American feminist alternative to the IACW became even more urgent for many Latin American feminists in the 1930s, when the Great Depression and increasing political revolutions throughout the Americas seemed to make the singular IACW goal – equal political and civil rights – increasingly irrelevant. During the years of the Revolution in Cuba, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro longed for such an alternative as never before. Tapping into more explicitly Communist and Marxist veins of ideology that privileged a Latin American class struggle over U.S.-dominated structures of power, and that questioned the relevance of liberal feminist goals, she increasingly rejected the patronizing leadership of the IACW.

In Cuba, by late 1930, the Machado dictatorship had ushered in a new and protracted period of repression and tyranny. Replacing civilian political administrators, provincial governors, and municipal mayors with "Machadista" military supervisors, Machado increasingly relied on the *porra* or secret police to quash the mounting opposition throughout Cuban cities and countryside.[99] Popular revolutionary anger simmered, and when the *clases populares*, intellectuals, and growing numbers of middle-class youth began pressuring the government with mass protests, Machado responded with brutal repression. Many feminists were thrown into jail for rebellion against the government. Domínguez and her group formed part of this opposition, and on January 3, 1931, the *porra* arrested Domínguez and a number of her cohort for recruiting students from the normal school to their revolutionary cause.[100] Released after a short term, Domínguez was arrested and jailed again on March 4, 1931.

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[97] Luisi to Domínguez, August 27, 1930, Caja 673, No 16, ODN-AN.
[98] Luisi to Domínguez, August 29, 1930, Caja 673, No 16, ODN-AN.
[99] McGillivray, *Blazing Cane*, 191.

In late February, 1931, Luisi wrote to her young friend, asking why she had not heard from her in such a long time.[101] Domínguez responded to Luisi from jail in April, writing her letter in pencil, because as she explained, it was the only thing she could find in her cell: "If you could know from what place I am answering your letter! I have been in prison from the 4th of March of this year for the second time this year. The fight against the tyrannical government of Gen Machado has turned the old fortress, Castillo del Principe, into a prison, where I have seen much and learned much."[102] Never before had Cuba witnessed such a revolution, Domínguez told Luisi, and "the women are rendering a beautiful effort of practical feminism."[103]

Realizing that international support and pressure could help her radical organization's cause, Domínguez reached out to Luisi for help from her group in Uruguay. She also expressed a desire to unite her organization of women workers "with some important ones in Europe." Knowing of Luisi's prominence in Europe, she appealed to her for assistance in making the necessary connections.

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[100] Stoner, "Domínguez," 132.
[101] Luisi to Domínguez, February 28, 1931, Caja 675, No 8, ODN-AN.
[102] Domínguez to Luisi, April 6, 1931, Carpeta "D," PL-BN. Domínguez published an account of her prison experiences in Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, *De 6 a 6: la vida en las prisones* (México, D.F.: [s.n.]. 1937).
[103] Domínguez to Luisi, April 6, 1931, Carpeta "D," PL-BN.

Luisi received Domínguez's letter while she was in Belgrade for the annual meeting of the International Alliance of Women. She at once took up her young friend's request to serve as her messenger and help affiliate her organization with some in Europe. At the Belgrade meeting, Luisi spoke about Domínguez's situation and even suggested that the Alliance send a telegram to Machado to plea for Domínguez's release. The Alliance members, impressed by Domínguez's "courageous work and actions," voted to send her a note of sympathy. Fearing that a letter to Machado might do more harm than good, they decided not to send him a telegram.[104] In June, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro received a letter from International Alliance of Woman's Headquarters Secretary Katherine Bompas. It stated that the group had "learned with deep sympathy from Dr. Paulina Luisi that you are experiencing great difficulties in your work for the emancipation of women." Bompass "express[ed]…our admiration for your devotion and our sincere hope that your sufferings will be justified by the speedy and complete success of the cause to which you are devoted."[105]

Luisi wrote to Domínguez after the Alliance meeting to tell her the news and assure her that the Alliance supported her revolutionary struggle, stating "from my lips they heard of your bravery." She added, "I admire and love you more than ever."[106] Luisi also urged Domínguez to send additional information so she could do more for her: "Send me programs, rules, statutes, information about your organization and associated ones, etc. I am so glad to be in correspondence with you and to be even more connected to the women of Cuba, and especially to you, my noble friend."[107]

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[104] Minutes of International Alliance Board Meeting, May 1931, Caja 254, Carpeta 6, PL-AGN.
[105] Katherine Bompas to Domínguez, June 26, 1931, Leg. 675, No 8, ODN-AN.
[106] Luisi to Domínguez, June, 1931, Leg. 675, No 8, ODN-AN.

In June Domínguez wrote to Luisi thanking her for the correspondence from the International Aliance, which had "filled her with deep emotion," and for her letter that had brought her so much joy. Although she was out of jail, she noted that she was still "an object of persecution" and therefore in hiding. She railed against the intervention of the U.S. in Cuba, connecting the fight against Machado with a fight against U.S. imperialism, and to the dream of a brighter future for all of Latin America:

> [H]ere we fight against the tyranny. And what a treasure of strength and civic ideal and valor is our youth…The North fatally acting in a protective gesture! What destiny [is in store] for our Latin America! When will there be a brave and strong resurgence against the yankee imperialism that depersonalizes us, but that is of all the oppressed people who are living under only a constitutional democracy![108]

Her second imprisonment of three months, however, had radicalized Domínguez away from liberal politics and liberal feminism. She explained to Luisi that "my struggles have brought with them a marked change to my ideological structure." Her difficulties had given her the opportunity to identify more closely with "the people." Now, "feminism," she said, "with its political and civil aspirations seems to me too narrow a mold to fight for. It seems to me accommodating selfishness. The spirit of the age demands something more just and equitable. I confess I live in a moment when the vision of Russia attracts me. I try to study this phenomenon carefully…"[109] She asked Luisi why she too did not study Communism; "I know all about the difficulties of applying their beautiful theories in opposition to all the capitalist universe. Pardon my suggestion, but you and I and all of us who have set ourselves the task of opening new furrows have to drink from all sources."[110]

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[107] Luisi to Domínguez, June, 1931, Leg. 675, No 8, ODN-AN.
[108] Domínguez to Luisi, June 10, 1931, Carpeta "D," PL-BN.
[109] Ibid.

Domínguez articulated here a sense of mutual exclusivity between "feminism" and Marxism that she herself never wholly embraced. She did turn her back on a narrow conception of liberal feminism – for women's civil and political equality – because she believed these goals did not address the needs of working-class women. She would, however, always continue to integrate goals for women's equality with class politics and broader international concerns in her activism. The notion that women's rights or "feminism" more broadly had little place in the class struggle, though, was prevalent among many Communist and Marxist groups that spread throughout Latin America in the 1920s and among the Communist opposition groups that arose dramatically in Cuba during the fight against Machado in the 1930s.[111] As Christine Ehrick has noted, the Left groups in Uruguay in the 1920s "had problems organizing working-class women, due to an inability to bridge gender gaps and an overall conceptualization of the Communist vanguard in masculine terms."[112]

The Marxist alternative to Communism, the Aprista Party, which spread throughout Latin America in these years and had a female leader in Peruvian Magda Portal, provides an example of how the Leftist struggle characterized and separated itself from "feminism." Peruvian political leader Victor Raúl Haya de La Torre had founded the Aprista movement in Mexico City in 1924. Some years later, Magda Portal co-founded the Aprista Party of Peru, which she helped lead for two decades. During the

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[110] Domínguez to Luisi, June 10, 1931, Carpeta "D," PL-BN.
[111] See Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba*.
[112] Christine Ehrick, *The Shield of the Weak: Feminism and the State in Uruguay, 1903-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 182.

Great Depression the movement spread dramatically throughout Latin America. Drawing on Marxist thought but not allying themselves with the Communist Party, Apristas believed that the nationalist middle classes of Latin America should lead the anti-imperialist movement. Their motto was: "Against Yankee Imperialism, for the unity of the peoples of Latin America, for the realization of social justice." Their founding agenda included the five points: anti-imperialism, Pan-American unity, internationalization of the Panama Canal, nationalization of land and industries, and concern for Indo-America's indigenous heritage and solidarity with all oppressed peoples.[113] Women's rights, however, were not part of the agenda.

Though Magda Portal was vocal about women's equal participation in the revolutionary movement, she critiqued "feminism" for privileging of women's rights above the Latin American class struggle. In 1930 she published an article in *Repertorio Americano* that praised some instances of organized feminism in Latin America, including Ofelia Domínguez's leadership in Cuba, but insisted: "[I]n Latin America, emerging in all its aspects, politically and socially backward, feminism would be untimely…The vote is an exercise of democracy, and in America, almost without exception, democracy does not exist."[114] In an article the following year, she expanded on this idea: "The abstract concept of women's suffrage does not itself meet the ideal, the maximum aspiration of women, because it is possible to attach the vote to the whims of a dictatorial regime..."[115] For her, the revolution against U.S. imperialism and liberation of her consciousness and of her country needed to come before any demands of equality with men.[116]

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[113] Kathleen Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel: The World of Magda Portal, with a Selection of her Poetry* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 22; Diego Rivera helped create APRA's banner with featured a five-pointed star representing these five goals.

[114] Magda Portal, "Dos libros de mujeres," *Repertorio Americano* 12, no. 11 (September 20, 1930): 170. In this article she reviewed Mariblanca Sabas Alomá's book *Feminísmo*. Portal took issue with the title *Feminísmo* and claimed that the book really was nothing about "feminism," which reveals that Portal defined "feminism" as "liberal feminism" – a fight for equal civil and political rights. Sabas Alomá's book, she wrote, was about women, the defense of the woman worker, women's production, and diverse other things, including commercial exploitation, but it was not about "feminism." Portal insisted that Alomá was also not a "feminist."

Luisi would later become epistolary friends with Magda Portal and later joined the Socialist party, although she never became a member of the Aprista party or the Communist party. In the early 1930s, still a believer in liberal feminism, she was continuing the fight for suffrage in Uruguay. Nonetheless, she found great inspiration in her more radical leftist counterparts of Portal and Domínguez, and she agreed with their beliefs that women in Latin America needed to take an equal role alongside men in the fight against U.S. dominance. Although no record of Luisi's response to Domínguez's missive about Communism exists in the archives, the warm friendship between the two women continued well into the 1940s. Luisi's own beliefs from this period make clear that she fully sympathized with her friend.[117] She realized the political and local situations in Cuba causing Domínguez to self-consciously choose Marxist over feminist goals and to write to her: "Is it not true that we are in a moment of intense crisis in America?…I understand that it is necessary [to amass] the mental capacities among us women, to work together with men in this hour of intense responsibility…If we can, we women will jolt our continent!"[118]

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[115] Magda Portal, "Rol de la mujer revolucionaria. El voto femenino." *Repertorio Americano* 22, no 21 (1931).

[116] See also Ruth Cubillo Paniagua, *Mujeres e identidades: Las escritoras del* Repertorio Americano *(1919-1959)* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2001), 105-107.

[117] Although Luisi later joined the Socialist Party, she viewed Communism too extreme. In a letter she wrote to Muna Lee from Paris in 1933, she said "today it seems that the world is divided into extremes – right or left! Dictator or Communist!" Luisi to Lee, June 16, 1933, Box 79, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

In contrast to the Pan-American feminism of Luisi and Domínguez, which demonstrated adaptation to the local struggles of the Cuban revolution, the Pan-American feminism of the IACW maintained its strict and abiding focus on liberal feminism, revolution or not. In holding to these principles, the IACW clashed deeply with not only Luisi and Domínguez but other feminists in Cuba and elsewhere.

In the years between 1930 and 1932, the IACW had made vibrant, though ultimately unsuccessful, inroads towards married women's equal nationality rights. During this period, Doris Stevens focused the IACW agenda on its nationality work at the Hague codification conference and in compiling a legal report to be filed at the 1933 Montevideo conference. Stevens believed that in Cuba the IACW needed to form a Nationality Committee to work with the new Cuban government to pass nationality laws and to continue the push for women's suffrage. Cuban IACW commissioner Elena Mederos wrote to Stevens in the early 1930s to explain how the wave of repression and revolution sweeping Cuba was moving suffrage away from the forefront of feminists' political discourse. But Stevens in turn advised Mederos that a period of political unrest ought to serve a propitious opportunity to secure women suffrage.[119]

Mederos, a liberal feminist, much to the right of Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, was not an anti-imperialist. She did, however, understand the connections between the long history of U.S. neo-colonialism in Cuba and the country's current economic and political strife. She also understood that the exigencies of the revolution made organizing a suffrage battle difficult. Mederos requested the NWP journal *Equal Rights* publish a short article she had written to enlighten Stevens and other women in the United States about the tumult in Cuba and to praise the efforts of young female students in the revolutionary cause.[120] Several weeks later, Mederos's comments appeared in *Equal Rights*, but in an adulterated version, which de-emphasized the revolutionary activities. Instead, the article highlighted the theme of sexual equality: "There were street fighting and arrests and all the color and horror of a somewhat hysterical civic crisis, but regardless of the cause and of the manifestations of the revolt women were equally active and equally prominent with men in it."[121]

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[118] Domínguez to Luisi, June 10, 1931, PL-BN.

[119] Mederos to Stevens, November 3, 1930; Stevens to Mederos, November 13, 1930, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

When Mederos saw the article, she was shocked by the depiction of the revolution in *Equal Rights* as a "hysterical crisis. "I thank you for using so adroitly the information I sent you on the participation of Cuban women in the life struggle for dignifying national life," she wrote to IACW secretary Fanny Bunand Sevastos. "However…I cannot but express to you how deeply a phrase used in the first paragraph has hurt me – because it is absolutely untrue and because it appears in the official organ of the Woman's Party, from which I expected a deeper insight into the heart of Cuba's problem." The phrase "a somewhat hysterical civic crisis" she wrote, "diminish[es] the dignity of the protest of the Cuban people before a dictatorial government that neither respects life nor laws." She explained, "I feel the whole world should know more about our problems and specially the American world, since its government is indirectly upholding this mediaval state of affairs to serve financial interests or what not. [sic]" She continued:

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[120] Mederos to Stevens, December 4, 1930, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[121] "Militant Women in Brazil and Cuba," *Equal Rights*, January 17, 1931, 399. They sent Mederos a copy. Fanny Bunand Sevastos to Mederos, January 24, 1930, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

> Do you know that our University, all our High Schools, Normal Schools and Commercial Schools are closed indefinitely. That we have no free press…that since November we are living under Martial Law [that] Habeus Corpus is openly denied those detained, tho this is also unconstitutional…Do you know that hundreds of persons have been imprisoned for civically protesting of this state of affairs and, knowing all this do you consider there is any right to qualify as hysterical the protest of the Cuban people no matter how spontaneous this protest may be. Or would you not consider it more just and more exact to apply that adjective to a government's attitude?[122]

In response, Sevastos, Mune Lee, and Doris Stevens each wrote to Mederos, apologizing for their blunder and explaining that the article had not actually been written by an NWP member. They also sent her copy of a subsequent issue of *Equal Rights* which featured Mederos's article reprinted in full (and in which the word "hysterical" did not appear). Next to the article was a small box of text: "The National Woman's Party is, of course, a non-combatant in revolutions, political or otherwise. It holds to but one principle, Equal Rights."[123] The IACW members stopped short of extending their sympathy to Mederos and her country-women for their revolutionary cause, since such a platform was outside their program. Sevastos told her "We are, as you know, a non political organization and therefore, cannot make official comments on other matters than strictly on those pertaining to women's activities and women's rights."[124] Stevens, meanwhile, continued to insist that the revolution provided “a golden opportunity” to organize “with increased vigor” and “get the vote in Cuba.”[125]

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[122] Mederos to Bunand Sevastos, February 13, 1931, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[123] "Women's Actions in Recent Events in Cuba," *Equal Rights*, February 7, 1931.

[124] Muna Lee to Mederos, February 25, 1931, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers; Bunand Sevastos to Mederos, February 27, 1931; Mederos to Bunand Sevastos, March 1931, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers. Although Mederos wrote a letter to Edith Hooker, the editor of *Equal Rights*, to be reprinted and air her concerns about the phrase at the suggestion of Stevens, her letter never appeared in *Equal Rights*.

The tensions between the politics of the Cuban revolution and single-minded goals of the IACW simmered to a boil when Stevens preached the value of suffrage to Ofelia Domínguez’s organization, the Unión Laborista de Mujeres. When in June, 1931, Margarita de Aragón, the Unión Laborista’s Secretary of Foreign Relations, wrote to Stevens asking her for bulletins and information from the IACW, Stevens wrote back expressing her delight at news of the organization and urged them to fight for suffrage during the Constitutional Reforms taking place in Cuba.[126] Margarita de Aragón responded that although their organization called “for full equality in the civil, political and social order,” the current situation made the vote an unrealistic and undesirable goal. “The day when Cuba has a legal government, we will exercise the right to vote. We do not want a stale right at its source,” de Aragón explained.[127] Stevens responded with a terse note in which she suggested women in the United States as models for women of Cuba: “When we were fighting for suffrage in this country, women had…to make demands upon public men to whose policies on most matters they were thoroughly opposed. Women would never have got very far if they had done otherwise. Beggars can rarely be choosers, and women are still beggars for their rights everywhere.” She closed with her friendly respects.[128]

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[125] Stevens to Mederos, May 1, 1931, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[126] Stevens to Margarita de Aragón, Stevens Collection, September 18, 1931, Box 65, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[127] Margarita de Aragón and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro to Stevens, October 3, 1931, Box 65, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[128] Stevens to Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, undated, Box 65, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

When de Aragón showed this letter to Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, an infuriated Domínguez wrote a long letter back to Stevens, attempting to enlighten Stevens on her "lacking an absolute and frank intelligence on the part of all our sisters of America." Speaking on behalf of "Cuban feminists," Domínguez reiterated that "gaining the recognition of our political rights by granting votes to women is not the only nor the most urgent of our programs." She resented Stevens's implication that the Unión Laborista was obstructing or delaying votes for women in Cuba. She explained that given Cuba's political instability, her organization was not pushing "for the total and quick gaining of their political rights," but rather for something "more serious…the *restoration of law*, not just ours as women, but of an entire people deprived of liberty without reason and reduced to the worst of slavery."[129]

Domínguez refused to accept the friendly sentiments in Stevens's letter, and "could not stand the idea of lowering oneself to beg for that which she has the right to demand." She believed, "like Martí said…that 'rights should not be begged for.' 'Rights are to be taken'…

> Do not fear that our circumstantial and patriotic stand will retard or compromise, in the American continents, the definite triumph of political ideals which today absorb all your energies, ideals which are also ours; before judging, understand our courageous stand which obliges us to postpone our precious and more direct interests to the fundamental interests of the nation, and you will see and recognize in this a new motive, guaranteeing the ability of the woman and of her preparation for the arduous civic education which will increase the respect for her in all just and sensible nations.

Domínguez concluded her letter by congratulating Stevens on her successes for legal rights for U.S. women and pledging her loyalty to the IACW ideal of equality. But she asserted she would not follow Stevens's "rules," the current application of which, at this time, would result in disaster.[130]

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[129] Domínguez to Sevens, November 23, 1931, Box 65, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

Stevens was unswayed by Domínguez's letter. She wrote to Elena Mederos:

> Never mind about Dr Dominguez. I am writing her no more letters…to try to persuade her that Cuban women ought to agitate for the vote no matter what government is in power. Her group is evidently convinced on this point, so we will have to hope that other groups will continue the work. Her position is not unique; we have encountered it before. There are always women who think that even though they have no political power, it is more important to change that government first and get the vote second. She seems to have misinterpreted my last letter, but never mind.[131]

Domínguez, however, meant to make the most of her articulations to Stevens, believing it important to publicize the misguided direction of the IACW. Significantly, Domínguez published her correspondence with Stevens as a flier that she distributed to feminist groups throughout Latin America. The flier reprinted both the letter Stevens had sent to her, and Domínguez's response to that letter under the title, "To the Political Conscience of the Latin American Woman."[132]

The Unión Laborista de Mujeres circulated the flier widely and proudly throughout Latin America. Several years later, one of their bulletins reported that this campaign around Domínguez's 1930 "response to the suggestions of Doris Stevens" ranked among the organization's most important anti-imperialist fights to date.[133] It is likely that one of the recipients of this flier was Domínguez's good friend, Paulina Luisi.

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[130] Domínguez to Sevens, November 23, 1931, Box 65, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[131] Stevens to Mederos, February 12, 1932, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[132] "Union Laborista de Mujeres, A la Conciencia Política de la Mujer Latino Americana, Carta de la Srta. Doris Stevens, Presidenta de la Inter American Commission of Woman a la Unión Laborista de Mujeres." Leg 675, No: 8, ODN-AN.
[133] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro to Adelia di Carlo, November 5, 1933, Leg 673, No 9; 8 September 1933, URM letter attached to the "Informe," Leg 675, No 11, ODN-AN.

The years 1932 and 1933 would see dramatic changes in the national and political lives of both Luisi and Domínguez, illustrating the impact of their national politics on the possibilities for Pan-American feminism, and confirming their insistence that their local political contexts indeed mattered. Paulina Luisi saw the fruition of the long suffrage battle in Uruguay when full voting rights were granted to women in December 1932.[134] In March 1933, however, a military coup and the resulting rise of a dictatorship under Gabriel Terra destroyed the suffrage euphoria. After the former president of Uruguay and Luisi's friend Baltasar Brum failed in his attempts to lead the resistance to Terra's dictatorship, Brum committed suicide by gunshot.

As late as August, 1932, Luisi was urging Doris Stevens to appoint her as the IACW delegate for Uruguay so she could attend the 1933 Montevideo Conference, perhaps hopeful that she could inject her own vision for inter-American feminism. However, after the imposition of the Terra dictatorship, Luisi believed that fighting for women's equal rights under the current regime was not the appropriate goal. Inciting reprisals against all opposition, Terra arrested Paulina Luisi's sister Luisa Luisi for speaking at the funeral of a slain former deputy and Socialist.[135] Paulina Luisi wrote Alice Paul that she and her sisters were fleeing for Europe "as no self respecting feminist could stay in her country under present circumstances…"[136]

Domínguez continued to face a desperate political climate as well, and in January, 1933 she fled Cuba for Mexico, where she remained until Machado's overthrow in

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[134] "Se ha Reconocido a la Mujer Uruguaya el Derecho al Voto Activo y Pasivo, Tanto en Materia Nacional como Municipal," *El Pueblo* (Montevideo), December 16, 1932, 1.
[135] "Terra Repressing Foes," *New York Times*, November 3, 1933, 10.
[136] Quoted by Stevens to Margarita Robles de Mendoza, November 4, 1933, Box 77, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

September 1933. In Mexico Domínguez tried to rally revolutionary student groups and exiled Cubans, in an attempt to grow support for the revolution and to protest U.S. mediation and control over Machado's successor.[137] Under a democratic regime, she would uphold the fight for women's rights. Indeed, from Mexico she directed those in the Unión Laborista de Mujeres in Cuba to oppose the intervention of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles and to send missives to the new, temporary Revolutionary government of Ramón Grau San Martín, imploring the inclusion of women's equal rights in a new Cuban constitution. Under Grau San Martín a number of reforms were enacted, including women's suffrage and repealing the Platt Amendment. However, as of January 1934, with the backing of Welles, military leader Fulgencia Batista rose to power, shattering the reformist dreams Grau's government had engendered and confirming Domínguez's worst fears about U.S. imperialism.[138]

While in Mexico, in August, 1933, Domínguez received several requests that she appeal to her government to represent Latin American women at the 1933 Montevideo Conference. One appeal came from Argentinian feminist Adelia di Carlo; the other, from her friend Máximo Soto Hall. While only a few years before, Soto Hall had praised the IACW for its commitment to equality and liberty, his opinion of the very organization that his own 1923 resolution had made possible, had dramatically diminished in the early years of the 1930s.[139] Now, as he told Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz, he felt like

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[137] Stoner, "Domínguez," 137.

[138] Batista would remain in control through a series of puppet presidents until he officially became president in 1940.

[139] Domínguez Navarro to Adelia di Carlo, November 5, 1933, Caja 673, No 9; Soto Hall to Excmo. Señor Presidente de la Republica, Habana, August 17, 1933, Caja 673, No 3, ODN-AN.

"Saturn, anxious to swallow his children."[140] The IACW, he believed had not fulfilled its promise of a multi-lateral commitment to equality; its actual organization demonstrated "lack of cooperation from other people in the continent." He sent Domínguez a copy of a letter he wrote explaining these concerns to the Cuban government and urging them to send their own female delegates to the conference to serve as a counterweight to the IACW. After its creation, he detailed, the IACW "became a unilateral office, with no other representation than that of the women of the United States." Although "[t]hey have done commendable work," he explained, its U.S. unilateralism made its work was "incomplete."[141]

To these requests, Domínguez responded that she was out of favor with her government and unfortunately could not represent her country at the Montevideo Conference. She did recognize the need to develop a counterweight to the hegemony of the IACW, but she believed that justice would never arise from a conference hosted by the Pan American Union. She sent di Carlo a copy of the flier she had published that contained her correspondence with Doris Stevens from 1931, telling her "It was written two years ago, but it remains current." Domínguez explained to di Carlo that a real inter-American feminism could not hope to emerge from the Pan-American conferences which only perpetuated "insincerity, lies, demagoguery." A real inter-American feminism, she suggested, could only come about with a continental congress of Latin American women

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[140] Bertha Lutz to Sophonisba Breckinridge, February 1, 1934, Reel 11, Sophonisba Breckinridge Papers, Library of Congress.

[141] Soto Hall to Presidente de la Republica, August 17, 1933, Caja 673, No 3, ODN-AN.

– this was what they should work for, she wrote, as sisters and *correligonarrias* who shared the same language and "raza."[142]

Luisi, Domínguez, and Soto Hall were not the only ones with a low opinion of the IACW on the eve of the December 1933 Montevideo Conference. Earlier that fall, Doris Stevens sought, without much success, to convince various IACW delegates to attend the upcoming conference. Elena Mederos declined despite numerous entreaties from Stevens, explaining that she had been enlisted under the Machado government and that the new government would not sponsor her.[143] Other delegates reported being "ill" and or having family commitments that made it impossible for them to attend. Maria Elena de Hinestrosa from Colombia resigned completely from the IACW in November, 1933 because of bad health.[144] Another to resign her post as commissioner because of ill health was Chilean Aida Parada.[145] When Stevens asked that Marta Vergara, a Chilean feminist who had served in the Commission's nationality campaign at the Hague, fill Parada's post and attend Montevideo, Vergara told Stevens she too could no longer support the IACW. Vergara explained that the "feminism" the Commission stood for was "anti-revolutionary." A narrow focus on equal civil and political rights would serve only the interests of middle-class women, she explained, but would do nothing to help the "economic situation of the proletariat woman" in Latin America.[146]

Panamanian representative Clara González also was unable to attend. She had left the Pan American Union offices of the IACW in 1930 after the Havana Conference and returned to Panama. Suffering from a serious illness for a number of years, she had maintained a cordial though intermittent correspondence with Doris Stevens. She wrote to Stevens in 1931 to ask her help in getting her appointed to the upcoming Montevideo conference through Stevens's connections to Panama's president.[147] Despite her efforts, Stevens was unable to secure the president's agreement to send González or any woman to the conference. She urged González to try to raise the money herself. In the impatient tone that characterized much of Stevens's correspondence to IACW delegates, she wrote, "Is it not humanly possible for you to get the feminists of your country who realize the importance of civil and political rights of women being on the agenda of the Seventh Conference, to get up a mass meeting in your city and contribute sufficient funds to get you to Montevideo and back…? This would seem to be the only way it can be done now."[148] A response from González does not exist, but she did not attend the Montevideo conference.

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[142] Domínguez Navarro to Adelia di Carlo, November 5, 1933, Caja 673, No 9, ODN-AN.
[143] Mederos to Stevens, October 7, 1933, Box 65, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[144] Ricardo Hinestrosa D. to Stevens, November 4, 1933, Box 60, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.
[145] Stevens to Parada, November 2, 1933, Box 64, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[146] Vergara to Stevens, October 24, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

Five years had passed since the picture was taken of González and Stevens talking to each other fondly in the sun of the Pan American Union patio. Over this time, the IACW had not only not lived up to its promises to unite the women of the Americas, it had alienated, disillusioned and undermined the hopes of many throughout Latin America who had believed it might stand for a multi-lateral inter-American feminism. Yet it had also galvanized assertive opposition to the Commission, resulting in strong, Latin-American-led alternative visions for an inter-American feminism based on multi-lateralism and social justice. Opposition to the IACW would culminate at the 1933

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[147] González to Stevens, December 22, 1931, Box 84, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.
[148] Stevens to González, October 19, 1933, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

Montevideo Conference, posing a real challenge to Stevens's authority and creating greater space for alternative visions of Pan-American feminism.

Chapter 4
The Great Feminist Battle of Montevideo, 1933

"The essential qualities of a true Pan Americanism must be the same as those which constitute a good neighbor, namely, mutual understanding, and, through such understanding, a sympathetic appreciation of the other's point of view."

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Address before the special session of the Governing Board of the Pan American Union in celebration of Pan American Day. Washington, D.C., April 12, 1933

In the days after Christmas, 1933, following the Seventh International Conference of American States in Montevideo, Uruguay, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull told the American public that "a more thorough understanding has been brought about at Montevideo than at any time in two generations."[1] An editorial in the *Nation*, however, doubted the geopolitical success won by the U.S. delegation. "[T]he most concrete, as well as the most dramatic, act of the conference," the editorial asserted, was not Hull's announcement of the Good Neighbor policy nor his resolution lowering trade tariffs. Rather, it was the passage of an international treaty guaranteeing women's equal nationality rights and the recommendation that all nations grant equal civil and political rights to women.[2]

"Dramatic" was an understatement. Commotion and furor had erupted in Montevideo over the Equal Rights treaties brokered by the Inter-American Commission of Women, and over the fact that the U.S. State Department delegation at Montevideo had opposed them and sought to disband the IACW altogether. The *New York Times*'s assiduous coverage of these events portrayed them as little more than an extension of the intense equal rights versus protective labor legislation debate that was dividing reformers and feminists throughout the United States. The U.S. delegation to Montevideo included Sophonisba Breckinridge, a social reformer and opponent of the "Equal Rights" platform of the National Woman's Party. She and the U.S. delegation had gone head-to-head with Doris Stevens, NWP member and chairman of the IACW, to oppose, ultimately unsuccessfully, the IACW Equal Rights treaties and continuation of Stevens's leadership.[3] This debate replicated on foreign soil, as the *Nation* put it, "domestic political and social causes quite outside the ken of the nations gathered at Montevideo."[4]

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[1] Cordell Hull quoted in Michael A. Butler, *Cautious Visionary: Cordell Hull and Trade Reform, 1933-1937* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1998), 91.
[2] "A Polite Conference," *The Nation* 137, no. 3573 (December 27, 1933): 724.

Such a portrayal, however, overlooked the significance these events held for many Latin American feminists as well as the role the latter had in shaping the conflict itself. As the previous chapter revealed, in the years leading up to the Montevideo conference a growing chorus, including Paulina Luisi and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, voiced deep dissatisfaction with the unilateral leadership of the U.S. National Woman's Party over the IACW and its narrow agenda for "equal rights" defined as equal civil and political rights under the law for women. The escalation of the Great Depression, which had seen many women turned out of their jobs, contributed to political turmoil. Revolutions in Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay, and the Chaco War that began in 1932 between Bolivia and Paraguay, were only some of the displacements that eroded the welfare of men, women, and children in the Americas. For many Latin American activists, the stakes of the women's rights debates in Montevideo had little to nothing to do with the internecine "equal rights" versus protective legislation conflict in the United States. While many Latin American feminists supported the IACW Equal Rights treaties, significant numbers were more concerned about the outcome of the Montevideo Conference in terms of overhauling the organization. They desired greater collective cooperation with Latin American leadership of the Commission, and a broader agenda for Pan-American feminism, one that prioritized social and economic welfare, as well as civil and politics rights, and international peace.

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[3] Harold B. Hinton, "Rights of Women Bring Parley Rift," *New York Times*, December 12, 1933, 20; "Women Victorious in Equality Fight at Montevideo," *New York Times*, December 17, 1933, 1; "U.S. Move to Block a Feminist Treaty Laid to Strife Here," *New York Times*, December 18, 1933, 1; "Feminists Assail Our Stand on Pact," *New York Times*, December 19, 1933, 10; Mildred Adams, "Again Controversy Arises Over Equality for Women," *New York Times*, December 24, 1933, XX4; "Mrs. Roosevelt Denies Opposing Women's Treaty," *New York Times*, December 27, 1933, 9; "Doris Stevens Hails Feminist Pact Victory," *New York Times*, January 25, 1934, 9.
[4] "A Polite Conference," *The Nation*, 724.

One of those vying for change was Brazilian feminist Bertha Lutz. As technical advisor to the Brazilian delegation in Montevideo, Lutz stoked a great deal of the debate there, levying numerous resolutions, some successful others not, to alter the structure and agenda of the IACW. An interview she gave after the conference, which appeared in Ecuadorian and Cuban magazines, revealed her motivations. Lutz "simply does not believe in" the Pan-American feminism as established by the Doris-Stevens led IACW, with its "active and strong idiosyncracy" for equal rights. A Pan-American feminism that truly represented the women of the Americas would not only promote equal rights, she explained to her interviewer, Isabel Morel, the pen name of Chilean feminist Delia Ducong de Arrate. It would also address pressing economic and social issues for women workers and children and would explicitly push for world peace. Morel echoed these sentiments. Equal rights under the law for women were well and good, she acknowledged, but this time of intense social and economic turmoil begged another question, too: "What has America done for her children?"[5]

Lutz's desire for inclusion of social and economic rights in the feminist agenda reverberated with many other Latin American feminists who had been dissatisfied with the IACW. However, Lutz's Pan-American feminist vision was also somewhat idiosyncratic. While she believed U.S. feminists should not dominate Pan-American feminism, she also had a hierarchical view of the Americas, privileging Brazil over other countries as a rightful leader in feminism. In addition, unlike Luisi, Domínguez, Clara González, and other Spanish-speaking feminists who explicitly critiqued U.S. imperialism, Lutz was something of a U.S.-phile. Although she opposed armed interventions of any kind, she believed U.S. military actions in the Americas were on the wane and looked favorably on closer economic, cultural, and intellectual ties between the United States and the rest of the Americas. Her sense of exceptionalism as a Portuguese-speaking national of Brazil, whose history she believed distinct from the rest of the Americas, helped underwrite Lutz's affinity for the U.S. and her belief in a shared cultural superiority over other Latin America countries.

While these views isolated her from many Spanish-speaking feminists, since 1922 they had enabled Lutz to nurture a close relationship with the U.S. League of Women Voters and with Carrie Chapman Catt. This friendship helped pave the way for her active collaboration with LWV member Sophonsiba Breckinridge and the U.S. State Department to undermine the IACW at Montevideo. The two women worked together even though they had somewhat different goals. Breckinridge opposed a sweeping equal rights treaty in order to safeguard protective labor legislation, while Lutz had begun to speak out *against* protective labor legislation for working women. Nonetheless, the two women shared a feminist ideology that promoted social welfare, as well as a strong dislike for the NWP, and these commonalities overrode their differences. At the conference they diligently and creatively collaborated in attempts to foil the IACW.

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[5] Isabel Morel, "An Evaluation of International Feminism," [undated] translated into English from an article from a Havana-based magazine *Social*, Box 63, Folder 4, Stevens Papers. She wrote another article on the same topic in Ecuadorian periodical: Isabel Morel, "Sobremesa de la VII Conferencia Internacional," *Nuevos Horizontes* (Guayaquil) March 1934, 8.

Although the women's rights debates at Montevideo gained significant press coverage in their day in the U.S., they have been overlooked in contemporary literature. The conference has been remembered primarily for its inauguration of a Good Neighbor policy of nonintervention that ushered in a period of relative stability and peace in the Americas.[6] Historical scholarship has not yet explored how the conference threw into relief and, indeed brought to a head, the lack of "good-neighborly" understanding within Pan-American feminism. The limited literature on the women's rights debate at Montevideo somewhat replicates the narrative of the newspapers of the time by focusing on the fight between Stevens and Breckinridge, casting the conflict as part of the age-old debate between "social feminists" and "equal rights" or NWP feminists.[7] More broadly, scholarship on international feminism that focuses analysis on conflicts between the

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[6] See Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Holt, 2006), 27-28, 33-39; Frederick B. Bike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Frederick Marks, *Wind over Sand: The Diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt* (Athens: University of George Press, 1988); Frank Niess, *A Hemisphere to Itself: A History of US-Latin American Relations* (London: Zed Books, 1990).

[7] Diane Elizabeth Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights: The Equality Treaties Campaign of the National Woman's Party and Reactions of the U.S. State Department and the National League of Women Voters (1928-1938)," (PhD Dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1999); Christy Snider, "Only a Question of Method: Sophonisba P. Breckinridge and the Push for Women's Political Equality at the 1933 Pan-American Congress" (paper presented at Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Amherst, MA, June 2011).

NWP and its Equal Rights agendas and (usually Western European) labor feminists, as Eileen Boris notes, usually "reaffirm[s]…the dichotomy between equal rights, tied to a gender-first ideology, and protective legislation, associated with a class-based defense of women industrial workers."[8]

Recognizing the perspectives of Lutz and other Latin American feminists who had a stake in the proceedings at Montevideo reveals a more nuanced Pan-American feminist agenda, one that challenged such rigid dichotomies between "gender-first" or "class-first" positions regarding equal rights. Many who advocated absolute notions of equal rights legislation for women and opposed gender-specific hour and condition work laws also believed in a greater role of the state in fostering social and economic justice. Many believed women's roles as mothers merited state-sponsored maternity legislation as a social "right," rather than a "protection." Finally, many above all desired greater multi-lateralism in the organization and leadership of Pan-American feminism.

Foregrounding Latin American feminist perspectives and focusing on Lutz's role at Montevideo provides a window into a different, as yet unexplored, side of the debates over Pan-American feminism. Lutz's own unique Pan-American feminist vision energized her collaboration throughout the 1920s with the League of Women Voters in the U.S. and laid much of the groundwork for her later alliance with Breckinridge and the U.S. delegation at Montevideo, despite the fact that her views on protective labor legislation ultimately strayed from the party-line of the LWV. The equal rights versus protective legislation debate in the U.S. mobilized social reformers in the new administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to secure a position for Sophonisba Breckinridge at the upcoming Montevideo Conference in order to extinguish the IACW. At the conference, after the U.S. delegation's attempts to disband the IACW failed, Bertha Lutz tried in numerous ways to change the organization to reflect feminist ideals of equal civil and political rights, as well as social and economic justice, greater multi-lateralism, and peace. Although the IACW survived the challenge, Paulina Luisi and Mexican IACW delegate Margarita Robles de Mendoza collaborated in creating an alternative Pan-American group that would be led by the Spanish-speaking women of the Americas, in support of Lutz's broader feminist agenda.

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[8] Eileen Boris, "'No Right to Layettes or Nursing Time': Maternity Leave and the Question of U.S. Exceptionalism," *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed., Leon Fink (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 174.

Bertha Lutz and Pan-American Feminism

A passion for international travel and for science led a young Bertha Maria Julia Lutz to feminism. Born in 1894 in São Paulo to an English nurse and a Swiss-Brazilian scientist and pioneer of tropical medicine, Lutz received much of her education in Europe. Between 1911 and 1918, she studied zoology, botany, biology, and chemistry at the Sorbonne.[9]

The impact of the feminist movement Lutz witnessed in Britain, at the height of suffrage militancy, led to her activism for the female vote when she returned to Brazil. In 1918 Lutz published an article that sparked the development of a formal woman's suffrage movement. Championing economic independence for women, she called on her Brazilian sisters not to "live parasitically based on their sex" but rather to engage in the nation's political life and "become valuable instruments in the progress of Brazil."[10] She formed a small study group for women's rights. The following year her feminist fame grew when Lutz outperformed male competitors on the rigorous science and natural history exams in order to become Secretary of the *Museu Nacional*, becoming the second woman in the history of Brazil to win a civil service appointment to a government job.

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[9] Interview with Bertha Lutz, January 2, 1975, Rio de Janeiro, by Eleanor Mitchell, Society of Women Geographers. Cassette tape of the interview from Society of Women Geographers, Washington, D.C., in author's possession.

Science initially provided the language and rationale for Lutz's feminism. She defined feminism scientifically as "the attempt which modern woman is making…to fashion a medium in which she can harmoniously develop her feminine personality," while "satisfying the physico-psychological necessities of her organism and…maximizing…her individual life."[11] She believed that women and men were equal, but they were not the same. Biology was determinative. She understood women, bestowed by nature with reproductive organs to be naturally more nurturing and peaceful than men, who, freed from the biological responsibilities of reproduction, were "the provider[s] and the protector[s]" and "have more interest in power [and in] money."[12]

As she explained in a 1920 medical journal article titled "The Limits Imposed Upon the Individual Activity of Woman by Biologic Factors," Lutz believed that the biological effects of motherhood atrophied women's potential in other areas, that "[t]he pregnant organism carrying the parasitic egg feels the influence of this parasitism upon all the functions." Lutz looked favorably toward the changes taking places throughout the world that were speeding the development of women's intellect and work outside the home and apart from motherhood, modern developments that Lutz believed could help women overcome their "biological limitations." Yet women now faced a new conundrum because, as she put it, "the exigencies of work reconcile themselves badly with the duties of maternity, and intellectual development exerts an inhibiting action upon sexual functions."[13] She concluded that women, as mothers, needed to be protected on the job from long hours, harsh working conditions, and night work. These beliefs underwrote her stance in favor of protective labor legislation for women workers that the new International Labor Organization was beginning to promote.

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[10] Lutz, "Seção Cartas de Mulher," *Revista da Semana*, December 28, 1918; June E. Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Brazil, 1850-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 134.

[11] Lutz quoted in "Brazil Sends Brilliant Woman to Conference," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1922, 42.

[12] Lutz quoted in "Brazil's Women Score Gains," *New York Times*, November 8, 1936, D9.

Lutz's biological understandings also informed her personal decision to remain unmarried and childless. As she put it, "For the individual woman there will be a radical method: to choose resolutely one or the other course, either to dedicate herself entirely to work, or to abandon this new orientation and, beaten, turn backward." To "turn backward" meant devoting oneself to domestic life. It was up to those few, like herself, who chose to dedicate themselves entirely to their work, to find and collaborate with each other in a movement to promote women's equality with men and still celebrate "women's values" of social welfare and peace. "At the present moment," she wrote in 1920, "everything depends on collective action."[14]

The Pan-American movement, which was at that moment developing with clamors for international peace, collaboration, and progressive women's rights ideals, quickly became central to Lutz's agenda. In 1922, she served as the Brazilian delegate to the Pan American Conference of Women in Baltimore, Maryland. Lutz formed an almost immediately-close friendship with Carrie Chapman Catt, to whom she enthused after the conference, "The days I spent with you were amongst the happiest not only of those spent in this country, but in my life."[15] Lutz, who was becoming known in the U.S. as the "brains" of Brazil's suffrage movement, was named Vice-President of the Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women (PAAAW), proposed by Paulina Luisi at the conference.[16] Catt was elected Honorary President. Just months after returning to Brazil Lutz transformed her small women's rights group into a national organization, the Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino (FBPF). She often credited the Baltimore conference with the FBPF's creation.[17]

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[13] Bertha Lutz, "The Limits Imposed Upon the Individual Activity of Woman by Biologic Factors," *A Folha Medica*, Rio de Janeiro, December 1920, II:6, League of Women Voters Papers, LofC (LWV Papers).
[14] Lutz, "The Limits Imposed Upon the Individual Activity of Woman by Biologic Factors."

In 1923, Catt traveled to Brazil and collaborated with Lutz and others in drawing up the FBPF's constitution.[18] Its principles, in line with the PAAAW, included securing the right to vote, advancing women's education, obtaining protective legislative measures for women workers, and, finally, improving relations among women of all American countries in order, as Lutz explained, to "obtain lasting peace in the Western Hemisphere."[19] In the spring of 1925, when Lutz returned to the United States for the Second Conference of the PAAAW, the group elected her President of the newly-organized Inter-American Union of Women (IAUW).[20] The purpose of the group was similar to those of the PAAAW – women's civil and political rights and education, their social welfare and children's social welfare, and inter-American peace.[21]

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[15] Bertha Lutz to Carrie Chapman Catt, July 7, 1922, Reel 4, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Library of Congress.

[16] "Women Voters to Welcome Brazilian Suffragist To-day," *New York Tribune*, April 8, 1922, 9. In 1923, a *Boston Daily Globe* article called Lutz "South America's Most Prominent 'New Woman,'" Margaret Bell, "Six Great Feminists, V. Dona Bertha Lutz," *Boston Daily Globe*, September 7, 1923, 16.

[17] Bertha Lutz, "Summary of the First Biennial Report of the Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women," II:50, LWV Papers.

[18] Lutz to Maud Wood Park, March 21, 1923, II:17, LWV Papers; Lutz, *Homenagem das senhoras brasilieras*, 10; Lutz, "The Feminist Movement in Brazil," *Baltimore Sun*, June 21, 1931, 3; Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex,* 141.

[19] Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex*, 136-137; Mary Wilhelmine Williams, *The People and Politics of Latin America* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1930), 741; Lutz, *Austregesilio*, in Blachman, "Eve in Adamocracy," 127.

The beliefs that the Western Hemisphere was outpacing Europe in its progress toward peace and civilization, and that women of the Americas had a special role to play in this process, were central to Lutz's Pan-American feminism. She was fond of quoting H.G. Wells's 1921 work *The Salvaging of Civilization*, in which he stated that the war had proved Europe a hopeless place to start a real organization for international peace, and that the great hope for salvaging the civilization of the world was a Pan American union. "But he has forgotten one thing," Lutz noted, "the women. Women are a new force in the history of the world."[22]

In particular, Lutz believed that women from the United States and Brazil represented a new force in the history of the world. This belief helped underwrite Lutz's close friendship with Catt. While some Latin American feminists, even delegates to the 1925 Inter-American conference hosted by Catt, abhorred Catt's ethnocentrism and inauspicious comments about "backward" Latin American women, Lutz always referred to Catt in only the most reverential and flattering terms, viewing Catt as her teacher in all things related to women's rights. She addressed her as "Mother" and herself as Catt's "Brazilian daughter," in their correspondence.[23] The appreciation was mutual. In reports Catt published about feminism in South America, she reserved special praise for feminism in Brazil, with its "undying organized woman suffrage movement," and for Bertha Lutz, "a beautiful young woman who is the 'propulsive force' at present."[24]

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[20] "New Pan-American Union Organized at Meeting of Women," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1924, 2; "History of the Pan American Conference of Women, Pan-American Association for the Advancement of Women, Inter-American Union of Women, April 1922- April 1926," II:50, LWV Papers. (For more on this organization and conference see Chapter 2.)

[21] "Tentative Program of Congress of Inter-American Union of Women, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1928," II:50, LWV Papers.

[22] Lutz quoted in "The Latin Point of View," *National Business Wom*en 5, no. 4 (October 1922): 21. In *The Salvaging of Civilization*, H.G. Wells wrote: "…American accessibility to the idea of a federalized world neither began with [Wilson] nor will it end with his failure. America is still a hopeful laboratory of world-unifying thought. A long string of arbitration treaties stands to the credit of America, and a series of developing Pan-American projects, pointing clearly to at least a continental synthesis within a measurable time. There has been, and there still is, a better understanding of, and a greater receptivity to, ideas of international synthesis in America than in any European state."

The close friendship between Lutz and Catt was informed by a belief, held by many Brazilian elites of the time, in a special relationship between Brazil and the U.S. Such a relationship, they thought, could be enjoyed since Brazil, a former Portuguese colony and a monarchy until the 19th century, was separate from and superior to Spanish-speaking Latin America. The belief in Brazilian/U.S. exceptionalism encouraged Brazil's willingness to engage in Pan-American relations with the U.S.[25]

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[23] Lutz to Catt, May 21, 1945, Reel 12, National American Woman Suffrage Association Papers (NAWSA Papers). Leila Rupp notes that many women in the international feminist world spoke of each other in familial/motherly ways; "Bertha Lutz…addressed Catt as 'Dear (Step-) mother Mrs. Catt,' 'My dear (mother) Mrs. Catt,' and 'My dear mother (not step) Mrs. Catt,'…" *Worlds of Women*, 199. It is significant to note, though, that Lutz was one of the few, perhaps the only, Latin American feminist to address Carrie Chapman Catt in this affectionate manner.

[24] Carrie Chapman Catt, "Busy Women in Brazil," *The Woman Citizen*, June 2, 1923, 7-8, 26. Catt also noted the exceptionality of Brazil, which with its Portuguese language and heritage was "hated [by Spanish-speaking Latin Americans] most, if not quite as much, as the United States. There is unity among all the other countries," as she observed in her travel diary, "Report of Carrie Chapman Catt, On South America and European Trip, 1922-1923," Reel 2, Catt Papers.

[25] As Leslie Bethell explains, "For Brazilians, there were two giants – though unequal giants, no doubt – in the western hemisphere: the United States and Brazil. Both were continental in size; both had huge natural resources and economic potential; both were stable 'democracies.'" Leslie Bethell, "Brazil and 'Latin America,'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* 42 (2010): 465; Joseph Smith, *Unequal Giants: Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Brazil, 1889-1930* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1991).

Lutz glorified this special relationship in her speeches and public activism both in Brazil and in the U.S.[26] Addressing a group of California business women in 1922, Lutz said that Brazil was turning away from "Europe for ideas and ideals" and "realizing now that we can learn far more from" those in the United States "who got their independence from conditions very similar to ours."[27] Speaking in Brazil, Lutz distinguished her country from others in South and Central America, describing it as "young…free of preconceptions and the dead weight of traditions." Consequently it could "adapt more quickly to…progressive ideas" like feminism.[28] Lutz herself spoke English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and German, and made a point of noting she preferred her name "Bertha" in the English spelling (rather than Berta).[29] While Lutz liked to say, "There are no Americas: America is only one," her view of the "Americas" was in fact divided along hierarchical lines with the U.S. and Brazil on top.[30]

Lutz's view of a natural affinity between women in the U.S. and in Brazil and her analogizing of the two countries' feminist movements, ignored salient political differences. For one, the small size of Brazil's middle class, compared to that of the United States, made for a different type of feminist mobilization – one that was smaller-scale, not cross-class, and more dependent on personal connections to powerful men in government. Although Brazilian women would win the right to vote in 1934, suffrage would be restricted by literacy, and the percent of literate Brazilian women was far less than in the U.S.[31] While the feminist movement in Brazil may have had more in common with that of Southern Cone nations like Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, the cultural superiority Lutz believed Brazil and the U.S. shared underwrote her belief in the necessity of U.S. and Brazilian leadership in helping uplift their less fortunate sisters in the more backward, Spanish-speaking Latin America.

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[26] Lutz also told her friend U.S. feminist Mary Wilhelmine Williams, that she was "very anxious to have closer relationship bet[ween] Brazil and the US." Williams, Diary entry, July 13, 1926, Mary Wilhelmine Williams Papers, Special Collections, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

[27] Lutz quoted in "The Latin Point of View," *National Business Women* 5, no. 4 (October 1922): 21.

[28] Lutz, *A Noite*, October 11, 1921, in Blachman, "Eve in Adamocracy," 122.

[29] "Bertha Lutz," undated, Box 62, Folder 6, Stevens Papers; Amanda Finch to Mary Anderson, August 5, 1936, Records of the Women's Bureau, RG86.3.5, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

[30] Lutz quoted in *Proceedings and Report of the Columbus Day Conferences Held in Twelve American Countries on October 12, 1923* (New York: Inter-America Press, 1926), 29.

These values played out directly in Lutz's leadership of the Inter-American Union of Women. In 1925, Lutz noted to LWV president and IAUW leader Belle Sherwin that the Union already had the representation of over half the "continent," with "the USA and Brasil alone."[32] Despite the grandness of the combined size of Brazil and the United States, though, the group had not yet organized many Spanish-speaking feminists. In 1926 Lutz attributed the IAUW's lack of success organizing women from Spanish-speaking nations to the historical failure of these nations to federate, and, implicitly, to their cultural backwardness. Distinguishing between the English-, Portuguese-, and Spanish-speaking nations, Lutz wrote to Sherwin:

> The Portuguese are all grouped in one federation of states: The United States of Brasil. The Spanish being more scattered have not succeeded in federating…[W]hile we are very lucky in having the English group of women strongly represented in our Inter-American Union and while Brasil is also in it, we have not been quite so successful with the Spanish...[33]

Despite Lutz's stated desire to include more Spanish-speaking feminists, little evidence exists that she actively reached out to them. She also seemed to guard her leadership position of Pan-American feminism to the exclusion of collaborating with other Latin American feminists. When Panamanian member and Vice President of the Union Ester Niera de Calvo wrote inviting Lutz to the 1926 Panama conference over which de Calvo would preside, Lutz never responded.[34]

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[31] Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 9, 24.
[32] Lutz to Belle Sherwin, June 15, 1925, II:50, LWV Papers.
[33] Lutz to Belle Sherwin, May 27, 1926, II:156, LWV Papers.

While the esteem Lutz had for the U.S. and Brazilian leadership of the organization may have led her to overlook the significance of other Latin American feminists, Lutz was also understandably distracted by the suffrage movement in Brazil, rapidly gaining ground. In 1927, the newly-elected governor of the northeastern state of Rio Grande do Norte, Juvenal Lamartine de Faria, a longtime supporter of women's suffrage and a friend of the FBPF, secured a state amendment to grant women the franchise there.[35]

Advances in her national women's suffrage movement notwithstanding, the lack of robust representation of Spanish-speaking feminists in the IAUW no doubt hindered its strength, as did the news in 1928 that the U.S. National Woman's Party had helped form an Inter-American Commission of Women and would be taking over its leadership. The creation of the IACW took both Lutz and the League of Women Voters by surprise. In October, 1927, aware of Máximo Soto Hall's 1923 Santiago resolution, which allowed women to participate as delegates at the next Pan-American Conference to be held in Havana, Lutz had told Belle Sherwin this conference would be "most important" and urged her to persuade the Pan American Union to include women on the U.S. delegation. From Brazil, Lutz tried to urge the Cuban minister there to gain representation at the conference, but to no avail. Leo Rowe told Sherwin that the U.S. delegation to the 1928 conference was already constituted and that it was thus too late to include a woman. Sherwin, unaware that the conference agenda included the topic of women's civil and political rights, did not persist further.[36] Now the NWP activism in Havana had dramatically upstaged Lutz and the LWV's Inter-American Union of Women by creating the IACW and subsequently selecting Doris Stevens as its chairman.

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[34] De Calvo to Catt, November 25, 1925. Catt later reprimanded Lutz for her silence to Esther Niera de Calvo, Catt to Lutz, March 27, 1928, II:156, LWV Papers. The 1926 Panama conference (as chapter 2 revealed) turned out to be pivotal in the expression of an anti-hegemonic Pan-American feminism, as led by Clara González and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro.

[35] Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex*, 156; Interview with Bertha Lutz, January 2, 1975, Rio de Janeiro, by Eleanor Mitchell, Society of Women Geographers. Lutz and the FBPF believed this to be a watershed moment for women's suffrage in Brazil. Toward the end of her life when remembering this moment, Bertha Lutz would trace Lamartine's pivotal actions back to advice Carrie Chapman Catt had given the FBPF, which the FBPF had followed, to "invite prominent men to speak at the opening and the last session" of their conferences. It was a speech one of these invited men had given that Lutz attributed to inspiring Lamartine's introduction of women's suffrage in Rio Grande.

While Carrie Chapman Catt begrudgingly took off her hat to the National Woman's Party, acknowledging they "did a very good piece of work," the League of Women Voters now feared the "new and serious situation" the IACW posed. As Belle Sherwin warned Maud Wood Park, the NWP had successfully seized "an outpost in the world" from which to promote their Equal Rights ideas internationally.[37] They worried that Doris Stevens's new group would "slip into such a treaty provisions which will make the enactment of labor laws difficult" and which would override existing, hard-won protective labor legislation in the United States.[38] The National Women's Trade Union

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[36] Lutz had been aware of the 1923 resolution at least as early as 1926. In the 1926 "Columbus Day" celebration the FBPF hosted a woman read Soto Hall's 1923 speech in Santiago on the rights of women. "Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino e União Inter Americana de Mulheres, Sessão Solemne de Confraternisação Continental em 12 de Outubro de 1926," II:156; Lutz to Sherwin, October 26, 1927, II:156; Sherwin to Leo Rowe, November 18, 1927; Rowe to Sherwin, November 21, 1927, II:111; Sherwin to Lutz, January 26, 1928, II:156, LWV Papers.
[37] Catt to Sherwin, March 27, 1928, II:155; Catt to Sherwin, 26 September 1928, II: 225, LWV Papers.
[38] Dorothy Hill to Belle Sherwin, May 23, 1928, II:156, LWV Papers.

League of America (WTUL) shared these concerns and collaborated with the LWV in letter writing campaigns to Leo Rowe. They protested Doris Stevens's appointment as chairman of the Inter-American Commission of Women and explained that Stevens did not represent the women of the United States, let alone those of the Western Hemisphere.[39]

Even before the creation of the IACW, Lutz had expressed her belief in protective labor legislation as well as her loyalty to the LWV, which made her, too, an opponent of the National Woman's Party.[40] In a letter to LWV president Belle Sherwin in 1926, Lutz explained that although the NWP had contacted her to endorse their equal-rights position, she could not "see [her] way clear to accept [their offer]," citing as the chief reason her loyalty to the LWV and to Catt; "We [the FBPF] are heart and soul with the National League of Women Voters and understand that as a branch of the Inter American Union of Women we are incorporated therewith. Besides, my attachment to Mrs Catt is sincere and unswervable. Her kindness to me will never be forgotten, and I sympathise most heartily with her able leadership."[41]

Lutz's sense of opposition toward the NWP no doubt inflamed her resentment at their leadership of the new IACW, which was effectively displacing her leadership of Pan-American feminism. With its official connections to the Pan American Union, the IACW dramatically overshadowed Lutz's small and ineffectual IAUW. Due to scarcity of funding, the LWV told Lutz in 1929 that the Inter-American Union was "too anemic to be continued."[42]

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[39] Elisabeth Christman to Leo Rowe, May 25, 1928; Christman to Sherwin, May 25, 1928; Sherwin to Christman, May 28, 1928, II:156; Sherwin to Rowe, May 10, 1928; Sherwin to Rowe, May 23, 1928; Sherwin to Rowe, June 8, 1928, LWV Papers.

[40] As early as 1925, Lutz made known to the LWV that she disagreed with "the equal rights for men and women bill, of the type advocated by the Woman's Party." "File Copy of Miss Sherwin's Quarterly Inter-American Union Letter," November 10, 1925, II:50; Lutz to Sherwin, October 13, 1925, II:50, LWV Papers.

[41] [Underline in the original] Lutz to Sherwin, May 27, 1926, II:156 LWV Papers.

The fact that the IACW did not push the Brazilian government to make Lutz its delegate most likely frustrated Lutz further and convinced her that Doris Stevens was not seriously invested in forming a true Pan-American organization. In 1929 Lutz had asked the Brazilian government to nominate her as the Brazilian delegate to the IACW, but in 1930 the position instead went to widow of a Brazilian ambassador to the United States, Flora de Oliveira Lima, who soon became a close friend of Stevens.[43] Despite Lutz's disappointment, she cultivated amicable though distant relations with the Commission for political reasons, even visiting the Woman's Party Washington, D.C. headquarters on a speaking tour to the United States in 1932.[44]

From 1930 to 1933, the rise of the IACW at the cost of Lutz's Pan-American leadership, along with the Great Depression and political turmoil in Brazil, served to influence Lutz's beliefs about Pan-American feminism. Specifically, Lutz's views on protective labor legislation for women began to shift toward a more firm "equal rights" stance. With a plummeting demand for Brazil's coffee exports and a sharp downturn in the economy after the 1929 stock market crash, many factories laid off workers and shut down. The country's new president, Getulio Vargas, who swept into power with the

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[42] Sherwin to Lutz, October 17, 1929, II:156, LWV Papers. The organization did not officially dissolve until 1932; Lutz also beseeched the LWV them as soon as the IACW is formed to persuade Pan Am Union to have the IAUW to appoint women for the IACW. She wanted a stake in it and wanted the "right women" appointed. See Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 290-291.

[43] "Dr. Manoel D. Lima, Diplomat, Dies," *New York Times*, March 25, 1928, 32; "Inter-America Commission Holds Conference," *Equal Rights* 16, no.4 (March 1, 1930): 28; "Memorial to Dr. Lima, *Equal Rights* 17, no. 44 (December 5, 1931): 352. For Stevens's long correspondence with Oliveira Lima see Box 62, Folders 11, 12, 13, Stevens Papers.

[44] Lutz to Stevens and Muna Lee, April 25, 1932, Box 62, Folder 11, Stevens Papers.

1930 Revolution, attempted to quell the rising dissent and meet expectations of workers and industrialists. He created a federal Ministry of Labor, Industry, and Commerce to regulate industrial relations, and established social security, the 8-hour workday, and retirement pensions for a broad range of occupations.[45] In 1932 Vargas instituted Decree-Law 21.417, which curtailed women's work in many occupations between ten at night and five in the morning, in keeping with International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions on night work.[46]

Although Lutz had favored the 1926 law that limited Brazilian women's and children's factory labor to six hours of day work, she now viewed protective labor legislation as harmful to women's potential as wage earners. In the context of the Great Depression she recognized the necessity of women's wage labor for the maintenance of their families and the fact that they did not benefit from strong union representation that would assert their rights.[47] Vargas implemented the 1932 laws to limit women's hours of work in order to satisfy male workers and union leaders who wanted elimination of female competition, and to enforce "proper" gender roles. Although women dominated some of Brazil's industries, like textiles, their union leadership was always male and did not make efforts to safeguard or promote women's best interests. Union leaders advocated restrictions on women's work out of the belief that men should be the primary economic actors and women should be at home taking care of children.[48] Lutz now came out strongly with her new belief that protections were designed to reduce competition from women for male jobs and fostered unequal work opportunities and pay.[49] Soon, the FBPF inaugurated its journal, *Boletim da FBPF*, which Lutz used as a pulpit for outlining the organization's bold new priority: equal labor opportunities for women in Brazil.[50]

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[45] He enacted these measures between 1930 and 1937; Joel Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 51-54.
[46] Mary Wilhelmine Williams to Alice Paul and Doris Stevens, September 25, 1933, Box 85, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.
[47] This was decree 5803 of December 1, 1926, Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men*, 46.
[48] Wolfe, *Working Women, Working Men*, 58.

Lutz promoted these views on labor laws when she was chosen to be the women's representative to the committee drafting the country's new constitution. In 1932, among the sweeping electoral reforms Vargas made to promote liberal democratic nationalism, he proclaimed Brazil the fourth country in the Western Hemisphere to enact women's suffrage.[51] While the suffrage victory delighted Lutz, she also deemed it a critical time to oppose measures defining women workers in supportive roles to their husbands and children. Eliminating protective legislation, she believed, was now necessary to establish greater egalitarianism and to turn the important, but largely symbolic, guarantee of suffrage into concrete gains. In 1933, Lutz published her suggestions for the 1934 Constitution,"*13 Principios Basicos*," which included broad ideals such as "humanization of work," "universalization of social security," "equality of sexes," and "prohibition of violence." They reinforced Lutz's goal of women's equality with men in all arenas of national life (except the military) and also supported Brazil's role as a leader and peacemaker in inter-American politics.[52]

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[49] Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, 140-148, 168, 170-1.

[50] Ibid., 171.

[51] The law also stated that the nationality of married women would not be affected by marriage to foreigners. Hahner, "The Beginnings of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Brazil," 200.

[52] Bertha Lutz, *13 Principios Basicos: Suggestões ao Ante-Projecto da Constituição* (Rio de Janeiro, Publição da Federação Brasileira Pelo Progresso Feminino, 1933), 24, 31, 38, 49, 51; Many of Lutz's thirteen points would make it into the 1934 Constitution, guaranteeing for women the rights to vote, participate in Government Committees, and hold office in all departments of the Civil Service as well as rights of equal nationality, citizenship, labor access and remuneration.

The same economic and social problems resulting from the Great Depression that shifted her politics in favor of "equal rights" simultaneously served to increase her ideological opposition to the Commission that upheld "equal rights" above all else. Although she sought equal pay for equal work, equal hours for men and women, and other equality provisions for the safeguarding of women workers, she believed that a Pan-American feminist agenda *only* about individual rights missed many needs of women workers and mothers, including maternity legislation. In Brazil she would advocate for the state to elect women in Women's and Children's Bureaus to administer state-sponsored maternity legislation and legislate on all matters pertaining to the home and child welfare. As she would later tell Carrie Chapman Catt, she desired an "enlargening of the scope of the international women's collaboration…to social and economic questions."[53]

Lutz also wanted the agenda to include questions of international peace. The political turmoil throughout the world, she believed, required an explicit endorsement of women's role as peacemakers. With the recent Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Adolf Hitler's rise to power, and Benito Mussolini's troops occupying Ethiopia, world security and peace seemed to be at a precipice. Lutz believed the election of women to public and political posts of power, including to international conference delegations, could help rectify dangerous international politics. This objective, missing from the IACW agenda, was another explicit priority of her Pan-American feminism.

The Constitution also guaranteed to men and women a minimum salary, an eight-hour day, and health insurance.

[53] Lutz to Catt, December 1, 1934, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

Finally, Lutz also endorsed the view that any Pan-American group needed to do more than promote procedural changes in the law – it needed collective action; it needed to organize women. The IACW to her seemed far from reaching this goal, and out of touch with women's groups and feminists in various countries. Catt confirmed Lutz's impression, writing, "The Woman's Party will not attempt organization as that is not its way of working. It is like the cuckoo which lays its eggs in the nests of others birds, expecting them to sit on them and hatch them out."[54]

Lutz now determined not to let another International Conference of American States pass without trying to re-direct Pan-American feminism with the agenda she believed best. She knew that at the upcoming Montevideo conference in December, 1933, there would be a discussion and, presumably, resolutions passed on women's civil and political rights. The IACW would reveal the comprehensive research they had done on these issues throughout the hemisphere as a basis to promote their Equal Rights Treaty as well as their Equal Nationality Treaty. Thus, Lutz sought appointment to the Brazilian delegation going to Montevideo. In this capacity, she would have power to influence resolutions. In addition to writing to James Brown Scott directly to ask his help on this matter, Lutz tried to enlist the help of the IACW.

Lutz's new stance in favor of "equal rights" went far toward convincing the IACW to assist her. She asked her friend, historian and NWP member Mary Wilhelmine Williams, who was visiting Rio de Janeiro at the time, to convey her desires to Doris Stevens and Alice Paul.[55] On her steamer trip back to the United States, Williams wrote to Stevens and Paul suggesting the IACW use their suasion to help Lutz become a delegate to the conference, informing them that "Miss Lutz has come out strongly for equal rights." On a follow-up visit to Doris Stevens in Washington, D.C. that lasted several hours, Williams impressed upon Stevens that the IACW should try at all costs to influence President Vargas or the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil to elect Lutz on the Brazilian delegation, and to help get Latin American governments to send women on their delegations to Montevideo more generally.[56] A surprised Doris Stevens explained to Williams that, "Miss Paul and I had always understood her to be opposed to equality in industry." However, as Stevens recalled later, "Dr. Williams assured me that Miss Lutz had told her that she had recounted the former belief, and that since the depression had come upon us and she had seen so many women turned out of their jobs, that she, Miss Lutz, was now for equality in industry."[57] For Stevens, learning of Lutz's change of view toward "equal rights" was tantamount to an assurance that Lutz would support the IACW. Stevens wrote to Peruvian ambassador to Brazil, IACW advocate, and her personal friend, Victor Maurtua, and asked him to take up the matter with the Brazilian government in Rio.[58]

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[54] Catt to Lutz, June 9, 1932, LWV Papers.

[55] Stevens to Lutz, September 23, 1933, Box 62, Folder 11, Stevens Papers. For more on the friendship between Lutz and Williams, see Katherine Marino, "Transnational Pan-American

Noting Lutz's determination to attend the Montevideo conference and what she believed was Lutz's backing of the IACW may have boosted Doris Stevens's spirits

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Feminism: The Friendship of Bertha Lutz and Mary Wilhelmine Williams, 1926-1944," *Journal of Women's History* (forthcoming).

[56] Mary Wilhelmine Williams to Alice Paul and Doris Stevens, September 25, 1933, Box 85, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.

[57] Memorandum, attached to letter from Stevens to Flora Oliviera, Box 62, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[58] Lutz to Stevens, October 6, 1933, Box 62, Folder 11, Stevens Papers. As of October 2 Stevens was trying to fund Flora Oliviera's travel to Montevideo as the IACW delegate. Stevens to Maurtua, October 2, 1933, Box 62, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

during a time she felt badly in need of encouragement. Several months before the Montevideo conference, Stevens revealed to Jane Norman Smith that she felt "utterly unequal to the task before us with no money and almost no help."[59] Many IACW delegates had written to say they would not be going to Montevideo, for various reasons stemming from economic and revolutionary turmoil, or simply because they no longer supported the IACW.

In the midst of declining approval from Latin American feminists, Stevens worked day and night to gain success in other areas, mostly in the League of Nations and in building her international law pedigree. Between 1931 and 1932 she traveled to Geneva several times to help with the Women's Consultative Committee report for the League of Nations Assembly. While in the United States, she traveled between Washington, D.C. and New York City where she took classes in Spanish and international law at Columbia University. In D.C. she worked feverishly with other IACW members to compile the enormous legal report on women's rights they would present at Montevideo.[60] This digest of laws, spanning twenty-one large volumes for the twenty-one different nations, not only included where women did and did not have equal political and nationality rights with men, but also accounted for women's rights to hold public office, serve on juries, engage in business, marry, serve as witnesses to public documents, administer property, and divorce. It also took up the questions of parents' joint authority over legitimate children and parents' joint responsibility for illegitimate children.[61]

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[59] Stevens to Smith, October 25, 1933, Box 125, Folder 6, Jane Norman Smith Papers.
[60] Notes from Stevens's Columbia classes, 1930, Box 12, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

Fanfare accompanied the departure of Stevens and her report for Montevideo. The *New York Times* wrote that the vast legal study marked "the first time such a search for information on the political and civil rights of women has been made over so large an area."[62] However, as Stevens boarded the *S.S. American Legion* for Montevideo – along with research committee member Anne Carter and executive secretary Fanny Bunand-Sevastos carrying four boxes of documents, two typewriters, 50 copies each of the 21 volume report, and their summer clothes – she likely worried about the lack of Latin American feminist support.[63]

However, several Latin American feminists would be attending the conference, and Stevens hoped they would give their aid to the IACW. Mexico's IACW delegate since 1929, Margarita Robles de Mendoza, who had worked for a period of time in the Washington, D.C. office, was named by her government to be technical advisor to the Mexican delegation.[64] The Dominican Republic had sent Minerva Bernardino to the conference; she was secretary of the feminist group Acción Feminista Dominicana and alternate for the IACW commissioner from the DR, who could not attend. Paraguay and

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[61] "Report of the Inter-American Commission of Women to the Seventh International Conference of American States on the Civil and Political Rights of Women," Box 78, Folders 15-17, Stevens Papers. (The report included all countries except Canada.)

[62] "Study of Women's Status: Pan-American Commission Will Take it to Montevideo," *New York Times*, November 11, 1933, 16.

[63] Untitled log of the IACW, Box 96, Folder 8, Stevens Papers. IACW member Ella Reigel would go ahead of them and meet them in Montevideo.

[64] Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, October 13, 1933, Box 77, Folder 8, Stevens Papers; Robles had worked in the Washington, D.C. office of the IACW for three months from 1931-32, during which time the IACW paid her transportation and living expenses. Stevens to Robles de Mendoza, May 20, 1935, Box 77, Folder 8; Stevens to Robles de Mendoza, September 29, 1933, Box 77, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

Uruguay had enlisted women to their delegations, including Dr. Sofá A.V. de Demichelli, a supporter of women's rights and affiliate of the Terra government in Uruguay.[65]

While Latin American representation from the IACW ranks was not as strong as Stevens had wanted, she looked forward to what she hoped would be helpful collaboration from Bertha Lutz. In early November before her trip Stevens wrote to Lutz, "We are counting without fail upon seeing you in Montevideo to help in every possible way to make our work with the Conference a success." She also informed Lutz that the U.S. delegation under its new administration of recently-inaugurated president Franklin Delano Roosevelt had appointed a woman to its delegation: Sophonisba Breckinridge. "She is a very superior woman and will, we hope, be of great help."[66] Stevens, however, would not be able to count on either woman for support.

Sophonisba Breckinridge and Pan-American Feminism

In October 1933, when sixty-seven-year-old Sophonisba Breckinridge, newly emeritus professor of Public Welfare Administration at the University of Chicago, received the invitation from the U.S. government asking her to serve as a delegate to the upcoming Pan-American Conference in Montevideo, she accepted with delight.[67] She looked forward to participating on the committee that would discuss women's civil and political rights. After several decades of tireless work as an educator, lawyer, social reformer and advocate of labor legislation for women and children, fair housing, and rights of immigrants, Breckinridge was now turning more self-consciously to "feminist" goals.[68] She had just published a significant study, *Women in the Twentieth Century*, which detailed women's rise in employment over the past two decades and also critiqued the existing barriers to women's full employment.[69] Breckinridge was concerned to see how the Great Depression inspired hostility toward women workers, and, as she explained to a friend, the two specific areas that interested her "the most at the present moment" were married women's right to work, and "the rights of women, whether married or not, to have access to opportunities of wage earning."[70] Serving on the conference Third Committee, on the rights of women, seemed a perfect fit.

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[65] Carmen Portinho Lutz of Brazil and Ana Rosa Tornero of Bolivia also attended the conference.

[66] Stevens to Lutz, November 6, 1933, Box 62, Folder 11, Stevens Papers; "Miss Breckinridge Accepts," *New York Times*, October 28, 1933, 16; As Stevens later recalled of Breckinridge, "I knew practically nothing about her except that she bor[e] a distinguished Kentucky name, had done social, settlement and university work for most of her life in Chicago. I was prepared to like her and hoped to get on well with her." Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[67] "Miss Breckinridge Accepts," *New York Times*, October 28, 1933, 16.

But Breckinridge also looked forward to her appointment because it would give her significant leverage in helping redefine Pan-American feminism away from the aims of the Woman's Party-led IACW. As former vice-president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and longtime member of the LWV, she feared the IACW Equal Rights treaties. She believed in women's equality in terms of pay, right to work, nationality, jury service, and other issues. But she also believed that in order to ensure equality for women on the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder, safeguards from exploitation that protective labor legislation ensured were necessary. Thus, Breckinridge opposed any sweeping "equal rights" law that would eliminate special labor legislation laws. She and the LWV advocated a piecemeal and gradual “specific bills for specific ills” approach. The only thing worse than the ERA, to Breckinridge’s mind, would be a continental-wide Equal Rights Treaty of the type the IACW proposed.

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[68] Nancy Ellen Barr, "A Profession for Women: Education, Social Service Administration, and Feminism in the Life of Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, 1886-1948," (PhD. diss., Emory University, 1993), 358-360.

[69] Sophonisba Breckinridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933). Her work included detailed tables of women in employment and asserted that women's political involvement had brought about many great social welfare gains in terms of mother's pensions, child labor laws, and appropriations for the U.S. Children's Bureau.

[70] Quoted in Barr, "A Profession for Women," 360.

Breckinridge had collaborated with the LWV in rebutting the IACW and in promoting an alternative vision of Pan-American feminism, one that advocated a flexible case-by-case strategy for equality legislation and consideration of social issues and child welfare. In 1929, Breckinridge wrote the preface to *Toward Equal Rights for Men and Women*, a book commissioned by the LWV which laid out its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and also to the IACW Equal Rights Treaties. Written by Ethel M. Smith, the legislative secretary of the WTUL, the book explained that the Pan-American feminism of the IACW misrepresented the best interests of Latin American women. The latter, Smith wrote, had routinely fought for public health and social welfare, hours legislation for women workers, as well as for maternity and child protection. Was the elimination of such social and economic welfare goals, Smith asked, “what those Cuban women meant who joined with the group of North American feminists at Havana in their [Equal Rights] petition to the [1928] Havana Conference? Did the Cuban women intend to repudiate such legislation as the recent Cuban maternity law for working women…and various other types of social and labor legislation lately written upon the statute books in Latin America?”[71] Smith urged the need to “know…the meaning of equal rights in terms of the law of each country, as distinguished from common usage of the term.”[72]

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[71] Ethel M. Smith, *Toward Equal Rights for Men and Women* (Washington, D.C.: Committee on the Legal Status of Women, National League of Women Voters, 1929), 125.
[72] Ibid., 127.

Smith was not entirely accurate in the way she framed the debate on behalf of Latin American feminists. The effects of the Great Depression were in fact leading a growing number of Latin American feminists, including Bertha Lutz, to explicitly condemn any labor legislation designed in "protective" ways and that deemed different hours and conditions for women's work. Maternity legislation was the one area many believed a special provision should be made for women workers, with the caveat that such state-sponsored legislation should offer "maternity rights" rather than "maternity protection." The Equal Rights Treaty – concerning civil and political equality of women – would not detract from the ability to legislate for women's health or maternity pensions. And an embrace of an Equal Rights Treaty would not necessarily be incompatible with Latin American feminists' social and economic welfare goals.[73]

Smith, in her fierce opposition to the export of the Woman's Party's Equal Rights bills, was herself exporting to Latin America a debate that largely did not exist. Both sides of the U.S. feminist equal-rights debate, which so adamantly attempted to speak for "Latin American women," reflected that peculiar facet of "Americanism" Walter Lippmann defined euphemistically as: "our touching belief that the world is like ourselves."[74]

Reformers in the U.S. Children's Bureau and Women's Bureau, who, with the LWV and WTUL comprised a dense network, also shared the desire to dislodge the

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[73] The following chapter will explore how a number of Latin American feminists simultaneously upheld maternity legislation goals and the IACW Equal Rights treaties.

[74] Quoted in Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (New York: Picador, 2009), 18.

Equal Rights vision of the Inter-American Commission of Women.[75] They gained new hopes of accomplishing this feat with the inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933. Months before the Montevideo conference, Katharine Lenroot and Grace Abbott of the Children's Bureau asked their friend Frances Perkins, recently appointed Secretary of Labor, to help them enlist a woman of their own ideals to its U.S. delegation. Sophonisba Breckinridge had attended the Pan American Child Congress of 1930 in Lima, Peru. There, she and Lenroot supported a platform in support of mothers' rights, prenatal and postnatal care and education for needy mothers, and aid to poor families, and social security.[76] Breckinridge, they believed, would be perfect for the job.

Perkins sent a letter drafted by Abbott to President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull recommending the appointment of Sophonisba Breckinridge to the U.S. delegation to the conference. The letter critiqued the IACW outright.[77] It emphasized the need for appointment of a woman "sympathetic" to the administration's approach to labor and social issues. Roosevelt and Hull were distracted by geopolitical issues they deemed of greater importance, such as tariff policy, indebtedness, and the U.S. presence in Cuba. But Roosevelt openly favored protective legislation, understood the symbolic importance of electing a female delegate, and eagerly complied with Perkins's advice.[78] He appointed Breckinridge as one of the five U.S. delegates to the conference.[79] She would serve as an aide to Alexander Weddell, Ambassador to Argentina. Weddell, with a wife in the LWV, also opposed the NWP and would be chief U.S. member of the sub-committee to hear the first report of the IACW in the Third Committee.[80] The Third Committee would not only vote on the IACW Equal Rights treaties, but would also decide whether or not the IACW should continue its work.

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[75] Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 78-9 describes the clash between women reformers in this New Deal network with NWP activists at the 1936 Buenos Aires Conference.

[76] Donna Guy, "The Politics of Pan-American Cooperation: Maternalist Feminism and the Child Rights Movement, 1913-1960," *Gender & History* 10, no. 3 (November 1998): 460.

[77] As early as June, Katharine Lenroot, assistant to Grace Abbott, the chief of the Children's Bureau, was aware of the conference's need to elect a woman opposed to the IACW's "equal rights" plans and conferred with Abbott about this. Grace Abbott notified Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins that the State Department appointments to the Montevideo Conference in December, Grace Abbott, "Memorandum for the Secretary," October 9, 1933; Grace Abbott to Frances Perkins, September 30, 1933, Folder "Conference-Pan American, Montevideo, Dec 1933," Box 50, MLR Entry 20 (Secretary Frances Perkins, General Subject File, 1933-41), RG 174 (Secretaries of Labor, 1933-1967, Department of Labor), National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

Then, in consultation with Lenroot and Abbott, Perkins drafted a memorandum with instructions for the U.S. Delegation.[81] She directed the delegates to reject any treaty that "declar[ed]…in general terms that there shall be no distinction based on sex." Rather, they should uphold the principle of women's "effective equality of opportunity and of protection," and suggest that the "needs and opportunities for both sexes should be safeguarded by appropriate legislation designed to meet the special problems of each group."[82] Such questions of women's civil and political rights should be taken up individually by nations for further study. As for the third and final matter, the continuation of the Inter-American Commission of Women, Perkins advised the U.S. delegation to abstain from voting. Their silence would speak volumes. Perkins acceded ground to the IACW only on the Equal Nationality Treaty, which she said the U.S. delegation could "support" as long as it "follow[ed]… the general principles of the Cable Act.'"[83] The final, official instructions to delegates took on Perkins's suggestions, except it suggested that even on the Equal Nationality Treaty the U.S. delegation should "abstain," due to the inappropriateness of women's rights as the subject of any international treaty. [84] Regarding the future of the IACW, the "confidential" directives questioned the appropriateness of the organization's continuation since its American representatives did not accurately reflect the U.S.'s position on women's labor or social concerns. [85] If any resolution on the continuation of the Commission should be broached, the delegates were directed, "you should refrain from voting thereon, stating that you are without instructions." [86] Sophonisba Breckinridge believed these actions would, as she explained to her friend, LWV president Belle Sherwin, "disable the Commission's *raison de'etre*."[87]

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[78] For more on Roosevelt's relationship to the network of New Deal women and social legislation politics, see Ware, *Beyond the New Deal*, 44-58; 98-100.

[79] State Dept. press release, December 2, 1933, "Press Releases," MLR Entry 210, RG 43, National Archives II.

[80] Weddell would repeatedly make the fact that his wife was a LWV member known to Stevens during the Montevideo conference proceedings. Stevens memoirs, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[81] Hull to Perkins, October 25, 1933, "Conference-Pan American, Montevideo, December 1933," Box 50, MLR Entry 20, RG 174.

[82] "Suggestions for Memorandum on Instructions, items 6, 8, 18, 19 of the Agenda," n.d. attachment to Perkins to Hull, October 30, 1933, "Conference-Pan American, Montevideo, December 1933," Box 50, MLR Entry 20, RG 174.

The fact that Breckinridge, like Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins, advocated "gradually eliminating discriminations against women" rather than removing them in a "clean sweep" came to Doris Stevens's attention several days into the eighteen-day voyage to Montevideo. Jane Norman Smith sent Stevens a *Cincinnati Times-Star* article that explained Breckinridge's politics and stated that the appointment of Breckinridge signified that "the Administration…is not enthusiastic over…Miss Stevens's views" and "frowned on women's rights as a subject of treaties."[88] Stevens had been scheduling interviews with delegates from the U.S. and other countries who were also aboard the *S.S. Legion*. She now made an appointment to see Sophonisba Breckinridge.[89] In this meeting, as Stevens later recalled, Breckinridge exuded "less than warmth." But Breckinridge assuaged Stevens's worries by informing her that her "chief interest" at Montevideo would be child welfare.[90] Meanwhile, in her cabin Breckinridge worked on a twenty-two-page memo for the U.S. delegation that detailed the history of the IACW and its misbegotten treaties. She wrote to her friend Edith Abbott, "I think… [the U.S. State Department] will clip the wings of the Women's Party [sic]."[91]

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[83] Hull to Perkins, October 25, 1933, "Conference-Pan American, Montevideo, December 1933," Box 50, MLR Entry 20, RG 174.
[84] Cordell Hull, "Instructions to Delegates" *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers*, 1933, Volume IV, The American Republics (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 84.
[85] Ibid., 85.
[86] Cordell Hull, "Instructions to Delegates" *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers*, 1933, Volume IV, The American Republics (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 84-5.
[87] Breckinridge to Belle Sherwin, December 8, 1933, Reel 10, Sophonisba Breckinridge Papers, Library of Congress.

Montevideo: Lutz and Breckinridge versus Stevens

In Rio de Janeiro, Bertha Lutz eagerly awaited the arrival of the *S.S. Legion*, which stopped there on November 24 to pick up passengers, including herself, on its way to Montevideo. She was anxious to meet Sophonisba Breckinridge, whom she had admired since hearing Breckinridge speak at a League of Women Voters convention in Washington, D.C. years before, and whose legal work on women's status she had devoured.[92] Breckinridge seemed a champion of the type of feminism Lutz believed in – one that did not deny women equal rights but that did not focus on equal rights to the exclusion of social welfare, child welfare, and maternity legislation. Lutz believed, rightly, that Breckinridge would be on her side in trying to remove Stevens from power over the IACW. When they met, Lutz explained to Breckinridge that she had urged in vain for the LWV to intervene in the 1928 conference in Havana that had, in their absence, led to the NWP's leadership of the Inter-American Commission of Women.[93]

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[88] Bess Furman [untitled] *Cincinnati Times-Star*, November 14, 1933, mentioned in Jane Norman Smith to Stevens, November 17, 1933, Box 78, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

[89] Breckinridge to [Edith Abbott], November 25, 1933, Reel 10, Breckinridge Papers.

[90] The meeting took place November 22, 1933, from Untitled log of the IAC, Box 96, Folder 8, Stevens Papers; Stevens, unpublished memoirs, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[91] Breckinridge to Abbott, November 28, 1933, reel 10, Breckinridge Papers.

[92] Specifically Lutz admired Breckinridge's "Survey of the Legal Status of Women in the 48 States." Lutz to Sherwin, September 3, 1930, II:156, LWV Papers.

At the same time, Lutz also tried to ingratiate herself with Doris Stevens, whose help she still sought to make her a full delegate. Lutz and a group of Brazilian women greeted Stevens when the *S.S. Legion* landed in Rio de Janeiro and took a photograph with her. Although Lutz had been made technical advisor to the Brazilian delegation, giving her power to speak at the conference proceedings, without full delegate status, she could not propose and vote on resolutions. She asked Stevens to intercede on her behalf. When Stevens approached Victor Maurtua to ask his assistance, he agreed but warned Stevens "I do not believe she will be helpful." Maurtua, Peruvian ambassador in Brazil, knew Lutz personally and likely realized she had her own designs for Pan-American feminism. Stevens brushed off his warning, based on Lutz's recent support for "equal rights." Later, as Stevens would put it she "had reason to recall [Maurtua's] prophecy frequently during the Conference."[94]

In addition to Lutz's and Breckinridge's designs on the IACW, the U.S. State Department had its own concerns about the Inter-American Commission of Women, namely their possible interference with more important matters at the conference. Amidst roiling economic and political tensions in the Americas, the rise of fascism in

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[93] Breckinridge to Sherwin, December 8, 1933, Reel 10, Breckinridge Papers.
[94] Memorandum to Oliviera, undated, Box 62, Folder 13; Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

Germany and Italy, and the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia, the Montevideo Conference took on a role of greater significance than any previous inter-American conference. With Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Sumner Welles's inept efforts at fostering a pro-U.S. government in Cuba, and with lingering U.S. financial control over Haiti, charges of "yanqui imperialismo" were stronger than ever.[95] As late as October, anxious that Mexico would raise questions of external indebtedness and revision of the Monroe Doctrine, Hull sought to postpone the conference.[96] When postponement proved impossible, he resolved to push forward in a way that he hoped would promote harmony. He planned to propose a tariff reduction resolution as well as a Good Neighbor Policy, with a new code of non-intervention by the United States in Latin America, which the Roosevelt administration had been formulating – both designed to soothe troubled inter-American relations. In comparison, Hull believed women's rights to be of little importance.

However, because of the fierce activism and propaganda of the Inter-American Commission of Women, Hull quickly realized that the question of women's rights was unavoidable. As early as the trip over on the *S.S. Legion*, when Stevens and her team had begun meeting with delegates, the Commission members foisted themselves into the center of events. Upon arrival in Montevideo, they secured an office for the IACW in the Hotel Parque directly below the headquarters of the U.S. delegation, from which the IACW team interviewed large numbers of delegates.[97] In the National Assembly, they procured an office next to the principal assembly hall. Sophonisba Breckinridge in particular deplored the "especially close" ties the NWP had with the *New York Times* representatives at the conference, which Hull too found irksome.[98]

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[95] "Yanqui Imperialismo," *New Republic*, December 6, 1933, 89-90.
[96] Telegram from Hull to Ambassador in Mexico (Daniels), September 28, 1933, *FRUS*, Vol V, 17; Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 49.
[97] Untitled log of the IACW, Box 96, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

In addition, Hull worried that the Inter-American Commission's unorthodox tactics in conference proceedings would jeopardize his efforts to ensure improved relations among a number of delegates hostile to the United States. In particular, he was concerned by IACW strategies in the sub-committee to the Third Committee. The treaties and resolutions of the IACW would have to pass through this smaller sub-committee in order to be voted on officially by the Third Committee. Sub-committee members, composed of five delegates from Uruguay, Peru, Cuba, Brazil, and Chile, were not unanimously agreed on an international treaty giving women absolute equal civil and political rights.[99] After studying the report of the IACW, a majority of three countries (Brazil, Peru, and Chile) voted against the Equal Rights Treaty, believing that such a sweeping international bill would threaten Latin American national sovereignty. [100] The statesmen from these countries instead voted for a simple recommendation asking states to grant political and civil rights to women. While the Equal Rights Treaty had been defeated, there was still hope for the Equal Nationality Treaty to gain the sub-committee's full support and make it to the Third Committee. Doris Stevens sought to influence events so that the sub-committee would vote favorably for it.

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[98] The *New York Times* team consisted of John W. White, dean of the *New York Times* press corps in South America, Harold Hinton of the Washington Bureau and Peter Khill. Both White and Hinton became close, life-long friends of Stevens.

[99] The sub-committee delegates were: Sra de Demicheli from Uruguay; Alberto Angel Giraudy from Cuba; Gustavo Rivera from Chile; Neuhaus Uguarteche from Peru, and Francisco da Silva Campos from Brazil.

[100] Untitled log of the IACW, Box 96, Folder 8, Stevens Papers; Harold B. Hinton, "Rights of Women Bring Parley Rift," *New York Times*, December 12, 1933, 20.

Hull had heard rumors that Stevens was a scofflaw who surreptitiously appealed to those highest in power to help push her resolutions through. In a telegram to William Phillips, Under Secretary of State in Washington, D.C., Hull noted the fact that Latin American delegates had been resistant to the Equal Rights Treaty because they feared it would infringe on their sovereignty. He worried in order to advance the nationality treaty, Stevens might utilize underhanded "tactics" and "go over the heads" of unwilling Latin American delegates, thus upsetting the equanimity he was trying to create and possibly spoiling passage of his own resolutions. Regarding these concerns, he asked Phillips to consult with Frances Perkins and the president.[101]

Stevens did, in fact, attempt to influence conference events in canny and somewhat clandestine ways. The night before the last meeting of the sub-committee, Stevens met with Brazilian delegate Francisco Campos, who was also the head of the sub-committee. The two collaborated and co-drafted a proposal that Campos then presented the following day. The resolutions included three items: Adoption of the Equal Nationality Treaty; recommendation to national governments to study and promote equal civil and political rights to women; and thanks to the IACW for its "unique, notable and unselfish labor" in furthering the cause of women, and promoting continuation of its work.[102] Campos's proposal was unanimously adopted. These resolutions proceeded for consideration to the Third Committee, at which all countries would be represented.

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[101] Telegram, Hull to Phillips, December 9, 1933, 710 G, NAII.

[102] "Boletín de Prensa," No. 58., VII Conferencia Internacional Americana, Montevideo, December 12, 1933, Box 78, Folder 16; Informe de la Subcomision, C.III, N. 2.VII Conferencia Internacional Americana, Box 78, Folder 16; Untitled document, Box 78, Folder 10; Telegraph from IACW, December 12, 1933, Box 78, Folder 14, Stevens Papers.

Stevens had little inkling that Cordell Hull was worried about the IACW. Unlike her chilly interviews with Alexander Weddell and Breckinridge, her talks with Hull had been congenial.[103] On December 11, in keeping with official instructions, Hull told Stevens he "had no instructions for or against continuation [of the IACW]."[104] However, official instructions quickly changed. That evening, in response to his telegram to Phillips, Hull now received new orders to try to abolish the women's organization. Phillips instructed Hull:

> If…the Conference proceeds to vote on any resolution recommending the continuation of the Inter-American Commission of Women, you should state that your Government does not (repeat not) desire any longer to be represented on the Commission and intends to continue its studies in this field through branches of the Government charged with responsibility in these matters…The foregoing has been discussed with Miss Perkins who approves.[105]

Phillips later sent a memo explaining that "Miss Perkins emphatically opposes the continuance of the Inter-American Commission of Women. She feels it important from the domestic point of view not to give semi-official standing to an American group of women antagonistic to the Government program with respect to women."[106] The State Department, fearing its lack of control over the conference proceedings, readily utilized the domestic debate over equal rights as a pretext for quashing the IACW.

Several days before the Third Committee vote on the sub-committee resolutions, Doris Stevens heard rumors from Latin American delegates that, according to Alexander

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[103] When Stevens tried to tell Weddell about the work of the commission, he apparently interrupted her with "I know all about you," and told her that she had no right to make requests. Stevens's unpublished book manuscript, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[104] "Conference with the Secretary of the United States of America," December 11, 1933; "Memorandum for the Secretary of State," December 11, 1933, Box 78, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

[105] Telegram, Phillips to Hull, December 11, 1933, 710 G, NAII.

[106] Memo attached to Telegram, Phillips to Hull, December 11, 1933, 710 G. NAII.

Weddell, "the United States, for some incomprehensible reason, wanted the Inter American Commission of Women killed."[107] When Stevens questioned Hull, he directed her to Weddell, saying "the matter was entirely out of his hands." When she asked Weddell, he responded tersely, "Orders."[108]

Stevens became more determined than ever. If the State Department was using the domestic conflict over "equal rights" to fight the Commission, the Commission would use international politics to fight the State Department. Just as she had done before in Havana and in Ramboillet, Stevens deliberately contrasted the idealistic mission of the IACW for "equality" with the mission of the U.S. government. Drawing on the anti-American sentiments simmering at the conference, Stevens insisted that she and the IACW were on the same side as Latin American nations beleaguered by U.S. hegemony and were in a fight against the "United States government." Launching into action the day before the meeting, Stevens and her IACW aides canvassed delegations from the afternoon until the early hours of the morning, alerting them of the news that the United States would speak against the continuation of the IACW and leave its future up to a vote from them. The women took pains to emphasize that the IACW was independent from the U.S. government and received no money from it.[109] They also emphasized that women's rights meant improvement more broadly for Latin American countries. In preceding days Latin American delegates Sofia Demicheli and Margarita Robles de Mendoza had given rousing speeches in favor of the Equal Rights treaties, linking women's political equality with advancement in Latin America more generally. Stevens and her IACW cronies framed the U.S. government's opposition to the IACW as opposition to Latin American progress and equality. The celebratory NWP narrative "Doris Stevens in Montevideo" later shared her speech to many Latin American delegates:

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[107] "Doris Stevens at Montevideo," Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.
[108] Untitled document, Box 78, Folder 10; Untitled document, Box 86, Folder 8 Stevens Papers.
[109] Untitled document, Box 78, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

> 'Here is a great principle involved…In the long run, the advancement of your women will mean more to the progress of your countries than anything else you do here. If either you or your country cannot afford to defy the United States, tell me and I shall understand. Have you personally anything to lose, or has your country? But if you promise me now to vote for the Inter American Commission of Women in tomorrow morning's session, I shall expect you to stand like a rock with me for equality.'[110]

Many found Stevens's entreaties persuasive. The next morning, after Weddell and Breckinridge walked together up to the podium of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies, Weddell read in Spanish a statement thanking the Inter-American Commission of Women but explaining that the United States would not support its continuation. It would also abstain from voting on the Equal Nationality Treaty. "It is the great belief of the majority of the women, as well as of the men of the United States of America," Weddell reasoned, that the issues on women's legal, civil, and social status should be considered by individual states rather than federal governments, and "treated separately." Since the growing representation of women in public offices in the United States indicated "that the Roosevelt Administration has a new ideal and new concepts of the functions of Government," which accorded women positions of leadership, he asserted that the IACW had served its purpose. Thus, the U.S. government "desired to dissociate itself in the future from the work of the… Commission."[111] It would abstain on all votes regarding the IACW and its treaties.

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[110] "Doris Stevens at Montevideo," Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

The Latin American delegates in the Third Committee rose in near-unanimous opposition to Weddell. Neuhaus Ugarteche, delegate from Peru, led the resistance. He said Peru would sign the Equal Nationality Treaty "with pleasure." He acknowledged that civil and political rights represented "an essentially complex matter in every country…[involving] problems which require different consideration and study to solve them" in each different country, but he believed the IACW had attained a "brilliant conquest" and should continue its work. Cestero from the Dominican Republic seconded this point and averred that he too would sign the Equal Nationality Treaty. He explained that women's rights were key to the Dominican Republic's "moral and intellectual progress."[112] Similar appeals followed from delegates from Mexico, El Salvador, Chile, and others. Only Argentina sided with the United States in voting for disbanding the IACW.[113] Stevens attributed Argentina's vote entirely to Weddell, who as the Ambassador there, "employ[ed]… his own prestige at Buenos Aires, and the prestige of his country, to dragoon Argentina into opposing the Inter American Commission of Women."[114] In the end, the group voted for the Equal Nationality Treaty, unanimously gave warm thanks for the work of the Commission, and invited it to continue and report to the Eighth Conference to be held in Lima, Peru, in 1938. On December 16th, the Third Committee had accepted the subcommittee's report.

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[111] "Minutes of the Fourth Session (December 16, 1933)," *Third Committee: Civil and Political Rights of Women: Minutes and Antecedents* (Montevideo: Imprenta Nacional, 1933), 10-11; "VII International Conference of American States, Speech of Delegate Weddell at Plenary Session of Chapter III – Political and Civil Rights of Women," December 18, 1933, 710. G./60, National Archives II.

[112] "Minutes of the Fourth Session (December 16, 1933)," *Third Committee*, 11.

[113] Ibid., 12; Untitled document, Box 78, Folder 10, Stevens Papers.

[114] "Doris Stevens at Montevideo," Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

The IACW proudly proclaimed, "This is the first and only occasion in Pan American Conferences that Latin America, en bloc, has voted against the United States…" Stevens later openly reflected on the fact that the anti-U.S. sentiment prevalent in Latin America had helped these accomplishments in Montevideo. Recognizing that "So many [were] not in a mood to follow the lead of the United States," she acknowledged that the "hostility [of the U.S. delegation] was…our greatest asset."[115] Being put in opposition to the U.S. government, "I became a symbol of repudiation, persecution, an object of pity…"[116]

Events in the Third Committee had not gone as Hull had planned. While he had ostensibly sought to curtail the powers of the IACW in order to protect the "sovereignty" of Latin American nations, these nations had almost unanimously risen in opposition to the U.S. delegation's appeals to dismantle the IACW and its treaties. In other conference committees, Hull achieved some success in cultivating friendly relations through the introduction of both his tariff plan and a new Good Neighbor policy. However the U.S. votes against the IACW struck many Latin American delegates as distasteful and as in opposition to the best interest of Latin America, where women in most countries, unlike women in the U.S., still did not have the right to vote.[117]

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[115] "Doris Stevens at Montevideo," Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[116] Ibid.

[117] A foreign policy writer later observed, "the only topic at the Conference which the US delegation for a time openly opposed the majority sentiment was that relating to equal rights for women." Charles A. Thomson, "The Seventh Pan-American Conference, Montevideo," *Foreign Policy Association* 10, no. 7 (1934): 88.

Hull and others on the U.S. delegation attempted to justify the reason for their actions not as a desire to stifle progress for women in Latin America, but rather as part of an internecine debate between two factions of women reformers in the U.S., the equal rights versus the protective legislation camps. In speeches that Stevens and Breckinridge later gave, they too revealed how important this domestic conflict was to them, each side claiming to represent the majority of women in the United States and, by extension, the Americas. Stevens spoke of the many telegrams that U.S. women's groups and individuals, including Amelia Earhart, had sent to the president in alarm upon learning of the U.S. delegation's opposition to the IACW and its Equal Nationality Treaty.[118] Breckinridge, in a rebuttal, listed the numerous women's groups in the U.S. that opposed such "equal rights" legislation.[119]

For Bertha Lutz, however, the significance of the IACW treaties had never been about the equal rights versus protective legislation debate. Rather, it was rooted in her desire to dismantle Stevens's leadership of Pan-American feminism. From the beginning of the conference, Lutz acted in subtle ways to undermine Stevens's leadership. Participating in the sub-committee of the Third Committee as Brazil's technical advisor, it had been Lutz who had proposed the simple recommendation to urge equal rights in civil, political, and nationality rights, in lieu of the IACW Equal Rights Treaty.[120] She also proposed that all future conferences include female delegates, hoping this would bring other women not affiliated with the IACW into future Pan American conferences. The sub-committee adopted her proposal, and the Third Committee passed it.[121]

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[118] *Inter American Commission of Women: Documents Concerning Its Creation and Organization* (Washington, DC: Pan American Union, 1935), 35-40.

[119] Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, "Speech at Com. III – Civil and Political Rights of Women," 17 December 1933, TD, 3rd Committee – Political and Civil Rts of Women [1 of 2], General Records, 1933-1934, Reports of Delegates, Comm. On Initiatives, 2-4, Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, International Conference Records, U.S. Delegation to the Seventh International Conference of American States, Record Group 43, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

[120] "Proposal Made by Bertha Lutz, Technical Advisor to Brazilian Delegation to Sub-Committee of III Commission, Seventh International Conference of American States, Montevideo, December

A desire for greater multi-lateralism infused Lutz's goals to restructure the IACW. She suggested in the sub-committee that going forward, the chairmanship of the IACW should rotate among the nations. This was a direct shot across the bow of Doris Stevens. The plan for rotation was accepted by the sub-committee and approved by the majority of the Third Committee who also believed that chairmanship indeed should alternate among representatives of the various countries and not be limited to a U.S. woman.[122]

Stevens had noted with dismay that Lutz was not only refusing the IACW the support she had hoped for but seemed, in fact, hostile to its continuation. From conversations with the male Brazilian delegates Stevens learned that Lutz had never spoken with them about supporting the Equal Rights or Equal Nationality Treaties. Stevens also noticed the "close alliance," and "frequent two-some" of Lutz and Breckinridge.[123] The only explanation that made sense to Stevens was that Lutz had been dishonest about her advocacy for "equal rights." It did not occur to Stevens that perhaps Lutz actually favored a more expansive definition of "equal rights" for women, and, in addition, resented Stevens's maverick leadership. After Breckinridge and Weddell's

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1933," Box 78, Folder 9, Stevens Papers. Lutz's proposal was worded "States agree that their legislation will not subsist any distinction based on gender difference, both with respect to nationality and as in what relates generally to the exercise of civil and political rights."

[121] "Tercera Comisión, Proposición de la Delegación del Brasil, C.III, No.4," Box 78, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[122] "Boletín de la Prensa, No. 61, III Comisión" December 15, 1933, Box 78, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[123] Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers; Stevens to Flora Oliviera, March 15, 1934, Box 62, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

plans to defeat the IACW failed in the Third Committee, Lutz's attempt to mobilize a serious challenge became clear to Stevens, who later recalled,

> Miss Lutz seemed to become possessed. She tried to reconvene the Third [Committee] to propose various ways to disassociate the Inter American Commission headquarters from the Pan American Union, that is, remove the seat from Washington; she tried to change the character of the work; she tried by secret petition and various resolutions to change the powers and jurisdiction of the Commission; and finally to kill it outright.[124]

After the Third Committee voted continuance of the IACW and endorsed its Equal Nationality Treaty, a still resolute Lutz wrote a long memo to Breckinridge and others on the U.S. delegation explaining the continued importance of policy and leadership change. She thought it imperative to shift the emphasis from strictly women's rights to one of mutual collaboration within the delegations.[125] Lutz explained that although she had tried to get a delegation of representatives of the Inter-American Union of Women and the LWV to Havana in 1928, they had not been able to mobilize representatives, thus paving the way for the NWP to triumph over the IACW. Because "the continuation of the present policy will spell disaster to the latin Americans womens hope [sic]," and because it was necessary that the Commission "must be used, for and by them," she suggested giving teeth to the rotation resolution by "indicating the place to which the presidency should rotate," which she believed should be Brazil.[126]

Lutz appealed to Angel Alberto Giraudy, Cuban Minster of labor and chief Cuban Delegate to the conference, to bring her mechanism plan for chairmanship rotation to the conference's Committee on Initiatives on December 18. This "Lutz resolution" specified that each Pan American Conference would designate a different country to be the seat of the Inter American Commission of Women between conferences and assign that country's commissioner to act as chairman. It also asked that appointment of any commissioner rely upon the "ratification by the governments after indication has been made by the associations of women…most representative of organized feminine opinion." The resolution named Brazil as the country to be chosen for the period following the Montevideo Conference, since Brazil was a country where "the feminine movement has been organized for many years and is in a position to maintain the Commission."[127]

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[124] Stevens to Flora Oliviera, March 15, 1934, Box 62, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.
[125] Bertha Lutz, untitled document, undated, "Third Committee-Political & Civil Rights of Women," Box 5, MLR Entry 203, RG 43, NAII.
[126] Ibid.

Lutz also attempted to reconvene the Third Committee to present her agenda for Pan-American feminism - for social and economic rights as well as political and civil rights for women. Titled "Civil and Political Rights of Women, Minimum Replevin," Lutz advocated not only for equal "juridical, economic and political rights of women," but for women's authority over the making of laws and public administration "relating to the home, maternity, infancy, and feminine labor." She wanted maternity insurance provided by the state in a manner that would safeguard, not hinder women's work.[128] Lutz asked Angel Giraudy and Uruguayan delegate Sofia Demicheli to formally propose these economic and social ideas as the bases for a shift in Pan-American feminism's goals and for increased collaboration.[129]

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[127] Untitled resolution, "Third Committee-Political & Civil Rights of Women," Box 5, MLR Entry 203, RG 43, NAII.
[128] "Civil and Political Rights of Women, Minimum Replevin, C.III, No. 5," *Third Committee*, 28-29; Lutz also sent her proposal to the US Delegation.
[129] "Proposición de las delegadas de Cuba y del Uruguay, C.III, No. 6," Box 78, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

When Giraudy referred Lutz's resolutions to the Third Committee, in favor of making a more multi-lateral Commission, with a more expansive remit, Stevens became alarmed. She fired off an urgent telegram to Alice Paul asking for help influencing the Cuban delegates:

> New Attack on Commission and me has been launched by Lutz and Breckinridge via Cuba and Uruguay. This has driven us desperately day and night stop…They have attacked us also in several Committee meetings with maneuvers unbelievable and feeling they now rely on resolution on floor of Conference stop Cuba is unmanageable stop Please try to do something on Cuba today from there. Stevens [130]

For their part, Stevens and her IACW cohort aggressively interviewed delegates individually, asking them to absent themselves from the rest of the Third Committee meetings so Lutz's recommendations could not be voted on. Again, Stevens's entreaties seemed to work. The majority of delegations did not attend the final three meetings of the Third Committee. Without a quorum, the committee could not act on any resolution.[131] Therefore, the conference plenary adopted the Third Committee's report, which included no mechanism for rotation of the chairman or definite change to the IACW program to include social or economic rights; it included only an "aspiration" that the chairmanship rotate between conferences.[132]

Not yet deterred, Lutz and Breckinridge tried a series of maneuvers to wrest power from Stevens. On the Eighth Committee which considered the management of the Pan American Conferences, Breckinridge suggested a resolution that stipulated "persons selected" to be representatives from various countries at Pan American conferences should be "in accord with the sentiments and policies of the governments of the countries from which they come."[133] She knew such a stipulation would preclude Doris Stevens's participation. Realizing the questionable ethics and danger of such a proposal, Peru and Mexico spoke out in its condemnation, and the resolution was unanimously rejected.[134] Lutz then introduced another resolution that could challenge the authority of the IACW. The Committee of Initiatives at the conference recommended the establishment of a new group called the Inter American Labor Institute, to be headquartered in a Latin American capital. Lutz suggested the institute contain a "Women's Department," that would be "responsible for all matters of especial interest to women." Directed by women who lived in the capital city where the institute resided, the location must be chosen specifically "where there are resources and women's organizations." Lutz had Rio de Janeiro in mind.[135]

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[130] Cable Doris Stevens to Alice Paul, December 22, 1933, Box 85, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.

[131] "Minutes of the Fifth Session (December 19, 1933)," "Minutes of the Sixth Session (December 20, 1933)," "Minutes of the Seventh Session, (December 21, 1933)," *Third Committee*, 14-16.

[132] Gustavo Rivera, "Report of Sub-Committee," December 14, 1933, in Seventh International Conference of American State, *Third Committee*, 26.

Though this measure passed, Lutz and Breckinridge sought a more immediate way to challenge the IACW. Demonstrating a flair for the covert, they inserted a new resolution at the ultimate plenary session of the Conference on December 24, to create, going forward, a new Committee composed of the women who had formed part of delegations at Montevideo. Because such sessions were usually "pro forma," as Stevens recalled, she considered not attending the last plenary session. But having witnessed Breckinridge and Lutz sharing a "close and animated luncheon conference that day," she suspected "they [were]…up to something," and she decided to go to the meeting.[136] Sitting in the audience, Stevens heard, among the others that were listed in Spanish and adopted, an unfamiliar proposal that would create a new official group of women. This group would work not just for more egalitarian legislation, but also to "coordinate and unify the activities of all the women…and obtain the support of the women's organizations and of the governments" in fulfillment of its ends.[137] Breckinridge and Lutz had asked Cuban delegate Giraudy to insert this "ripper bill;" in essence, it would have created a rival inter-American feminist organization with Breckinridge and Lutz at its helm.[138]

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[133] Seventh International Conference of American States, *First, Second and Eighth Committees, Minutes, and Antecedents* (Montevideo, 1933), 192; "Proposed by Breckinridge," December 21, 1933; Sophonisba Breckinridge to Stevens with proposal as attachment, December 23, 1933, Box 78, Folder 9, Stevens Papers. Stevens was alerted to this proposal by Mexican delegate Sierra who told her "The witch (Miss Breckinridge) is after you again," Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.

[134] Secretary of State Hull later told Stevens that Breckinridge's proposal had not been sanctioned by the U.S. delegation and "had no standing." Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[135] Among the purposes of such an organization would be the "defense of the work of women," and the education of working women. "Project for Women's Department in an Inter American Labor Institute proposed by Bertha Lutz at the Montevideo Conference, 1933," Women's Bureau Records, National Archives II. (This became "Resolution XXIII" of the Conference Resolutions.); Bertha Lutz to Freida Miller, February 18, 1936, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

Realizing these implications, Stevens leapt from her seat and started furiously scrawling on the only scraps of paper she found available – Western Union Telegraph blanks – messages in English, Spanish, and French to delegates.[139] According to Stevens's memory of the events, conference interpreter José Tercero helpfully publicized the scandal to delegates wearing headphones, announcing "'Hell has broken out; the ladies have been double-crossed.'" When delegates began to protest the resolution,

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[136] Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 13, Stevens Papers.
[137] Untitled document, "Proposed to initiatives Sunday, December 24," Box 78, Folder 9, Stevens Papers.
[138] In legislative terms, a "ripper bill" is "a legislative bill or act for taking powers of appointment to and removal from office away from the usual holders of these powers and conferring them unrestrictedly on a chief executive, as a governor or mayor, or on a board of officials."
[139] Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

Giraudy admitted “he had only introduced it by ‘request’ and that he now wished to withdraw it,” drawing “applause and laughter” from the conference members.[140]

Lutz, Breckinridge, and others of the U.S. delegation were not laughing. Despite their best efforts, the IACW had survived and gotten unanimous passage of its Equal Nationality Treaty, including a signature from the United States, which recanted its former position of opposition. All the countries except Venezuela signed the Equal Nationality Treaty. Additionally, representatives from four countries – Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, and Cuba – elected to sign the complete Equal Rights Treaty. Doris Stevens celebrated this achievement while simultaneously criticizing the U.S.: “Where greater powers refused to go, smaller powers led the way.”[141]

As an admirer of the U.S., Lutz found it especially distasteful to witness how Stevens helped pave her way to victory by drawing on anti-U.S. tensions and specifically pandering to those delegates who opposed the U.S. Lutz’s feelings for Stevens had evolved over the course of the conference from dislike and distrust to, as Alexander Weddell later put it, “a XIVth century, Florentine detestation of Doris Stevens.”[142] As Lutz wrote to Catt: “Miss Stevens does not represent the women’s movement, and…all Americans are not business men out to exploit the small republics of Central America.”[143] A confidential U.S. State Department memo detailing the work of the IACW and Doris Stevens also reveals Lutz influenced their view of the group. Describing Stevens as

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[140] Stevens, unpublished memoir, Box 126, Folder 3, Stevens Papers; “Conference Saves Women’s Board Final Working Session Rejects Plan to Abolish Inter-American Commission,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1933.

[141] “Inter American Commission of Women, Legislative Palace, Statement by Doris Stevens,” December 26, 1933, Box 79, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.

[142] Hill, “International Law for Women’s Rights,” 292; Hill cites Alexander Weddell to Sumner Welles, August 20, 1936, Folder 5, Box 38, Sumner Welles Papers.

[143] Lutz to Catt, December 1, 1934, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

"overwrought" and "fanatical" the memo explains that Lutz informed Breckinridge and others on the U.S. delegation that the Haitian delegates, who had "been rather in opposition to…[the U.S.] Delegation's program…[had] been on apparently close terms with members at the Women's Commission." Believing that Doris Stevens and the IACW would "advanc[e]…their country's interests," to greater effect than the U.S. State Department, the Haitian delegates had given their allegiance to Stevens. Weddell and Breckinridge had reason to believe, they reported, that Stevens had exerted similar influence on other delegates from the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Uruguay unhappy with the U.S. State Department program.[144]

However for Lutz, it was not Stevens's successful manipulation of anti-American politics as much as her manipulation of *men* at the conference that made her and the feminism she stood for so reprehensible. Lutz believed that Stevens and her cohort had won the support of Latin American delegates because they had seduced them. "The last I heard in Buenos Aires was that [Mexican delegate] Manuel Sierra told everyone Miss Stevens had kissed him for shunting off my proposal at the last session," she wrote to Breckinridge after.[145] Also, "the newspaper men [in Argentina] are telling that Miss Stevens was found sitting on the knees of Mrs Mendozas husband..."[146] To Catt she wrote that Stevens was "certified insane," and the IACW "a positive disgrace," explaining:

> Miss Stevens gave a little demonstration of a sex-mad psychopath, calling Miss B and me by zoologic names, of a domestic variety, paying the Mexican delegates in kisses for voting against us, luring the Haitians with a French secretary she has, who lives up to the reputation French women have in South America. The trouble

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[144] State Department Memo, 710 G, National Archives II.
[145] Lutz to Breckinridge, February 1, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge Papers.
[146] Lutz to Breckinridge, January 1, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge Papers.

> is that men went home with the idea that Miss B and I were sexless puritans in the midst of greek hertairas, in the women's movement. It was a dreadful demonstration…[147]

While Lutz's charges of Stevens's sexual favors at the conference remain unconfirmed, there is evidence that Stevens, described by many as "charming" and "beautiful," did maximize her magnetism to the opposite sex to meet her political ends. Leila Rupp has revealed how Stevens, who balanced a complicated romantic life of extra-marital affairs, divorce, and two marriages, with a modern, distinctly heterosocial approach to feminism, embodied the paradox of the New Woman during a time of sexual revolution. But Stevens also seemed explicitly to *utilize* romantic relationships with men to further her feminist agenda, seeing no contradiction between marketing her sexuality and her equal rights goals.[148] Later in life, Stevens wrote a scene for a play she never published in which the leader of an inter-American feminist movement seeks the help of a Peruvian delegate and ambassador. The delegate propositions her, telling her he is "enchanted" with her and "would like to make a son by [her]."[149] The sketch ends with the delegate caressing the face of the somewhat dazed and flattered feminist who tells him that this idea would be "very difficult to realize." Whether or not this actually occurred, the fictional suitor was a thinly-veiled replica of Victor Maurtua, Peruvian ambassador, delegate to the Havana conference, and attendee of the Montevideo conference, where he had tipped off Stevens about Lutz. He was one of the staunchest Latin American supporters of Stevens.

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[147] Lutz to Catt, February 12, 1934, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

[148] Leila Rupp, "Feminism and the Sexual Revolution in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of Doris Stevens," *Feminist Studies* 15, no. 2 (Summer, 1989): 289-309.

[149] Untitled play, undated, Box 43, Folder 11, Stevens Papers.

Less fictional evidence comes from the love letters and poems that James Brown Scott, international lawyer and co-founder of the American Institute of International Law, began to send Stevens in 1929. Scott, who met Stevens when he served on the U.S. delegation to the 1928 Havana Conference, became the most influential advocate of the IACW and of Stevens in the U.S. He utilized his State Department connections and expertise as an international lawyer to help them draft the Equal Rights Treaty, spoke out publicly in favor of the IACW treaties, and elected Stevens to be the first female member of the American Institute of International Law. He also served as head of the Carnegie Foundation, which bankrolled the IACW. Essentially, Scott was the reason the IACW was financially afloat during the 1930s. He idolized and idealized Stevens both as a woman and as a progressive leader. In addition to professional, type-written letters about IACW business, Scott hand-wrote Stevens more intimate notes, praising her for her beauty and for awakening his "spirit" to the noble cause of equal rights for women.[150] Stevens's reaction to these letters does not exist in her archives. Scott, a married man, and Stevens, ostensibly in a monogamous relationship with James Mitchell, whom she later married, may have placed limits on their relationship. Yet Scott's letters reflect deep emotional intimacy. By 1930 he was signing them, "I am, my one and only love, your wholly devoted Jamie."[151] For Stevens, heterosexual desirability was power, and it seems safe to assume that she considered wielding everything in her arsenal to forward her Equal Rights aims.

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[150] One example, James Brown Scott, "Miss Stevens' Thirty-Seven Beautiful Years," October 26, 1929, Box 35, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[151] Scott to Stevens, [December?] 18, 1930, Box 35, Folder 8, Stevens Papers. Thank you to Nancy Cott for telling me about the personal letters from Scott to Stevens. Their relationship has not been discussed in literature about Stevens, nor has it been noted by Scott's biographer (who also omits mention of his work more generally for women's rights), George A. Finch, *Adventures in Internationalism: A Biography of James Brown Scott* (London: The Lawbook Exchange Ltd., 2011).

To Lutz, the idea that Stevens used her sexuality to forward her agenda represented the most flagrant misguidance by "lowering women's moral standards to those of men."[152] This conflict revealed one of the thorniest distinctions between the feminist politics of the two women. Lutz, like Stevens, operated in heterosocial networks. Unlike Stevens, she remained single throughout her life, celebrating her status as a "bachelor woman," and believing that for a woman the use of "sexual functions" came at the cost of intellect and a publicly-engaged life.[153] Feminism, in her view, should stand for a higher, purer morality of women's better instincts, which is why it was ultimately the immorality of Stevens and, by extension, the IACW, that she needed to fight against. "Equality," Lutz told a Mexican delegate after the conference, was "not desired" if it meant that.[154]

Involvement of more virtuous and principled U.S. women became essential to the success of any Pan-American feminist organization, in Lutz's opinion. She fired off letters to Belle Sherwin, Freida Miller, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Frances Perkins, and Carrie Chapman Catt regarding the distinctly *moral* failure of the IACW, which she believed was its greatest failure. "Their morals are atrocious, there [sic] methods are unscrupulous as those of Hitler, whose acute sense of publicity they possess in full," Lutz wrote Catt.[155] And to Frieda Miller, "…I believe it …capable of ruining all the achievements that women have obtained until now and of effectively preventing them from getting any further."[156] After narrating Stevens's sexual improprieties to Breckinridge, she wrote "So now you have the real…problem, in the last degree it is a moral issue that is at stake. So I do hope and expect you American women to help."[157] Having received little support from Belle Sherwin, Lutz appealed to Breckinridge to contact a list of U.S. reformers and to "please let me know what Miss Perkens*[sic]* thinks. I do count on you American women for the cleaning up."[158]

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[152] Lutz to Breckinridge, January 1, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge Papers.
[153] "To Be a Bachelor Is an Art, Brazilian Feminist Explains," *New York Times*, July 1, 1939, 16.
[154] Lutz to Breckinridge, January 1, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge Papers.
[155] Lutz to Catt, February, 1936, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

Lutz's sense of U.S.-Brazilian superiority and Brazil's uniqueness as a Portuguese-speaking nation hindered her attempts to establish a meaningful alternative to the IACW. Following the meeting, Lutz met with feminists from Argentina who pushed for a Latin American-centered organization, which provided only a minimal role for the U.S., an idea she found unacceptable.[159] Upon Lutz's return to Rio de Janeiro from the conference, she critiqued the IACW in the *New York Times*, stating that, while she had been pleased by the "feminist movement" evinced at the Montevideo conference, its analyses and debates were inadequate. She announced that she "would seek the collaboration of Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins…in a project to create an inter-American women's labor bureau."[160] A few years later, Stevens noted to Jane Norman Smith that although Bertha Lutz was still promoting the inter American women's labor bureau, and "very anxious…to become [its]…head…Latin American women have repeatedly told me that she works under the very great handicap of being a national of a

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[156] Lutz to Freida Miller, February 18, 1936, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[157] Lutz to Breckinridge, January 1, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge Papers.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] "Feminist is Encouraged," *New York Times*, January 7, 1934, 26.

Portuguese-speaking country, which language Spanish-speaking people do not esteem as highly as they do English and French!"[161]

Lutz's views of both her and Brazil's exceptionalism also made it difficult for her to speak broadly to a Latin American audience. In the interviews with Lutz that Isabel Morel published in Ecuador and Cuba after the conference, Lutz unabashedly expressed her firm belief that Brazil's version of Pan-American feminism represented the best way forward. According to Lutz, her Brazilian feminist organization, "an autonomous group whose intellectual forces are undoubted," upheld a broad platform, not only equal civil and political rights for women, but also social and economic rights of women and children and advocacy of world peace. While Lutz acknowledged the existence and "coherent ideology" of a separate group of Spanish-speaking, "Latin" feminists, she believed they lacked the necessary organizational center. Isabel Morel, the author of these published interviews, bemoaned the lack of unanimity among Latin American feminists; she urged women of the Americas to collaborate to help rouse a real inter-American movement of women to address issues of equality, rights, and international peace.[162]

The Unión de Mujeres Américas

Though the inter-American labor bureau would be an elusive dream for Bertha Lutz, her efforts in Montevideo likely helped pave the way for the emergence of a Pan-

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[161] Stevens to Jane Norman Smith, June 23, 1937, Box 90, Folder 17, Stevens Papers.

[162] Isabel Morel, "An Evaluation of International Feminism," [undated] translated into English from an article from a Havana-based magazine *Social*, Box 63, Folder 4, Stevens Papers; Isabel Morel, "Sobremesa de la VII Conferencia Internacional," *Nuevos Horizontes* (Guayaquil) March 1934, 8.

American feminist alternative to the IACW. Led by a Spanish-speaking feminist, it was perhaps not what Bertha Lutz had envisioned. A few months after the Conference, in March 1934, Margarita Robles de Mendoza, who had served as the IACW delegate from Mexico, created the Unión de Mujeres Américas (UMA), an association independent of the Pan American Union. Including "all women of the Americas who enlist to fight for their political, civil, social, and economic equality," the organization's motto was "peace and equality."[163]

Like Lutz, Mendoza was an elite, educated feminist who had taken a central role in her national suffrage movement.[164] Also like Lutz she disliked Stevens's hegemonic control over the IACW. Robles de Mendoza believed that U.S. funding ensured "the fact that the complete control of the work would always be under the jurisdiction of Doris Stevens." Before the Montevideo conference she had urged Stevens to consider other funding options for Latin American delegates, to little effect.[165] Longing for an alternative organization, one independent of the Pan American Union and of uni-lateral U.S. leadership, she founded the UMA. The UMA would be led by a Spanish-speaking Latin American feminist and its official language would be Spanish, although it would also publish a news bulletin in French, English, and Portuguese. As Robles de Mendoza stated, "Spanish American women should be the masters of our own destiny and…it should be our hands and our minds that should mark the route that we are to follow."[166]

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[163] Recortes de la revista mensual *UNO*, organ of the Partido Nacional Revolutiona, Mexico, D.F. April, 1935. Box 77, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[164] On Margarita Robles de Mendoza's role in the Mexican feminist movement see Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 159-166.

[165] Margarita Robles de Mendoza, "La Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres debe cambiar sede," Mexico, April 1940, Box 77, Folder 3; Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, January 20, 1932, Box 77, Folder 3, Stevens Papers. She wrote: "I personnaly[sic] believe that it is rather shameful that this Commission has only existed through the generosity of AMERICAN PEOPLE, I mean North American people. When…is [it] going to be beneficial mainly to the…Spanish speaking women of this Continene [sic]…?"

In June, 1934 Robles de Mendoza wrote to Doris Stevens announcing her creation of the UMA.[167] Although Robles de Mendoza had publicly supported the IACW's efforts throughout the conference, Stevens believed that she may have colluded with Lutz and Breckinridge in promotion of the inter-American Labor bureau and that the UMA may have grown out of their collaboration.[168] In a series of letters to Stevens, de Mendoza vehemently denied any contact before, during, or after the conference with Lutz and Breckinridge.[169] She repeatedly insisted to Doris Stevens that the UMA had nothing to do with the two women. "If I want to organize the UMA it is without any connection with Lutzes or Breckinridge," she wrote.[170] The goal of the UMA, she told Stevens, was to cooperate with the IACW in promoting its Equal Rights Treaty. De Mendoza even concluded her long letter with a final postcript: "¡I do not write to Lutz, nor to Breckinridge! They are not my friends."[171]

Perhaps she protested too much. Robles de Mendoza was not completely honest about her lack of contact with Lutz and Breckinridge. In February, 1934, she wrote to Breckinridge asking if she could provide her with an introduction to Carrie Chapman

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[166] Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, January 20, 1932, Box 77, Folder 3, Stevens Papers; See Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, April 17, 1939, Box 77, Folder 3, Stevens Papers; "Unión de Mujeres Americanas (UMA), Objetivos y Bases de Organización," June, 1934, Box 77, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[167] Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, June 5, 1934, Box 77, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[168] Stevens's initial letter to Robles de Mendoza asking her about her involvement in the Bureau does not exist, but there is a string of correspondence following in which Robles protests the accusation. In a following letter from Stevens, she tersely informs Robles that Robles herself had told Stevens she planned to be involved in the Inter-American Labor Bureau. Stevens to Robles de Mendoza, June 14, 1934, Box 77, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[169] Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, June 7, 1934, Box 77, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

Catt.[172] She also liaised with Bertha Lutz after the Montevideo conference about forming an alternative organization to the IACW. According to Lutz, Margarita Robles de Mendoza and Minerva Bernardino, the Dominican IACW representative, informed her "they were going to put Miss Stevens out of the presidency at the [N]ew York banquet, thanking her and saying they want a Latin…"[173] This public ousting never occurred. But their contact reveals that Lutz and Breckinridge had impressed Robles de Mendoza in their tenacious fight against the unilateralism of Stevens and in their desires for an organization advancing social and economic rights as well as peace. The UMA, serving as an alternative Pan-American organization, clearly represented a challenge to Stevens and the hegemony of the IACW.

The new group explicitly confronted U.S. hegemony and imperialism, and it represented a different Pan-American feminism than Lutz promoted. For support, Robles de Mendoza turned to someone she knew shared her anti-imperialist politics: Paulina Luisi. The two women had never met, since Luisi had fled for Europe before the Montevideo Conference. While in Montevideo, Margarita Robles de Mendoza had become acquainted with a number of Luisi's fellow women's rights supporters and friends. She had spoken at a mass meeting of women's organizations, including the group over which Luisi presided, the Alianza Uruguaya.[174] In correspondence to Luisi she explained the aims of the organization – to address the social, economic, juridical, political, and civil rights of women and to spread inter-American peace. Robles de Mendoza asked Luisi for advice and to consider being the president of UMA.

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[172] Margarita Robles de Mendoza to Sophonisba Breckinridge, February 4, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge Papers.

[173] Lutz to Breckinridge, February 1, 1934, Reel 11, Breckinridge.

[174] Photographs of de Mendoza speaking in Montevideo, MC 546-PD. 64f-19, Stevens Papers; Photograph of the tea hosted by Alianza, MC 546-PD. 65f-10, Stevens Papers; untitled note regarding December 21 Tea at Jockey Club hosted by Alianza, Box 78, Folder 11, Stevens Papers; Speech by Alianza member Elvira V. Martorelli at the event praised the IACW and also praised Paulina Luisi as the mother of Uruguayan feminism, see Box 79, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.

When Luisi returned to Montevideo in 1935, she wrote a long letter to Robles de Mendoza telling her how excited she was by this development, which she felt represented a real beacon of hope. She praised Robles de Mendoza for her fierce feminist activism: "[M]y friends have…painted you as a terrible revolutionary. I have heard you are a terrible radical … that's enough to bring you all my sympathies." Luisi explained that she herself had returned to Uruguay over the past year with the intention "of founding an international Association of feminist women of America and Spain." When she learned about Mendoza's formation of the UMA she decided to desist. While she said she could not accept the presidency of UMA ("it is the initiator who should assume the effective presidency during this early period of organization. No one better than you to carry it out and give it force"), she suggested changes to the organization's constitution. As Luisi explained, "I believe it is indispensible to signal in the statutes, that the UMA is independent of all internal political parties, in each country, and the same with religion." She warned de Mendoza against a Catholic-clergy directed "feminism based on spiritual submission."[175]

Finally, Luisi noted, her other recommended changes "respond to avoiding one nation of preference over the others, having supremacy, you must anticipate this especially with the United States." She told Robles de Mendoza that she had informed Doris Stevens of this fact to her face when they had met years ago in Berlin. So as not to repeat the mistakes of the IACW, Luisi suggested a rotation apparatus similar to that which Lutz had advised at the Montevideo conference, with a new president among the American nations every five years. Toward the end of the letter Luisi reiterated her desire that the UMA be efficient and lasting:

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[175] Luisi to Margarita Robles de Mendoza, May 2, 1935, Caja 252, Carpeta 6, Archivo de Paulina Luisi, Archivo General de la Nación (PL-AG) Montevideo Uruguay.

> I repeat, I desire the formation of a group with seriousness/reliability and guarantees of regular work, of a way that it can stand up solidly with the other major world organizations. Of the hispanic-american women, the other feminists in the world have a low concept, it is necessary to demonstrate to them that although until today we have not been able to organize ourselves we are just as capable as the others to do it. Your beautiful initiative can do it… We are doing something serious and lasting.[176]

Just as Isabel Morel, in the wake of the Montevideo conference, had articulated her desire for a strong group of Latin American women to face the rampant challenges to peace, security, and the welfare of women and children, so Luisi and Mendoza hoped the UMA could accomplish these goals. At the same time, the organization would remain true to Robles de Mendoza's promise of collaborating with the IACW and championing its Equal Rights Treaties. With the rise of fascism throughout the world, the years immediately following the Montevideo conference would reveal great threats to women's rights, as well as greater collaboration among women of the Americas than ever before. Unprecedentedly, with Spanish-speaking countries taking the lead, women of the Americas would embark on a collaborative movement that stood staunchly for equal rights as well as for social and economic justice for women and children.

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[176] Luisi to Margarita Robles de Mendoza, May 2, 1935, Caja 252, Carpeta 6, PL-AG.

Chapter 5
The Birth of Popular-Front Pan-American Feminism, 1934-1937

In December, 1935, at the Balmeceda Theater in Santiago, Chile members of the newly-formed Popular-Front feminist group, the *Movimiento pro Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena* (MEMCh or Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women) voiced their concerns for working women. Joining them were male and female delegates and workers who would be participating in the International Labor Organization (ILO) conference taking place there in several days. MEMCh co-founder Marta Vergara, who introduced herself as a delegate of the Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), served as one of the keynote speakers. As the Commission's Chilean delegate, Vergara announced the gains the Commission had made for women's rights at the 1933 Montevideo Conference in passing an Equal Nationality Treaty and introducing an Equal Rights Treaty, and declared MEMCh's alliance with the Commission. It contrasted their united, inter-American defense for working women's rights with the growth of fascism in Europe, which was stripping women of their rights.[1] MEMCh outlined a strong and anti-fascist agenda for equal rights and against protective labor legislation for women workers; they demanded equal wages, hours, and opportunities, as well as state-sponsored maternity legislation for all women workers.

This collaboration of a Chilean Popular-Front feminist group with the IACW, and their unique agenda – for equal rights as well as maternity legislation – marked a new phase in the Commission's life. For many years since the IACW's founding in 1928, Latin American feminists had critiqued the Commission for being run hierarchically by

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[1] "Concentración Feminina en el Teatro Balmeceda," *El Mercurio* (Santiago), December 30, 1935; "La Gran Concentración del Memch," *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.

National Woman's Party leader Doris Stevens and for focusing on an "equal rights" agenda defined narrowly as equal political and civil rights for women. This agenda had alienated many Latin American feminists who believed in a broader agenda and more multi-lateral cooperation, thus hindering collaboration with the Commission. However, the rise of fascism in Europe, and specifically Hitler's rise to power in Germany, had dramatically altered international political alignments and raised global concerns about women's rights. The threats fascism posed to women's civil, political, and economic rights; the economic devastation of Great Depression; the subsequent rise of Popular Front movements; and the spread of social welfare legislation in the Americas all combined to expand the significance of women's "equal rights" internationally.

Now, at the 1936 ILO Conference, under Marta Vergara's leadership, the Commission, with its "Equal Rights" commitments, was emerging as newly relevant and as a bastion of working women's rights in the Americas. Its agenda, as Vergara helped to re-shape it, encompassed a broader meaning of "equal rights," than the Commission had formerly upheld; Vergara utilized the Commission's platform to argue not only for women's equal rights in hours, wages, and opportunities of work, but also for a key social welfare goal -- state-sponsored maternity legislation. The new Pan-American feminism that Vergara advocated promoted a vision of democracy that combined individual rights with social and economic welfare, one that was specifically anti-fascist. The ILO Conference would not be an isolated incident – more collaborations emerged after this time in what I call a Popular-Front Pan-American feminism – an internationalist feminism that combined social democratic labor concerns with "equal rights" feminism, and that combined an anti-fascist politics of inter-American solidarity with a sustained critique of U.S. imperialism in the Americas.

This chapter looks closely at the birth of this “Popular-Front Pan-American feminist” ideology. It identifies Marta Vergara as a leader in the movement’s development and traces her evolving relationship with the Commission alongside broader political shifts in Chile, and internationally, in the 1930s. Vergara had collaborated with the IACW in the League of Nations in the early 1930s but had been one of the many Latin American feminists to reject the Commission before the 1933 Montevideo conference because its goals clashed with the class-based, collectivist agenda she increasingly believed women of the Americas needed. However, in the wake of the Great Depression, the rise of Hitler’s power in Germany and the emergence of a broad Popular-Front movement in Europe and the Americas, Vergara began to collaborate anew with the IACW. The Popular Front made possible new collaboration around anti-fascism between liberal democratic activists, socialists, and Communists. Vergara and the newly-founded MEMCh began to rally around the Inter-American Commission of Women and its Equal Rights treaties as weapons in the antifascist struggle, most powerfully at the 1936 ILO Conference. In the process, she helped transform the meaning of the treaties, expanding the definition of “equal rights” to include not only civil and political individual rights, but social welfare and economic justice, as well.

For her part, Doris Stevens, chairman of the IACW, welcomed the strong show of “equal rights” support for the Commission from her friend Vergara. She recognized that Vergara was a mouthpiece for a new and growing leftist Latin American feminist coalition that, in the wake of the rise of fascism especially, was pushing for an international movement abolishing restrictions on the employment of women, and that was increasingly utilizing the Commission's Equal Rights Treaties to defend its positions. Stevens especially encouraged Vergara's support in the face of growing threats to the Commission's "Equal Rights" agenda from the U.S. State Department and the Women's and Children's Bureaus. Stevens and Vergara would collaborate together at the 1936 Buenos Aires Peace Conference, and Stevens even adjusted the Commission's platform to include support of state-sponsored maternity legislation, a position spearheaded by Vergara. Although Stevens portrayed the IACW as part of a Popular-Front Pan-American bloc that supported women's rights in an anti-fascist and anti-imperialist context, real tensions emerged between Stevens and Vergara over feminist and socialist commitments. Despite their ideological differences, the two women nonetheless united in support of "equal rights." Their collaboration at the Buenos Aires conferences enabled an expansion of the relevance of the Commission in the Americas to women's groups in Argentina and Chile, during a time the Commission's Equal Rights Treaties did seem to be viable weapons in a struggle against new measures limiting women's rights.

This history of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism, of collaboration between leftist and liberal feminists around "equal rights" in the 1930s in the Americas, has been overlooked in scholarship that, in focusing on U.S. and European actors, sees only irreconcilable conflict between an "equal rights" and a class-based feminism.[2] Some historians have pointed out that during the 1930s the rise of fascism and diminishing opportunities for women in the labor market, did impel a greater number of feminists in Europe to critique sex-based protective legislation, and Leila Rupp has acknowledged that among feminists in the United States and Europe, "limited cooperation [between leftist and "equal rights" feminists] revived during the period of the Popular Front, as fascism forced reluctant liberals and communists into a strained embrace."[3] However, few have examined how Latin American or Pan-American feminists responded to, engaged in, or influenced these realignments. In the United States, literature on the National Woman's Party has not viewed any coalition between them and leftist or Communist groups during the Popular-Front period which, as this chapter shows, flowered in their collaborations with Latin American feminists in the Pan-American realm.[4] On the other hand, scholarship on Marta Vergara and her group MEMCh has mostly explored their activism in the national Chilean context and not how they helped

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[2] Scholarship on international feminism that focuses on Euro-U.S. groups and that frames the debate between "equal rights" and "protective legislation," includes Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Sandra Whitworth, "Gender, International Relations and the Case of the ILO," *Review of International Studies* 20 (October 1994): 389-405; Carol Riegelman Lubin and Anne Winslow, *Social Justice for Women: The International Labor Organization and Women* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 30; Carol Miller, "'Geneva – The Key to Equality':

Inter-war Feminists and the League of Nations," *Women's History Review* 3 (1994): 219-245; Paula F. Pfeffer, "'A Whisper in the Assembly of Nations' United States' Participation in the International Movement for Women's Rights from the League of Nations to the United Nations," *Women's Studies International Forum* 8 (1985): 459-471.

[3] Quote from Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 35; Susan D. Becker, *The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment: American Feminism Between the Wars* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1981), 178.

[4] In the United States, historians have revealed that even during the Popular-Front period, which broadened collaboration between liberal democrats and Communists and fellow-travelers, inter-ideological feminist collaboration did not occur. Neither U.S. labor reformers nor the Communist Party supported the Equal Rights Amendment, and Communist women critiqued the NWP's limited vision of "rights" for middle-class, white women. After the 1920s, Cott explains, "feminism and socialism became more organizationally and ideologically specific—the former in the NWP, the latter in the Communist Party." Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 74; Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Constance Coiner, *Better Red: The Writing and Resistance of Tillie Olsen and Meridel Le Sueur* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), chap. 2; Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1998), 31-32.

motivate new inter-American coalitions.[5] Historians of the Popular Front in Latin America have begun to identify the political shifts that, alongside a greater popularity for Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy and New Deal, fostered new international collaborations across the Americas and the U.S., around a wide conception of democracy that privileged not only individual rights but also social and economic equality and welfare, and multi-lateralism.[6] These historians, however, have not identified the key role that international feminism played in helping to define this broader definition of "democracy," and how feminists, especially from Latin America, played a strong role in forging this definition, sometimes at cross-purposes with official "Good Neighbor" policies.

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[5] Vergara's own memoirs, published in 1961, *Memorias de una mujer irreverente*, have been overlooked for their content on the IACW and international feminism. The book won the prestigious Premio Municipal de Literatura in Chile in 1963. Works that examine Vergara and MEMCh in their national contexts include Corinne A. Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era: Feminism, Class, and Politics in the Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena (MEMCh), 1935-1950," (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 1996); Karin Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Edda Gaviola, Ximena Jiles, Lorella Lopresti, and Claudia Rojas, *Queremos votar en las próximas elecciones: Historia del movimiento sufragista chileno, 1913-1952* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 1986); Chile, Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, *Elena Caffarena: Un siglo, una mujer* (Santiago: Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, 2003); María Angélica Meza, *La otra mitad de Chile* (Santiago: Centro de Estudios Sociales Ltda., 1985). Corinne Pernet, "Chilean Feminists, the International Women's Movement, and Suffrage, 1915-1950," *The Pacific Historical Review* 69 (2000): 663-688 describes the international and Pan-American connections Chilean feminists cultivated from 1915 to 1950, including an appraisal of Marta Vergara's role. Pernet gestures toward how the dramatic historical contexts of the 1930s might have re-shaped Pan-American feminism, arguing that while in the 1920s "Chilean feminists endorsed suffrage as a desired goal but did not actively pursue it[,] by the late 1930s and 1940s, their discourse shifted to emphasize that women's equality and political rights were the cornerstone of democracy, an ideal for all countries." (664) Ellen Dubois' recent article "Internationalizing Married Women's Nationality: The Hague Campaign of 1930," in *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945* (London: Routledge, 2010): 204-216 examines Vergara's role in the League of Nations's married women's nationality campaign but not her influence on inter-American feminism.

[6] On the politics of the Popular Front in the Americas see Sebastiaan Faber, "'La Hora ha llegado,' Hispanism, Pan-Americanism, and the Hope of Spanish/American Glory, 1938-1948," in *Ideologies of Hispanism*, ed., Mabel Moraña (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005): 62-106; Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), xx; Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 36-38.

Looking closely at the evolution of Marta Vergara's inter-American feminist activism, and her collaboration with Doris Stevens, provides a portal into the emerging Popular-Front Pan-American feminist activism that she was central to creating. Her story reveals not only how the politics of the Inter-American Commission of Women shifted toward a broader notion of feminism that incorporated social democratic labor goals as well as juridical "equal rights," but also how Latin American feminists began to emerge as leaders in their own rights of the previously hegemonically NWP-dominated Inter-American Commission of Women.

Marta Vergara

Marta Vergara's life was characterized by dramatic breaks of both a personal and political nature. Born in the port city of Valpraiso, Chile in 1898 into a middle-class family, she was a young child when the earthquake of 1906 caused her father to lose his job as a merchant. Her mother died soon after. Vergara had a brief marriage to an artist that ended in divorce in the early 1920s, and by the late 1920s she had established a name for herself as a journalist. When General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo assumed a military dictatorship over Chile in 1927, Vergara fled to Europe where she worked as a correspondent for *El Mercurio*, the largest newspaper in Chile. It was through one of her literary contacts that she received the opportunity to represent Chile at the upcoming Hague Codification Conference. The Chilean delegation was in need of an educated female representative, and when Vergara found out that her travel and expenses would be provided for, she elected to go.[7]

With this experience, as she put it in her memoirs, "my life changed."[8] Soon after traveling to the Hague, she met the National Woman's Party members Doris Stevens and Alice Paul, and she was introduced to the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women, which was at that time pushing the Hague Codification Conference to consider the Equal Nationality Treaty for married women's equal nationality rights. In Chile, modernist poetry and literature had spoken to the young Vergara far more than the small women's rights movement, led at that time by Chilean feminist educator Amanda Labarca, who was a family friend. Vergara had found Labarca's group's feminism "unpoetic."[9] However, her engagement at the Hague Codification conference for international women's rights, and specifically for married women's nationality rights, awoke in her a strong feminist politics. When she and Doris Stevens first met, Stevens informed Vergara that her position as Chilean delegate would be of great importance since Chile was one of the few countries in the world that made no distinction between women's and men's nationality rights.[10] Vergara rose to the occasion in the 1930 conference, giving her first public speech and lucidly advocating for women's equality with men.[11] Even though no international legislation resulted from the 1930 Hague conference, the IACW campaign and Vergara's activism in it were central, historian Ellen Dubois argues, to "open[ing] up…a prolonged feminist presence in the League of

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[7] Marta Vergara, *Memorias de una mujer irreverente* (Santiago: Zig-Zag, 1961), 8-33; 66-67.
[8] Ibid., 66.
[9] Ibid., 34.
[10] Ibid., 67-69.
[11] "Chilean Representative Pleads for Equality," *Equal Rights* 16, no. 15 (May 17, 1930): 117.

Nations."[12] Vergara became a pivotal advocate to the IACW debates on nationality in the League of Nations for the next two years, working alongside Alice Paul, who lived in Geneva off and on in those years as well.[13]

While her experiences in Europe were rousing Vergara's feminist consciousness, they were awakening her socialist politics, as well. Even before meeting Stevens and Paul, Vergara had been interviewing avant-garde leftist thinkers in Paris. She met with French pacifist and socialist Henri Barbusse, whose explanation of socialism -- which boiled down for her to "the love of man, the desire to dignify him" -- led her to read the Communist Manifesto and the works of Lenin and Trotsky.[14] After the economic turmoil she and her family had suffered, socialism began to appear for her as a path to equal opportunities for all people, especially as a viable solution in Chile, currently under a military dictatorship.

Increasingly, Vergara's experiences in the League of Nations only confirmed this vision; Japan's aggressions toward China and the rise of fascism in Europe moved her even more decisively to the left. Although enthusiastic about the work of the League of Nations for women's rights, she became disenchanted with the great-power leadership of the League, which she believed supported the economic and political hegemony of capitalist countries, marginalized Latin American nations, and did nothing in the face of the spread of fascism in Japan or Europe. She found in the Soviet Union, with its demands for an overthrow of capitalism and for universal disarmament, the most compelling answers to the world-wide problems of economic impoverishment and increasing warfare.[15]

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[12] DuBois, "Internationalizing Married Women's Nationality," 204.

[13] Vergara was the first Latin American woman to be sent as a delegate to a League of Nations Assembly in 1931. She became a member of the Nationality Committee of the IACW and in 1931 she represented the Commission on the League of Nations' Consultative Committee of Women in Nationality and at the International Labor Organization conference. In 1932 she served as technical advisor to the Chilean delegation in the 1932 assembly of the League of Nations, where she also promoted women's equal nationality rights. In all of these capacities, she spoke out on women's equal economic, civil, and political rights. Marta Vergara, "The Women at the Hague," *Equal Rights* 16, no. 27 (August 9, 1930): 211; "News from the Field: Marta Vergara," *Equal Rights*, 17, no. 23 (July 11, 1931): 184; Marta Vergara, "*Women Fight for Equal Economic Rights" Equal rights.* 17, no. 26 (August 1, 1931) 203-205; "*News from the Field: Chile Appoints Marta Vergara Technical Advisor," Equal rights* 17, no. 33 (September 19, 1931) 264; "Marta Vergara of Chile to Go to Genea," *Equal Rights* 18, no. 29 (August 20, 1932): 227.

[14] Vergara, *Memorias*, 53-54.

Socialist thought infused Vergara's feminist politics, which combined a demand for individual women's rights with collectivism and social solidarity. As she explained in her 1930 speech at the Hague, women should be allowed to flourish as equals with men, and these rights of the individual could be fully compatible with the "[rights] of society, whether it be represented by the family, the State, or humanity."[16] In Chile, she explained, it was "the family" that "continues to be the fundamental unit of our social and political organization." She knew that in this important respect her feminist politics differed from those of Doris Stevens and Alice Paul, who viewed the individual, rather than the family or society, as the fundamental political unit, and who did not incorporate into their feminism the social and economic analysis that Vergara did. As Vergara wrote in her memoirs, Alice Paul "believed seriously in the justice of the capitalist society, in free enterprise, and in possibilities for everyone." In Paul's view, Vergara explained, the

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[15] Vergara, *Memorias*, 79-80.

[16] "Chilean Representative Pleads for Equality," 117. On the notion of the family as the central unit in political life more generally in Latin America, see Donna Guy. Guy questions the assumption of "Latin American specialists [who] deal with liberal theory based on the belief that the individual is the basis of society. Most liberal feminist theory starts from this assumption…For years I have had the strong belief that the family, rather than the individual, is the basic unit of Latin American society." From Donna Guy, *White Slavery and Mothers Alive and Dead: The Troubled Meeting of Sex, Gender, Public Health, and Progress in Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 11.

"United States was not and never had been an imperialist country, and if an infantry of Marines ever landed in places beyond the Rio Grande, it was for the good of the country thus protected."[17] She believed that these views led to Paul and Stevens's "concentrated" focus on "equal rights" for women, to the exclusion of "other social injustices."[18]

Despite these differences in ideology, Vergara nonetheless admired Paul and Stevens for their principled stance in favor of international women's "equal rights." She was passionate about her work in favor of women's nationality rights in the League of Nations and in favor of the work of the IACW.[19] Stevens and Paul, in turn, viewed Vergara as central to their strategy of trying to organize women in Latin American in favor of the IACW prior to the 1933 Montevideo conference. Stevens even offered for the Commission to pay Vergara to travel to their Washington, D.C. headquarters and then embark on an organizing tour of South American countries to rally favor for equal rights. The Great Depression, however, made it difficult for Stevens to raise those funds, and in Chile, the ouster of Ibáñez from power in late 1931 led to Vergara's return home the following year. One of the first things Vergara did on her return to Chile was to meet Aida Parada, who had been the Commission's Chilean delegate.[20] Soon after their meeting, Parada resigned ostensibly for reasons of poor health and Vergara became the official IACW delegate for Chile. She also launched into new work on behalf of women's civil and political rights. In early 1933 she allied with Amanda Labarca and other feminists in the formation of the *Comité Nacional pro Derechos de la Mujer* (National Committee for Women's Rights), which in the following year secured ratification of an amendment that granted women suffrage in municipal elections in Chile.[21]

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[17] Vergara, *Memorias*, 80.

[18] Ibid. When Vergara took a trip to Germany to investigate the rise of Hitler's power there, Paul's response was to "smile…indulgently at my interests in something alien to hers." Vergara, *Memorias*, 82.

[19] WILPF member Anna Melissa Graves, who knew Vergara and her friend the Chilean and leftist sculptor Laura Rodig through Graves' work with Aprista leader Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, also noted Vergara's avidity for her League of Nations work for women's nationality rights in her papers. "Marta Vergara," and undated correspondence from Vergara to Graves from 1930, Folder 21, Box 15, Microfilm Reel 74.7, Anna Melissa Graves Papers, Swarthmore Peace Archives, Swarthmore, PA.

[20] On Parada, see Chapter 3, at the 1930 Havana meeting of the IACW she became friends with Clara González and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro. All three had also been dismayed with the Commission's narrow focus. By 1936 Parada was a professor at the University of Chile in Santiago.

Vergara's initial desires to cultivate women's civil and political rights activism upon her return to Chile, however, quickly dissipated as she found these efforts engaged only elite women and did little to tangibly aid working women. If, as Vergara would later explain to Doris Stevens, her socialist consciousness had been stirred in Europe, it became inflamed upon her return to Chile, which she found "totally paralyzed" in the economic crisis.[22] Political tumult and grinding poverty characterized the years following Ibáñez's ouster. Struggling to deal with massive problems in public housing, health, and social welfare, Chile became a laboratory of broad-based socialist and Communist thought and organizing, in which the working-class and more educated, elite sectors of society became sympathetic to socialist ideas.[23]

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[21] Stevens to Vergara, November 15, 1932; Vergara to Stevens, December 16, 1932; Stevens to Vergara, January 31, 1933; Vergara to Stevens, March 24, 1933; Stevens to Vergara, April 27, 1933; Stevens to Vergara, July 13, 1933; Vergara to Stevens, July 23, 1933; Box 64, Folder 7, Stevens Papers. On the Comité pro Derechos de la Mujer see Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile & Uruguay, 1890-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 302-303.

[22] Vergara to Stevens, October 24, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[23] Patrick Barr-Melej, *Reforming Chile: Cultural Politics, Nationalism, and the Rise of the Middle Class* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 110.

In this context, and in the face of Alessandri's use of presidential authority to curtail free speech of the Communist Party in 1933, Vergara allied herself more and more with the radical left. For Vergara and for many others in Latin America, the left provided what Greg Grandin has described as "a commonsensical understanding of democracy not as procedural constitutionalism but as the felt experiences of individual sovereignty and social solidarity."[24] The desire for the "felt experience of individual sovereignty and social solidarity" aptly describes the pull Vergara and many of her peers in Chile found in the left. Through a friend's introduction, Vergara met Marcos Chamudes, a Communist Party official with whom she would become romantically involved. Although Vergara did not join the Communist Party officially until 1936, she became a Communist sympathizer and adopted the view that, as she put it, "the only way we can possibly improve our situation is to cut ties with the imperialist interests and work the land." [25] She also relinquished her ties to the *Comité Nacional pro Derechos de la Mujer* and instead became the Secretary General of the *Federación de Mujeres Socialistas*, a group of working-class women, anarchists, and socialists, who were committed to the needs of working women, and who also believed that democracy could only flourish in a classless society.[26]

Vergara found that her newfound alliance with the Communist Party of Chile and the *Federación de Mujeres Socialistas* made impossible any further collaboration with the Inter-American Commission of Women. She had initially planned to help Doris Stevens rally Latin American women to the Commission's cause at the 1933 Montevideo Conference. When Stevens wrote to Vergara in September, 1933, beseeching her to join her in Montevideo a few months later, Vergara endeavored to explain why she could not. In two long letters, Vergara recapitulated the Communist Party line. She explained that U.S. hegemony in the Pan-American Union and in inter-American relations, and the insufficiency of the Commission's "equal rights" agenda to meet the needs of women workers, made it impossible for her to work with the IACW. She wrote that U.S. economic imperialism was "the highest stage of bourgeois capitalism," against which she and others throughout Latin America were mobilizing a "global resurgence, and in particular, an American resurgence."[27]

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[24] Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre*, 4.

[25] Vergara to Stevens, October 24, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[26] Vergara, *Memorias*, 91-92. On the formation of the FMS see Cristián Riveros Gazmuri R., *Historia de Chile: 1891-1944: Política, Economía, Sociedad, Cultura, Vida Privada, Episodios* (Santiago: RIL Editores, 2012), 171-172. Isabel Díaz was a leader of the FMS. On Díaz, see Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 75-76, 93, 133.

Moreover, the goals the Inter-American Commission of Women supported -- equal civil and political rights for women -- were not the priority of the working women with whom she collaborated in the *Federación de Mujeres de Chile*. The working woman, she explained, "does not oppose her civil and political rights – quite the contrary – but she understands that at the same time she is going to win little with them if she is also still a slave of the economic system." Women's political rights would have to come in "second place" to the class fight; women's political power would "surge exponentially when they have obtained power over the means of production."[28] In her second letter, Vergara made plangent appeals to Stevens to understand what she believed were their irreconcilable differences:

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[27] Vergara to Stevens, October 24, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers; Vergara to Stevens, December 8, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[28] Vergara to Stevens, October 24, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

> Now you can understand, Doris, that…you and I are in different camps. The aspiration toward a socialist society is not a new one for me. What is more or less new is my actual …work toward obtaining it…Thus, Doris, I will continue working for equality, but on the road toward a society without classes. And since this is not your point of view, since you collaborate with the Pan-American Union, and, with you, all the Commission, we become enemies. And this, despite all the personal sympathy I have for you.[29]

Vergara's memoirs, written decades later, provide a somewhat different and intriguing account of her rationale for not joining Stevens in Montevideo. Here, she describes the experience of turning her back on the Commission as "a difficult moment, almost dramatic…what the feminists wanted was as valuable to me as before." But it was her boyfriend, Chamudes, and other officials of the Chilean Communist Party who would not allow her to go to the Pan American Conference. Their disapprobation held in spite of Vergara's own insistence that she "could work with feminists and attack imperialism" and that the feminism of Doris Stevens and the IACW was free of "politics" of any kind. In her memoir she argued that the IACW was merely "a sort of illegitimate child which [the Pan American Union] had come to recognize in spite of itself" rather than an official branch of U.S. hegemonic Pan-Americanism.[30]

Stevens may have suspected that Vergara was not entirely speaking for herself in turning down collaboration with the Commission, for despite Vergara's long explanations, Stevens sent her a number of cables in which she continued to beg for her help.[31] Recognizing that she had little Latin American feminist support in Montevideo, Stevens especially viewed Vergara, who had been so vital to the Commission's work at the League of Nations, as an influential promoter of the Commission's agenda. After the Montevideo conference, Stevens traveled to Santiago to meet and confer in person with Vergara. Little evidence of the substance of their conversation exists, although rumors swirled that after the Montevideo Conference, in which the Pan American Union voted that the Chairman of the IACW should rotate, Stevens had designs to enlist Vergara as the future Chairman.[32] Vergara's own memoirs portray a bittersweet meeting with Stevens, whom she still regarded as a friend, despite their ideological differences. Vergara recalled being surprised that Stevens had come to see her after she had so roundly denounced the Commission. And even though, in their meeting, Stevens "never asked me about my political ties or my personal affairs," Vergara explained she was touched that Stevens offered her continuing friendship. When they parted, Stevens told Vergara, "if you are ever in trouble and the Commission can do something for you, it will."[33] The development of a Popular Front against fascism would ultimately make Vergara's twin commitments to Communist change and feminist politics more palatable to the Communist Party, and would ultimately lead to her reconciliation with Doris Stevens and the Inter-American Commission of Women.

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[29] Vergara to Stevens, December 8, 1933, Box 78, Folder 3, Stevens Papers. In a cable, Vergara suggested to Stevens that she enlist another woman, Felisa Vergara, a "bourgouis feminist" who was a member of the Comité de Derechos de Mujeres as the Chilean delegate to replace her. Telegram, Vergara to Stevens, October 29, 1933, Box 64, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

[30] Vergara, *Memorias*, 141, 95. It is possible that in her memoirs, written in the 1960s, after she and her then-husband Chamudes had been ousted from the Communist Party, Vergara was trying to downplay her earlier Communist affiliations.

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[31] Telegram, Stevens to Vergara, December 3, 1933; Telegram, Stevens to Vergara, December 4, 1933; Telegram, Stevens to Vergara, December 5, 1933; Telegram, Vergara to Stevens, December 7, 1933; Telegram, Stevens to Vergara, December 7, 1933; Telegram, Stevens to Vergara, December 10, 1933; Telegram, Stevens to Vergara, January 1, 1933, Box 77, Folder 11, Stevens Papers.
[32] Lutz to Breckinridge, January 1, 1934, Reel 11, Sophonisba Breckinridge Papers.
[33] Vergara, *Memorias*, 89.

The Rise of Popular-Front Pan-American Feminism and the 1936 ILO Conference

The solidification of Hitler's power in Germany in 1933 focused global attention on international human rights, and on international women's rights, in a new and powerful way. In 1933, Hitler launched an aggressive campaign to remove women from all public positions, turning women out of administrative positions and universities; removing numerous state services for poor women and children; and citing "motherhood" the number one aim of women's education.[34] Mussolini enacted similar policies, his views on women's rights summarized in what became a famous dictum, "Women must obey…My idea of her role in the state is in opposition to all feminism…In our state, she must not count."[35]

In this context, the Inter-American Commission of Women's feats at the 1933 Montevideo Conference – passing the first treaty to consider women's rights internationally and gaining four signatures for another one, the Equal Rights Treaty – gained broad relevance internationally. In 1934, Alice Paul brought the Equal Rights Treaty to the League of Nations, where thanks to the endorsement of ten Latin American diplomats who touted both this and the Equal Nationality Treaty as inter-American measures of progress and democracy, they gained a position for consideration on the League's 1935 agenda.[36] In the two years following the Montevideo conference, at least ten international women's groups, including the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the International Council of Women, and the All-Asian Conference of Women formally endorsed the Equal Rights Treaty. They considered explicit support of "equal rights" a necessity given the fascist opposition to women's economic and political opportunities.[37]

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[34] Sandi E. Cooper, "Pacifism, Feminism, and Fascism in Inter-War France," *The International History Review* 19, no. 1 (1997): 113; "Nazi Treatment of Women," *The Vote*, London, June 9, 1933 (reprinted in *Equal Rights* 19, no. 21 (June 24, 1933): 167.) In April, 1933 Hitler removed Dr. Gertrude Baumer, a feminist leader and the head of division of Education and Child Welfare, from her position in the Department of the Interior. The following year, before a group of female Nazi organizers, Hitler denounced women's political equality, calling "so-called woman's equality…a product of decadent Jewish intellectualism" and believed it held "a conspiracy to weaken family life." "Hitler Derides Women's Rights," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 9, 1934 (reprinted in *Equal Rights* 20, no. 34 (September 22, 1934): 271; "Feminism and Semitism," *New York Times*, September 10, 1934.

[35] Quote from Lucia Re, "Fascist Theories of 'Woman' and the Construction of Gender," in *Mothers of Invention: Women, Italian Fascism, and Culture*, ed., Robin Pickering-Iazzi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 78-79. See also Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berekley: University of California Press, 1992).

The new international show of support for equal rights included a group not usually known for their kinship with the National Woman's Party – leftist women. Over a thousand Communists, socialist reformers, and women's rights activists gathered in Paris in 1934 for the *Comité Mondial des Femmes contre la Guerre et le Fascisme*, the World Congress of Women against War and Fascism, endorsed the IACW's 1933 Pan-American Equal Rights Treaty as "particularly heartening at this time when the forces of reaction are taking away from women in Europe a large part of their freedom."[38] One of the earliest international meetings to rally women against fascism, this group prefigured the official creation of the Popular Front in 1935, when the Communist Party officially endorsed alliance between Communist and socialist parties in an anti-fascist struggle.

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[36] "Alice Paul Seeks World-Wide Equality," *Equal Rights* 20, no 26 (July 28, 1934): 203; Madeline Z. Doty, "Equal Rights Placed on League Agenda," *Equal Rights* 20, no 41 (November 10, 1934): 326-328; Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 220.

[37] Leila Rupp explains that despite the groundswell of support for the Equal Rights Treaty, there was some lack of clarity on whether the Equal Rights Treaty meant protective legislation or not. (The WILPF, for one, was clear that their support for the Equal Rights Treaty did not translate into support for the ERA in the U.S. because the latter would eliminate protective labor legislation.) For most, the Equal Rights Treaty embraced a broad and unobjectionable call for women's equal status that transcended the "equal rights" versus protective labor legislation debate. See Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 145.

[38] "News from the Field: Against War and Fascism," *Equal Rights* 20, no. 45 (December 8, 1934): 360; "Resolution Unanimously Adopted August 7, 1934, by Women's International Congress Against War and Fascism, Paris, France," *Equal Rights* 20, no 31 (September 1, 1934), 244. One speaker exhorted, "Comrades, do you know what this means? Had Germany signed [such an Equal Rights Treaty] before Hitler declared his dictatorship, he could not have degraded women as he has done without calling down on his head world-wide condemnation." Monica Whately, "Equality, Freedom and Peace," *Equal Rights* 20, no 32 (September 8, 1934): 254-255. Four African American women were included on the delegation of forty women from the United

The 1934 World Congress of Women Against War and Fascism revealed a distinctly feminist Popular-Front politics – one that was concerned with a broad agenda: working women's equal rights; social welfare legislation that addressed the needs of mothers and children; and support for democracy and peace. The Congress demanded women's "complete civil and political emancipation," "equality under the law," "equality of rights;" equal right to work; equal pay for equal work; and equal access to all social services male workers received relating to unemployment insurance and family subsidies. Delegates also called for state-sponsored maternity legislation.[39] Outside of the United States, the debate among women's rights advocates over protective labor legislation for working women was becoming less fractious in the face of the common enemy of fascism.[40] The 1934 meeting contributed to a consensus around advocating "equal

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States – including Iquala McKeith and Captola J. Tasker, of the Alabama Sharecroppers Union; Rosa Rayside, member of the Domestic Workers' Union from Harlem; and Mable Byrd, African American economist and former government worker on the NRA codes. Dorothy Chertak, "Peace Congress to Meet," *New York Times* (May 26, 1934), 16; "Mable Byrd Heads Women's Anti-War, Fascist Committee," *Chicago Defender* (June 2, 1934), 3; "Anti-Fascist Women Open Paris Congress," *New York Times* (August 5, 1934), 5; "2 Negro Women Go to Anti-War Confab," *New York Amsterdam News* (August 4, 1934), 8; "Peace Confab 'Just Like a Bunch of Biddies,' *New York Amsterdam News* (August 25, 1934), 1; "Women and Fascism," *Manchester Guardian* (July 30, 1934), 16.

[39] "Congreso Internacional de Mujeres Contra la Guerra y el Fascismo," Caja 250, Carpeta 3; "Congreso Internacional de Mujeres Contra la Guerra y el Fascismo, Principios Fundamentales," Caja 256, Carpeta 2, Archivo de Paulina Luisi, Archivo General de la Nación (PL-AGN) Montevideo, Uruguay. Luisi was one of the organizers of the conference.

[40] See also Gretta Palmer, "'Only Communism Offers Equal Economic Rights,'" *National Business Woman* 13, no. 11 (November, 1934): 343, 357-358. On her interview with John Strachey who argues against the promise of fascism or liberal capitalism liberating women economically.

rights" for women workers in the face of so many new state policies that attempted to take these away.

Celebration of the 1934 Paris conference reached the Americas, where fascism was spreading as well. One of the conference organizers was Paulina Luisi, who was living in exile in Europe at the time and published news of the conference in Uruguayan newspapers, attempting to rally women there around the conference's goals.[41] In Cuba, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro also heard of and cheered on the 1934 conference.[42] It is likely that Marta Vergara, well-versed with the French thinkers and activists who had hatched the plan for the conference, was also inspired by it.

The growing model of Popular-Front feminism abroad and the rise of Popular-Front ideologies in Chile, specifically, allowed Vergara to openly rekindle and fuse her "equal rights" feminist concerns with her social justice commitments. For Vergara, "the special contempt fascism had for women," and the way Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy "actively debase[d women] and strip[ped]" them of their rights had made her "more and more inclined toward a women's organization, organized by the Communists."[43] Yet, Vergara had long been unhappy that neither the Communist Party nor her partner Chamudes were receptive to her beliefs that fighting for women's rights could be compatible with the class struggle. When she broached the subject "heatedly…with the [CP] militants," she later recalled, they "either insulted me or simply mocked me."[44] As she summarized the conflict between her point of view and Chamudes', "I believed that equal rights for women were more important than the class struggle." But Chile was witnessing the growth of a Popular-Front movement, in which a coalition of Radical, Socialist, and Communist Parties, sought the "expansion of democratic liberties, economic development through state intervention, and socio-economic justice for the Chilean people."[45] This coalition who would control the executive branch of Chile from 1938 to 1947 under Pedro Aguirre Cerda. Vergara used the Popular-Front rationale to convince the Communist Party of the validity of her efforts to work for "women's rights" broadly. As she recalled in her memoirs, "the Chilean Communist Party believed at the time that the country's revolution would be bourgeois-democratic in nature," she argued in response. "Why then exclude bourgeois women? Why not help them obtain the benefits enumerated in the platform?"[46]

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[41] "Ha Dado un Manifiesto Contra la Guerra el C. Mundial de Mujeres," *El País* (Montevideo), July 5, 1934. Paulina Luisi had collaborated in Europe with Isabel Blume from Belgium, Margarita Nelken from Spain, Gabrielle Duchêne of France, and about a dozen other women in helping to organize the conference. The congress led to the creation of the International Committee of Women Against War and Fascism, of which Duchêne was president. The 1934 Paris meeting was also inspired by the organizing efforts of communist intellectuals, Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse who in 1932 and 1933 had created in Amsterdam and Paris the World Committee Against Fascism and War. Lorraine Coons, "Gabrielle Duchêne: Feminist, Pacifist, Reluctant Bourgeois," *Peace & Change* 24, no. 2 (April 1999): 131.

[42] [Ofelia Domínguez Navarro] to Maria Dolores Machin V da de Huppman, November 7, 1934, Leg 675, No 2, Archivo de Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Havana, Cuba.

[43] Vergara, *Memorias*, 92-94.

Indeed, in May, 1935, Vergara, with progressive lawyer Elena Caffarena, co-founded the cross-class Moviemiento pro Emancipación de las Mujeres Chilenas (MEMCh). It would become "the largest autonomous women's group operating at the time" in Chile.[47] MEMCh combined the cause of women's rights with the goals of the Popular-Front coalition, which in turn endorsed the group. With a manifesto calling for "the integral emancipation of women, especially their economic, juridical, biological, and political emancipation," MEMCh coupled liberal feminist reforms for the vote, equal civil rights, and equal pay for equal work with demands for state-sponsored maternity legislation, legal abortion, and birth control access.[48] Significantly, MEMCh connected women's equal economic rights with anti-fascism and peace: "Let us fight against fascism, because it tends to deprive women of her most elementary rights, considering her only qualified to engage in domestic work, and against war, as being an inhumane cruelty, serving only to protect commercial interests."[49] They viewed economic equity as increasingly important, calling not only for measures that would establish equal pay for equal work but also for social welfare for working women and children. Although the founding members of MEMCh were of the middle-class, including former IACW commissioner, Aida Parada, they made up the minority of a group whose rank and file was mostly working-class.[50]

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[44] Vergara, *Memorias*, 93.
[45] Cerda would not relinquish presidency until 1952. Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises*, 4.
[46] Vergara, *Memorias*, 92.
[47] Pernet, "Mobilizing Women," 107; Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises*, 3-4, 6, 101-3; MEMCh was created before formal initiation of the Popular Front in the summer of 1935 by the Communist International.

Internationalism and international feminism were also key parts of MEMCh's ideology. The articles that filled their organ, *La Mujer Nueva* reported on the conditions of life for working women and children in Chile, throughout the Americas, and in the world. *La Mujer Nueva* reported on the plight of indigenous women in Peru; on women in Germany and Italy; and on the Spanish Civil War. The journal reproduced a mélange of essays by internationalist figures, including French thinker Romain Rolland, U.S. socialist journalist John Reed, U.S. liberal feminist and novelist Pearl Buck, Spanish feminist and Republican leader "La Pasionaria" Dolores Ibárruri, and British feminist

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[48] "Programa del Movimiento pro Emancipación de las Mujeres," *La Mujer Nueva* 1, no. 1 (November, 1935): 3; Vergara, *Memorias*, 135-136.

[49] "Programa del Movimiento pro Emancipación de las Mujeres," *La Mujer Nueva*, 3.

[50] Pernet, "Mobilizing," 131.

Emmeline Pankhurst, among others.[51] Vergara was eager to reconnect with the Inter-American Commission of Women and to ally MEMCh with the IACW. The upcoming conference of the International Labor Organization, to be held in Santiago, seemed to be a propitious opportunity to fight for the rights of women workers and connect their demands to a the broad "equal rights" platform of the Commission. Vergara and Caffarena had set their sights on the ILO Conference as an important place to announce the formation of their new organization and to push for its agenda.

Internationally, just as the Inter-American Commission of Women was becoming seen as a bastion of support for women, in the wake of the Great Depression and the rise of fascism, the ILO, which had been established in Geneva after the First World War to examine conditions of employment and labor and propose international solutions, was viewed as a bastion of support for trade unionism and workers' rights. Hitler had left the League of Nations in 1934, and with it, the ILO, and had flouted a number of international labor conventions in his dismissal of labor unions. The same year, the U.S. had joined the ILO, and the organization began to emerge in the Americas, especially, at this time, as an engine for social democracy and welfare. As Jill Jensen has revealed, "By the mid-1930s, [Latin American and U.S.] members were responsible for seventy percent of new ratifications, having successfully incorporated specific ILO standards into their own systems of laws."[52] Before the creation of the U.S. welfare state, Latin American countries had established equal minimum wages for men and women, a number had instituted state-sponsored maternity legislation, and many were demanding that the ILO pay greater attention to the specific needs of workers in the Americas.[53] At the urging of president Alessandri, the 1936 Santiago conference would be the ILO's first in the Americas.

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[51] "La Mujer India en Peru," *La Mujer Nueva* 1, no. 4 (February, 1936), 2; John Reed, "Los derechos de las pequeñas naciones," *La Mujer Nueva* 1, no. 2 (December, 1935), 3; "Unos momentos con la Pasionaria," *La Mujer Nueva* 1, no. 5 (March, 1936), 3; Theodore Dreiser, "La Mujer en Rusia," *La Mujer Nueva* 1, no. 6 (May, 1936), 2; E. Sylvia Pankhurst, "La degradación de las mujeres bajo el fascismo," *La Mujer Nueva* 1, no. 6 (May, 1936), 3.

Back in the United States, Doris Stevens and the NWP were eying the upcoming ILO Conference, not with optimism about its hopes for social democracy but with apprehension for its protective legislation measures for women. The U.S. National Woman's Party deemed the ILO an engine of protective labor legislation for women workers since its inception. In 1919 the ILO Maternity Convention stipulated that women not work for six weeks after childbirth. More recently, its 1934 meeting had passed draft conventions prohibiting women from night work, and the most recent ILO conference in Geneva in 1935 had adopted a draft convention prohibiting women from working underground in mines.[54]

The NWP was especially concerned at this time about working women's equality internationally as well as in the United States, where they viewed measures that the U.S. government had established in the face of the Great Depression as rolling back women's opportunities to work equally, calling them, in many cases, "fascist."[55] One of the greatest banes was the Economy Act of 1932, which justified the dismissal of one of two spouses employed by the government, thus prioritizing the federally employed wife of a federally employed man for layoffs. The NWP also lambasted the National Recovery Administration Codes (NRA Codes), enacted in 1933 as a New Deal measure, which nominally established minimum wages for men and women, but which in fact contained wage discriminations for women workers. Members also spoke out against a number of state legislatures that were now passing new laws establishing minimum wages for women and children only.[56]

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[52] Jill Jensen, "From Geneva to the Americas: The International Labor Organization and Inter-American Social Security Standards, 1936-1948," *International Labor and Working Class History* no. 80 (Fall 2011): 218.

[53] On the new relevance of the ILO to international workers' rights, and to the Americas starting in 1935-1936 see Jill Jensen, "From Geneva to the Americas" and Norberto Osvaldo Ferreras, "From Universal to Regional: The First Two American Meetings of the ILO and the Definition of a Latin American Labor Law Agenda, 1936-39," AHA Conference Paper, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 2013.

[54] "New Chains Forged to Shackle Women Workers," *Equal Rights* 20, no. 22 (June 30, 1934): 171-173; "International Menace to Women," *Equal Rights* 21, no. 11 (July 15, 1935): 2.

Historians have debated the extent to which these welfare measures in fact hurt or helped women, but what is clear is that the question of the "proper" place for women reemerged with a vengeance in the United States at the time, and that in cultural discourse, married women workers became a scapegoat for the Great Depression.[57] A Gallup poll conducted in the mid-1930s revealed that "four-fifths of those questioned thought that a wife should not work if her husband had a job."[58] Many NWP members and other concerned women connected this trend to the exporting of fascism from Italy and Germany to the United States.[59] In the face of this ground they were losing nationally, some NWP members upheld the Commission's Equal Rights Treaty as even more important to safeguarding their own nation to international standards in women's rights.[60]

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[55] "The Minimum Wage Muddle," *Equal Rights* 20, no. 10 (April 7, 1934): 76; Jane Norman Smith to Stevens, November 1, 1935, Box 90, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[56] A number of states, including New York and New Jersey, passed minimum wage legislation for women and minors alone after 1933, despite a 1923 *Adkins v. Children's Hospital* Supreme Court decision that declared a minimum wage law for women unconstitutional.

[57] In *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (1983), Alice Kessler-Harris argues that even though New Deal measures were on the surface discriminatory against women workers, especially married women workers, they nonetheless allowed women some leverage in the workplace. The very segmentation of women workers in clerical and service work, for example, she says, helped to lessen the impact of economic collapse. Those employed in those sectors were somewhat less likely to be laid off than were blue collar workers; in addition, women's status as low-wage workers helped to protect them, as employers tended to cut back first on more expensive, usually male workers. Moreover, the NRA codes promoted a largely unintended improvement in low-wage women workers' standards. Kessler Harris says that these improvements and the increasing need of women to serve as primary family breadwinners in the depression laid the basis for the more assertive quest for equality after the war. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Stevens and the NWP also worried about the ILO being further guided by influential women's groups in the U.S. who opposed the Equal Rights Treaties. Although the Equal Rights Treaties had risen in popularity internationally, in the United States, they still attracted the opprobrium of those who feared the NWP "Equal Rights

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[58] Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 2; From 1932 and 1937 the federal government dismissed 1,600 married women from government service under the Economy Act.

[59] In 1936, *Equal Rights* reported on Lawrence Dennis' *The Coming American Fascism* which prescribed an "approved fascism" the U.S. could adopt, which described barring women from industry. "The Menace of Fascism," *Equal Rights* 1, no. 49 (February 8, 1936): 386; Lawrence Dennis, *The Coming American Fascism* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1936) was a pro-fascist treatise that explicitly laid out fascist ideas concerning women and work: "Today in the United States the number of women gainfully employed is about equal to the number of unemployed men. A rational fascism for America would not proceed to drastic disemployment of women to create jobs for men. But…a large but gradual transfer of women from the office and factory to the home is clearly indicated…Fascism finds it impossible to accept their [feminists'] thesis of equality between the sexes because fascism finds it impossible to escape the implications of sex and biological differences…An American fascism would involve…the discouragement of employment by women which is against the public interest." (260-264) See also "Lena Phillips Says Women's Rights Periled," *Washington Post*, August 8, 1934, p. 13; In May 1935, Genevieve Parkhurst, "Is Feminism Dead?," *Harper's* 176 (May 1935): 735-745 considered that "political forces inimical to women's equality…notably the rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy" were hurting women's rights internationally. Cott discusses Parkhurst's article in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 363.

[60] Mary Margaret McBride, "Doris Stevens, Feminist, Urges Opposition to Reich's Program," *Niagara Falls New York Gazette*, January 29, 1934. Mildred Adams, "Woman's Future: Two Divergent Paths," *New York Times*, March 18, 1934, SM8 specifically extolled the successful passage of the Equal Nationality Treaty in Montevideo as a "counter" to Hitler's pushing women "back to the kitchen" and to U.S. NRA and other discriminations against women. She wrote that both the Commission's treaties were some of the only pieces of "forward movement" for women in the past few years internationally.

Amendment" for its elimination of protective labor legislation. A coalition of groups, including the YWCA, Women's Trade Union League, League of Women Voters, and reformers in the Labor Department and Women's and Children's Bureau, did not abate in their vocal opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment in these years. Internationally, these groups also opposed the IACW's Equal Rights Treaties even though theirs was becoming a minority opinion. The League of Women Voters's campaign against the Treaty successfully resulted in curtailing its consideration at the 1935 League of Nations meeting. At the same time, the Treaty influenced the League of Nations' decision to launch a worldwide study of women's rights, delegating to itself the study of "civil and political" rights, and to the ILO women's economic and social welfare and rights.[61]

Stevens realized that this decision gave the ILO an even more central role in the welfare of working women internationally. Thus, even though the powers of the 1936 ILO conference in Santiago would be limited to making recommendations for future meetings rather than enacting new legislation, because of the great prestige the ILO held in a number of Latin American countries, Stevens was deeply concerned that the Commission have strong representation at the 1936 ILO conference. Although she was unsure whether Vergara would have time to give the Commission now that she was engaged in her own social and economic goals in Chile, Stevens wrote to her in an appeal for help.[62] It would be "disastrous," she wrote to Vergara, to have the ILO's protective legislation policies, or the threat of unequal wages for women, "extended to the American

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[61] Susan Becker, "International Feminism between the Wars: The National Woman's Party versus the League of Women Voters," in *Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940*, ed., Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983), 231-232; Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 360.

[62] Stevens to Smith, November 6, 1935, Box 90, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

States…which…have made definite commitments through the Pan-American Conferences…toward complete equality for men and women in all domains of life including the industrial domain."[63]

This time, Vergara responded in the affirmative. She and her new organization were already planning to advocate women's economic equality at the conference and Vergara was happy to represent the IACW, as well. Even before Doris Stevens wrote to Vergara about the ILO Conference, Vergara had spearheaded efforts organizing public meetings and events with the ILO delegates from other countries, and, largely due to her personal interdictions, successfully secured one of their own members, Communist and working-class union leader María Ramirez, as a Worker's Delegate to the conference.[64] One of only three women delegates, including Freida Miller from the U.S. Women's Bureau and Allamita Diniz-Gonzales, technical adviser to the Brazilian Department of Labor, Ramirez was also the only woman worker delegate.

Vergara explained to Stevens that their agenda would be two-pronged: they would fight for equality and to repeal protective labor legislation for working women, but they would also fight for state-sponsored maternity legislation. On the subject of "equal rights," Vergara explained her group MEMCh was more committed than ever. She especially supported equal minimum wage laws for men and women. "The salaries of workers in Chile are what we call starvation wages, and those of the women are today even lower," she wrote to Stevens, sending her as well a copy of MEMCh's manifesto and goals.[65] "Equal pay for equal work" had recently been written into the 1933 Chilean labor code, but employers consistently circumvented this clause.[66] Vergara explained they would fight for equal pay for equal work through the ILO conference and emphasized the benefits that her organization was already achieving through workers' own grass-roots efforts: "We are doing everything in our capacity to have the women workers demand in their unions that their men colleagues join with them in this struggle for equal pay based upon an [equal] minimum wage."[67] Vergara and her group also opposed the ILO's policies of curtailing night work only for women, and closing any specific areas of work to women, rejecting the notion that women were frailer or less capable than men.

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[63] Stevens to Vergara, November 25, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[64] "Te a los delegados obreros," *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.
[65] Vergara to Stevens, December 10, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

In addition to these equal rights measures, state-sponsored maternity legislation was another important demand at the ILO conference. Vergara explained to Stevens that she wanted to push for state-sponsored maternity legislation throughout the Americas. In part, Vergara wanted stricter enforcement of existing laws in Chile. Chile's labor code stipulated a maternity allowance for pregnant women but asked employers to pay fifty percent, which they usually sidestepped, resulting in women often working until the last day of their pregnancy.[68] She also wanted maternity legislation to apply not only to employees in the industrial trades and commerce, those usually considered under ILO codes, but applied to domestic workers, hospital workers, and agricultural workers as well.[69] As Karin Rosemblatt has explained, the inclusion of recognition of maternity did not necessarily make MEMCh's feminism simply "maternalist" – they wanted to revise maternity legislation so it would not "pigeonhole" and "exclude" women workers.[70]

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[66] Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era," 143.
[67] Vergara to Stevens, December 10, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[68] Maria Aracil, "Qué es la Conferencia Panamericana?" *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936; "Una gran concentración Feminina para Ocuparse de la Conferencia Panamericana," *La Opinión*, December 28, 1935.
[69] The MEMCH platform as established in *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936: "The dispositions of the Chilean Labor Code on protection for motherhood, which establishes the obligatory rest of six

Maternity legislation, however, did not fit with Doris Stevens's notion of the "Equal Rights" agenda of the Commission or of the National Woman's Party, and Stevens was uneasy having Vergara, as a representative of the IACW, argue for it. Along with other NWP members in the U.S. (which had no law for state-sponsored maternity legislation), Stevens believed that any asymmetrical provision bearing on sex, including maternity legislation, could violate equality. The NWP had long been opposed to the ILO's 1919 Maternity Convention, believing that such legislation took away women's choice, harmed her ability to compete with men, and placed the burden of the pregnancy on the employer. The NWP took the position, alongside Open Door International, the goal of securing "for a woman irrespective of…childbirth, the right at all times to decide whether or not she shall engage in paid work, and to ensure that no legislation or regulations shall deprive her of this right."[71] Thus, Stevens wrote to Vergara, "the state of pregnancy" was a "special case" that "should be so treated if and when it arises…In upholding the principle of equality we [the IACW] are not obliged to advocate a particular method by which the special situation should be handled."[72]

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weeks before and six weeks after childbirth, the holding open of jobs during this period, and the payment of a subsidy, is only applied to the women workers and employees of industry and commerce, excluding the domestics, the hospital employees, those who go to work in private homes and the large amount of agricultural workers. The same conditions are found in the dispositions on nurseries and the right of two periods of rest to nurse the child at the place of labor, being excluded from these advantages besides those already named, the teachers and in general all women working in governmental offices."

[70] Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises*, 81.

[71] "Woman's Party Delegates Sail for International Congress," *Equal Rights* 21, no. 13 (August 15, 1935): 1-2; See also "Protective Labor Legislation," *Equal Rights* 13, no 11 (April 24, 1926): 86-88.

[72] Stevens to Vergara, November 25, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

However, maternity legislation was becoming a reality in the Americas, and Vergara's insistence on its centrality to the ILO conference agenda made it something Stevens could no longer ignore. Vergara was not the first Latin American feminist to appeal to Stevens and the Commission in favor of maternity legislation. For decades, Latin American feminists had included maternity legislation in their feminist agendas, as had Clara González and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro at the 1926 Panama Conference. So had a growing tide of innovative social welfare legislation throughout the Americas in the 1930s, with maternity legislation passed in national legislatures like those of Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. After the Montevideo Conference of 1933, the Uruguayan feminist who had helped the Commission there, Sofía Álvarez de Demicheli, had written to Stevens to ask how their staunch support of "equal rights" reconciled women's needs as mothers, which forced Stevens to establish a position.[73] Stevens responded to Demicheli that "the problem of feminists has always been to safeguard maternity without embracing the attitude that because of potential motherhood, all women shall be restricted in their right to compete equally with men in the labor and professional market." She had tasked NWP member Helena Hill Weed to draw up a memorandum of the Commission's official position.[74] In the memorandum, Hill referred to the new Brazilian constitution of 1933 as a model for reconciling "equal rights" with maternity legislation. This constitution secured maternity legislation in a category of social welfare benefits, and separated it from labor legislation, managing, Hill believed, to avoid penalizing women who did not have children. Here, she explained:

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[73] Sofía Álvarez de Demicheli to Stevens, August 21, 1934, Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[74] Stevens to Álvarez de Demicheli, October 30, 1934, Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

> maternity legislation is classed with old age pensions, unemployment insurance, health and accident insurance, and death benefits – all of which are proper subjects for special legislation – and are provided for by regular contributions from the State, the employers and the employees. In this way maternity becomes the direct concern of the State, and women workers are not only guaranteed a rest period, with full pay, both before and after confinement, but we understand from the text that their jobs are held for them.[75]

All of the *labor* clauses in Brazil's constitution, on the other hand, stood strongly for equality for men and women. Brazilian women were granted equal nationality rights; equal individual rights; equal citizenship rights; equal pay for equal work; participation in government and on technical commissions. The National Woman's Party had in the pages of *Equal Rights* upheld the Brazilian constitution as superior to legislation for women in the United States: "What a commentary is this new constitution of Brazil on the 'New Deal' in this country with its smug discriminations against women in NRA codes. Brazil has felt the effect of the economic upheaval like the rest of the world, but…Instead of dismissing married women teachers and government employees, it provides for all citizens a maximum working week of six days." Hill wrote to Demichili that the NWP believed the Brazilian Constitution established a model way forward for "how [maternity legislation could be included] without destroying the principle of general sex equality in human relations."[76]

This willingness to accede to Brazil's successful integration of maternity legislation within an "equal rights" framework did not mean Stevens herself or the Commission would endorse maternity legislation. At the same time, Stevens recognized that the growing movement against protective labor legislation for women in all other respects was mounting in the Americas, not only among leftist feminists like Vergara, but also more generally in the social democratic welfare policies of many national legislatures. Stevens also knew that their support was essential to the livelihood of the Commission. Vergara was the only mouthpiece at the ILO conference for the Commission's Equal rights measures, and Stevens feared the growing role of women affiliated with the U.S. government, such as Frieda Miller, who opposed the Commission and who would also be at the ILO Conference. Thus, while Stevens objected to maternity legislation as an official IACW policy, she conceded to Vergara that, "if the States wish to insure those women who desire a state-subsidy for their care and the care of the child for a period before and after childbirth, there can be no objection from the equalitarian point of view so long as it is not obligatory for the mother to take it and so long as it is the State which pays the subsidy and not the employer."[77]

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[75] Helena Hill Weed, "Memorandum for Sofía de Demicheli," Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[76] Weed, "Memorandum for Sofía de Demicheli," Box 92, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

Ignoring Stevens's earlier equivocations about maternity leave being counter to official IACW policy, Vergara responded to Stevens, "I am very much in agreement with your proposal to work to bring about the State pay." She continued:

> In the Labor Code of Chile nurseries in the factories, subsidies for pregnancy and periods of nursing, etc., are contemplated, but there is not one single employer who complies with these obligations. When it is suspected that a woman who is with child is going to demand that he comply with the law, the employer without any ado sends her into the street.[78]

Thus, it was a combination of "equal rights" with maternity legislation that formed the backbone of MEMCh's goals at the ILO conference. In meetings before and during the conference, MEMCh representatives, including women workers, criticized the Chilean government for signing but not enforcing a "series of [ILO] conventions favorable to the [woman] worker," including the ILO's 1919 Maternity Convention. MEMCh demanded that Western Hemisphere countries institute a twelve-week maternity leave, not only for white-collar workers but also for domestic servants, home workers, and agriculture workers.[79] Additionally, MEMCh insisted that in establishments where more than 20 women were employed, nurseries be extended to all salaried workers.[80] MEMCh spoke out *against* the ILO's sex-based labor conventions Chile had ratified, which prohibited women from working at night, underground, and in any fields considered "above their strength, or dangerous for the physical or moral state of their sex."[81] These recommendations won the conference's endorsement.

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[77] Stevens to Vergara, November 25, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[78] Vergara to Stevens, December 10, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

At the conference, Vergara made these goals part of the agenda of the Inter-American Commission of Women. She and MEMCh speakers repeatedly couched their demands as part of a larger Pan-American women's movement – a movement spanning the Western Hemisphere and united in advancing equality for women workers. One MEMCh leader at the Balmecedea Theater meeting asked male delegates to "serve as the enthusiastic and generous intermediaries of the women's organizations of your respective countries, so that on the American Continent…women [could] march directly toward…liberation."[82] Vergara positioned herself as a delegate of the Inter-American

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[79] Felisa Vergara, "Tres Mujeres en la Conferencia Panamericana del Trabajo" *Acción Social* 46 (1936): 16-17; Aracil, "Qué es la Conferencia Panamericana?" *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.
[80] Aracil, "Qué es la Conferencia Panamericana?" *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.
[81] "Palabras dirigidas a los delegados por la compañera Felisa Vergara, en la manifestación del domingo," *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936; from Chilean labor code, Art 4, cited in Margarita Gallo Chinchilla, *La Mujer ante la legíslación chilena, derechos politico y social* (Santiago de Chile: Gutenberg, 1945).
[82] "Palabras dirigidas a los delegados por la compañera Felisa Vergara," *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.

Commission and Women and also actively promoted an equal rights agenda.[83] She spoke out at meetings on behalf of the IACW, explaining its history and activism for an Equal Rights Treaty.[84] Stevens had rallied a number of IACW delegates from Guatemala, Haiti, and Argentina to send Vergara resolutions in support of equal economic rights, which she read at events, as well.[85] Vergara also distributed a general appeal the IACW had drafted, in English and Spanish versions, to women's organizations, delegates at the Conference, and the press. Signed by Vergara, as well as by IACW representatives from Cuba, Uruguay, Brazil, and the U.S., it connected equal rights for women with democracy and anti-fascism. Reiterating the gains made for women's rights with the 1933 Pan-American treaties at Montevideo, it contrasted "the path of equality on which the American Republics have taken such brilliant, historic and encouraging steps" with the "many lamentable and reactionary acts of State in Europe which are crushing the aspirations of women and so setting back the day of a free and flourishing civilization for all humanity."[86]

Overall, the conference's results were mixed. Vergara was disappointed that delegates once again supported resolutions barring only women from night work, when she and MEMCh believed that such conventions should make night work illegal for men and women. However, the conference also gave clear affirmation to values of equal minimum wages, equal hours of work, and work of "equal responsibility" too -- for men and women, as well as MEMCh's proposals for state-sponsored maternity legislation. These recommendations would lay the groundwork for the agenda of the next Regional ILO Conference in Havana, Cuba in 1939.[87] Doris Stevens applauded these measures as a sign that even the ILO was moving toward a general consensus she was seeing elsewhere – a move against stipulating conventions for women only.[88] She celebrated Vergara's role in helping shift the ILO toward more equalitarian policies.

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[83] "Concentración Feminina en el Teatro Balmeceda," *El Mercurio*, December 30, 1935; "La Gran Concentración del Memch," *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.
[84] Memo IACW, November 26, 1935, Stevens Papers; "La Gran Concentración del Memch," *La Mujer Nueva*, January 1936.
[85] Corinne Antezana-Pernet, "Peace in the World and Democracy at Home: The Chilean Women's Movement in the 1940s," in *Latin American in the 1940s: War and Postwar Transitions*, ed., David Rock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 174.
[86] "An Appeal to the Delegates of the Regional Conference of the International Labor Organization from the Inter-American Commission of Women," December 20, 1935, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

Although Stevens and the Inter-American Commission of Women claimed Vergara's successes as their own, they were careful not to adopt her positions on maternity legislation. And when Vergara wrote a lengthy report on the outcomes of the Conference at Stevens's request, *Equal Rights* published an adulterated version of her article, omitting the sections of her report that explained efforts for maternity protection and keeping intact those relating to women's equal rights.[89] But Vergara's position would soon be taken up by Doris Stevens herself. Forces against the commission from inside the U.S. were mounting, and the conflict would come to another head at the 1936

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[87] On the 1939 Havana Conference, see *Second Labour Conference of the American States Which Are Members of the International Labour Organization, Havana, Cuba, 21 November – 2 December 1939, Record of Proceedings* (Montreal: International Labour Office, 1941); Boris, "'No Right to Layettes or Nursing Time,'" 178; Carol Riegelman Lubin and Anne Winslow, *Social Justice for Women: The International Labor Organization and Women* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 150.

[88] Doris Stevens, "Memo for Dr. Feis," Box 62, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[89] Stevens to Vergara, January 20, 1936, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers; "Report of Señora Marta Vergara, Member for Chile on The Inter-American Commission of Women, On the work of the Regional Labor Conference of American States held under the auspices of the International Labor Organization of Geneva, in Santiago de Chile," January 16, 1936, Stevens Papers; "Report of Señora Marta Vergara, Member for Chile on the Inter-American Commission of Women," *Equal Rights* (March 15, 1936): 1-4. A complete Spanish-language version of Vergara's report, with her statements about maternity legislation, can be found in the pages of *La Mujer Nueva*: Marta Vergara, "Conclusiones que aprobara la Conferencia Pan-Americana del Trabajo en lo que al trabajo feminine se refiere," *La Mujer Nueva*, March, 1936.

Buenos Aires peace conferences. Here, Stevens would ally herself even more with the social democratic welfare agenda of Vergara and rely on Vergara to foster bridges between the Popular-Front movement in the Americas and the Commission.

The Buenos Aires Peace Conference, 1936

Soon after the ILO Conference concluded, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced an Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace that would take place in Buenos Aires.[90] The growth of fascism, with the threat of German encroachment into the minds, hearts, and markets of Latin America, dramatically influenced the development of his Good Neighbor policy. The goals of the conference were for Pan-American neutrality in the face of the coming war in Europe, as well as for "economic renewal" and enhanced trade and social welfare legislation, in the Americas. Unlike the regular International Conferences of American States, though, the topic of women's rights, would not be on the agenda, in order, as the State Department reported, to "give preferential consideration to the questions relating to the organization of peace."[91]

The fact that women's rights would not be included did not deter Doris Stevens from making plans to attend the conference, and she urged Vergara to join her there to establish a provision in the conference proceedings regarding women's Equal Rights as necessary for peace. Stevens's desire that Vergara accompany her in Buenos Aires only increased when she discovered that the Socialist Party of Argentina would be holding their own "popular peace conference" or "people's peace conference" immediately before as a counterpart to Roosevelt's official one. Led by the Argentine physician, socialist, and feminist Alicia Moreau de Justo, this "people's peace conference," would discuss reduction of armaments, free exchange of people and ideas, anti-imperialism, and anti-fascism. While "women's rights" were not on the agenda of this conference either, Moreau de Justo -- a longtime socialist feminist leader and internationalist -- had sent invitations for this conference to a number of women's groups and leaders in the U.S., including Doris Stevens and Carrie Chapman Catt.

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[90] Harold F. Peterson, *Argentina and the United States, 1810-1960* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 389.

[91] State Department Memo "Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace," August 8, 1936, RG 43, 710/76, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

Stevens believed that attending this conference and collaborating there with Vergara, an established leftist feminist leader in Chile, would be essential to influencing the official conference that followed it, and to fostering stronger ties with Argentine feminists in Buenos Aires. "I think the Movimiento and not the Commission should take leadership in piloting the resolutions through the [popular]…congress and also the resolution through the government Conference," Stevens wrote to Vergara.[92]

While Vergara agreed to join Stevens in Buenos Aires, and while she believed in the IACW's Equal Rights Treaties as international bulwarks against fascism, she also did not find in the Inter-American Commission of Women the perfect fruition of her feminist goals. Vergara, who officially joined the Communist Party in 1936, was anxious for the Commission to encompass even broader objectives, including social change made by and for working women, peace, and disarmament. After the ILO conference, Vergara had written to Stevens about the "definite gap" she saw "between the conditions of women presented by laws and reality. I know that the mission of the Commission is officially…juridical, but in order not to separate ourselves from reality, we ought to do other work indirectly." Vergara suggested collaboration with women workers, to, "hear from their own lips what they want and to what they are opposed."[93] There is no evidence of a response to this request from Stevens.

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[92] Stevens to Vergara, October 19, 1936, Box 64, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

Now, in anticipation of the Buenos Aires conference, Vergara wrote to Stevens that she agreed wholeheartedly with the Commission's plans for women's "equal rights" but also asked whether the IACW would take a stand on anti-fascism and peace more broadly: "Today before the danger of a world conflagration we must re-initiate with new vigor the fight against war."[94] To this, Stevens acknowledged that fascism was threatening peace abroad and in the Americas, but typically she emphasized that they would prioritize their one goal, for "women's rights," and not for "peace."[95] Stevens dismissed Vergara's entreaties for making working women's collaboration and peace central to the Commission's agenda, seeing these as distractions from the main issue of women's equal rights. Although the two women would work together productively at the conferences in Buenos Aires, these tensions between their feminist and political ideals would also reemerge there.

As soon as Vergara and Stevens arrived in Buenos Aires, they sought to ensure "women's rights" on the Socialist Party people's conference agenda. In a meeting with Moreau de Justo the day they arrived, they secured Stevens's official credentials to join the conference as a delegate. On the first day of the sessions Vergara became one of the six delegates appointed to lead the "Third Commission," which would discuss the "Free exchange of peoples and ideas," making her one of only three women named on the four commissions.[96]

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[93] Vergara to Stevens, January 16, 1936, Box 72, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[94] Vergara to Stevens, August 17, 1936, Box 64, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.
[95] Stevens to Vergara, September 10, 1936, Box 64, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

As the people's conference proceeded, Stevens allied herself with Vergara as a promoter of Popular-Front feminism, strategically, not only to promote women's rights at the conference, but also to oppose any U.S. opposition to their "Equal Rights" objectives. Among the delegates to the conference was U.S. social reformer Josephine Schain, a representative of Carrie Chapman Catt's organization, the Cause and Cure of War, and, acting as her assistant, Helen Hayes of the YWCA. Longstanding opponents to the National Woman's Party's ERA and Equal Rights Treaties, these women sought to promote an agenda for the education of men, women, and children for peace, and also to denounce the Equal Rights Treaty if it came up in the proceedings.[97]

Allying herself with her Popular-Front companion Vergara, Stevens actually portrayed herself as a leftist and Schain as representing the "right" in the debate over women's rights that erupted at the conference. Vergara, in her position as "Third Commission" member, successfully inserted the inclusion of a statement on women's rights into the conference resolutions. But debates erupted when the draft of the resolution ultimately produced by the "Third Commission" president, Argentine Socialist leader Dr. Nicholas Reppeto, included weaker language on women's rights than the memorandum which Vergara and Stevens had drafted.[98] When Stevens and Vergara applied pressure to Reppeto to get the wording of the resolution changed to more explicitly endorse the Equal Rights Treaty, Schain interjected and argued against the Equal Rights Treaty. She explained that its text was so vague "no one knew what…[it] involved, [and] that it most certainly would do away with protective legislation for women so badly needed in South America."[99] Doris Stevens then took the floor and defended the Equal Rights Treaty, her first speech in Spanish.

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[96] Stevens to Edith Houghton Hooker, November 28, 1936, Box 63, Folder 3; Untitled memo re: Buenos Aires Conference, Box 62, Folder 14; "Record of Main Events of the Trip to and from Buenos Aires and in Buenos Aires, November 7, 1936-January 13, 1937," Box 63, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[97] White, "Women Stage Row at Peace Meeting."

Stevens portrayed Schain's concern with "protecting" women as fascist and explained that "Schain represented the extreme right wing of Feminism in the United States."[100] As she acknowledged in a letter to her husband Jonathan Mitchell, she spoke out of desperation: "I said Schain represented the extreme right and that was kind of mean in that left audience but there was nothing else to do."[101] Her characterization likely resonated with others. The notes Stevens's secretary took at the conference revealed that when Schain had mentioned "protective legislation" for working women, "there were whispers of fascism among delegates. Restriction had no standing," the secretary wrote, "at this conference which has devoted hours of debate against restrictions of all kinds under which many of delegates here have suffered under various dictatorships."[102] Aware of the connection many were making between calls for protecting women and fascist dictatorships, the politically adept Stevens tried to stoke these concerns about Schain's political inclinations by painting her as deeply conservative.

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[98] "Resolución propuesta sugerida para ser adoptada por el Congreso de Mujeres pro Paz en Buenos Aires," November 23, 1936; "A La Conferencia Popular por la Paz de América," Box 63, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[99] "Record of Main Events of the Trip to and from Buenos Aires and in Buenos Aires, November 7, 1936-January 13, 1937," Box 63, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Stevens to Mitchell, November 28, 1936, Box 25, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.
[102] "Rough Notes on Equal Rights Battle – People's Conference for the Peace of America," November 25, 1936, Box 63, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

At the same time, Stevens was clear that the Equal Rights Treaty would be compatible with maternity legislation, the first time she ever publicly did so. She recognized the brand of social democratic feminism that was expected of the Commission among this audience, in contrast to the rise of repressive and fascist regimes, and she cast the feminism of the IACW as compatible with this vision centrally concerned with working women and working mothers. In her speech, she upheld the constitution of Brazil as a model of the fruition of the Equal Rights Treaty. Their assurance of equal rights in work, hours, and wages, for men and women, Stevens explained, still allowed room for maternity legislation for women workers. In this way she began articulating a position for the Commission that favored state-sponsored maternity legislation and allied herself with the Popular-Front feminism of Marta Vergara, a move clearly intended to gain greater Latin American support for the Commission. Vergara, in turn, gave a speech following Stevens', in support not only of the Equal Rights resolution but also on the other points of the "Third Committee's" report which included free exchange of ideas and freedom of press, and growing pacifist networks in the Americas.[103]

Stevens's and Vergara's speeches were effective. Not one vote was raised in favor of revising the text, and the Equal Rights resolution they had drafted passed. It called attention to

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[103] "Record of Main Events of the Trip to and from Buenos Aires and in Buenos Aires, November 7, 1936-January 13, 1937," Box 63, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

> the necessity of extending to all the women of the Americas the benefits of equal civil and political rights, of establishing equal pay for equal work without distinction of sex, and to recommend to non-signatories the desirability of adhering at the earliest possible time to the treaty signed at Montevideo in 1933 by Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay which guarantees equal rights to men and women within their respective countries.[104]

While this resolution was incorporated into the requests that the popular conference made to the official Peace Conference convening in the capital, Stevens would find that the people's conference had little influence on the official conference called by Roosevelt. At that conference, she would need to rely on the mobilization of Argentine feminists, especially those from the anti-fascist group, UMA, on Marta Vergara, and on her own lobbying male diplomats at the conference to try to secure consideration of women's rights.

At the latter conference she affiliated herself with the same brand of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism – a feminism that embraced social democracy and economic welfare for all people as well as women's political and civil rights – in order to convince Latin American diplomats to support a women's rights agenda. She adopted this strategy because the conference itself reflected a growing consensus that the developing systems of social and economic welfare in the Americas were a key component of anti-fascism and democracy. The speeches and resolutions of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration at this event went farther than before in assuring non-intervention of the U.S. in the Americas to create a stronghold against fascism, and in articulating a common vision in the Americas for social democracy. As the *Nation* magazine later remarked of Roosevelt's opening speech in Buenos Aires, "he stressed no less than fourteen times his advocacy of the principles of democracy, constitutional regimes, democratic government, individual liberty, personal freedom, and social and political justice."[105] Along with continental neutrality in the face of war as a key to Pan-American peace, Roosevelt also emphasized social democracy that combined social justice and economic welfare, specifically pledging to support, for the Americas, higher standards of living "for all our people."[106] This vision reflected his growing New Deal policies, the popularity of which had recently won him reelection in the United States, as well as the new policies being established in the Americas that guaranteed people's rights to social security, to work, unionization, rest and leisure time, food, clothing, housing, health care, and education.

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[104] Alicia Moreau de Justo to Dr. Carlos Saavedra Lamas, December, 1936, Box 63, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.

Stevens, Vergara, and a vibrant group of Argentine feminists they collaborated with wanted to add "equality for women" to this list of social democratic goals. At that time, a feminist movement was emerging in Argentina in response to new measures that would threaten working women's rights. In 1935 the president and military officer Agustín P. Justo proposed to reverse hard-fought Civil Code reforms for women that had been enacted in 1926. The changes would have reduced the status of married women to that of minors, preventing a married woman from working, spending her earnings, administering her property, or being a member of a commercial or civil organization, without the authority of her husband.[107] Deeming this a reactionary and "fascist" measure, in 1936 a group of female intellectuals and leftists formed a group to oppose it. The *Unión de Mujeres Argentinas* (UMA), led by the famous writer Victoria Ocampo, Ana Rosa Schliper de Martínez Geurrero, and María Rosa Oliver heralded the beginnings of their own "Popular-Front" feminist movement in Argentina. UMA collaborated with a number of existing groups and leaders, including the Socialist feminist Alicia Moreau de Justo, the socialist feminist magazine *Vida Femenina,* and the more conservative but liberal woman's rights leader Carmela Horne de Burmeister, whose Argentine Association for Women's Suffrage claimed at that time roughly one hundred thousand members.[108] While UMA's campaign focused initially on revoking the 1935 proposal to the legislature, they collaborated with these groups in a broad struggle for political rights, economic equality, equal pay for equal work, and state-sponsored maternity legislation as anti-fascist measures.[109] Thus, when they met Doris Stevens and Marta Vergara, the UMA was eager to engage in collaborations on behalf of the Equal Rights Treaties with them.

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[105] Stephen Naft, "Behind the Pan-American Front," *Nation* (December 12, 1936), 696.
[106] J.B.S. Hardman, ed., *Rendezvous with Destiny: Addresses and Opinions of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (New York, 1944): 143-145.
[107] Nancy Caro Hollander, "Women: The Forgotten Half of Argentine History," in *Female and Male in Latin American History*, ed., Ann M. Pescatello (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), 150; Gregory Hammond, *The Women's Suffrage Movement and Feminism in Argentina from Roca to Perón* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011), 135-136.

Marta Vergara was central to facilitating connections with these activists, recalling in her memoirs, "I put [Doris Stevens] in touch with the best group of women that could be found in Argentina." Vergara introduced Stevens to the UMA co-founder and Communist sympathizer María Rosa Oliver, who in turn introduced the two women to the other UMA leaders, including Victoria Ocampo, Ana Rosa de Martínez Guerrero, and Susana Larguia.[110] The wealthy and well-connected Ocampo explicitly reached out to all groups in forming the UMA: "I do not speak on behalf of any political group, not even the communists, as some people have tried to assert, perhaps because I never treated communists as untouchables," she wrote.[111] Stevens would become close friends with Ocampo, and the help of UMA would prove influential in their work at the official Buenos Aires conference.

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[108] Marifran Carlson, *¡Feminismo!: The Woman's Movement in Argentina from Its Beginnings to Eva Perón* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1988), 172.
[109] Donna Guy, *Women Build the Welfare State: Performing Charity and Creating Rights in Argentina, 1880-1955* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 153-154.
[110] Vergara, *Memorias*, 142.

Early on at the conference, Stevens divided up the list of diplomats in attendance with Marta Vergara and UMA leader Susana Larguia. The three rallied broad support among the Latin American diplomats in favor of including women's rights in the conference's resolutions. For her part, Stevens worked on influencing Oswaldo Aranha, the Brazilian Ambassador to the United States, who was the head of the Brazilian delegation at Buenos Aires.[112]

Once Aranha agreed that the Brazilian delegation would introduce the topic of women's rights at the conference, Stevens explicitly adopted Brazil's position concerning equal rights for women and maternity leave as the Commission's own, just as she had done at the people's conference. In both her negotiations with Aranha and her dealings with the U.S. State Department, she argued that those who claimed the equal rights legislation would eliminate safeguards for working women were wrong, and that the Commission did not in fact oppose maternity legislation for working women. In a long and detailed memo to Herbert Feis, the economic advisor of the U.S. delegation at Buenos Aires, Stevens praised Brazil's maternity and social welfare provisions, as well as their equal rights measures for women workers.[113] Stevens encouraged Aranha to take the same position in garnering support among the U.S. delegates for the "women's rights" resolution.[114]

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[111] Quoted in Hammond, *The Women's Suffrage Movement and Feminism in Argentina*, 136.
[112] "Record of Main Events of the Trip to and from Buenos Aires and in Buenos Aires, November 7, 1936-January 13, 1937," Box 63, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

Despite these entreaties, the U.S. delegation made known their plans to oppose consideration of women's rights on the same grounds they had provided at the 1933 Montevideo conference -- that nations should decide such matters for themselves. In response, Stevens, Vergara, UMA leaders, and other Argentine feminists and affiliates of the IACW reminded the conference attendees that an international standard for women's rights would stand as a strong measure of democracy and peace against a rise of fascism. Elise F. Musser, the only woman on the U.S. delegation and a representative in the Democratic Party, publicly announced that her "private" views were to object to inclusion of this resolution. In response, Stevens and Vergara jointly drafted a statement that Vergara translated into Spanish and circulated for signatures.[115] Endorsed by Commission representatives Elena Mederos González of Cuba, Margarita Robles de Mendoza of Mexico, Marta Vergara, and a number of women's groups of various political affiliations, the declaration affirmed their desire to establish international standards in women's rights:

> This Conference sets itself up…[as a] model…for Europe to follow. Women all over Europe at the present time who are suffering under regimes hostile to the full development of the talents of women, look with hope to this Conference for a model of how to treaty all women as well as how to treat other bases of friction

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[113] "Memo for Dr. Feis," December 12, 1936, Box 62, Folder 1, Stevens Papers.
[114] "Points for the Ambassador," December 12, 1936, Box 62, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.
[115] John W. White, "Equal Rights Fight at Peak at Parley," *New York Times*, December 9, 1936, 19; "Statement of Mrs. Elise F. Musser," December 8, 1936; "Statement Made to *New York Times* by Doris Stevens, December 14th," Box 62, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

> within and between States. The women of South and Central America insist that this matter has ceased to be of purely national concern.[116]

Stevens also sent a statement to the *New York Times* explaining that their Pan-American feminist plea “pointed to the vast number of dictatorships which throttle all domestic efforts to strengthen democracy, not only in Europe, but unhappily on this Continent.”[117]

Rosalina Coehlo Lisboa de Miller, the Brazilian delegate, emphasized this connection between women’s rights, social democracy, and peace, when she introduced the women’s rights resolution at a meeting of the “Sixth Commission,” on Intellectual Cooperation and Moral Disarmament.[118] Miller acted on Aranha’s instructions, but was a self-described feminist. The resolution she introduced -- “To recommend to the governments of the American Republics the adoption of the most adequate legislation in order to recognize fully the rights and duties of citizenship” – was a weaker version of what Stevens had originally asked Aranha to support, which had included explicit reference to the Equal Rights Treaty. But given the controversy the women’s rights platform had evoked, Stevens believed that this resolution was the best that could be done.[119]

Over sixty Argentine women’s organizations, spearheaded by the UMA and the Argentine Association for Women’s Suffrage, forwarded a petition to the conference urging its signature. They argued that women, as mothers, were naturally peace makers, and thus needed the same political and civil rights that men had. Additionally, they argued that the way dictatorships were repealing women's rights internationally demanded the consideration of women's rights a key issue in any peace resolutions.[120] Stevens also enlisted the aid of a number of women's groups and individuals from the U.S. and internationally who had come out in support of women's equal status and of the Equal Rights Treaty, to send cables voicing their support to the conference and the State Department. In the end, the conference recommended the women's rights resolution that Miller had proposed and even gained the endorsement of the U.S. delegation.

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[116] “Statement of Hispanic Organization of Women and other Feminist Individual Leaders Concerning Women’s Rights in the Peace Conference,” Box 62, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[117] “Statement made to *New York Times* by Doris Stevens, December 14th,” Box 62, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[118] The other five Commissions were Organization of Peace, Neutrality, Limitation of Armaments, Juridical Problems, and Economic Problems.

[119] “Equal Rights at the Inter American Conference for Peace,” Box 62, Folder 16; “Verbatim Translation of Debate in Sixth Commission, Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1936,” Box 63, Folder 2, Stevens Papers.

Despite Vergara and Stevens's outward show of collaboration at the Buenos Aires conference, and their common belief in an international and anti-fascist Equal Rights feminism which had helped make this resolution possible, Vergara's memoirs and Stevens's personal correspondence reveal that cracks were already emerging in their "united front." While Vergara had been very enthusiastic about the people's conference, she was much less enthusiastic about taking part in the official Pan American conference, and she refused Stevens's request that she meet with the Chilean Minister of Foreign Miguel Cruchaga, who was an anti-Communist. Letters from Stevens to Mitchell and her friend Fanny Bunand-Sévastos, who lived in Russia at the time, reveal that Stevens discovered during the Buenos Aires conference that Vergara had officially joined the Communist party and thus felt Vergara's loyalties were now divided. She blamed Vergara for not co-drafting the women's rights resolution with Reppetto at the people's conference to begin with, to ensure the use of their strong wording. "Marta is whole-heartedly a communist now and it is hard to keep her attention on the position of women," Stevens wrote to Bunand-Sévastos. "A good deal of her time in B.A. was spent conferring with her party colleagues, many of whom were there for the Peoples' Conference."[121] Stevens had never been in favor of Communism, but having recently learned about Stalin's show trials of 1936, her distaste only increased.

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[120] "Declaración de la mujer Argentina," Box 62, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

In Vergara's memoirs, she likewise alluded to conflicts between herself and Stevens. She saw through Stevens's attempts to ally herself with leftist and Popular-Front supporters at the people's conference. Of Stevens's speech in Spanish at the people's conference, Vergara wrote, "It is possible that [Stevens] remembered some years of her youth in the then-glorious bohemian Greenwich Village [a time when Stevens was affiliated with quasi-socialist politics], but really now her presence in the Congress was like that of a member of the Salvation Army in a bar."[122] Vergara also noted the unequal power dynamics between Stevens, as IACW chairman from the United States, and herself in her memoirs; during their month-long stay in Buenos Aires, Vergara was explicit in pointing out that Stevens stayed at the opulent Hotel Alvear, where Franklin Roosevelt also stayed, while Vergara lodged at a small "casa de pension."[123]

Nonetheless, the two had successfully collaborated to include women's rights in the conference agenda and had knit strong connections with women's rights leaders in UMA in Argentina. When she and Doris Stevens said good-bye in Buenos Aires, Vergara recalled in her memoirs, "Doris, hard Doris, implacable Doris, said goodbye to me with tears in her eyes. Perhaps she felt how much I liked her and admired her, although we were in different camps."[124] Their friendship would continue for the rest of their lives.

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[121] Stevens to Fanny Bunand-Sévastos, April 19, 1937, Box 29, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[122] The Salvation Army had been influential in the temperance movement. Vergara, *Memorias*, 141.

[123] Ibid.

The activism evinced around Popular-Front Pan-American feminism that Stevens and Vergara had spearheaded with women in the UMA helped include women's rights in the Buenos Aires conference agendas, and also gave support to the national activism that saw a reversal of the legislative projects in both Chile and Argentina that threatened women's rights. In December, 1936, after the Buenos Aires conference, *La Mujer Nueva*, the organ for MEMCh announced that the Chilean government's plans to reduce working women's minimum wages to 20 percent less than men's had been overturned. They gave special credit to the support of the UMA in Argentina and the Inter-American Commission of Women. "The Inter-American Commission of Women, the prestigious organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C., that fights for the full recognition of women's political, civil, and economic rights…sent cables to the legislature asking for the removal of this inequality," *La Mujer Nueva* reported. And representatives like Victoria Ocampo from UMA had done the same.[125]

In Argentina, as well, UMA launched an ultimately successful campaign against the proposed changes to the civil code that would have reduced married women's status to that of minors. Early in 1937, Victoria Ocampo and UMA sent Vergara and MEMCh a message which Vergara reprinted in the pages of *La Mujer Nueva*. Amidst articles that announced MEMCh's support for the Spanish Civil War, for working women's maternity legislation, and equal pay for equal work, appeared a message from Victoria Ocampo affirming their sisterhood in a Popular-Front Pan-American feminism: “The interests of the woman are inextricably linked, and the legislation of one country usually has repercussions in another, which justifies our international fight for our rights.”[126]

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[124] Vergara, *Memorias*, 144.

[125] "Las empleadas tendrán salario minimo igual al hombre," *La Mujer Nueva*, December, 1936, 1.

In addition to strengthening the bonds between MEMCh, the UMA, and the IACW, the Buenos Aires conference crystallized a shift in the remit of the Inter-American Commission of Women, which Vergara influenced. In Buenos Aires, Stevens formally established the Commission’s advocacy for a broader notion of “equal rights” that included maternity legislation, and this new agenda would only continue to develop over the next few years. In 1938, NWP member and IACW activist Jane Norman Smith wrote and distributed a memo to many of their Latin American affiliates that Stevens titled “Maternity Legislation Not Incompatible with Equal Rights.”[127] At the 1938 Lima Conference, the Commission announced that it was undertaking a Western-Hemisphere-wide study of maternity legislation for working women.[128] The IACW’s new explicit concerns for working women had doubtless been influenced by the expansion of health, welfare, social security, and labor agencies created in the U.S.’s New Deal in the 1930s and by the international concerns over working women demonstrated in the ILO Conferences. But it had also been significantly guided by the demands of leftist Popular-Front feminists like Marta Vergara, who made their voices to forge a new agenda for Pan-American feminism heard. Influenced by feminists like Marta Vergara, the Inter-

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[126] “Hermoso ejemplo de solidaridad,” *La Mujer Nueva*, March, 1937, 6.

[127] Stevens to Smith, April 11, 1938, Box 90, Folder 17, Stevens Papers.

[128] The Commission inserted a study of maternity legislation throughout the Americas into their comprehensive research on women’s civil and political rights, reporting on “pregnancy, maternity and other social benefits to the end that better conditions for mothers, and especially working mothers be consummated in industry, commerce, and agriculture.” IACW report to Lima Conference, 1938, Stevens Papers.

American Commission of Women was becoming more transnational, reflecting to a greater extent the concerns of non-NWP feminists from outside the U.S. and the brand of social democracy they favored that combined individual sovereignty with social and economic justice.

Chapter 6
Popular-Front Pan-American Feminism and Women's Suffrage: 1936-1939

"I do not mean…that I have absolute faith in universal suffrage as the main spring of democracies today. It is well-known that up to date its practice has failed because of selfish interests and base passions which have intervened to nullify its efficiency and ruin its prestige as a democratic institution. But this does not mean that the principle on which it is based does not remain intact, far above the corruption of those who have exercised it up to the present, nor that women must cease to regard it as the first and last aim of our militant action in the feminist ranks, until the political progress of the people produces a new formula which may permit us to approach the ideal of giving the greatest possible participation to all individuals in the management of public affairs."

- Clara González speaking at the First meeting of the Inter-American Commission of Women in Havana, 1930[1]

"[Woman is involved in] the most important social struggles of our time: against the war, against imperialism, against fascism…she is in offices and schools, continues at home and takes to the street for demonstrations, organizes meetings, acts in revolutions and, finally, favors the sanctioning of leftist governments to support the proletarian class that has the mission of destroying the capitalist regime under which we live. And this modern woman is denied the vote under the pretext that she is incapable of exercising it!"

–Esther Chapa, Secretary of the Acción Política of the Frente Unico de Derechos de Mujeres speaking at the First National Congress of Women in Mexico, 1936.[2]

"What is the essence of our objective? The rule of equal opportunity to develop that which is within us, whether our talents may be meager or ample. What are the instruments through which our doctrine will shine? Men and women; human beings. For behind all laws, behind all States, are men and women, the ultimate units of society…Your renowned President Trujillo…took steps to inaugurate woman suffrage in your country. You must give him a hand…My prayer is that he will add to his already immensely impressive list of brilliant and integral achievements for your country, one more immortal act – the granting to you the right to elect and be elected, a fundamental right in democracy."

–Doris Stevens speaking on the radio 1938 to the Dominican Republic for Generalissimo Trujillo[3]

While Doris Stevens and Marta Vergara were forging a Popular-Front Pan-American feminism at the 1936 Buenos Aires peace conferences, thousands of miles away in Panama City, Clara González cheered them on. Recently, she had redoubled her support for the Inter-American Commission of Women as its Panamanian delegate and as the leader of the *Partido Nacional Feminista* (PNF). The PNF had just suffered a defeat in the Panamanian National Assembly over woman suffrage. González now hoped that Stevens and Vergara could secure international recognition of the importance of women's rights at the 1936 Buenos Aires Peace conferences, believing that such recognition might encourage progressive reform in the Americas.

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[1] Clara González, "Political Rights of Women," February, 1930, Box 84, Folder 7, Doris Stevens Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (henceforward Stevens Papers).

[2] Esther Chapa, *El Derecho de Voto para La Mujer* (Frente Unico pro Derechos de la Mujer, 1936), 4.

[3] Doris Stevens speech given and broadcast over Station H I N in the Palacio del Consejo Adminsitrativo of Santo Domingo, August 12, 1938, Box 66, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

Specifically, González hoped that such international recognition of women's rights would curb the growing tide of non-democratic power in Panama and forward her vision of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism. While for Marta Vergara, the crux of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism was social welfare measures for working women, such as maternity legislation, for Clara González at this time, it was women's right to vote. In Panama, woman suffrage was becoming a key goal in a broad, cross-class Popular-Front feminist movement cohering around the promotion of democracy both abroad and at home, in opposition to the nationalist and right-leaning *Acción Comunal* group holding executive power in Panama. Clara González had long considered herself both a socialist and a feminist. She believed in a broad feminist agenda that argued for upsetting the capitalist order at the same time it argued for political and civil rights for women internationally. While González held that citizenship consisted of more than suffrage, she also understood that citizenship and full political participation were incomplete without the vote.[4] For her, suffrage was not only a means to an end but as an integral aspect of the exercise of democracy. In the mid to late 1930s, with the historical conjuncture of an international Popular-Front movement emerging to knit together Communists, socialists, and liberal democrats in a democratic platform against fascism internationally; the rise of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Good Neighbor and New Deal policies; the growing appeal of fascism and non-democratic powers in Panama in the *Acción Comunal*; and recognition of international human rights and women's rights, specifically, as a counter to fascism, González and the PNF turned more than ever before to the Inter-American Commission of Women to promote women's suffrage. As a result, unprecedented transnational collaboration emerged between a cross-class and inter-racial group of Popular-Front Panamanian feminists, and U.S. women affiliated with the Inter-American Commission of Women, not only in its Washington D.C. headquarters but also in the much-contested U.S. outpost of the Canal Zone in Panama. Together, these women launched a vibrant Popular-Front Pan-American feminist movement in Panama.

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[4] See Chapter 2. González, trained as a lawyer whose dissertation was an exhaustive study of the juridical situation of women's civil, legal, penal, and political rights in Panama, believed that

Their movement, however, was short-lived. Despite their robust collaboration, the political instability and repression of the right-wing government, the *Acción Comunal*, did not make it a propitious time for woman suffrage, and their campaign ended in defeat. Further fracturing their alliance was the increasingly apparent lack of cohesion between the Popular-Front ideals that Clara González and many of her fellow Panamanian feminists held dear and the brand of U.S.-led international feminism that Doris Stevens and the IACW embodied. While Doris Stevens had strategically allied the Inter-American Commission of Women with the Popular Front's watchwords of freedom, democracy, and anti-fascism, she did not embrace the social democracy that Gonzalez did

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legal and political equality for women served as the fundamental lynchpin to all of their other rights.

with any ideological commitment or consistency, and her commitment to any politics aside from "equal rights" for women was thin. Although Stevens had portrayed herself as an ally of Communist feminist Marta Vergara and leftist Argentinian feminists during the 1936 Buenos Aires conferences from 1936 to 1938, Stevens herself was moving to the right. She objected to the Roosevelt administration, which she believed was undermining her leadership of the Commission; after Stalin's show trials of 1936 she increasingly abhorred the Soviet Union and Communism; and the brand of feminism she espoused focused so narrowly on "equal rights" that she was willing to ally herself with any groups that promoted it, even the pro-fascist Trujillo dictatorship. In 1938 at the Pan American Conference in Lima, the U.S. State Department and women reformers with whom they allied worked together to expose Stevens's frail commitment to the Popular-Front Pan-American feminism in their successful effort to remove her as the Commissioner of the IACW.

For a time, though, the powerful common belief in promoting international standards of women's equal rights linked González and Stevens together. Despite their other ideological differences, González utilized this link to forge a Popular-Front Pan-American feminist movement around woman suffrage in Panama from 1935 to 1938. In this period, Popular-Front Pan-American feminism both intersected and clashed with inter-American foreign policy.

The Popular Front itself varied according to national contexts; while it achieved power in government and implemented state policies in Chile, Spain, and France in these years, in Panama and other countries in the Americas, the Popular Front functioned as a social movement and an alliance that eventually turned into an electoral coalition of political parties. For many leftist feminists in the Americas, the Popular Front was a powerful international social movement that gave sustenance to their women's rights goals. In Panama and in Mexico, specifically, its coalition provided a critical backdrop to woman suffrage and intersected with vibrant feminist movements. While historians have examined a number of Popular-Front suffrage movements in their national contexts -- Clara González's biographer Yolando Marco Serra, for instance, has called the suffrage campaign in Panama from 1936 to 1938 evidence of the creation of a "women's popular front" – this chapter seeks to put them into the international and Pan-American context in which the actors of these movements understood themselves as operating.[5] By no means were all woman suffrage movements in the Americas associated with the international Popular Front, nor did the left uniformly support woman suffrage. By 1936, in the Americas, female suffrage had been attained in the United States (1920), Ecuador (1929), Brazil (1932), Uruguay (1932), and Cuba (1934) due to a wide array of political forces, nationally and internationally. As Donna Guy has pointed out, "women in Latin America have received the vote from the hands of authoritarian leaders as well as through feminist campaigns and democratic processes." Nonetheless, during this time, a powerful Popular-Front Pan-American feminist movement that crossed national borders and that was driven by Latin American feminists, cohered around women's right to vote.[6]

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[5] Yolanda Marco Serra, *Clara González de Behringer: Biografía* (Panamá: Edición Hans Roeder, 2007), 118-119. On the Popular Front suffrage movement in Mexico see Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). On the Popular Front and suffrage in Chile, see Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[6] Donna Guy writes: "While suffrage and political activism offer an important glimpse into relationships between women and the state, women in Latin America have received the vote from the hands of authoritarian leaders as well as through feminist campaigns and democratic processes. During parts of the twentieth century electoral fraud and the infrequency of elections

The existence of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism shaped by Latin American feminists like Clara González and Marta Vergara has largely been overlooked in a history of international feminism that has rarely taken as its subjects Latin American actors. It has been overlooked in the history of the Inter-American Commission of Women, generally understood to be a product of U.S. feminist leadership and situated in the context of the internecine U.S. feminist conflict over "equal rights" versus protective legislation.[7] Understanding the significance of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism sheds new light on the importance that other political debates – especially debates about fascism versus social democracy – had to the fate of the Inter-American Commission of Women and to Pan-American feminism more broadly.

Clara González and Panamanian Feminism: 1930-1936

In 1930, after three years of living and studying in the United States, Clara González returned to Panama somewhat disenchanted about the prospects for a Pan-American feminist movement. No one had been more idealistic about its possibilities than she, when, in 1926, she had partnered with Ofelia Domínguez Navarro at the *Congreso de Mujeres* in Panama, and proposed a broad, socialist, anti-imperialist, and multi-lateral Pan-American feminism.[8] In 1928, González had wanted to implement this vision when she was appointed, with much fanfare, to become one of the first delegates

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in many countries made suffrage a moot point and often obscured the role of political parties." Donna J. Guy, *White Slavery and Mothers Alive and Dead: The Troubled Meeting of Sex, Gender, Public Health, and Progress in Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 2.

[7] Historians have tended to explain the demise of the IACW as entirely a result of pressure from U.S. female social reformers who opposed the "equal rights" agenda of the IACW and the National Woman's Party.

[8] See Chapter 2.

to the Inter-American Commission of Women.[9] But, despite her initially high hopes for the group, her work at the IACW headquarters in Washington, D.C. while studying law and penal institutions for women and children at NYU, disappointed her. Doris Stevens's hegemonic leadership and narrow vision for the Commission -- for equal civil and political rights for women, only – was not the multi-lateral Pan-American feminist movement González and Domínguez had outlined in 1926. At the 1930 Havana conference, in consul with Domínguez and Chilean feminist Aida Parada, González shared her concerns about the hegemony of Doris Stevens over Latin American women and also about the narrowness of the Commission's goals.

The Great Depression made González an even sharper critic of capitalism as well as of the liberal feminism of the Inter-American Commission of Women. While González earnestly believed in the civil and political equality that the Equal Rights Treaties promised, she also believed that such feminist goals like equal rights could not be siphoned off from broader and more revolutionary visions of change – of critiquing capitalism and integrating working women into society in a more coherent and effective way. In correspondence after the 1930 Havana conference, she wrote to Domínguez about her doubts that the Inter-American Commission of Women could reach working women. And after she returned to Panama in 1930, while she did not give up her position as the Inter-American Commission of Women's Panamanian delegate, her communications with Stevens became intermittent. She focused her efforts more on national feminist issues.[10]

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[9] See Chapter 3. "Fue Designada Una Panameña para la Unión Pan-Americana," *Diario de la Marina* (Habana), July 17, 1928; "Panama's One Woman Laywer is Here on Official Mission," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), July 17, 1928; "Takes Up Latin Legal Work," *Washington Times*, July 17, 1928; "Visiting Here," *Washington Daily News*, July 17, 1928; "Only Woman Lawyer in Panama Working to Get Suffrage There," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 20, 1928; "Panama Has 27-Year-Old Portia," *The Sun* (Baltimore), July 22, 1928; "Miss González Arrives; Mrs. Belmont Greets Commission," *Equal Rights*, July 28, 1928, 199; "La Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres labora por la Igualdad Civil y Política de la Mujer," *La Estrella de Panamá* (Panama) July 29, 1928.

In Panama, González immediately set about reorganizing the feminist group she had founded there seven years earlier – the *Partido Nacional Feminista* (PNF) – and shaping it into the type organization the IACW had not been – one that addressed the concerns of working women. The right of women to vote remained at the top of its demands, but the PNF's goal of woman's suffrage was connected to a broader social change they envisioned for reforming capitalism and creating greater social equality and welfare for all, especially women and children.[11] The group's core members remained an urban group of middle-class teachers, including Otilia Arosemena de Tejeira, Élida Campodónico de Crespo (who in 1935 also became a lawyer), and Georgina Jiménez, with whom González formed the directing board of the PNF. Their members also grew in the 1930s to include women from the working-class sectors even throughout more rural parts of the country, as well.

The reorganization of the PNF, and their demands for working women's inclusion in the political process in Panama occurred alongside a much broader period of political awakening evoked by the Great Depression's social and economic turmoil, and the search for new solutions to the country's problems. The period saw the development of the Socialist and Communist parties of Panama, founded in April and September, 1930, respectively. Students, workers, and professionals began to engage in new forms of political activism and demands for national sovereignty in Panama, and against U.S. hegemony.

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[10] See Chapter 3.
[11] Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 104.

Historians have termed this period of political awakening the “Generation of ‘31”; it culminated in the nation’s first armed *golpe de estado* in 1931. The nationalist group, the *Acción Comunal* led the coup, ousting the elite, pro-United States administration of Florencio Arosemena, and bringing to power Harmodio Arias, president from 1932 to 1936. Formed in 1923 by industrialist and U.S.-educated brothers Arnulfo and Harmodio Arias, the *Acción Comunal* consisted mostly of middle-class Panamanians who deeply resented U.S. imperialism and the U.S.-controlled oligarchy of presidents who had led Panama since 1903. They demanded “Panama for Panamanians,” and opposed all foreign presence on the island, including North Americans who held the positions of power at schools, hospitals, and state bureaucracy, especially in the Canal Zone, as well as West Indian laborers and more recent Chinese immigrants who worked as merchants in small commerce.[12] Their nationalist arguments gained greater influence in the face of rising unemployment and poverty of the Great Depression, which especially hit Panama’s predominantly service-sector economy profoundly. Its promises of relief to farmers, new jobs and higher pay for workers, a republican government, and “regeneration” of democracy, inspired widespread hopes which helped secure the popular support necessary for the 1931 coup.

In Panama, however, as in many other Latin American countries, the aftermath of the Great Depression saw a shift toward stronger forms of authoritarian control, and soon the actual regime under Harmodio Arias began to resemble those of Panama’s earlier pro-

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[12] Peter A. Szok, *“La última gaviota:” Liberalism and Nostalgia in Early Twentieth-Century Panama* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 111-112.

U.S. elite family regimes.[13] In order to quell the opposition groups that quickly arose to confront Arias, the president and *Acción Comunal* leaders developed a growing national police force and paramilitary groups in the absence of U.S. military officers. These groups established a large presence in the governing of Panama and the subduing of any would-be opponents they deemed subversive.[14] The president's use of the police and curtailing of democracy became particularly apparent during the 1932 renters' strike, in which Arias sent in the National Police to end the uprising, suspended the strikers' constitutional rights, and arrested their leaders.[15] This event convinced many workers, increasingly represented by the Sociality Party and also the Communist Party, who had organized the strike, that Arias had "little vested interest in the success of" the working-class.[16]

Although the PNF was an autonomous group that was without any official links to a political party, a number of PNF members were affiliates of or sympathetic to the Socialist and Communist parties.[17] In the early 1930s, González, an advocate of the Socialist Party, spoke out on behalf of the PNF at a worker's congress, describing women and children "as key elements in the 'Panamanian proletariat's effort to lay the foundations for…a united front in their fight against the ruthless exploitation being inflicted by capital."[18] González and other PNF leaders also participated in the 1932 renters' strike, and increasingly were deeply disturbed by the president's use of force and paramilitary organizations against political opposition and against the mass organizations of the Socialist and Communist parties, and the limitations of citizens' rights. Giving a speech at the National Institute in 1932, where González taught classes on political economy and law, she implicitly critiqued the *Acción Comunal* regime, explaining that Panama needed a social democracy, one "attuned to the real needs of modern life, which is essentially a life of relationships, of interdependence, of solidarity, of mutual aid, of social action, and of love..."[19]

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[13] Thomas L. Pearcy, *We Answer Only to God: Politics and the Military in Panama, 1903-1947* (Albuqurque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 69; David Green, *The Containment of Latin America: A History of the Myths and Realities of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 12.

[14] The president re-armed police whose rifles had earlier been confiscated by the U.S. government.

[15] Pearcy, *We Answer Only to God*, 73.

[16] Ibid., 72, 58-59. The strike was provoked after an influx of impoverished workers from around the Canal Zone and rural areas had flocked to the city, aggravated already bleak working and living conditions. Poor workers, including West Indian workers from the Canal Zone, struck in 1932 in a tenement strike. While Harmodio Arias himself had engaged in a similar renters' strike in 1925 and had, at that time, sided with the urban poor, and opposed the U.S.-led oligarchy in Panama, this time he did not.

[17] One of the more active PNF members included the wife of the leader of the Communist Party in Panama. Serra, "Ser ciudadana en Panamá en la década de 1930," *Un Siglo de Luchas Femeninas en América Latina*, ed., Eugenia Rodríguez Sáenz (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2002), 77.

The president's refusal to make any concessions for women's rights only further confirmed the *Acción Comunal*'s lack of commitment to the social democratic vision the PNF upheld. Although Arias and the *Acción Comunal* had included the right of women to vote in their political platform, in 1932, Arias ignored a plea the PNF made for women's suffrage. Over the four years of his term, as González would later explain,

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[18] Serra, "Ser ciudadana en Panamá en la década de 1930," 108.

[19] Quote from Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 109. I find Ira Katznelson's definition of "social democracy" useful: "By social democracy…I mean the attempts by labor and socialist movements in Western capitalist democracies to work through their electoral and representational political systems to achieve two principal goals: first, the effect interventions in markets that in the short run mitigate unequal distributional patterns, in the medium run promote more basic public controls over markets, and in the long run bring about a shift in social organization from capitalism to socialism; and second, to secure the solidarity of their working-class base while reaching out for the allies they need to achieve majorities in elections and legislatures.'" Ira Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order: 1930-1980*, ed., Steven Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 186.

Arias did “absolutely nothing” for women’s rights, and González believed the PNF owed him “nothing more than resentment.”[20]

Lack of support for the *Acción Comunal* increased in the PNF ranks as their affiliation with the Socialist and Communist parties in Panama grew in the context of the rise of fascism in Europe. As news spread of Mussolini’s and Hitler’s ascensions to power and their restrictions on the rights of women, especially, many in Panama began to draw similarities between the nationalist *Acción Comunal* and the fascism on the rise in Europe – seeing in both powerful authoritarian control and anti-feminist stances. These similarities would become even more pronounced as the 1930s wore on, and as the leaders of the *Acción Comunal* who assumed the presidency openly admired Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany.[21]

While informed by international currents, the variant of the Popular Front that emerged in Panama was also autochthonous. As early as 1934, even before the official establishment of a Popular Front by the Comintern congress in August 1935, which would unite mass organizations against fascism, a proto-Popular Front was forming in Panama in opposition to the *Acción Comunal*.[22] It united middle-class reformers with “vast sectors of the laboring classes under the leadership of the former” and helped shape meanings of citizenship. The ideals that brought this diverse group of Socialists,

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[20] González to Stevens, May 13, 1935, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[21] Arnulfo Arias, co-founder of the *Acción Comunal*, made known his admiration for Italy and Germany while he was Minister of Foreign Relations of Panama in the mid to late 1930s; he assumed the presidency from 1940 to 1941 and 1949 to 1951.

[22] Find out when the group assumed the name the “Frente Popular;” the Popular Front (composed of liberals, socialists, and communists) and the *Coalición Nacional Revolucionaria* (composed of nationalists in the National Revolutionary party, some in the National Liberal party, and members of the *Acción Comunal*). In 1939 the “Frente Popular” bloc would run against the Accion Comunal leaders in the Panamanian presidential election.

Communists, and liberal democrats together in Panama were their opposition to the authoritarianism of the *Acción Comunal*, belief in the need of social democracy in Panama, opposition to U.S. imperialism, and, demand for women's right to vote. Among the Communist and Socialist parties, the struggle for social democracy in Panama and for woman suffrage intertwined and advanced each other, in a period in which "the distinctions between liberal, individual rights and identity-based, collective rights" blurred.[23] During this period, the labor movement and the Communist and Socialist parties became the most receptive to women's rights goals. Demetrio Porras, the leader of the Socialist Party in Panama, was one of the more outspoken supporters of women's right to vote.

Thus, in 1935, armed with this new support, González believed it a propitious moment to launch a new campaign around woman suffrage in Panama. This decision also prompted González to rekindle her connection with Doris Stevens and the Inter-American Commission of Women. The IACW's Equal Rights Treaties, introduced to the world at the 1933 Montevideo Conference, were being taken up by leftist feminists in Europe and the Americas as safeguards against fascism.[24] Despite her ideological differences with Stevens, González believed that the PNF's affiliation with the IACW could tangibly aid the suffrage campaign in Panama. In 1935 González wrote to Stevens, apologizing for her "sporadic communication," and explaining that her health had not been good, but sending her "personal affection" as well as her "sincere adhesion to the ideals that you defend."[25]

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[23] As Karin Rosemblatt had explained of the Popular Front in Chile, "…the importance of suffrage could not be overlooked by popular-front supporters. After all, the popular fronts' control of the executive branch and their ability to carry out reforms depended on their winning elections, and popular-front supporters generally saw voting rights as a valuable aspect of citizenship." Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises*, 242.

[24] See Chapter 5.

New collaborations that emerged in 1935 between the PNF and the Inter-American Commission of Women reflected the anti-fascist, "equal rights" feminism that newly bound them together. In March, 1935, U.S. NWP member and IACW affiliate Mary Winsor traveled through Panama and spoke about the value of cultivating women's suffrage and how women under dictatorships were "rapidly losing their rights."[26] When, in July, 1935, Doris Stevens sent a letter to the leaders of the PNF, as requested by González in order to stir flagging hopes of some PNF members, Stevens asserted that the rise of fascism brought great urgency to their women's rights goals and collaboration: "It is imperative that we be more active and vigilant than ever before. Abroad we see multiple instances of ruthlessness in crushing the talents and aspirations of women. We must see to it that such a state of affairs can not happen over here." Addressing PNF leaders *Elida* Campodónico de *Crespo*, Otilia Arosemena de Tejeira, and others, by name, Stevens pledged the PNF the "gratitude…solidarity and fraternity" of the IACW, and ended her note with a rousing call to a "united front of women…with love and high hopes for, at least, political equality in Panama this year!"[27]

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[25] González to Stevens, May 13, 1935, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[26] Ibid.; "Feminist Leader is Due Saturday for Panama Stay," *Star and Herald* (Panama), February 28, 1935; Quote from "Feminist Party Hears Mary Winsor Urge Ratification of Nation. Bill," *Star and Herald* (Panama), March 3, 1935.
[27] Doris Stevens and the Office of the Inter American Commission of Women to the Partido Nacional Feminista de Panama, July 23, 1935, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers. She also connected the 1933 Montevideo Equal Rights Treaty to the promise of liberal democracy and equality for women internationally and explained that governments would not act on these decrees unless "enlightened women in each republic show that they insist upon this promise being carried out."

González hoped that this new "united front" of collaboration with the Inter-American Commission of Women would lend legitimacy to their national campaign around suffrage. As González explained to Stevens, she hoped that Stevens's letter would "reinforce the work of the party, which is very slow, even though it spans much of the interior of the country" and that Mary Winsor's visit and Stevens's letter could "be a pretext" for "new work in the feminist camp" in Panama.[28]

Throughout their new suffrage struggle, González and the PNF publicly invoked the international support of the Inter-American Commission of Women, as a defense of the democratic value of woman suffrage. They utilized the IACW support strongly during their campaign for women's access to voter registration cards. In 1935, to launch their new campaign, González, Otilia Arosemena de Tejeira and *Elida* Campodónico de *Crespo,* sought to obtain from the government the new identification cards they had introduced that would allow male citizens in Panama to register to vote for the 1936 election. One of the rationales of the PNF for suffrage was that it was constitutionally guaranteed under Article 11, which declared "*ciudadanos*" (citizens) were eligible to vote. The modifier "*varones*" ("male") had been eliminated in 1930, and the PNF argued that although "*ciudadanos*" was a masculine noun, it should be interpreted as gender-neutral. By this logic, women were part of the citizenry already and had a right to obtain their identification cards for citizenship. However, the Secretary of the Government, Héctor Valdés, turned down González, Arosemena, and Campodónico, explaining that "en Panamá no hay ciudadanas sino ciudadanos" ("In Panama, there are not female citizens, but rather male citizens") and expounding upon his personal opposition to political rights for women. In protest, González, de Crespo, and de Tejeira sent a formal petition to the government which was never answered, and González published an open letter to all of the political parties in Panama in the president's own newspaper *El Panamá América*.

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[28] González to Stevens, May 13, 1935, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

González's "Carta Abierta," argued for suffrage as a basic part of the democratic process and repeatedly invoked the affiliation of the PNF with the IACW.[29] She pointed out the fundamental inconsistency between the fact that almost all of the many political parties with representation in the National Assembly - the *Partido Liberal Unido*, *Liberal Nacional*, *Coalición Revolucionaria*, *Liberal Doctrinario*, *Liberal Renovador*, *Liberal Progresivo*, *Conservador*, *Socialista Marxista*, *Acción Comunal* y *Comunista* – had officially endorsed the right of women to vote. Yet, none of the parties, with the exception of those on the left, González explained, were putting any action behind their words. She distinguished "the parties of the left," for whom "juridical equality of men and women" was so ingrained in their ideology that it brooked no debate. In her letter's conclusion, González referred to her status as "official representative of an international organization the Inter-American Commission of Women that fights for complete equality of men and women," and made three exhortations: first, that the Secretary of the Government grant identity cards to women who requested them; second, that the National Jury of Elections declare its agreement with the inclusion of women in the citizenry, granting full rights to vote for the candidate of their choosing in the upcoming election; and third, that the Minister of Foreign Relations instruct the Panamanian delegate to the upcoming ILO Conference in Santiago not to agree to any convention that contains discriminations against the woman worker.[30] In her last plea, she again underscored her affiliation with the IACW, whose Chilean representative Marta Vergara was taking a stand for women's equal rights at the ILO conference in Santiago.

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[29] González to Stevens, January 8, 1936, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

Although González's letter did not change the administration's decision to withhold identity cards from women, it may have helped spark greater support for suffrage among some deputies in Panama's National Assembly. The country's corrupt presidential elections underlined even more the connections between lack of democracy for women and lack of democracy in Panama more generally. In June, 1936, Harmodio and Arnulfo Arias shepherded into power Harmodio Arias's own minister of foreign affairs, Juan Demóstenes Arosemena Barreati, who assumed the presidency from 1936 to 1939. The elections were widely viewed as corrupt; as Pearcy explains, "on election day the administration distributed duplicate cédulas (voter registration cards), destroyed ballot boxes, detailed opposing members of the electoral board, and concocted ghost votes…"[31]

The Popular Front forming in Panama protested these elections vigorously.[32] Woman suffrage became part of these wider debates over democracy between the Popular-Front bloc and the *Acción Comunal* leadership. Following Arosemena's election, the liberal deputy Alfredo Alemán introduced a petition for women's suffrage to the National Assembly of Panama in October, 1936. The PNF had encouraged Alemán's actions, and González described him to Stevens as "the active leader of the feminist bloc" in Congress.[33] Woman suffrage became the subject of week-long public discussions in which women from the PNF and universities filled the halls of the National Assembly to listen and show their support.[34]

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[30] Clara González, "Carta Abierta Dirigida a Todos los Jefes de los P. Politicos" *El Panamá América*, December 27, 1935.

[31] Pearcy, *We Answer Only to God*, 77.

[32] Increasing violence between them broke out daily, not only in the streets, but in institutions, and especially around the 1936 election. The violence was so extreme, González's biographer explains, that Clara González herself owned a small gun which she carried with her in her purse for self-defense. Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 112.

In the National Assembly discussions, the Popular Front became a critical backdrop for the suffrage battle. The liberal and socialist deputies who argued in favor of woman's suffrage defended it as part of an "inclusive democracy;" Panama's democracy would only truly represent the will of the people if women were included in the electorate. The Socialist deputy Demetrio Porras gave a long speech in which his allegiance with the Popular Front was made explicit. He outlined Marxist views on equality especially for working-class women and drew on the philosophy of German social democrat and feminist August Bebel in defense of women's suffrage. He also referred to the participation of women in the defense of the Second Spanish Republic in the Spanish Civil War as evidence of women's abilities to engage in political processes, and he folded the right of women's suffrage into the broader, class-based Popular-Front fight for a democratic and anti-fascist society. The debate of the moment, he explained, was "not about sex, nor race, the problem of today is the class fight, the fight between the exploited and the exploiters, between capitalism and the proletariat, between the bourgeois and their lackeys and workers." He also likened those who seemed to be in favor of restricting the right of suffrage to fascists in Europe.[35]

Only a few deputies spoke against the measure, providing objections that had long been in circulation, and that increasingly seemed outdated given women's increasing entry into the workplace: that women were not sufficiently "prepared" to vote and that women's political participation would destroy the home and the political order. One of the most oft-cited reasons for excluding women from the electorate historically had been that they would be "too conservative" and vote with the Catholic clergy. Although no deputies cited this reason in the proceedings, a liberal deputy and supporter of woman suffrage, Sergio González, suggested that affiliation of the suffrage movement with the ideals of the Popular Front was deeply threatening to groups in power: "I think the fear about the women's vote is not so much about the clergy," he announced, "as it is about the ideas of the left."[36]

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[33] Telegram from González to Stevens, October 14, 1936, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[34] González to Stevens, undated letter [December, 1936], Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[35] Serra, "Ser ciudadana en Panamá," 80-81.

Despite the strong show of support for women's suffrage in the National Assembly discussions, the proposal was defeated narrowly. Although on October 15, after four hours of debates, the vote on women's suffrage resulted in a 16 to 16 tie, the next morning, after more speeches, a second vote resulted in 7 votes in favor and 16 opposed. Deputies who had initially voted in favor of the bill were absent on the second day of the voting.[37] González believed that Harmodio Arias had utilized political suasion and threats to influence deputies to refrain from voting, and that the National Assembly was the "rubber stamp" of the executive.[38] This was a major blow to the PNF. The Chamber of Deputies would not meet again until September 1938, when González planned for it to be reintroduced, and around which time she expected to launch a new fight. The PNF, though comforted by the strong show of support they had received at the National Assembly, were deeply disappointed by the outcome. Clara González was promised the secretaryship of a committee that the Chamber of Deputies had authorized to study legislation and propose reforms for the next assembly which would occur in 1938, and decided that she and the PNF would redouble their efforts for the 1938 assembly.

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[36] Quote from Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 114; Serra, "Ser ciudadana en Panamá," 80-82.

[37] Serra, "Ser ciudadana en Panamá," 82-83.

[38] There are conflicting accounts of the votes; González wrote to Stevens that the bill defeated by only one vote in the end, but both Serra and newspaper articles from the time report the 16 to 7 vote. Serra, "Ser ciudadana en Panamá," 82-83; "El sufragio para la mujer fue negado ayer en la Cámara por 16 votos a 7," *La Estrella de Panamá*, October 17, 1936. Evelyn Rigby Moore to Stevens, October 3, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5; González to Stevens, undated letter [December, 1936], Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers; Eduardo, "Interesting If True," *Panama American*, June 13, 1938.

Throughout these events, González kept Doris Stevens informed, telling her they had "made a beautiful suffrage battle," and Stevens sent a missive to the deputy Alemán to show the IACW's support.[39] González wrote to Stevens about the suffrage defeat in Panama on the eve of Stevens's trip to Buenos Aires for the peace conferences with Marta Vergara and urged her to make a plea there for women's political equality. Writing to Stevens with advice on her speech at the official peace conference, González told her, "What has most sustained the enemies [of women's suffrage] is that the women's vote hasn't produced any…favorable results for politics in general…It would be good if your speech discusses this."[40] González's reliance on the Commission for support for women's suffrage would only increase with the rise of government repression over the next few years.

Popular-Front Pan-American Feminism in Panama, 1936-1938

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[39] González to Stevens, undated [December, 1936]; Stevens to Honorable Alfredo Alemán, October 15, 1936, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[40] González to Stevens, undated [December, 1936], Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

After 1936, as links between the forces in power in Panama and European fascism continued to grow, and as Popular-Front opposition to the government increased, the PNF did not abate in their hopes for a woman's suffrage campaign. Nor did they abate in their contact with the Inter-American Commission of Women. In fact, in this climate, the PNF and other Panamanian feminist groups forged a new and strong Popular-Front Pan-American feminist mobilization around women's suffrage not only with IACW chairman Doris Stevens, but also, unprecedentedly, with U.S. women living in the Canal Zone who newly affiliated with the Commission. Facilitating these connections was the fact that in the face of the increasingly non-democratic government in power in Panama, the new liberal New Deal and Good Neighbor policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt appeared more salubrious and democratic. This shift, combined with the broader Popular-Front ideal of defending western democracies, helped to blunt the anti-imperialist politics of leftist groups in Panama. It also made possible the new collaborations between leftist, working-class, Panamanian feminists, even those of color, and U.S. women in the Canal Zone. These women united around the democratic right of women to vote in Panama, despite their other ideological differences.[41]

Reaching out to U.S. women also appeared to González as more vital than ever at a time when she was facing a number of deeply disappointing setbacks. The politics of the Popular Front played out on a very personal level for Clara González, whose movements were being watched by the government. After the 1936 suffrage defeat, the new presidency of Juan Demóstenes Arosemena saw an increase in the reprisals against the Popular Front, the PNF, and Clara González herself. During this time, the *Accíon Comunal* in power became the "advance guard of extreme nationalism in Panama" that "would ultimately lead to the triumph of nazism-fascism" in later years.[42] Connections between the *Acción Comunal* and European fascism were made more concrete at this time when Arnulfo Arias, who served as Arosemena's foreign ambassador to a number of European countries, took well-publicized trips to Germany where he openly sympathized with the Hitler regime. Although Arosemena's party line was that his government would not tolerate Communism or Fascism in his country, during this time, according to González's biographer, "the Popular Front very clearly had the idea that Arnulfo Arias was the Panamanian version of European fascism and that his arrival to power meant the disappearance of democracy."[43] Increasing hostilities and open violence broke out regularly between the "Frente Popular" and the newly-named *Coalición Nacional Revolucionaria* bloc, composed of members of the National Revolutionary party, National Liberal party, and *Acción Comunal*.

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[41] Several key individuals fostered these new connections, including Panamanian feminists Clara González, Otilia de Tejeira, and Felicia Santizo; and U.S. Canal Zone denizens like Evelyn Rigby Moore, Emeline McGraner, and Ruth Williams. The friendship that formed between Clara González and Evelyn Rigby Moore in 1937 helped foster a wide and unusual collaboration of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism over the next two years.

In this climate González feared for her personal safety so much that she even began to carry a handgun in her purse.[44] In 1936, she also began making plans to travel to Mexico, where, under the revolutionary government of Lázaro Cárdenas, exiles from many countries in Latin America flocked, and where there was an active Popular-Front woman suffrage campaign.[45] However, news of González's trip reached President

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[42] Jules Dubois, *Danger Over Panama* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1964), 112.
[43] "Arosemena Warns Foes," *New York Times*, March 10, 1937, p. 11; "Panama to Fight 'Isms,'" *New York Times*, November 3, 1937, p. 4; Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 124.
[44] Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 113.
[45] González to Stevens, February 2, 1937, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

Arosemena, who believed she intended “to make contacts with the Bolsheviks” in Mexico. In retaliation, just before González planned to leave Panama, Arosemena announced his removal of her as secretary of the committee the Chamber of Deputies had authorized to study legislation and propose reforms for the 1938 assembly. He replaced her with the brother of the Secretary of the Government.[46]

Around the same time, the Arosemena administration dealt another blow to González by curtailing her hours of work at the National Institute. She believed she received this punishment because of her support of Diogenes de la Rosa, a young trade union leader and Trotskyist who in 1934 had established the Partido Obrero Marxista-Leninista and who was a energetic leader in the Popular Front.[47] In 1937 the Panamanian government arrested de la Rosa on charges of conspiracy against the government for giving aid and shelter to leftist Venezuelan refugees in exile from the dictatorship there. Clara González and a number of other friends of de la Rosa helped pay his bond which freed him from jail. In turn, the Panamanian government reduced González’s teaching hours by half at the National Institute, which also resulted in halving her salary. This setback, combined with her removal of the secretaryship of the Congressional committee, deeply disturbed González, who now feared losing her job entirely if she travelled to Mexico. González thus refrained from taking the trip, although she did begin to secretly make plans to leave for Spain to work in the defense of the Spanish Republic in the Civil War.[48]

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[46] Evelyn Rigby Moore to Doris Stevens, October 3, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[47] In 1935 this party had merged with the Socialist Party of Panama in 1935. Robert Jackson Alexander, *International Trotskyism, 1929-1985: A Documented Analysis of the Movement*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 636.
[48] Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 125.

In this bleak climate of surveillance and repression, the Inter-American Commission of Women appeared to González even more as an international haven and a bastion of support. However, she also faced the practical problem of communicating freely with Doris Stevens at this time, since González believed they were intercepting her mail and telegrams to the United States. She did not dare write to Stevens directly about the personal setbacks she had faced from the government.[49]

Thus, in the fall of 1937, when Clara González received a letter from a young U.S. woman from the Canal Zone, Evelyn Rigby Moore, explaining she had received González's address from Doris Stevens and wanted to work with the Inter-American Commission of Women to help the woman suffrage movement in Panama, González was eager to meet with her. When the two women met in October, 1937, González confided in Moore the many setbacks she had faced, asking her to convey the information to Doris Stevens, which Moore did. Together, González and Moore discussed forming a new feminist movement, one that would draw on the support of the Inter-American Commission of Women, and that would enlist collaborations of women from Panama and the Canal Zone, in a broad woman suffrage campaign. After their meeting, which lasted several hours, Moore wrote to Stevens of her deep respect for González, "I cannot begin to express my admiration for Clara for having taken the stand she has in this atmosphere of apathy and worse than indifference, almost contempt."[50]

Evelyn Rigby Moore's sensitivity to González's personal plight no doubt fostered González's eagerness to confide in her, as did Moore's fluency in Spanish, her feminist interests and civic engagement, and her understanding of the fraught political climates both in Panama and between Panama and the Canal Zone. All of these characteristics made Moore somewhat unique among the population of white, middle-class U.S. wives of skilled male Canal workers who lived in the Canal Zone.[51]

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[49] González to Stevens, January 8, 1936, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[50] Moore to Stevens, October 3, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

The 553-square mile Canal Zone, an area consisting of the Panama Canal and a five-mile border on either side, had been created during the construction of the Panama Canal by the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty. That treaty granted to the United States "all the rights, power, and authority within the zone…which the United States would possess and exercise if it were the sovereign of the territory," in perpetuity.[52] Populated by U.S. male workers for the Panama Canal Company and their families and the West Indian laborers on the Canal, the Zone was marked by racial segregation akin to the Jim Crow South, and had long been a site of contest and struggle, both internally, as well as with Panama. Although in 1936, the Roosevelt and Arosemena Administrations negotiated the Hull-Alfaro Treaty which formally ended Panama's status as a U.S. protectorate and rescinded the right of U.S. intervention, tensions between Panama and the Canal Zone remained strong.

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[51] Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders: Making America's Empire at the Panama Canal* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009) provides a rich portrait of the community of women in the Canal Zone during the building of the Panama Canal. "By 1912 thousands of white American housewives had taken passage to the Canal Zone, accompanied by thousands more of their sons and daughters. The Canal Zone census of that year found nearly eighteen hundred married white women who had been born in the United States. The vast majority had moved to the Zone to provide a home for their husbands. Some were wives of senior officials…engineers, and white-collar employees, but most were wives of machinists, railroad engineers, steam-shovel men, and other skilled workers." (229)

[52] In 1907 the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that the territory of the Canal Zone belonged to the United States and that the U.S. government did have the right to exercise its power there and build the canal." Greene, *The Canal Builders*, 270-271.

Born in Chicago in 1900, Evelyn Cattron Rigby had studied social science and graduated from Goucher College in 1923.[53] After graduation, on a visit to the Canal Zone with her mother and father, who was a U.S. Colonel, she had met and married Lewis B. Moore, a civil engineer who worked for the U.S. government on the Panama Canal.[54] Aside from two years in Colombia from 1927 to 1929, Moore and her husband had lived with their two sons in Balboa, the Canal Zone town built by the United States in 1919 which served as the headquarters of its canal operations. In 1925 Moore had founded the College Club of the Canal Zone, a civic group of Canal Zone women, that modeled itself after the American Association of University Women though not officially affiliated with that group.[55] Moore was also a journalist, writing for various publications, including the newspaper the *Panama American*, and magazine *Three Americas* and, in 1938, she published the first English-language volume of translated Panamanian fiction.[56]

While most Canal Zone women remained isolated from the realities of life in the Republic of Panama, their lives focused on their homes and neighborhoods, Moore was unique in her efforts to engage with Panama. While at Goucher, she had studied with the progressive historian of Latin America and Pan-American feminist Mary Wilhelmine Williams, and she understood the historical legacy of tensions between the Canal Zone and Panama. She self-consciously viewed herself as a bridge between Panama and the Canal Zone and attempted, through her educational, journalist, and club work, to foster "better understanding between Panama and the Canal Zone."[57]

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[53] At Goucher College, Moore took classes from Mary Wilhelmine Williams, a pacifist and feminist who was a professor of history and specialist in Latin America, and the two stayed in close touch after her graduation. Moore graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Goucher.

[54] Her father was William Catron Rigby. "Biographical information," Box 1, Evelyn Rigby Moore Collection, Collection #6400, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming (hereafter Moore Collection). Her husband's father, Frank E. Moore was also a canal employee and his maternal grandfather had arrived in the Canal in 1849 built the Hotel Central in Panama City. "Mrs. Frank E. Moore," *New York Times*, March 23, 1938, 23.

[55] Moore to Stevens, January 4, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5; Greene reports that since the early 1900s women reformers began instituting a network of women's clubs in the Canal Zone which, although it tried to unite working-class women with middle- and upper-class women, "remained predominantly a world of middle- and upper-middle-class white women." Greene, *Canal Builders*, 243.

[56] Evelyn Moore, *Sancocho: Stories and Sketches of Panama* ([N.p.]: Printed by the Panama American Publishing Co., 1938). Moore dedicated this book to PNF member "Otilia Arosemena de Tejeira whose help in interpreting the Panamanian scene has been indispensible." (Stanford Green Library's coy of this book includes a written dedication from Moore to Ruth Williams, her colleague in the College Club who collaborated in the Panamanian suffrage movement, dated December 6, 1938.)

When on a trip to Mexico in 1937, Moore heard a talk by Anna Kelton Wiley, a National Woman's Party member and IACW affiliate on the Inter-American Commission of Women and suffrage in Mexico. Moore then realized that the suffrage movement in Panama could be a productive way that women of the Canal Zone, and U.S. women more generally, could foster ties with Panamanian women.[58] After Wiley's talk, Moore conferred with her, and then corresponded with Doris Stevens about the Commission's work and about Clara González, the PNF, and the suffrage movement in Panama. Moore resolved to reach out to González.[59]

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[57] Moore to Stevens, January 4, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers. In a paper written sometime between 1940 and 1941, Moore wrote of U.S. foreign policy: "Apologists for our actions in the Caribbean have pointed out that we had no imperialistic aggressive aims, that we merely wished, by assuring the financial stability of the small republics, to protect their sovereignty and thus our own coastline from possible future attack by a strong power. Unfortunately, good intentions are not enough. Although we deny imperialism, the dictionary definition of the word is extending control over countries, which we have done in the Caribbean." Moore, "Relations with Latin America since 1920," Moore Collection.

[58] Anna Kelton Wiley, "Woman Suffrage in Mexico," *Equal Rights* 11, no. 23 (June 15, 1937): 84.

[59] Evelyn Rigby Moore to Anna Kelton Wiley, August 28, 1937; Stevens to Moore, September 17, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers. On Moore's return to Panama, she also wrote an article about the Mexican suffrage movement for the *Panama American* and spoke of the efforts of Margarita Robles de Mendoza, identifying her as the Mexican representative of the IACW, and mentioning Clara González as the Panamanian representative, as well. "Mexican Women Want the Vote – They'll Get It," *Panama American*, June 20, 1937.

When González and Moore met, they discussed how to reenergize the suffrage campaign. Moore shared with González a table Doris Stevens had sent her, outlining the present status of women's suffrage in the world, and González planned to organize a PNF meeting to share the information from the table. They also agreed to distribute an Equal Rights petition that Stevens had sent Moore. Stevens was hoping the petition, which established agreement with the principle of women's civil and political equality, would gain thousands of signatures before she presented it at the upcoming 1938 Eighth International Conference of American States in Lima. González agreed to distribute the petition to the PNF, and Moore would distribute it at a meeting of the Canal Zone College Club. The October, 1937 edition of the *Panama American* noted that "Equal rights for all women of the western hemisphere is the subject of a petition now being circulated in Panama and the Canal Zone….originated with the Inter-American Commission of Women." The article directed interested parties to "Clara González in Panama City and Mrs. Lewis Moore in Balboa."[60]

This new collaboration delighted Doris Stevens, who was currently brainstorming ways to increase the Commission's popular support among Latin American feminists before the 1938 Lima Conference. She had recently developed a new idea for enhancing the reach of the Commission – a Liaison Committee of the IACW – which would officially affiliate various women's groups throughout the Americas with the Commission for the first time. This plan was a deviation from the typical formula for the IACW which traditionally operated through its 21 delegates from the various Republics. The Liaison Committee, on the other hand, would bring the IACW into direct contact with various women's groups, and ideally more feminist support throughout the Americas.[61] Stevens hoped the Liaison Committee could help create a more "closely-knit organ [and] a more solid front" in preparation for the upcoming Lima Conference in 1938. She wrote to both González and Moore about women from Panama and the Canal Zone joining the Liaison Committee.[62] González, who had always favored a collectivist approach to feminist organizing over the clientelist strategies the IACW had relied on in the past, no doubt looked approvingly to this move by the Commission, which had the promise of involving more women from Latin America in the work of the IACW.

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[60] Clipping, "Seek Women's Suffrage in Latin America," *Panama American*, October 1937, Box 74, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

In late November, 1937, González, Otilia de Tejeira, and Elida de Crespo jointly met with Evelyn Moore, and they all agreed to ally with the Liaison Committee. They concurred that developing a unified body of Panamanian and Canal Zone women's groups could also be helpful in mobilizing a new suffrage campaign before the next General Assembly in Panama in 1938. González proposed that once the IACW Liaison Committee was organized, it could be used to organize a mass meeting in June, 1938, a

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[61] Stevens had devised the plan when the IACW had in 1937 launched a massive letter-writing campaign to protest the plan of Ecuador's military dictator Federico Páez to revise the constitution in favor of revoking women's suffrage. Stevens and Minerva Bernardino, the IACW representative from the Dominican Republic, who worked in the Washington, D.C. offices, had written to all the organizations with which they were affiliated, including Clara González's PNF and Marta Vergara's MEMCh, appealing them to put pressure on the Ecuadorean government to end the proposal. Ultimately, the acting Páez was forced to resign in October, 1937, which eliminated his appeal to convoke a constitutional assembly, and the threat passed, but Stevens decided that establishing a Liaison Committee, of groups formally affiliated with the IACW, could help if she needed to quickly mobilize groups in the future. "Memorandum re: women's suffrage in Ecuador," Box 66, Folder 13, Stevens Papers; Stevens to González, September 25, 1936, Box 84, Folder 5. The letter-writing campaign around the effort to revoke woman suffrage in Ecuador also convinced Stevens of the need to create a "Liaison Committee." "Draft letter to the Commissioners," sent to Minerva Bernardino, August 5, 1937, Box 74, Folder 16, Stevens Papers; George Lauderbaugh, *The History of Ecuador* (ABC-CLIO, 2012), 104. He had initially been allied with the Liberal-Socialist party and then with the Conservative party.

[62] Stevens to González, September 25, 1936, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers; Stevens to Moore, November 7, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

National Woman's Congress that would occur before the National Assembly discussed women's suffrage again that September.[63] Over the next months, due to the work of González, de Crespo, de Tejeira, and Moore, the IACW "Liaison Committee" gained adherents in Panama, including the PNF and the newly-formed *Acción Social Femenina*, a feminist group of working-class women, many of whom were women of color.[64] In the Canal Zone the Liaison Committee gained new adherents in: the Woman's Clubs of Cristobal and Pedro Miguel and the Women's League of the Canal Zone, a group that worked for widows' pensions in the Canal Zone, and was presided over by Emeline McGraner, wife of an electrical worker for the Panama Canal, who also happened to be a member of the NWP.[65]

Although González and her PNF cohort welcomed this strong show of new support from women in the Canal Zone, and Moore was delighted to reach out to Canal Zone women for the suffrage cause, the potential risks of their collaboration were not lost on them. Moore particularly recognized that her husband's position as a representative of the U.S. government put them both in a potentially precarious position, and as she explained in a letter reporting on her meeting with González to Doris Stevens, "while I can act as a friend and helper, since my husband is an official in the government of the Panama Canal, it will be impossible to come forward in any executive way in the republic of Panama." She could not "mix openly in anything that might develop into a fight with the government of Panama."[66] In their first meeting, Moore told González that she could count on her as "a silent partner" but the two agreed that "for an American woman, especially one from the Canal Zone, to take a front seat in this would be a great mistake," especially given the anti-U.S. politics of the Arosemena administration.[67]

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[63] Moore to Stevens, November 24, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[64] Ibid.

[65] The Women's League, with 275 members, was the largest women's club in the Canal Zone, and McGraner wrote to Stevens to introduce herself and pledge her support, and Stevens in turn sent her a large packet of information on the IACW; in February the Women's League joined the Liaison Committee. McGraner to Stevens, November 26, 1937; Stevens to McGraner, December 8, 1938; McGraner to Stevens, March 15, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers. Emeline McGraner was married to an electrical worker on the Panama Canal, Arthur McGraner. Marion Dickerman, Ruth Taylor, *Who's Who in Labor* (New York: Dryden Press, 1946), 234.

At the same time, the historical conjuncture of the Roosevelt Good Neighbor Policy, the Popular Front, and the authoritarian government in Panama caused leftist Panamanian women to welcome, in an unprecedented way, the involvement of U.S. women in their campaign. It even fostered surprising cross-class and inter-racial collaborations between working-class Panamanian women of color and U.S. women in the IACW and the Canal Zone. Involvement of the *Acción Social Femenina* (ASF) provides a glimpse into this collaboration. The ASF was headed by Felicia Santizo, an Afro-Panamanian educator and feminist, who had since 1930 been affiliated with the Communist Party. She had collaborated with González in the formation of the PNF in 1923, and in December, 1936, Santizo organized the ASF in Colón as an anti-fascist women's group.[68] One Panamanian historian describes the ASF as "the first feminist movement [that was] authentically popular, that fought for the complete emancipation of the woman, the right to vote, the right to be elected to positions of popular election, independent of her education, social position, economic, or racial status."[69] Feminism was only one part of a larger project, and Santizo worked to improve the educations of Afro-Panamanian and West Indian workers and to establish school lockers and canteens in their schools.[70]

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[66] Moore to Stevens, October 3, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers. She explained that her teacher at Goucher, Mary Wilhelmine Williams, had asked her to organize for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Panama in 1934, but that she had had to regretfully decline because of her husband's position. Williams to Moore, November 21, 1934, Moore Collection.
[67] Moore to Stevens, November 24, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[68] "Estatuos de la Sociedad Acción Social Femenina," Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

Santizo eagerly affiliated the ASF with the IACW Liaison Committee after González told her about the group, and Santizo received literature on the IACW from Doris Stevens directly. In a letter to Doris Stevens, Santizo explained her organization's goals for peace, anti-fascism, and social welfare as well as the vote for women: "This Association is not formed by women of high social position, but by honest working women who desire the improvement of humanity. We want also to help all organizations that work for a truly peaceful world because it is a well known fact that in all conflicts, it is the woman who pays." She requested additional material about the IACW, adding "I want to make it clear…that we belong to the anti-fascist camp, and for this reason, we do not accept any propaganda which favors this cause."[71] She allied her group with the IACW, saying the ASF "should very much like to collaborate with you in everything you think we can do here in Panama."

For Santizo, Pan-Americanism and Pan-American feminist collaboration with U.S. counterparts, specifically, became part of her Popular-Front cause, which opposed the authoritarianism at large in Panama. The U.S., under the liberal presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, represented to Santizo a force against fascism. Santizo explained to Stevens her deep opposition to the political situation in Panama, where she saw fascism stripping women, in particular, of their rights:

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[69] Eugenio Barrera, *Felicia Santizo: Una Educadora al Servicio de su Pueblo* (Panamá: Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos Justo Arosemena, 1980), 7.
[70] Ibid., Felicia Santizo and Ester de Rivas, "Acción Social Femenina," Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[71] Santizo to Stevens, January 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

> Our government…is a reactionary regime…built on the influence of fascist propaganda, brought to our country by the totalitarian governments of Europe, especially Italy and Germany. Therefore, the prominent leaders here, for the most part fascist, as is evident, maintain that woman's place is in the home. The so-called Liberals say that the vote for women would be destructive because all women are fanatics.[72]

Santizo further explained to Stevens why, despite longstanding differences between Panama and the United States, she viewed the Good Neighbor and New Deal policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a harbinger of broad, liberal changes, and why she believed that the United States represented a force that could curtail the repressive anti-feminist ideology of the current administration in Panama:

> Here in Panama they discuss a great deal the policy of President Roosevelt and they see with favor his inclination to the left. Nevertheless, here it is asserted that because of the great interest the United States has in the Panama Canal, the influence of that policy will never be extended here. Yet we of the Acción Social Femenina and other leftist labor groups of this country, consider that if it were not for the progressive policy of the U.S., the totalitarian influence of Italy and Germany would already have damaged our republican institutions because the majority of the public leaders are conservative and liberal with fascist ideas.[73]

For this reason, the ASF welcomed connections with the Canal Zone clubs. Women's League president Emeline McGraner reported to Stevens that she had met Santizo and members of the ASF independently of their Liaison Committee efforts – they had found a common cause protesting Japanese imperialism and discussing boycotting Japanese goods. Santizo warmed to McGraner's group as a result, and the two also began to collaborate on the Equal Rights cause.[74]

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[72] Santizo to Bernardino, April 12, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[73] Ibid.

Over the next year, the ASF, PNF, and various organizations linked to the IACW through the Liaison Committee all pledged their support to the suffrage campaign and to a forthcoming national congress of the PNF that Clara González envisioned.[75] As González later recalled, the momentum achieved by the movement was remarkable; people were gathering in parks and informal groups to discuss women's rights, and they were receiving financial support from men and women and public functionaries.[76] The *Acción Social Femenina* organized a public event for "Pan-American Day" in April 1938 in which a woman read a speech that outlined the organization's goals for the "economic and social condition…of all poor women…those most needy." In order to achieve this, they explained, women must become legislators in Panama, and in order for that to happen, "they must vote." Demanding the vote, they explained,

> we, mothers of families, create our children, yet we cannot express our opinion about schools and the manner in which they are educated. Because we women pay taxes, yet we cannot control the amount imposed on us. Because we women work and in this way contribute to the economic life of our country, yet nevertheless our opinion is not considered on matters which concern us directly.[77]

Despite these broad, cross-class, and inter-American collaborations that occurred around the promotion of women's suffrage, significant disconnects existed between the Popular-Front politics and strategy that González and Santizo advocated and the goals and methods with which Stevens and Moore were comfortable. While the ASF and PNF clearly represented the left and the Popular Front, viewing women's suffrage as part of a broader labor and anti-fascist struggle, Doris Stevens's trademark strategy had long been to appeal to any political group that would support the vote. And in these years, Stevens was moving to the right. In the United States, Stevens objected to the New Deal policies of Roosevelt, and she believed the association of women's suffrage groups with leftist politics in the Americas was a distraction. In 1935 when she received letters from a conservative woman, Chonchita Chibas, in Cuba, who reported that Alianza had become "politics mad" and that Communism was taking over Cuban politics, Stevens responded disapprovingly. "It takes great restraint for women to keep to the feminist line and not get [partisan] about various political groups," Stevens wrote, "but we would get on faster if they would do politics through other political groups, if they must, and keep the feminist group purely feminist. Only in this way can they put pressure as a feminist group on all political units."[78]

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[74] McGraner to Stevens, March 31, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[75] Moore to Stevens, January 24, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[76] Clara González, "Carta a Ricardo Alfaro," July 26, 1938, in *Clara González, la mujer del siglo: selección de escritos*, ed., and with introduction by Anayansi Turner (Panamá: [s.n.], 2006), 164.
[77] Untitled speech, April 6, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

Increasingly, Stevens and Moore believed that the Panamanian suffrage movement's association with leftist politics was a great liability. Both sympathized with González for the repression she faced at the hands of the government. In response to Moore's letter describing how the government had stripped González of teaching hours and removed her from the secretaryship of the Congressional committee, Stevens had responded: "One always pays for one's courage in the pursuit of justice. I do not think she ought to be too discouraged if she is following a revolutionary star which she apparently feels moved to follow…Please convey to Clara our warmest appreciation of her valiant courage in all she has done in the past and all she will do in the future."[79]

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[78] Chonchita Chibas to Stevens; Stevens to Chibas, August 12, 1935, Box 65, Folder 7, Stevens Papers. Stevens's move to the right was coinciding with the anti-Communism of some of her friends, including Max Eastman and Fanny Bunand-Sévastos. She wrote to Bunand-Sévastos that she and former friend Lydia Gibson had gotten into an argument about the Soviet Union. Stevens to Bunand-Sévastos, December 15, 1937, Box 29, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

However, they did not identify with Clara's cause themselves, and Moore was concerned that González's "interest in the Socialist Party and Leftist principles in general have weakened her position as a leader of women."[80] In their opinion, these causes were a liability, not only to her personal safety, but to their ability to reach a broad movement, one that they believed relied upon swaying powerful male deputies in Congress. Informing their very different ideological perspective was also their view that the United States political system and history served as a model for all other nations.[81] Moore wrote to Stevens that "it seems to me a pity that none of the socially and financially powerful women have been interested in this work…I believe it would gain if they could be made to take part."[82] Stevens wrote in response: "I agree so heartily…As you know full well, the suffrage movement did not get on very well in the States until it had the approval of recognized women of influence. This is the same the world over…"[83]

Moore wanted the movement to focus on the vote and only the vote, "in the effort to try to unite all women of Panama without regard to religion or politics," and believed that if she could organize some of the "socially and financially" elect women separately, they could lend support to the suffrage campaign. When Moore revealed these plans to Otilia de Tejiera, as Moore wrote to Stevens, "Otilia…was very much opposed…We argued for some time, and she finally agreed to talk to others of her group. She apparently doesn't want anyone who will not come out definitely against Fascism." Moore attempted to explain to de Tejeira her belief that the right to vote was "an entirely different thing [from anti-fascism]…a principle of all women having citizenship rights regardless of their political beliefs." This, however, was not all that the vote meant to Otilia de Tejeira and Clara González.[84] In the meantime, as Moore, relayed to Stevens, the "Labor organizations of Panama have all come out in favor of women's rights."[85]

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[79] Stevens to Moore, November 8, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[80] Moore to Stevens, March 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[81] In her letter of November 8, 1937, Stevens had compared Arosemena to Woodrow Wilson and the suffrage movement in Panama in the 1930s to that in the United States a decade and a half earlier, Moore to Stevens, November 8, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[82] Moore to Stevens, January 4, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[83] Stevens to Moore, January 13, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

Clara González was well-aware of the distinctions that existed between the Panamanian Popular-Front goals and the U.S. feminist goals that Stevens and Moore embraced, as well as the uneven power dynamic between herself and Doris Stevens. But she also found in the IACW an influential source of support against the much greater hostility from her government. González utilized the Inter-American Commission of Women to leverage her own vision of their "equal rights" goals, in support of the Popular-Front ends that she supported.

González's activism in Mexico in 1938 reflects this dynamic. From January to April, 1938, Gonzálzez finally did travel to Mexico for several months on a trip under the aegis of a paid invitation from the University of Mexico, where she delivered some lectures. In González's correspondence with Stevens about her trip, she explained that her goal would be to cultivate contacts with the suffrage movement, which she offered to do on behalf of the IACW. González's biographer surmises that González also traveled to Mexico because key opposition members from Panama were there, and she wanted to cultivate the Popular-Front movement in Panama, which was now seeking "to reestablish the power of the Constitution and to give Panama a Democratic government."[86]

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[84] Moore to Stevens, January 25, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers; Stevens to Moore, February 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers. In response, Stevens suggested that Moore urge Calvo or Maria Arias to independently form their own group which could then affiliate with the Liaison committee. She believed that they should work separately: "…the group that considers itself more Left, undertakes to obtain the votes of the liberal and Left members of Congress, and the more conservative women undertake to deliver the support of the conservative or Catholic or Right members of the Congress…If it develops that the Party (PNF) keeps itself in membership aloof from any but anti-fascist, anti-clericals, etc., all the more reason why the new Campaign Committee, which might comprise people of other beliefs, should be formed." She advised "one must be tender of the fears of those women who see the governments of most South American countries as very reactionary. However, there is no golden way to avoid excessive fanaticism, whether religious or political, except by liquidation through training of the women to take part in public affairs."

[85] Moore to Stevens, March 11, 1937, Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

A large Popular-Front feminist movement had been exploding in Mexico since 1936. While the IACW had a strong and vocal supporter in the Mexican suffrage movement in the patrician Margarita Robles de Mendoza, the IACW did not have extensive contacts with Mexican feminist groups or with the Popular-Front activists, many of whom were Communists and members of the Frente Unico de Derechos de Mujeres (FUPDM). The FUPDM had formed in 1935 as a Popular-Front feminist group, and their vision for suffrage and social change coincided with González's more than Stevens's. Nonetheless Stevens sent González a list of people in Mexico with whom she should make contact, including their delegate Margarita Robles de Mendoza and others.[87] She also urged her to see Cárdenas while she was there and personally push for suffrage. In late August, 1937, Cárdenas announced he would call on Congress the following month to make "whatever legal reforms necessary" to grant women political equality with men.[88] In December, 1937, the Senate in Mexico had approved women's suffrage, and now final consent rested with the Chamber of Deputies and the President.

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[86] Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 125.
[87] Stevens to González, February 13, 1937, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

While in Mexico, González made contact with none of the people on Stevens's list, explaining later that personal sickness prevented her from seeing the president personally, as did other events surrounding the expropriation of the petroleum companies, but she advised Stevens that she had made her own contacts in Mexico. All of the women with whom she collaborated, including Esther Chapa and Matil de Rodríguez Cabo de Mújica, were Communist feminists at the forefront of the Popular-Front suffrage movement.[89] González told Stevens that none of them knew about the Inter-American Commission of Women, but they were very interested in it and urged Stevens to make contact with them because they were "true feminists."[90] González was utilizing the Inter-American Commission of Women to her own ends, reshaping their Western-hemisphere-wide "equal rights" goals to support her vision of a Popular-Front Pan-American feminism, one that united her organization, the Partido Nacional Feminista of Panama with the FUPDM of Mexico, both of which were genuinely invested in the politics of the Popular Front.[91]

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[88] Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico*, 178-179; "III Inter American Conference on Education," Box 109, Folder 7, Stevens Papers. There, the IACW delegation included not only their Haitian delegate Madeleine Sylvain, and Hazel Moore but also several Mexican Communist feminists and educators, Consuelo Rubio, Maria Efraina Rocha, and Maria del Refugio Garcia, who was the Secretary General of the Communist and Popular Front feminist group, the Frente Unico Pro-Derechos de la Mujer.

[89] González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[90] Robles de Mendoza to Stevens, July 22, 1938, Box 77, Folder 9, Stevens Papers.

[91] In July, 1938, the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico would also approve the resolution on women's suffrage.

Their differences in vision notwithstanding, the collaboration that González, Stevens, Moore, and other women forged between the Panamanian feminists and Canal Zone women was significant and laid the groundwork for their long-anticipated suffrage movement in Panama in 1938. In April, 1938, after Clara González returned from Mexico, she immediately began to prepare the PNF for their National Congress of Women. A turning point came when the liberal Assmeblyman, Deputy Everardo Duque who had opposed suffrage during the 1936 National Assembly decision, went on public record now in support of woman suffrage. He explained that his change of opinion was due to his having "secured literature from countries where women already enjoyed full suffrage rights" and given "considerable study to this question since the last sessions of the Assembly."[92] Clara González and Evelyn Rigby Moore believed that Duque's change of view was "purely political," but they agreed that whatever his motivations, his change of view gave the movement a welcome boost.[93] "Seldom in the history of the Partido," González later recalled, "have we had such favorable notice by the press, [and by] men and women."[94] The Municipal Council of Panama even offered their endorsement by granting the PNF access to the Palacio Municipal for their regular meetings.[95]

Capitalizing on their positive publicity, on June 12, 1938, the PNF held a public meeting of about fifty women in the chambers of the Palacio Municipal. Announcing a "new stage of work," for woman suffrage, they outlined their objectives, which they insisted were affiliated with no political party: "to unify all the women of the Republic with the goal of achieving the *improvement* in the *economic, political, and social situation*, of working toward the study and solution of *national problems*, and to fight for the *democracy and peace of the world*."[96] In attendance were members of the Municipal Council, including the president of the Municipal Council, and the national Assemblyman Alfredo Alemán, who had introduced their suffrage proposal to the National Assembly in 1936. Alemán spoke, promising to present a proposal on women's suffrage at the forthcoming 1938 assembly and stating his hope that Arosemena, as a "liberal," would approve of it.[97] PNF members spoke of their new phase of work to begin making a house-to-house canvas to enlist the support of all women of Panama. They also announced their intention to hold a series of meetings every Sunday morning in the Council Chambers for the next month and a half, climaxing with a large mass national congress of women in Panama City in August.

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[92] "Luchara por el voto femenino," *El Panamá América*, May 21, 1938; "El Partido Nacional Feminista Recibe Mensaje de Dip. Duque," *Star & Herald*, May 30, 1938; "Women's Vote Measure Will Be Proposed," *Panama American*, May 21, 1938.
[93] Moore to Stevens, May 31, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[94] González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[95] González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

In the day's speeches, the cooperation of the IACW and the women of the Canal Zone became central. Evelyn Ribgy Moore attended the meeting, and although she had planned to speak, she asked her colleague on the Canal Zone College Club, Ruth Williams, also a member of the Liaison Committee, to speak on her behalf.[98] In her speech Ruth Williams shared news of the support that the various women's groups in the Zone were giving and would continue to give Panamanian women in their suffrage cause.

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[96] Partido Nacional Feminista, "Invitación a Todas las Mujeres," June 9, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[97] González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers; "R.P. Feminist Party Holds Meet Sunday," *Panama American*, June 13, 1938; "Congreso nacional de mujeres habrá en agosto próximo," *Panamá América*, June 13, 1938.

[98] Moore reported that it was because she had a cold, but it is possible that she did not want to speak publicly given her husband's position with the U.S. government.

As González later recalled, Williams spoke of the Canal Zone support as a "demonstration of the solidarity, that, through the Inter-American Commission of Women, was being cultivated among women of the Continent."[99] Otilia de Tejeira, who had recently visited the headquarters of the Inter-American Commission of Women on a trip to Washington, D.C. where she had also met Doris Stevens, spoke out about the important support the Inter-American Commission of Women was giving their cause, as well.[100] As one newspaper reported, de Tejeira "explained how the cooperation of the five groups of that organization on the Isthmus, the Feminist Party [the PNF] and the Acción Feminista of Colón, the Canal Zone College Club, the Canal Zone Women's League, and the Pedro Miguel Women's Club, was necessary for the passage of the amendment."[101] Based on the initial press after the meeting, it was a great success; one *Panama American* reporter noted that "Panamanian women may soon enjoy full political rights including the right to vote."[102]

The meeting and exuberant newspaper coverage attending it aroused the ire of *Acción Comunal* President Juan Demostenes Arosemena. Two days after the meeting, Arosemena publicly announced his emphatic opposition to woman suffrage. In an article entitled "I Am Opposed to Female Suffrage," published in his own powerful newspaper, *El Panamá América*, Arosemena stated that if the woman suffrage law passed by the National Assembly, he would veto it. He explained that women were not prepared for the franchise and that woman suffrage movement represented the goal of a fringe minority and was not “a national aspiration nor a social reality.”[103]

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[99] Clara González, "Carta a Ricardo Alfaro," July 26, 1938, in *Clara González, la mujer del siglo: selección de escritos*, ed., and with introduction by Anayansi Turner (Panamá: [s.n.], 2006), 164.
[100] Otilia de Tejeira visited the IACW's headquarters in Washington, D.C. on April 21, 1937, "Notes re Panama women," Box 84, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.
[101] "R.P. Feminist Party Holds Meet Sunday," *Panama American*, June 13, 1938;
[102] Eduardo, "Interesting If True," *Panama American*, June 13, 1938.

Arosemena’s statement probably did not surprise Clara González, who had known for some time his intentions to veto any woman suffrage bill that passed; but she may not have been prepared for the vehemence of hostility his statement unleashed.[104] Shortly after the president’s declaration, the Secretary of Education and Agriculture, Aníbal Ríos D., also released a statement to the press forbidding any teacher from taking part in any feminist activities; he condemned them form cooperating in the suffrage movement on the pretext that it involved them in political activities, prohibited to teachers.[105] This announcement severely incapacitated the PNF and the *Acción Social Femenina*, many of whose members and almost all their leadership were teachers. Clara González worried that she and others would be fired from their teaching positions, and a letter from Otilia de Tejeira to Doris Stevens later revealed that a number indeed lost their jobs.[106] Felicia Santizo also wrote to Stevens, “I continue with the same spirit, but with clipped wings, because, since I am a teacher, I cannot take part in feminist propaganda, according to the Secretary of Public Education.”[107] The newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* called this announcement “the second fatal blow that strikes the great suffrage movement.”[108]

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[103] “Soy Opuesta al Voto Femenino,” *El Panamá América*, June 14, 1938; “President is Opposed to Votes for Women,” *Panama American*, June 14, 1938, p. 1; González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[104] Moore to Stevens, October 23, 1937, Box 74, Folder 16, Stevens Papers.

[105] “El Srio. Anibal Rios D. Adversa el Voto Femenino,” *El Nuevo Diario*, June 19, 1938, p. 1; González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[106] González, “Carta a Ricardo Alfaro;” Otilia de Tejeira to Stevens, June 22, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

[107] Santizo to Stevens, July 4, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

[108] “El Srio. Anibal Rios D. Adversa el Voto Femenino,” *El Nuevo Diario*, June 19, 1938, p. 1

The third fatal blow, perhaps, was President Arosemena's complaint to the Canal Zone governor about Canal Zone women's interventions in Panamanian politics.[109] According to González, Arosemena called the Governor of the Canal Zone on the phone, "personally accusing…Miss Ruth Williams for having attended the session and spoken out…[which] the Panamanian government considered an intervention of the Zone women into Panamanian politics, prohibited by the laws of the same jurisdiction."[110] The platform of Arosemena's political party opposed U.S. imperialism, and ever since the Canal Zone's creation, frictions had existed over the strong U.S. presence on the island that had only increased with the rise of the *Acción Comunal* to power. The president utilized U.S. intervention as a pretext to quash Canal Zone women's support of the movement, and the Canal Zone government, eager to avoid conflict, followed the president's command. As Clara González recalled, "the chief of the intelligence service of the Zone called Ruth Williams and told her that by the order of the governor, if she continued in communication, even by telephone, with any of us three [Elida de Crespo, Otilia de Tejeira and herself] she would be deported immediately."[111] As a result, all organizing with women in the Canal Zone, even Evelyn Rigby Moore, ceased. When Moore met and discussed the matter with Charles McIlvaine, the Executive Secretary of the Canal Zone, he told her there was no reason "why the Canal Zone women's clubs could not continue their 'educational' interest in women's rights, so long as they kept out of Panama."[112]

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[109] Otilia de Tejeira to Doris Stevens, June 22, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[110] González, "Carta a Ricardo Alfaro," 165; González to Stevens, June 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[111] Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 121, González, "Carta a Ricardo Alfaro."
[112] Moore to Stevens, August 19, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

The not-so-subtle subtext to Arosemena's opposition to the suffrage movement had little to do with U.S. imperialism and stemmed from his fear of the movement's alliance with the Popular Front. His words in *El Panamá América* were that "granting women the right to vote…would…add one more evil to the many from which our political contests now are suffering."[113] One Canal Zone opinion writer from the *Panama American* connected the President's dissent to his fear of the Popular-Front bloc that opposed him: "the President believes that the feminist movement, far from being a spontaneous desire of the women of the Republic to secure the right to vote, is a political plan by elements which have not the best interests of the people at heart" the commentator wrote. The President "is of the opinion that sinister hands are at work behind the scenes, the hands of agents who would introduce into the Republic exotic political doctrines which Dr. Arosemena so often has declared will never flourish in Panama while he is in a position to fight them."[114] Arosemena was not only opposed to Communism but to the broad-based Popular-Front movement that included Communism, Socialism, liberal democratic groups, and all anti-fascist mobilizers, of which he included the PNF, and which he viewed as a threat to the *Acción Comunal*'s power.

Clara González and the PNF in turn denied that their suffrage movement represented a Communist platform or any political threat. González wrote a long letter appealing to Ricardo Alfaro, former president of the Republic of Panama, a liberal deputy who also opposed the *Acción Comunal* regime, and an ambassador to the United States, who was also a friend of Doris Stevens and the Inter-American Commission of Women.

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[113] "Soy Opuesta al Voto Femenino," *El Panamá América*, June 14, 1938; "President is Opposed to Votes for Women," *Panama American*, June 14, 1938, p. 1; González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[114] Eduardo, "Interesting If True," *Panama American*, June 15, 1938, p. 1.

In her letter, she explained that the president had told the Canal Zone governor that she, Elida de Crespo, and Otilia de Tejeira were “mortal enemies of the current administration.” González wrote, “In terms of Elida, there’s no doubt [that she is an enemy], but…Otilia…has always been considered a great friend of the current government which has employed and paid a large salary to her brother, and her husband and a brother-in-law.” In terms of herself, she said the president also knew she had no ulterior motives, but that he provided the “excuse” that “it was a political necessity” to quell her efforts.[115] González defended the apolitical nature of their June 12 suffrage gathering, explaining to Alfaro that at the meeting there had been “no stridency, everything was legal, and following the ideals that we have been pursuing for 16 years…We declared again and again that our work was entirely disconnected from that of the militant political parties.”[116]

Clara González, Otilia de Tejeira, and other members of the PNF also declared the purity of their movement in an open letter to the president. This time, they were careful not to mention the support from the Inter-American Commission of Women or U.S. women from the Canal Zone, and rather linked woman suffrage to more nationalist desires. They reminded Arosemena of his earlier endorsement of woman suffrage, and explained that woman suffrage represented a Panamanian reality in that it captured the desires of many Panamanian women. They insisted that women were prepared to exercise the franchise, and that their votes were important to the progress of the nation. They signed off “somos de Ud. conciudadanas obsecuentes, por el Partido Nacional Feminista” (“we are your obedient fellow citizens, for the Partido Nacional Feminista).”

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[115] González, “Carta a Alfaro,” 165.
[116] Ibid., 164.

Here they somewhat transgressively asserted for themselves the national citizenship the president had denied them, giving themselves the contested appellation "ciudadanas."[117]

The president's control of the press at that time was such that none of the three leading Spanish-language newspapers in Panama would publish the PNF's letter to the president. González found the press entirely closed to the PNF, and that, several days later, no outlet would agree to publish a statement she and Elida de Crespo had written in support of the Spanish Civil War on its second anniversary. Radio stations which had previously welcomed the PNF and given them broadcasting spots for over a month prior to their meeting, now also closed to the PNF. One of the radio stations, financially supported by the government, launched a campaign against and ridiculed members of the PNF.[118] The president of the Municipal Council hastily withdrew his promise to the PNF of access to the Palacio Municipal for their meetings.

González was infuriated by the administration's hijacking of democracy and the oppression that faced not only her and PNF members but all members of groups that challenged the government. She believed the actions of the administration toward the PNF were only one small part of broader "fascistic tendencies," that were dangerously growing as the government "widened its radius of dictatorial action." She had witnessed recent police raids on the Socialist Party, police brutality against the Socialist Party leader Demetrio Porras, and the curtailment of the rights of freedom to speech and freedom of association, not just for the PNF but for many of her compatriots.[119] As a result, the PNF went underground and continued functioning, but as a semi-legal organization.

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[117] "Carta Abierta al Excmo. Sr. Presidente de la República," June 16, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

[118] González, "Carta a Ricardo Alfaro," 165-166; Otilia de Tejeira to Stevens, June 22, 1938, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers; Serra, *Clara González de Behringer*, 121-122.

Demonstrating a characteristic lack of understanding and tendency to assimilate various political climates to the U.S., Doris Stevens, upon receiving news of the calamity that had befallen the PNF, urged them to speak to U.S. reporters from the *New York Times* about the government's actions. González and de Tejeira, however, did not want to risk endangering Ruth Williams, or themselves, further by speaking with a *Times* reporter.[120] More starkly revealing Stevens's lack of understanding of the political situation in Panama, and demonstrating the patronizing air that had become typical, Stevens urged González, de Tejeira, and Santizo to continue to push for suffrage. In a letter to González, Stevens impatiently directed her to follow U.S. suffragists' lead: "Do what American women and women everywhere have had to do to get the vote."[121]

As part of this effort, Stevens also urged González to join her at the Eighth International Conference of American States in Lima that would be taking place in just a few months. Stevens had decided that the crux of the Commission's work in Lima would be on suffrage. In Washington, D.C., IACW members had been busily compiling a report on women's political and civil rights, and Stevens had decided they would propose a draft convention on the political rights of women, asserting "[T]he right of women to vote and be elected shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex in the territory of their respective jurisdictions."[122] Stevens beseeched González to join her there to fight for woman suffrage: “Lima is our golden opportunity to harvest the suffrage gains made to date,” she wrote.[123]

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[119] González, "Carta a Ricardo Alfaro," 166.
[120] González to Stevens, July 11, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[121] Stevens, Memo to Minerva Bernardino for letter to Otilia de Tejeira, Box 84, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.
[122] Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 442.

However much González admired the work of the Commission, she knew that the vote was an impossibility at that moment in Panama. González also realized that her trip to Lima would be a financial hardship she could not bear and that she needed to channel her precious energies elsewhere in what she deemed most urgent at that moment – namely in joining the opposition forces to challenge the *Acción Comunal*. González had also been experiencing recurring bouts of poor health, and toward the end of 1938 was suffering another bout of illness. While she supported Stevens’s work, assiduously sending her information about the legal status of Panamanian women for the IACW report at Lima and expressing her hope that the Commission would represent the “continental aspiration for juridical and social equality for women” in the Americas, she explained that she could not join Stevens there.[124] She did, however, work with Evelyn Rigby Moore to organize a number of events for Doris Stevens on Stevens’s stop over in Panama en route to Lima. Stevens and the other conference delegates on board the Santa Ana liner stopped in Panama for a day, and Stevens gave four speeches, including to female Panamanian students, to the National Assembly, and also to Canal Zone and Panamanian women at a “Good Neighbor” luncheon attended by about 50 women from the Canal Zone and 50 women from Panama. Clara González was not in attendance at these meetings. By the time of Stevens's visit, González had fallen ill, and Stevens visited her at the hospital where she was convalescing.[125]

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[123] Stevens to González, July 22, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.
[124] González to Stevens, October 19, 1938, Box 84, Folder 8, Stevens Papers.

Although González could not travel to Lima, Stevens was nonetheless optimistic about the upcoming conference. Joining her there would be Minerva Bernardino; Graciela Mandujano, a representative from Marta Vergara's MEMCh; and two representatives from the Argentine feminist group UMA with whom Stevens had collaborated at the 1936 Buenos Aires Conference, Ana Rosa Schlieper de Martínez Guerrero, and Susana Larguia. On the steamer trip to Panama, Stevens had already experienced some hostility from members of the U.S. delegation who made plain their opposition to Stevens and her leadership of the IACW. But Stevens would not lower her morale. As she wrote to her husband, Jonathan Mitchell, "Principal thing is I'm riding high. Four speeches in Panama. Spirits good."[126] Her spirits would soon flag, however, as the U.S. delegation made clear it planned to oust her from the leadership of the Commission.

The Lima Conference of 1938 and the Removal of Doris Stevens from the IACW

The notion that the Inter-American Commission of Women under Doris Stevens's leadership was a mobilizer of a Popular-Front Pan-American feminism, which had been cultivated by Popular-Front feminists like Marta Vergara and Clara González and supported to some degree by Doris Stevens herself, would come to a dramatic end during the 1938 Eighth International Conference of American States in Lima. At the conference, members of the State Department together with U.S. women's group reformers finally succeeded in dismantling the structure of the IACW in a way that allowed for the removal of Doris Stevens as chairman. Key to their strategy was their insistence that Doris Stevens did not represent a leftist feminism and instead represented the far right.

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[125] Mrs. Kenneth Newland, "Society Notes," *Star & Herald*, November 28, 1938; "Doris Stevens Ha Sido Objeto De Muchos Agasajos," *El Panamá América*, December 2, 1938; "Miss Doris Stevens Speaks to Local Women at Tivoli," *Panama American*, December 1, 1938.

[126] Stevens to Jonathan Mitchell, November 29, 1938, Box 25, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

Stevens herself aided them in this depiction when, several months before the Lima conference, she traveled to the Dominican Republic upon the invitation of General Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, to promote women's rights there. Trujillo's Dominican Republic was quickly gaining a reputation as one of the bloodiest dictatorships in the Americas. The previous year he had overseen the slaughter of thousands of Haitians in the Dominican Republic. He also openly lauded Franco's regime in Spain. While Doris Stevens was not an admirer of his politics, Trujillo had made unfulfilled promises in the past toward granting women the right to vote, and in the spirit of her determination to promote "equal rights" for women no matter what the political system, Stevens latched onto the opportunity to push him for suffrage. She conditioned her visit on the grounds that the government "would undertake definitive legislation for women's rights," and after having secured U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull's approval. During her trip, Stevens gained Trujillo's endorsement of both the Equal Rights and Equal Nationality Treaties as well as his pledge that he would recommend to Congress a constitutional revision to grant women suffrage.[127] In a speech Stevens gave in Spanish, which was broadcast over the radio in the Dominican Republic, she praised Trujillo lavishly, expressing her hope that he would "add to his already immensely impressive list of brilliant and integral achievements…one more immortal act – the granting of you [women of the Dominican Republic] the right to elect and be elected, a fundamental right in democracy."[128]

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[127] "Trujillo Promises Rights for Women," *New York Times*, August 15, 1938, p. 8.

While Stevens's trip to the Dominican Republic was, by her account, a great success, it inspired the ire of many Latin Americans on the left and feminists, as well as that of the bloc of women's reformers who opposed her leadership of the Inter-American Commission of Women. In August 1938, Molly Dewson, the former director of the Women's Democratic National Committee who now served on the President's Social Security Board, sent Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles a *Washington Post* article announcing Stevens's trip to the Dominican Republic. She also sent him a letter explaining why at the 1938 Lima Conference the State Department needed to reorganize the Inter-American Commission of Women: "clearing up this situation lies in the hands of the State Department."[129] For several months, Dewson, together with Elsie Musser, member of the People's Mandate, former Democratic Utah state senator, and former delegate to the Buenos Aires conferences; Mary Anderson, the Women's Bureau Director; and Mary Winslow, representative of the National Women's Trade Union League (NWTUL), had been seeking to gain the State Department's commitment to help them put an end to the "Equal Rights" agenda of the Inter-American Commission of Women and remove Doris Stevens from its leadership.[130]

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[128] Doris Stevens speech given and broadcast over Station H I N in the Palacio del Consejo Adminsitrativo of Santo Domingo during her official visit to the Dominican Republic as distinguished guest of the Dominican government by the invitation of Generalisimo Trujillo. August 12, 1938, Box 66, Folder 6, Stevens Papers.

[129] "Doris Stevens Leaves Today for Dominica," *Washington Post*, August 9, 1938; Dewson to Welles, 11 Aug 1938 DF 710.F. IACW/18 RG 59) National Archives II, College Park, Maryland; Mary Dewson to Sumner Welles, August 11, 1938, DF 710.F IACW/18, RG 59, NARAII.

The newspaper article announcing Doris Stevens's trip to the Dominican Republic, mobilized Sumner Welles and Laurence Duggan, Chief of the Division of American Republics, into action. The dispute between the two factions of women's rights groups were never a matter of great concern to the U.S. State Department except when it interfered in their foreign relations agenda, and the IACW was increasingly becoming a thorn in the side of the State Department. Although the U.S. State Department maintained friendly diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic out of a desire for hemispheric solidarity, they found Trujillo's dictatorship repugnant and, without knowing that Hull had condoned Stevens's trip, Sumner and Duggan were furious that she had made a goodwill trip without advising them.[131] Together with Warren Kelchner, State Department authority in Latin American affairs, Welles and Duggan began to collaborate with Musser, Winslow, Dewson, and Anderson about how to reorganize the Commission and remove Stevens from its leadership at the Lima Conference. Discovering that Stevens had been appointed as the chairman by the Governing Board of the Pan American Union but never officially by the U.S. government, they devised a plan in which they would propose the Inter-American

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[130] Elise Musser to Mary Anderson, December 18, 1937; Musser to Mary Dewson, March 3, 1938, "Equal Rights-1939," Box 18, RG 86, NARA II; Musser to Sumner Welles, August 3, 1938, DF 710.F, RG 59, NARA II; Winslow was also chair of the Women's Joint Congressional Committee's subcommittee opposing the Equal Rights Amendment.

[131] Eric Paul Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998). Of a number of dictatorships in the Caribbean – Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, and Fulgencio Batista in Cuba -- FDR called them "S.O.B.s…[but] our S.O.B.s."

Commission of Women be re-organized as an "official" body composed only of representatives of respective governments. This reorganization would eliminate Stevens as chairman and place the work of the Commission under the direction of the U.S. State Department, taking away the IACW's autonomy as well.[132]

To ensure the success of their plan, the U.S. State Department appointed Elsie Musser as a delegate to the conference on the Fourth Committee, which would discuss women's rights and the future of the Inter-American Commission of Women. Louise Leonard Wright, chairman of the National League of Women Voters' Government and Foreign Policy Committee, was appointed as technical adviser to assist Musser.[133]

The State Department also knew that success of their plan relied on the support of a number of Latin American delegates and feminists who would be at the conference and participate in the Fourth Committee. Among those the U.S. delegates determined they must sway were Ana Rosa Schlieper de Martínez Guerrero and Susana Larguia, the Argentine feminists from UMA; Graciela Mandujano from MEMCh, and others who had collaborated with Stevens in the past. One powerful way they would seek to dislodge these women's loyalties from Stevens was to portray Stevens's affinity for an "equal rights" feminist doctrine as symptomatic of a wider, more pernicious and conservative political perspective. With growing global divisions emerging between “fascism” and “democracy,” and between “right” and “left,” it would be easy for them to slot Stevens, with her dalliances with Trujillo and her strict “equal rights” doctrine, into the “fascist” camp. Adolf A. Berle, a member of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Brain Trust” and beginning in 1938 Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, had actually called Stevens a “fascist” to her face. He levied this charge at her when the two met during the 1936 Buenos Aires Peace Conference. When Stevens had asked him, in surprise, why he called her a “fascist,” he told her that her unbending commitment to “equal rights,” no matter its repercussions, characterized her thus. She “did not care about the difficulties which flowed from [her] principles,” he stated.[134]

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[132] Welles to Duggan, memorandum, March 10, 1938, DF 710.F, RG 59, NARA II; Warren Kelchner, "Inter-American Commission of Women," memorandum, March 15, 1938, DF 710.F; Kelchner, IACW memo, June 18, 1938; Elise Musser to Sumner Welles, August 20, 1938, DF 710.F; R. Henry Norweb, "Visit of Miss Doris Stevens…" Dispatch No. 412, August 17, 1938, DF 710.F, RG 59, NARA II; Musser to Welles, August 20, 1938.

[133] "Landon a Delegate to Parley at Lima," *New York Times*, November 14, 1938, 1; The other U.S. members of the Fourth Committee were Laurence A. Steinhardt, U.S. Ambassador to Peru; and a priest, Father Francis O'Hara, President of the Univeristy of Notre Dame Later, Welles told Mabel Vernon that his desire to see Stevens removed from her position as chairman was related to her interfering in the Dominican Republic. He reportedly said "we could not have her free-lancing around in Latin America. We had to put a stop to that." State Department Records, Box 127, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

While Stevens was not a “fascist,” she was moving to the right in these years, and she had not been shy about her opposition to the Roosevelt administration since she felt they had personally attacked her at the 1933 Montevideo Conference. For her, personal and political motivations fed each other. Her opposition to the Roosevelt administration’s social welfare New Deal measures on the grounds that she favored a free market liberalism was impossible to disentangle from her personal animus for the Roosevelt administration. As soon as the steamer trip with the other U.S. delegates to Lima began, Stevens learned of the State Department’s plan to remove her as chairman of the Commission. Icy interactions with members of the U.S. Delegation also revealed to her the distinct flavor of the campaign they were waging against her. When the steamer left Panama, Laurence Duggan approached Stevens and asked her in a manner that Stevens recalled as “almost belligerent,” why she had gone to the Dominican Republic when she knew that Trujillo was a dictator.[135] Separately, Louise Leonard Wright quizzed Stevens on her opinions about Russia. "Had I been to Russia, Why not? Didn't I think what the Soviets were doing for women was wonderful; might the American continent not use them as a model for our reforms?"[136] As Stevens later recalled, she had responded that she had not been to Russia, and stated that she "believe[d] we can evolve something indigenous to this continent which will be more suitable than anything the Soviet has done."[137] Wright, Stevens believed, was angling for direct evidence of Stevens's opposition to Russia and to social democracy.

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[134] The Buenos Aires Conference, Record of Main events, Box 63, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

Stevens suspected these comments were relayed back to Adolf Berle, and that "this further confirmed…his belief that I was not sufficiently radical [and]…too conservative."[138] Shortly after arriving in Lima, Stevens encountered Berle in confidential conversation with Ana Rosa Schlieper and Susana Larguia, and overheard him explaining to them that she, Stevens, was right-wing and conservative.[139] She noted that Berle told these Argentinian feminists as well as other "delegates at Lima were that I was not radical enough."[140]

Stevens's trip to the Dominican Republic would have troubled anti-fascists Larguia and Schlieper, but they might not have needed much convincing from Berle. Although they had collaborated with Stevens at the 1936 Buenos Aires Peace conference, and although she had placated them and other Popular-Front feminists by including maternity legislation in the IACW goals and report of the Lima conference, like González, they were aware of Stevens's thin commitments to any broader Popular-Front politics. And for these women, their leftist and anti-fascist cause was as important as their feminist cause. Early on at the conference, Schlieper, Larguia, and Chilean MEMCh members Mandujano had made their political anti-fascist commitments known when they refused to stay in the lodging provided them by the conference, because of its connections to the dictatorship in Peru. Since interacting with Stevens in Buenos Aires in 1936, however, they had known that she, on the other hand, had no commitments to the anti-fascist cause.[141]

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[135] Stevens responded, to Duggan's surprise, that Hull had given her his blessing to go, and stated that she went to advise the government on reforming its laws regarding women's rights. She added, "to whom would you speak in Latin-America, Larry, if you had no commerce with dictators?" Stevens memoirs, "Lima—Another example of preemptory attitude, Duggan," Box 127, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[136] Stevens memoirs, Box 127, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[137] Stevens memoirs, "Lima – enroute Mrs. Wright," Box 127, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.

[138] Stevens to Mercedes Gallagher de Parks, January 27, 1939, Box 85, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[139] Stevens witnessed Berle telling them that the IACW's work was in opposition to the Roosevelt government's aims. Box 127, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

[140] Stevens to Mercedes Gallagher de Parks, January 27, 1939, Box 85, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

For these feminists, Stevens's ideological commitments merged with a worldview that underwrote her hegemonic leadership of the Commission. Stevens's unilateral leadership of the Commission was still a thorn in the side of many, and tensions around her leadership were reemerging at the conference. Graciela Mandujano had written to Marta Vergara while in Lima, complaining that she was not receiving the financial help Stevens had promised for her lodging.[142] When Vergara wrote to Stevens asking Stevens to "soften the differences that may remain in your relationship with [Manudujano]," Vergara offered, "I'll tell you frankly why. You will remember that Aida Parada had some conflicts with you when you worked together." Here, Vergara referred to the 1930 Havana Conference when Aida Parada was the Chilean commissioner. Parada had, together with Clara González and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, united at that time in their frustrations with Doris Stevens's unilateral leadership. Vergara continued:

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[141] When Stevens was in Argentina in 1936 she had also spoken to a group of women at UMA trying to dissuade them from Communism.

[142] Mandujano, Ana Rosa, and Susana Larguia, all allied in an anti-fascist cause, refused to stay in the lodging offered by the Peruvian government during the conference, which they explained as a fascist dictatorship.

> Now I would not want this second delegate [Mandujano] carrying with her for any reason a bad impression of you in the sense that you are a dictator within the Commission. I understand that you should be very nervous about all the excessive work, but for the good relations of North America with South Americans it is necessary that all have the impression that the Commission is a democratic organization.[143]

The use of the word "dictator" was not incidental. A number of feminists had long sought a Pan-American feminist body that would replicate the internationalism they hoped to see alive in the world – one of mutli-lateralism and democracy. Doris Stevens's unilateral and often patronizing style of leadership, became especially fraught in the context of dictatorships on the rise throughout the Americas and the world. In 1934, Bertha Lutz had likened Doris Stevens to Hitler. Now Vergara likened her to a dictator. Given this legacy of tensions in Stevens's leadership of inter-American feminism, Berle's charge of Stevens as a "fascist" no doubt would have resonated with many Latin American feminists, especially those on the left.[144]

Thus, despite the work the Commission had done to speak out for and safeguard women's rights against conservative regimes and dictatorships, the internal organization of the Commission still reflected for many a dictatorship in and of itself. A memo from the State Department confirmed that even those who supported the feminist work of the

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[143] Vergara to Stevens, December 20, 1938, Box 64, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[144] Toward the end of her life, Stevens scathingly remembered that Graciela Mandujano had requested money from the Commission because the Chilean government had not paid her expenses, but was actually utilizing the money to help Magda Portal, of the Aprista movement, to get to Chile and escape surveillance in Peru. Stevens had spoken up for Portal in a meeting of the Popular Peace Conference in 1936. But many years later Stevens said it felt "fantastic" to think that she had associated with them, and that had "working her deception on me." "Chile," Stevens's memors, dictated February 26, 1960, Box 64, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

Inter-American Commission of Women in spreading "equal rights" for women shared the view that it was time for Stevens's leadership to come to an end. The memo acknowledged that a group of feminists in Latin America, "general[ly] that of the militant contingent, sometimes radical and often in disfavor with existing governments…. [believes] that Miss Stevens has been a great defender of the cause of wo[m]en in Latin America." Nonetheless, it noted, "even her staunchest supporter, Miss Bernardino of the Dominican Republic said definitely there must be an end of one woman rule in the Women's Commission."[145]

Thus, even though as representatives of the IACW, Minerva Bernardino, Ana Rosa Schlieper, and others, did not disagree with the report and proposals that Stevens and the IACW had submitted to the conference, they also did not stand in the way of the U.S. State Department's efforts to remove Stevens or institute their own proposals for women's rights. Stevens and Bernardino presented their IACW report during the Fourth Committee on women's rights, providing "a lengthy digest of women's political, civil, and nationality rights as of 1938, and compared legal regulations for women and men engaged in industry, commerce, and agriculture." It also, unprecedentedly, included a special supplement on maternity legislation. Stevens and Bernardino argued that women's rights were a matter of international concern and that women's right to vote should be subject to international treaty.[146]

In response, the U.S. delegates deflated both the IACW suffrage treaty and its plans to continue its work under Stevens's leadership. Led by the U.S. delegation, the

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[145] Jonathan Mitchell's notes on State Department files, Box 26, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[146] This agenda had been decided at an IACW meeting preceding the conference. Minutes of the Committee meeting of the Inter American Commission of Women held in Pan American Union, Washington, D.C., June 25, 1938." Box 75, Folder 7, Stevens Papers.

Fourth Committee rejected the IACW proposed treaty on suffrage and a different resolution that included language about protective legislation for working women. The State Department's proposal specified working women be "safeguarded by legislation against economic exploitation and physically harmful conditions of employment, including the safeguarding of motherhood."[147]

In addition, the U.S. delegation recommended that the Inter-American Commission of Women be placed on an "official and permanent status" as an advisory body to the Governing Board of the Pan American Union, with each commissioner appointed by her government.[148] Backing them up in this proposal was Mexican reformer and Communist Josefé Balmeceda, another member of the Fourth Committee, who also "introduced a resolution into the Conference to the same effect, advocating that all autonomy be taken from the Commission and that it be under the strict control of member governments of the Pan American Union and/or the Pan American Union itself."[149]

Unlike other Pan American conferences that preceded it, this time Stevens had little support to draw on. None of the leftist Latin American feminists in attendance made any robust attempt to support the Inter-American Commission of Women. Stevens later reported that Ana Rosa Schlieper and Susana Larguia turned their backs on her during the conference proceedings: "The Argentine team behaved like rats."[150]

It was not just leftist Latin American feminists, however, who lacked support for the Commission under Stevens's leadership. Another person who was vocal in her argument for reorganizing the Commission was the reformer Mercedes de Gallagher Parks of Peru, a member of the Fourth Committee. A patrician women's rights reformer, she had been involved in Pan-American women's organizing for many years. She argued in favor of the abolition of the IACW in its current form and its incorporation into the Pan American Union on the grounds that the IACW contained delegates who were members of the Communist party. As Parks later explained to Stevens, "I did not approve of some of your members. They belong to the type of violent feminists which I consider do no good at all to any cause."[151] She was likely referring to Marta Vergara who was a member of the Communist Party, and also possibly Clara González, whom many believed was a Communist as well. Roundly objecting to Mercedes Gallagher de Parks's characterization was Brazilian feminist Rosalina Cohelo Miller, one of the only people in the Fourth Committee who vehemently objected to the plans to reorganize the IACW. Her objections, and her friendship with Doris Stevens, likely only confirmed for many the affiliation of the IACW with the right. Rosalina Cohelo Miller had recently aroused the alarm of the State Department for her fascist beliefs; as Doris Stevens wrote to Jonathan Mitchell after the conference, "She is a fascist and she doesn't care who knows it."[152]

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[147] Mary Winslow, Untitled proposal, n.d., II:423, LWV Papers, LoC.
[148] Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 440.
[149] "Proyecto de Resolución que Presenta la Delegación de Mexico a la Octava Conferencia Internacional Americana sobre la Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres," Box 75, Folder 3; Unpublished memoirs, Box 127, Folder 3, Stevens Papers.
[150] Stevens to Mitchell, December 29, 1938, Box 25, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

Despite long and heated debate, in the end, there was not enough robust opposition to the U.S. delegation's plan, and they successfully passed the resolution that reorganized the Commission and would remove Stevens from its chairmanship.[153] The Fourth Committee also agreed upon a "Declaration of Lima in Favor of Women's Rights" which established the protective legislation Mary Winslow had sought to secure, granting women:

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[151] Harold B. Hinton, "Lima Group Backs Rights for Women," *New York Times*, December 18, 1938, 45; Mercedes Gallagher de Parks to Stevens, February 8, 1939, Box 85, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

[152] Stevens to Mitchell, December 29, 1938, Box 25, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

> a. To political treatment on the basis of equality with men;
> b. To the enjoyment of equality as to civil status;
> c. To the most ample opportunities for work and to be protected therein;
> d. To the most ample protection as mothers.[154]

Doris Stevens would not give up her chairmanship without a fight. Over the months that followed the Lima Conference, Stevens and her allies argued that the U.S. government *had* in fact authorized Stevens's appointment to the Commission because then-Secretary of State Kellogg was the head of the Governing Board of the Pan American Union that nominated Stevens as chairman. She enlisted the help of influential statesmen and jurists like James Brown Scott, Antonio Sanchez Bustamante, and others with whom she had developed relationships over the years, who campaigned for Stevens to retain the chairmanship. Nonetheless, three months after the meeting, the State Department appointed Mary Winslow of the WTUL as the new chairman, and soon after she was replaced by the appointment of the Argentine feminist Ana Rosa Shlieper Martínez de Guerrero. The headquarters of the IACW, it was announced, would be moved to Buenos Aires.

These events calcified Stevens's animus toward the Roosevelt administration, and especially for Eleanor Roosevelt, whom Stevens was convinced had been the motivating factor behind the State Department's actions in Lima. In many ways, her removal as IACW chairman became one of the defining moments in her life; as the years went on, Stevens drifted even more toward the right, becoming a virulent anti-Communist engaged in the red-baiting of the McCarthy years. In the 1960s, she spent the last years of her life writing an unfinished draft of a memoir that detailed the underhandedness of the Roosevelt administration toward her.

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[153] Although Stevens and her colleagues managed to retain for the IACW the power to recommend action on questions related to the status of women, under the new system, the Governing Board of the Pan American Union was under no obligation to consider these recommendations. Hill, "International Law for Women's Rights," 451.

[154] *Final Act, December, 1938* (Lima, Peru: Printed by Torres Aguirre, 1938), 41.

Another person whose relationship with the IACW was affected by the reorganization was Clara González. After being banned from teaching at the National Institute, González moved to Costa Rica in "voluntary exile" from her government and to recuperate from her bouts of ill health.[155] González worked there with opposition forces planning an armed overthrow of the Acción Comunal. In early 1939 Panama announced that "under its own interpretation of the Lima Resolution," it named Esther Niera de Calvo to replace González as the delegate, appointing her in May, 1939, as the Panamanian representative of the Inter-American Commission of Women.[156]

Evelyn Rigby Moore kept Doris Stevens apprised of Clara González's whereabouts, and of events in Panama. In late November, 1939, Stevens wrote to Moore about the move of the Commission headquarters to Argentina, and expressed her fear that the Commission would "lose prestige and will become just an adjunct of the Argentine government." She also asked for Clara González's address in Costa Rica, saying that she wanted to write to her. She was concerned about González. And now that the Inter-American Commission of Women had been restructured, and war had broken out,

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[155] Moore to Stevens, November 18, 1939, Box 84, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

[156] Gaeta Wold Boyer to Esther Niera de Calvo, May 8, 1939, Box 60, Folder 11; "Replies from Foreign Office of American Republics to Scott and Bustamante Opinion of June 12, 1939," Box 127, Folder 5, Stevens Papers.

Stevens worried too about the state of feminism and women more generally: "The world is again in acute distress since we last met. It is not going to be a very fruitful time for the arts of peace, such as the status of women."[157]

The Inter-American Commission of Women would never have the same power as a women's rights organization that it had when it had autonomy before 1939. But the IACW had never been definitive of Pan-American feminism, and World War II would not quench the larger movement. During and after the war, feminists in the Americas continued their struggles for suffrage, for social and economic welfare, and for multi-lateralism and peace. Following the war, Pan-American feminists would bring this agenda to the founding of the United Nations. There they would take the lead in pushing women's rights into the concept of international human rights.

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[157] Stevens to Moore, November 30, 1939, Box 84, Folder 4, Stevens Papers.

Chapter 7

"A Latin American Contribution to the Constitution to the World," 1933-1946

Ever since the 1922 Pan American Conference of Women in Baltimore, Bertha Lutz had dreamed of an international group of women from the Western Hemisphere working together for women's rights and social and economic welfare, and for peace in the world. For many years she lamented the Inter-American Commission of Women, which, under Doris Stevens's leadership, did not embody the broad feminist agenda Lutz desired. But now as a member of the Brazilian delegation to the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco, Lutz anticipated the fruition of her long-sought goals for Pan-American feminism. After the shocks of World War II, within this new supranational institution for global peacekeeping, she hoped women of the Western Hemisphere, especially from the U.S. and Brazil, could take the lead. They would promote democracy, peace, and establish women's social, political, civil, and economic rights. Lutz believed that the charter of the UN could reflect women's equality in all the major bodies of the United Nations, and could also compose a separate commission to study and recommend changes to the status of women worldwide. With an international remit, this commission, according to Lutz's design, would study not only women's civil and political rights, but also their social and economic welfare, and thus, supersede the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

Lutz, a longtime Anglo-phile who harbored prejudices about the "hereditary" superiority of English-speaking people, hoped that British and U.S. women, especially those in the League of Women Voters and those in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, would aid her in these efforts. She was deeply disappointed, however, to find that neither U.S. nor British women's groups supported her feminist proposals at the conference. In a letter to her Pan-American feminist mentor Carrie Chapman Catt, Lutz complained about the lack of support from women from nations where women had already secured their rights. She pointed out that, on the other hand, feminists and delegates from Latin America were showing the strongest support for including women's rights in the UN Charter. She wrote to Catt: "I believe your mantle is falling off the shoulder of the Anglo-Saxons and that we [Latin American women] shall have to do the next stage of the battle for women. We shall do so."[1]

The disappointments Lutz felt about the lack of U.S. support for her feminist proposals, and her new inspiration in the women of Latin America, were only compounded by her broader disillusionment during the conference with the United States and Great Britain. Lutz had hoped for a multi-lateral organization in which smaller and larger nations would collaborate democratically for peace and justice. But the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union were shaping the United Nations into a hierarchical organ structured by Great Power hegemony, one that would benefit only from the veto power of the "Big Five" countries. At the conference, Lutz joined a group of dissatisfied delegates from Latin America and from other smaller countries who were deeply critical of Great-Power dominance in this new body, and who, in turn, made vocal demands for the inclusion of individual human rights in the charter, including women's rights.

In this context Lutz forged what was, for her, a new sort of Pan-American feminist collaboration, one with Spanish-speaking women of the Americas in the lead, and supported by delegates from smaller nations at the conference. It was one that demanded rights for women as well as rights for all nations – and that saw these two goals as mutually constitutive. Lutz, together with Minerva Bernardino from the Dominican Republic who was also the current president of the Inter-American Commission of Women, Amalia Castillo de Ledon from Mexico, and Isabel Pinto de Vidal, all women who had been engaged in Pan-American feminism in earlier years, formed the backbone of this feminist mobilization. They gained support from Jessie Street, a feminist consultant from the Australian delegation, as well as from various male delegates from Ethiopia, India, and other countries. Together, these women amended the UN charter in order to secure women's parity with men in the organizational structure of the United Nations, and they proposed what a year later would become the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

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[1] Bertha Lutz to Carrie Chapman Catt, May 21, 1945, NAWSA Papers, Reel 12.

Their efforts represented the culmination of several decades of Pan-American feminism. Shaped by Latin American feminists who had long pushed a broad "equal rights" agenda that included not only political and civil rights but also social and economic welfare and international multi-lateralism, Pan-American feminism helped make possible Lutz and her Latin American colleagues' activism at the UN conference. It served as a catalyst for their successful push of women's rights onto the agenda of international human rights.

Their activism, and Pan-American feminism more broadly, have typically been overlooked in histories that trace the genealogy of the notion that "women's rights are human rights." Studies of the postwar United Nations tend to overlook gender in general. Historians of the postwar creation of the UN have recently shed new light on the ways Great Britain and the U.S. dominated the conference and have given credit to the role that a host of delegates from smaller countries, especially Latin America, played in promoting a human rights agenda in the charter of the United Nations. In describing this activism, one historian has even called "Latin America the forgotten crucible of the universal human rights idea."[2] However, this literature does not explore how and why Latin American women were the ones to specifically forward *women*'s rights goals or the gendered dynamics, or how male delegates from Latin America and other countries promoted these goals, nor does it examine the role that gender played in the geopolitical concerns of the conference more generally.[3]

Meanwhile, historians of feminism who have begun to uncover the efforts of Latin American feminists at this 1945 founding conference of the United Nations have typically failed to discuss the broader context of Pan-Americanism, and of Pan-American feminism that preceded it, and have also not integrated the women's rights goals with other human rights goals at the conference. U.S. opposition to Lutz's feminist goals at the conference is typically situated within the context of U.S. women reformers' opposition to “equal rights” in the United States and to U.S. female reformer superiority over women from “backward nations.”[4]

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[2] Mary Ann Glendon, "The Forgotten Crucible: The Latin American Influence on the Universal Human Rights Idea," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 16, no 27 (2003): 27.

[3] This literature sometimes mentions women's rights as part of a broader human rights agenda but does not specifically examine women's rights. See Glendon, "The Forgotten Crucible;" Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York, Random House, 2001); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Paolo G. Carozza, "From Conquest to Constitutions: Retrieving a Latin American Tradition of the Idea of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 25 (2008): 281-313. An introduction to a special gender and human rights issue of *Central European History* asks "why it has been so difficult, even for scholars trained and committed to gender history, adequately to gender the history of human rights in the postwar moment." The authors suggest that "This particular absence may reflect in part the fact that the postwar human-rights regime was not articulated in gendered terms—despite the involvement of women such as Eleanor Roosevelt in highly visible representative ways in the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in on-the-ground humanitarian work in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust…" However, the the activism of Lutz and other Pan-American feminists at the 1945 conference is not mentioned. Carola Sachse and Atina Grossman, "Human Rights, Utopias, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Europe, Introduction," *Central European History* 44 (2011): 10-11.

At the United Nations conference, efforts to include “women’s rights” and “human rights” became mutually constitutive, and the broader context of Pan-American feminism was central to these projects. Though Pan-American feminism represented a myriad of women’s rights goals, it always combined desires for women’s rights with desires for international multi-lateralism and opposition to U.S. hegemony. Led by Latin American feminists, it also almost always blended strong support of social and economic support for women with political and civil equality. Bertha Lutz’s changing ideology from the 1930s to the 1940s provides a window into these decades of Pan-American feminism; she evolved to embrace multi-pronged goals at the 1945 United Nations Conference. It also investigates the broader contexts of Great Power hegemony and smaller power human rights mobilization at the conference that fundamentally shaped Latin American feminists’ successful push of “women’s rights” into the UN Charter. At the conference, Lutz called this act a “Latin American contribution to the constitution of the world.” Pan-American feminism could be called the “forgotten crucible” of the notion that “women’s rights are human rights.”

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[4] Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present*, 370; Jo Butterfield, “Playing Russian Roulette: Cold War Politics, International Feminism and the Stakes over the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women,” 14th Berkshire Conference, 2008; Helen Laville, “A New Era in International Women’s Rights?: American Women’s Associations and the Establishment of the UN Commission on the Status of Women,” *Journal of Women’s History* 20, no. 4 (2008): 34-56. Ellen DuBois and Lauren Derby, “The Strange Case of Minerva Bernardino: Pan American and United Nations Women’s Rights Activist,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 32 (2009): 43-50. Other scholarship that focuses on U.S. women’s efforts at the United Nations conference include Paula Pfeffer, “‘A Whisper in the Assembly of the Nations’: United States’ Participation in the International Movement for Women’s Rights from the League of Nations to the United Nations,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 8, no. 5 (1985): 459-471; Martha F. Davis, “Not so Foreign After All: Alice Paul and International Women’s Rights,” *New England Journal of International and Comparative Law* 16 (2010).

Bertha Lutz, 1933-1945

After the 1933 Montevideo conference, at which she made vehement though ultimately unsuccessful sallies against the Inter-American Commission of Women, Bertha Lutz still maintained fervid hopes for Pan-American feminism. She held fast to her goal of someday releasing the organization from the grip of Doris Stevens and her narrow "equal rights" ideology. Lutz always integrated social and economic concerns for women with her feminist goals of political and civil equality, but the Great Depression was making her resent even more deeply the platform of the IACW which, in its strict "equal rights" focus, did not integrate social and economic welfare of women and children. It was also making her a sharper critic of capitalism. In 1934, Lutz wrote to Catt that she had been "reading much Russian literature" and "personally [felt] convinced that socialism will triumph and the russian revolution is as fundamental as the French one." [sic][5]

While she was not part of a Popular-Front movement in Brazil, as her counterparts Clara González and Marta Vergara were in Panama and Chile, Lutz nonetheless did identify with a sort of Popular-Front Pan-American feminism, broadly conceived. She called for an inclusive social democratic feminism that opposed fascism and that emphasized women's equality in civil, political, and economic life.

The rise of fascism internationally, though, also reinforced Lutz's particular type of Pan-American feminism that privileged leadership of feminists from the "better-constituted" nations of the Americas – which she believed were the United States and

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[5] Lutz to Catt, February 12, 1934, NAWSA Papers, Reel 12.

Brazil. She feared the erosion women's rights in European countries where fascism was encroaching, and she believed that only powerful countries standing for social democracy could be a defense against the fascism she saw creeping in Europe and in the Americas. Lutz was great admirer of the social democratic measures of the Roosevelt administration and his inclusion of women in government positions. While Lutz did fear the development of fascism in Brazil, she believed that together, Brazil and the United States could model social and economic welfare measures, particularly regarding working women's rights, for the rest of the world. As she wrote to Freida Miller, "The North-American Government has shown the best appreciation of women's capacity to collaborate in government…Brazil…is liberally and intelligently disposed towards women also."[6]

Bolstering Lutz's optimism about Brazil's role in the liberal leadership of the world was its recent enactment of a Constitution that incorporated social democratic and feminist measures, a number of which Lutz herself had authored. In 1934, she published a list of recommendations, many of which had made it into the Constitution, establishing for women the rights to vote, participate in Government Committees, and hold office in all departments of the Civil Service as well as rights of equal nationality, citizenship, labor access and remuneration. The Constitution also guaranteed to men and women a minimum salary, an eight-hour day, and health insurance.[7] In a 1936 article in the bulletin of her feminist organization, the *Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino* (FBPF), Lutz stated that the strong show of equality for women demonstrated by the

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[6] Lutz to Miller, February 18, 1936, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[7] "Victory in Brazil, A Short Report on Fifteen Years of Work," *Boletim da FBPF* 1 (February, 1935) 3; Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, 170.

Brazilian constitution revealed that the Americas were establishing greater freedoms for women than in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.[8]

Lutz tried to advance this vision when, in 1936, she was elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies.[9] In this capacity, she helped organize and became the president of the Commission on the Code for Women, intended to draft new legislation on their social and economic rights. Under these auspices, she published *O Trabalho Femenino: A mulher na ordem economica e social* (Female Work: Women in the Social and Economic Order). This report, that spanned over 150 pages, forwarded goals that combined a strong notion of equal rights with social welfare for working women. It recommended that the government guarantee all women, regardless of civil status, the freedom to pursue whatever profession or economic activity they chose. The report also endorsed prohibiting all restrictions based on sex or civil status, especially regarding hiring and firing. To prevent the principle of equal pay for equal work from being undermined, the report stipulated that "work should be distributed independent of sex, and the withholding of better-paid jobs from women should be prohibited."[10] *O Trabalho Femenino* also proposed the creation of a Statute on Women and a National Department and General Council of the Home, Women's Work, Welfare, and Maternity Safety.[11]

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[8] "Entrevista: Visita cultural nazista: Bertha Lutz entrevista Louise Diehl, jornalista alemã nazista" *Boletim da FBPF* (June 1936): 3.

[9] She was elected upon the death of a male candidate.

[10] Bertha Lutz, *O trabalho femimino: A mulher na ordem economica e social* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1937). The statute even include a proposal of salaries for housewives as part of the minimum wage.

[11] They were Project Number 623 "Creo o Departamento Nacional e o Conselho Geral do Lar, Trabalho Feminino, Previdencia e Seguro Maternal" and Project Number 736 "Crea o Estatuto da Mulher."

Pan-American feminism played a strong role in these plans. In the report, Lutz explicitly modeled her plans for the National Department on Women's Work, Welfare, and Maternity Safety on the United States' Women's Bureau, the agency created by the U.S. Congress in 1920 as part of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department Lutz had in mind would study and "formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women…," Lutz wrote, quoting Mary Anderson, president of the Bureau. It would engage in research into actual conditions of women, in organization of a system of maternal insurance, and in training of professional social workers.[12]

Lutz also pointedly praised the progress in safeguarding female labor in the Americas, especially in Brazil and in the United States, as opposed to Europe: "In the American Continent…the guarantees for female work have found more fertile ground [than in Europe], moving quickly at times, almost overnight, from the complete absence of legislation and guarantees for women's work to the establishment of modern and relatively good systems."

Here she lauded the admirable work of U.S. reformers Mary Anderson and Frances Perkins.[13]

In her report, Lutz also could not help but critique the Inter-American Commission of Women under Doris Stevens's leadership and promote her own brand of Pan-American feminism. Writing about the significance she believed the various inter-American conferences of the past decade had for women's rights in various nations in the Americas, and she explained that a shift was occurring in how these conferences approached women's rights. At first, she noted, the conferences dealt with women's rights "in a …romantic manner, in keeping with the doctrinaire…equality theory." Here she referred to the narrow "equal rights" stance of the IACW under Stevens's leadership. However, she noted that "since the [Montevideo Conference]" they had "taken a more practical approach, considering women in the social and economic order," giving herself partial credit for this shift. Drawing attention to her own prestigious role in the conference, Lutz applied pressure on the Brazilian legislature to enact her goals.

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[12] Lutz, *O trabalho femimino.*
[13] Ibid., 39.

Lutz's plans for social and economic safeguards for women in Brazil came to an abrupt halt, however, in November 1937, when the president of Brazil, Getulio Vargas led a military coup and instituted a corporatist authoritarian regime. His *Estado Novo* (1937-45) was reminiscent of fascist dictatorships in Europe. Most of the feminist constitutional guarantees were eliminated before they had even been enforced. Although women retained the right to vote, under Vargas the state reinforced women's subordination to men, regarding women as wives and mothers rather than as political allies. It also reinstated "protective" legislation for women workers in an effort to curtail women's employment outside the home.[14]

The rise of the Vargas dictatorship made Lutz believe even more urgently in a confederation of women from the Americas, and specifically from the United States, in forwarding social democracy and women's rights. Lutz had always tended toward essentialist notions of female difference and an idea that women were more naturally nurturing than men, but the rise of the Vargas dictatorship also radicalized her perspective on gender difference and the notion that women needed to come to the rescue. She saw fascism, dictatorships, and abuses of power more generally as produces of excessive "masculinism." Early in 1938, Lutz wrote to her friend the U.S. historian Mary Wilhelmine Williams angrily outlining the situation in Brazil and decrying Vargas' "fiercely nationalist" and "masculinist" actions: "I come more and more to the conclusion that no civilization is possible without women very decisively in public affairs. I am for a matriarchal form of government, the male of the species… should not be allowed to govern [as] he has an incurable passion for fighting, power, and self-deception as to his uselessness…[15]

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[14] Thomas Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, 2000): 29-32; Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy*, 174; Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 189.

While Lutz wanted to see women rise to positions of world leadership, she also specifically wanted to see women from the U.S. take the lead. The rise of dictatorships in Spain, Germany, Italy, Japan, and throughout the Americas was reinforcing for her "biologic" views of U.S. and Anglo-Saxon superiority. As she wrote to a friend in the United States, "I have more faith in the women than in the men of this southern hemisphere, though I have more faith in the English-speaking peoples than in any geographic division of population."[16] To Carrie Chapman Catt she expounded on the connections between anti-fascism and alignments with what she called the "politically educated nations": "All the south of America is strongly influenced by the two extremist currents in Europe. The panamerican friendship is deep, but overlaid by those influences. It is very necessary to have more contact with politically educated nations, the anglo saxon and Scandinavian …principally."[17]

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[15] Lutz to Mary Wilhelmine Williams, March 1, 1938, Williams Papers, Special Collections, Green Library, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[16] Lutz to Lillian Estelle Fisher, July 5, 1941, Folder 16, Lillian Estelle Fisher Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California.
[17] Lutz to Catt, February, 1936, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

When, in August of 1939, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler's Germany, Lutz redoubled her desires to unite with U.S. women. In 1940 Lutz reached out to the League of Women Voters to present a "united front of women in the new world" and to focus on an anti-fascist Pan-American feminism. She wrote to the LWV president:

> The fate of women in Europe may not directly affect the women of the United States, as their position is the most secure and the most privileged, but it will, without any doubt, affect women in all the sister republics. We feel that Latin-American women alone could not influence events, but a united effort of all American women for the rights of women will certainly have a repercussion far and wide.[18]

She ended by saying that although the past years had been difficult for the FBPF, it continued to exist and "remain true to its old ideals and friendships." The LWV, however, offered Lutz a tepid response of sympathy but no concrete support.[19] In a *New York Times* interview Lutz implicitly critiqued women in the U.S. for their flagging interests in Pan-American feminism. She urged women in the U.S. to "get back some of the energy and power they had in the early Nineteen Twenties." And she wrote: "I can't help but feel that Pan-Americanism, as a weapon against totalitarianism, is on a very flimsy basis right now..."[20]

Nonetheless, Lutz maintained hopes that she could ally with U.S. women and lead a revived Pan-American feminism. She still abhorred the Inter-American Commission of Women. Even after Doris Stevens was removed from its leadership in 1939 Lutz believed that Stevens had left an indelible mark on the group. As late as 1939 Lutz had written to Carrie Chapman Catt, “I consider that the nuisance value of Doris Stevens approximates that of Adolf Hitler as far as women are concerned…Stevens has made the Inter-american problem insoluble as long as she lives.” Lutz expressed her hopes to Catt that she could devote herself in some way to the “cause.” She would find this opportunity in 1945 at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, the meeting that would write the charter of the supranational organization designed to preserve peace in the postwar world. There she would abandon her dream of collaborating with U.S. women and forge a new Pan-American feminism – one separate from the Inter-American Commission of Women, and led by herself and Spanish-speaking Latin American feminists.

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[18] Lutz to [Marguerite Wells], January 13, 1940, III:120, League of Women Voters Papers (LWVP).

[19] Wells to Lutz, February 9, 1940, III:120, LWVP.

[20] Lutz quoted in "Await Suffrage in Latin America," *New York Times*, March 23, 1941, D4.

The United Nations Conference on International Organization, 1945

In April, 1945 at the start of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, Lutz attended a tea in the hotel sitting room of Virginia Gildersleeve, the Dean of Barnard College who was a member of the U.S. delegation to conference, and Florence Horsbrugh, one of two female British delegates. Lutz divulged to these women her goals that the new United Nations include women in all integral bodies of the new organ and that it create a separate commission on the status of women. Only by doing so, Lutz believed, could the world hope to live up to the ideals of equality and the four freedoms espoused by Roosevelt’s 1941 Atlantic Charter.

To Lutz’s dismay, however, she found that Gildersleeve and Horsbrugh opposed these plans. Gildersleeve, Lutz wrote to Carrie Chapman Catt, was “a very old fashioned anti-feminist,” who in fact “requested us…to put in nothing for women, giving us to understand that would be unlady-like."[21] Lutz also reported that Horsbrugh told her that she (Horsbrugh) was "a Minister, [and that] women need nothing more in England.'" To this statement, Lutz reminded Horsbrugh that while women were slowly advancing in government positions in the world, female employees in many places throughout the world, including England, were not paid the same salaries as men.

Although Gildersleeve, Horsbrugh, and the other female delegate from England, Ellen Wilkinson, had all benefitted from the feminist movement and were part of women's associations in their countries, they were eager to disassociate themselves from feminist demands at the conference.[22] A number of U.S. and British women's groups, including the U.S. League of Women Voters and Women's Bureau, had decided to distance themselves from women's rights goals at the United Nations conference.

Their decision to do so stemmed in part from their opposition to National Woman's Party-inspired international equality measures and also in part from a more general trend toward subordinating "women's rights" to "human rights" during the war years. Alice Paul's newly-created World Woman's Party was vocal at this time in its advocacy of equality measures in the UN Charter. For U.S. women in the Roosevelt administration and the League of Women Voters, however, who had long opposed the NWP Equal Rights stance, Paul's emphasis on women's rights seemed not only dangerous for women but also in bad taste during a time when what they considered more pressing humanitarian goals should take precedence. The war years had seen the growth of this trend. During this period the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom considered taking "Women" out of their title, believing that the separatism of the group had served its purpose and that it was now time to include male pacifists in the organization.[23] Many of these women believed that U.S. women's suffrage gains and their expanded roles in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt government, which secured a few women in public positions during the New Deal, evinced sufficient progress for women; they also believed that feminism was unnecessarily antagonistic.[24] Eleanor Roosevelt clearly embodied this shift. In the meetings she led drafting the UN Declaration of Rights, following the United Nations conference, she repeatedly insisted that the word "men" in the Declaration was inclusive of "men and women" and that "women" did not need to be specified.[25]

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[21] Lutz to Catt, May 21, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[22] Gildersleeve was a member of the American Association of University Women.

Gildersleeve, Horsbrugh, and Wilkinson, were also of this mindset. At the UN conference, Gildersleeve and other women from the U.S. believed that broader humanitarian concerns and, above all, support for the U.S. government delegation's goals should take precedence. Gildersleeve opined in her memoirs that "At this stage in the advancement of women the best policy for them is to *not talk too much* about the abstract principles of women's rights, but to do good in any job they get."[26] According to her, when reporters asked Horsbrugh and Wilkinson "how it felt to be women delegates," the two women "replied indignantly: 'We are *not* "women delegates." We are delegates of our country and ministers of our government.'" Of Bertha Lutz, Gildersleeve wrote that she was shocked by her avowal of "herself [as] a militant feminist in favor of what seemed to me segregation of women." In her memoirs, Gildersleeve wrote: "It was a great surprise to me when I found at San Francisco among some of the women delegates that old militant feminism which I thought had passed away. Some of the women felt it necessary to call attention frequently to women and their problems and to rub in the fact that they were women."[27]

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[23] Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 128.

[24] On the gender politics of this period and the continuing politics of feminist separatism, see Estelle B. Freedman, "Separatism Revisited: Women's Institutions, Social Reform, and the Career of Miriram Van Waters," *Feminism, Sexuality, and Politics: Essays by Estelle B. Freedman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 37-56.

[25] Glendon quotes Eleanor Roosevelt saying, "'when we say "all men are brothers," we mean that all human beings are brothers, and we are not differentiating between men and women.'" Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New*, 68, 90.

[26] Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve, *Many a Good Crusade* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 350-1.

These militant feminists to whom Gildersleeve referred included not only Lutz but also a number of other women from Latin America: Minerva Bernardino, the chairman of the Inter-American Commission of Women and delegate from the Dominican Republic; Amalia Castillo de Ledón, Mexican representative on the IACW and an assistant to Bernardino; and Isabel Pinto de Vidal a senator from Uruguay and a longtime member of Paulina Luisi's women's group *Alianza Nacional de Mujeres* in Montevideo, who was on the Uruguayan delegation to the UN conference. It was with these women that Lutz found greater feminist connection. While Lutz had been wary of Minerva Bernardino since she had met her in at the 1933 Montevideo conference, and Bernardino had allied with Doris Stevens, both Bernardino and Amalia Castillo de Ledon were taking strong stands for women's rights in the new international order. At the inter-American conference, the Chapultepec Conference on the Problems of War and Peace in Mexico that took place in March, 1945, just a month before the UN Conference, Bernardino and Castillo had proposed and passed a resolution praising all of the American nations that had endorsed women's rights and suffrage, declaring suffrage to be a matter of "the most elemental human justice."

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[27] Gildersleeve, *Many a Good Crusade*, 349-350.

Lutz also found an ideological counterpart in Isabel Pinto de Vidal, whom she affectionately called "a motherly little lioness." As Lutz put it they agreed that "we need to assure the coming of more women of the right sort so that before there is another war we shall be numerous enough to tackle the real bad problems…"[28] Together, these women drafted provisions amending the Charter with the explicit statement that women would be eligible to serve in any capacity and under conditions of equality in the United Nations. Isabel Pinto de Vidal proposed an amendment that "Representation and participation in the organs of the Organization shall be open both to men and women under the same conditions." Lutz, de Ledon, and Bernardino jointly drafted a similar amendment: "Inclusion under Chapter V at any appropriate point, of the following paragraph: Representation and participation in the General International Organization shall be open to men and women under equal conditions."[29]

In addition to the committee meetings, Lutz, de Ledon, Bernardino, and de Vidal met separately almost daily. In these meetings they gained the support of Australian feminist Jessie Street, who had recently drafted a woman's charter in Australia that similarly combined the "equal rights" feminism of Lutz with social and economic welfare; it both "abolished sex discrimination and provided for working women free access to daycare." Street helped Lutz and the other feminists solicit committee members. Regarding their constant canvassing, Street later explained, "Many of [the other committee members] recognized that women were regarded as second-class citizens in nearly every country and that a special campaign would have to be undertaken throughout the United Nations to ensure that women were accorded universal respect and that human rights and fundamental freedoms applied to them."[30]

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[28] Lutz to Catt, May 21, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[29] Alfred Edward Volpe, "Latin America at San Francisco: The Aims, Attitudes, and Accomplishments of Latin America at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, April 25-June 26, 1945," PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 1950, 388.

The debates in the Committee meetings were heated, with the United States, Great Britain, and Cuba opposing the provision that de Vidal, Lutz, de Ledon, and Bernardino proposed. The delegates from these countries explained that explicit inclusion of "equal rights" for women was unnecessary since it was understood that women were not to be excluded from participation in the international body.[31] De Vidal, Street, and Lutz all spoke out in favor of the amendment, explaining that such an understanding did not in fact exist. Street "pointed out that in many countries women are excluded from occupying various positions just because the law does not specifically state they are eligible." Such exclusion had long been the case in Latin American countries in which "ciudadanos" was interpreted as male-only when applied to suffrage. Lutz noted, "We worked to obtain rights for women in Brazil for twenty-five years, women in the United States worked for sixty years and women in Great Britain for seventy years. Why should women have had to do all this work if it was unnecessary?"[32] Citing major constitutional declarations from the Magna Carta to the preamble of the American Constitution, Lutz pointed out, "you would find that men have never found it unnecessary to make a statement of their rights. Why, then, should it be unnecessary to make a statement of the rights of women?"[33]

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[30] Jessie M. G. Street, *Jessie Street: A Revised Autobiography*, ed., Leonore Coltheart (Annandale, N. W. W.: Federation Press, 2004): 182.
[31] Summary Report of Fifth Meeting of Committee I/2, May 11, 1945, Doc 244, I/2/12. Volpe, "Latin America at San Francisco," 341-343.
[32] Street, *Jessie Street,* 181-183.
[33] Quoted in Ibid., 183.

In Bertha Lutz's speech, she also negated the assumption prevalent among Gildersleeve and others that "men" naturally included "women":

> …It has always been held that women have been included in the general term 'men' throughout the centuries, and we also know that it has always resulted in the fact that women were precluded from taking part in public affairs. Now things have changed. I have noticed that during the last few years in the United Kingdom the King always addresses 'the men and women of this country.' The same phraseology is found in the speeches of the President of the United States. It is also developing throughout the Latin American Republics.[34]

While Lutz upheld the U.S. and Britain as models, privately, to her mentor Carrie Chapman Catt, Lutz wrote that she was deeply disappointed by the lack of support from the women and delegations of these nations:

> Your Brazilian daughter and the Latin american women with Australia have been doing great battle to get an article into the Charter giving women representation and participation on equal terms. Contrary to all expectation we have had no support at all from Britain and America, but good support from the Latins and some of the Orientals. The Russians are also standing by us. Miss Gildersleeve is a very old fashioned anti-feminist.[35]

She was also disappointed by the lack of support from U.S. women, noting "Your American women's associations here gave us very luke warm support until I told them straight that we expected more than that from them." Nonetheless, Lutz added: "I can assure you that we have eaten fire and have been sick at heart but we stood the fire and will stand it to the end."

Ultimately, Lutz and her cohort gained support for the amendment, which was finally adopted as originally drafted. The U.S. and Cuba voted against it, and the United Kingdom abstained, but other countries gave the provision their hearty support. Now, Article 8 of the UN Charter read: "The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs."

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[34] Street, *Jessie Street,* 183.

[35] Lutz to Catt, May 21, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

While a desire for women's equal rights guided this proposal, a belief in women's inherent superiority as leaders also steered it just as strongly. Lutz and de Vidal believed that only with women in leadership roles could the new international organization preserve peace. Their belief in the superiority of women "of the right sort" was only reinforced by events at the San Francisco conference itself. As de Vidal explained of the conference, "The men are too much afraid of facing and threshing out the fundamental difficulties and they do not give the women (who are too few of the right sort) the opportunity to tackle these problems."[36] The fundamental problems, according to de Vidal and Lutz, were not only war but, relatedly, the hegemony exerted over all the other countries of the world by the Great Powers.

For all of Lutz's beliefs in the "hereditary" superiority of English-speaking people, she also had great pride in Brazil and believed lasting peace could only be achieved through multi-lateralism, and a democratic inclusion of all countries in a peace-keeping body. At the UN conference, however, she found that the Great Powers had little concern for any goals aside from enshrining collective security in the United Nations. Great Power hegemony had been part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's plans for the UN from the outset; as early as January 1944 he had told Stalin that the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union would be "the trustees for the peace of the world" and that "any new world organization would have to be compatible with a high degree of Great Power control." Proceedings at the UN conference reflected this vision. Its Security Council would be dominated by the Big Five countries that would hold veto power. As Mark Mazower has written, many delegates from "smaller nations…feared that the UN represented a step backward, and that the Great Powers were seeking, under the guise of internationalism, to create a new world directorate, far more frightening…because of the awesome technology at its disposal."[37]

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[36] Lutz to Catt, May 21, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

The frightening new atomic power held by the Great Powers especially concerned Bertha Lutz, who believed that it would only be with a worldwide federation of equal nations that the world would avoid a third and cataclysmic war. She was dismayed that the "Great Five" countries alone would hold exclusive jurisdiction for keeping the peace. As Lutz wrote to Catt, "The reasonable thing would have been to make a Constitution for a World Federation and to limit the power of the great nations to the field in which they are really powerful, that of force. Without justice and democracy this thing will never work. It will only perpetuate tyranny."[38]

Many of the delegates from the fifty nations who gathered in San Francisco for the conference were similarly disillusioned. They had come to the UN conference and determined to hold the Allies to their wartime rhetoric of "freedom and democracy," and inspired by the "four freedoms" Roosevelt had promised in the form of human rights resolutions in the new UN.[39] Uniting in their opposition to the agenda of the United States for the international body, they, in turn "redirected attention back to the rights of the General Assembly, the commitment to human rights, the plight of colonial peoples, and the veto issue."[40] While they also did not succeed in altering the undemocratic and unrepresentative nature of Great Power leadership of the United Nations, they did have greater success in pushing a human rights agenda.[41]

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[37] Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 196.
[38] Lutz to Catt, June 3, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[39] Glendon, *A World Made New*, 10.

Though lesser in clout, the smaller nations, together, held substantial voting power, and delegates from Latin America, India, and Ethiopia, managed to secure human rights language in the UN charter. Representatives from the Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, India, Panama, Uruguay, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Venezuela argued for proposals that combated racial discrimination, and as Mary Ann Glendon writes, "Their combined efforts, supported by China, France, and the Soviet Union, produced the Charter's radical challenge to the social status quo throughout the world: an emphatic statement that human rights belong to everyone 'without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.'"[42] Bertha Lutz, and the female delegates from Latin America, were also influential in their support of this statement.[43]

At the conference, Lutz took active part in the critiques of the Great Power leadership, and in the robust opposition that rose from Latin American nations' demand for human rights and women's rights. These dynamics caused Lutz to shift her Pan-American feminism. Formerly allying Brazil and herself with the United States, Lutz now collaborated with other Latin American feminists in the face of lack of U.S. support for her feminist objectives at the conference. She began to identify less as an exceptional Brazilian and more as a Latin American, who, like her Spanish-speaking counterparts, experienced oppression under U.S. hegemony. In a letter to Carrie Chapman Catt, Lutz complained about the treatment of Latin American delegates at the hands of the British and American delegates who, she wrote, "make one feel one is being patronized." The Secretary of State, Edward Sittingius "has been so inconsiderate of the Latin Americans that they are all feeling humiliated and sore." Revealingly, she conveyed an interaction she had with the New York politician, Sol Bloom, who was also attending the UN conference. He had told Lutz, as she recalled to Catt, "'I don't care a dam [sic] about Brasil or Latin America, we have done enough for you." Lutz responded to him, addressing U.S. imperialism directly, "are you sure you don't mean 'enough to us?'"[44]

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[40] Mazower, *Governing the World*, 210.

[41] Ibid., 210-211; Glendon, *A World Made New*, 14. While the U.S. and Great Britain opposed proposals that Latin American delegates made "to include a bill of rights in the Charter and also rejected their suggestion that the Charter should contain a commitment to set up special commissions for education, culture, and human rights."

[42] Glendon, *A World Made New*, 13.

[43] Register of the United Nations Conference on International Organization Proceedings, Box 5, National Broadcasting Company sound recordings of proceedings, June 11, 1945, NBC sound recording of the proceedings of commission 2, committee 3 on 11 June 1945, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

On the other hand, "small nations," she remarked, are the ones "very eager for progress on social, economic, and cultural lines." These countries, agitating for human rights, had backed the Latin American feminists' resolutions for inclusion in the United Nations. Lutz wrote of these gains to Catt, "What has pleased and comforted me most is the progressive attitude of the delegations from Ethiopia, India, Lebanon, and Latin America…"[45]

Thus, for Lutz and for many others at the United Nations conference, the debates around inclusion of women's rights in the machinery of the United Nations was not only feminist but anti-hegemonic as well. These proposals garnered support from delegates who opposed the Great Power hegemony and saw in these human rights demands a way to leverage power in the new world order and to promote peace. It was this context that surrounded the greatest battle over women's rights at the conference: the debate over Lutz's proposal for a Commission on the Status of Women in Commission II/3, the group tasked with organizing the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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[44] Lutz to Catt, May 21, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[45] Ibid.

Due to the agitation from Latin American and other smaller nations at the conference, the Economic and Social Council, created at the Dumbarton Oaks conference, had risen in stature to become a "principal organ" of the UN, alongside the Security Council. One of the most vocal supporters of this rise in the Council's status was Australian Foreign Minister Herbert V. Evatt. Referring to the way the Great Depression, massive unemployment, and "lacking freedom from want" had played in the rise of totalitarian regimes around the world, Evatt's arguments led to a strengthening of the Charter's provision "for an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)."[46] The ECOSOC would contain a cluster of specialized agencies, including Labor, Health, Trade, Banking, Food and Agriculture, among others. A separate Commission on Human Rights would also be established within the ECOSOC.

Lutz wanted to see added to this list of agencies one that dealt specifically with women's rights. She believed it should function centrally in the organ that dealt with human rights in the United Nations, and not only in a tangential way. Such a group could apply moral pressure on the various nations of the world and assert the importance of women's civil, political, economic, and social equality. On this project, she found a strong supporter in Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Mudalier, the chair of the Commission II/3 and head of the Indian delegation. Mudalier had been one of the vocal opponents of the veto provision, and he believed that securing human rights provisions in the Charter would be an important way to counteract Great Power hegemony.[47]

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[46] Glendon, *A World Made New*, 14.

Lutz introduced a proposal which was later called the "Brazilian Declaration." It read:

> Whereas the status of women in different countries has to be radically improved and their rights have to be extended to attain the objectives of the Economic and Social Council to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of sex;
>
> And whereas the part that women have played in the war makes the consideration of their status and rights an urgent problem requiring solution:
>
> The Delegation of Brazil recommends that the Economic and Social Council should set up a special commission of women to study conditions and prepare reports on the political, civil, and economic status and opportunity of women with special reference to discrimination and limitations placed upon them on account of their sex.[48]

In support of the need for an international arm for women's rights, Lutz drew on the preceding Popular-Front Pan-American feminism that combined anti-fascism with women's rights. Lutz revealed that while many countries were advancing toward women's rights, nowhere in the world did women enjoy complete equality with men. She also noted that women's rights were particularly limited in Japan, Italy, and Germany, the three aggressor nations.[49]

Lutz received her strongest support in this proposal from del Vidal, Ledon, Street, and Bernardino, the current head of the Inter-American Commission of Women. Aware of Lutz's low opinion of the IACW, Bernardino initially was hesitant about supporting.[50] Lutz later recalled that while Bernardino was "afraid that it would swamp the Inter-American Commission of Women [but] I finally got her to agree," and soon, Bernardino was "very keen" on the idea of the Commission on the Status of Women.[51] In order to explicitly state that the separate Commission on the Status of Women would not overshadow the IACW, Ledon proposed that the declaration include the sentence: "This Commission shall cooperate with similar official Commissions in different parts of the world," to which Lutz agreed.[52] In a committee meeting, Bernardino spoke out in support of the Brazilian declaration, arguing that her group, the IACW, had long been "been working along the lines called for in the declaration" and said she looked forward to the IACW collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women.[53]

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[47] "Tomorrow at the joint idea of the Hindu President and myself we are bringing in a resolution to create a committee of Women under the commission of human freedoms to study the status of women. It looks very unpromising…" Lutz to Catt, June 3, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[48] Brazilian Declaration, Journal No. 38, June 7, 1945, A-37, Folder 143, Frieda Miller Papers, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Volpe, "Latin America at San Francisco," 344.
[49] Volpe, "Latin America at San Francisco," 344.

The Brazilian Declaration faced fierce opposition. As Street recalled, "The argument that most human rights had been enjoyed exclusively by men and denied to women and that a single body would not address this was exhaustively debated, with the United Kingdom and the United States firmly opposed."[54] Virginia Gildersleeve was one of the vocal opponents "contending that women should be regarded as human beings as men were and that the Commission on Human Rights would adequately care for their interests." Gildersleeve explained that she believed the Charter's wording, opposing discrimination on the basis of sex, was enough of a safeguard for women's equality, and that she feared that if there was a separate women's commission, then men may feel inclined to exclude women from their other commissions.[55] Gildersleeve was buttressed by more general opposition in women's groups who opposed the women's rights resolutions that the World Woman's Party led by Alice Paul were agitating for.

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[50] Lutz to Catt, June 3, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.
[51] Interview with Bertha Lutz, January 2, 1975, Rio de Janeiro, by Eleanor Mitchell, Society of Women Geographers. Cassette tape of the interview from Society of Women Geographers, Washington, D.C., in author's possession.
[52] Brazilian Declaration, Miller Papers.
[53] Volpe, "Latin America at San Francisco," 344.
[54] Street, *Jessie Street,* 181.

Gildersleeve did, however, note that while the "British and American men" hated being lectured about women's rights in this committee, "some of the men of other nationalities felt differently… One or two of them spoke to me with admiration of the feminists, especially of Dr. Lutz."[56] As Lutz later recalled, she received strong support for this proposal from several male delegates. These delegates included Ramaswami Mudalier and Jan Smuts from South Africa who had inserted "equal rights of men and women" in the preamble of the Charter of the UN.[57] Mudalier, Lutz later recalled, also spoke out about the importance of an explicit endorsement of women's collaboration in the United Nations and for women's rights.[58]

Strong support came as well from male delegates representing the eight Latin American countries comprising the Commission II/3, who viewed the Commission on the Status of Women as a way to promote the rights of small nations and human rights. When the question was put to a vote, a large majority of the committee, thirty-five delegations, voted in favor of setting up a Commission on the Status of Women.[59] In

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[55] Gildersleeve, *Many a Good Crusade*, 352.

[56] Ibid., 353.

[57] The preamble was adopted on May 7, 1945 and included the wording: "to re-establish faith in fundamental human rights, in the sanctity and ultimate value of human personality, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small." Christof Heyns, "The Preamble of the United Nations Charter: The Contribution of Jan Smuts," *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* 7 (1995): 338. For more on Jan Smuts as promoter of British empire and author of apartheid in South Africa see Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*.

[58] Interview with Lutz, Society of Women Geographers, 1975.

[59] Street, *Jessie Street,* 183.

June, 1946, the ECOSOC established a Commission on Human Rights as well as a separate Commission on the Status of Women.

Over the last days of the conference, the fact that these accomplishments had been made by women from Latin America was widely acknowledged. At one of the concluding meetings, Peter Frazer, of New Zealand, who had also vocally opposed the veto power of the Great Powers, offered hearty congratulations to all the women delegates to the Conference, and particularly to the women delegates from Latin America. He credited their efforts for the success of the clause including women in the body of the United Nations finding its way into the Charter.

In response, Bertha Lutz agreed that the article including women and men on equal terms in the United Nations was "a Latin American contribution to the constitution of the world." She averred: "It was written by the women of the delegations of Uruguay, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Mexico, presented by Senator Isabel Vidal of Uruguay and placed among their amendments by the governments of the countries these women and I represent." This article, she explained, "is not a mere…indication of the rights of women. Though I am a firm believer in such rights. It is more than this."[60]

Lutz went on to emphasize that the "smaller countries" realized the significance of women's involvement at the helm of the international organization in terms of guiding international justice and peace:

> The men of the different parts of the world and the most diverse civilizations represented at this conference have understood our full importance. Otherwise we would not have had the support of nearly every one of the delegations from smaller countries, which we've had together with the brilliant support of France,

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[60] Register of the United Nations Conference on International Organization Proceedings, Box 4, National Broadcasting Company sound recording of the proceedings of the second session of commission 1, committees 1 and 2 on 19 June 1945, Hoover Institute.

> New Zealand, Australia, and Russia…I am sure I am translating the thought in the minds of all of us when I say that there will never be unbreakable peace in the world until the women help to make it. The gods of war feed on the blood of their children, and someday the mothers of human beings will put a stop to this bloodshed.[61]

In these final meetings of the United Nations conference, Lutz laced her praise of the new organization with critiques. She was disappointed that even the Economic and Social Council was not truly multi-lateral or internationally representative – that not all fifty countries could participate in it. She expressed her hope that this would change in the concluding speeches of the assembly: "I still hope that someday….we will have the benefit of every country and of all the delegations in all of these matters" of the social and economic council.[62] She also noted that while the "first charter that was made in Geneva" for the League of Nations "was perhaps better than this," outlining as it did a multi-lateralism that did not exist in the United Nations charter, "the spirit may not have been so good." The success of the United Nations, she explained, "will depend on how much real effort, how much good intentions, and how much hard work we put into the implementing of what has been resolved upon."[63] To her friend Catt she gave a more unvarnished opinion, "The real truth, and to you I can tell it, is that the United Nations have written beautifully sounding words into the Charter, or are still writing them in but have no intentions of carrying them out…"[64]

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[61] Register of the United Nations Conference on International Organization Proceedings, Box 4, National Broadcasting Company sound recording of the proceedings of the second session of commission 1, committees 1 and 2 on 19 June 1945, Hoover Institute.

[62] Register of the United Nations Conference on International Organization Proceedings, Box 5, National Broadcasting Company sound recordings of proceedings, June 11, 1945, NBC sound recording of the proceedings of commission 2, committee 3 on 11 June 1945, Hoover Institute.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Lutz to Catt, June 3, 1945, Reel 12, NAWSA Papers.

The next few years confirmed what Lutz told Catt. The Cold War quickly divided the Great Powers and the following years saw internationalism redefined as a worldwide battle between capitalism and Communism. Human rights became deployed as a weapon in the Cold War struggle.[65] Women's rights also did not thrive in the new United Nations. While the Commission on the Status of Women was created in 1946, Lutz believed that U.S. women were still stymying its growth. In the 1950s, writing to Margery Corbett Ashby in England, Lutz complained, "we have not had much help from the more conservative North American groups, including Mrs. Roosevelt when she was a member of the United Nations."[66] It would not be until three decades later, in 1975, when the UN held its first World Conference on Women held in Mexico City, and the UN proclaimed the "UN Decade for Women" that the notion that "women's rights are human rights," planted at that 1945 UN conference, began to flourish.

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[65] Samuel Moyn explains that despite the 1946 UN Declaration of Rights which included social and economic rights, during the Cold War many Western countries prioritized political and civil rights and dropped the emphasis on social and economic rights. Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 79.

[66] Quoted in Christine Bolt, *Sisterhood Questioned?: Race, Class, and Internationalism in the American and British Women's Movements, c. 1880s-1970s* (New York: Routledge, 2004) 149. Eleanor Roosevelt had not believed that a separate commission for women was necessary.

Epilogue

In the years between the 1946 creation of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the 1975 Mexico City Conference of the United Nations, Cold War tensions escalated, and a collective amnesia about Pan-American feminism gradually set in. The activists Marta Vergara, Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Paulina Luisi, and Clara González, nonetheless maintained their Pan-American friendships and supported the idea that women's rights should have a prominent place in the construction of the new world order. After the war, many of them continued active roles as feminists in their own countries and in international organizations. Both Clara González and Ofelia Domínguez Navarro became representatives of their countries in the United Nations and supported children's welfare programs. A number of them published memoirs in which they wrote about the Inter-American Commission of Women and Pan-American feminism.

Ofelia Domínguez Navarro maintained her strong, critical stance against U.S. politics toward Latin America into these years, but she did revise her low opinion on the Inter-American Commission of Women. Writing in her memoirs, published in 1971, she recounted her feud with Doris Stevens and the Inter-American Commission of Women at the Havana meeting in 1931 when she, Clara González, and Aida Parada had allied in their frustrations with Stevens. But Domínguez noted that the years during and after World War II had seen the growth of women's rights throughout the hemisphere. Women's suffrage measures passed in El Salvador (1939), the Dominican Republic (1942), Chile (1945), Guatemala (1945), Panama (1945), Argentina, (1947), and Venezuela (1947). These measures coincided with a shift in many countries toward an unprecedented spread of democratic institutions and growth of labor unions. Domínguez acknowledged that some credit should go to the IACW for these suffrage measures: "We have wanted to distinguish the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women because in reality it has rendered extraordinarily important work in relation to the obtaining of women's rights in all of the Continent." Domínguez felt the need to amend her earlier turning away from the organization. "With this declaration, I am confessing my erroneous points of view in terms of the positive results that have been obtained through these international meetings of women."[1]

Another who lauded the IACW in her memoirs was Marta Vergara. In 1940, Vergara and her husband Marcos Chamudes had been ousted from the Communist Party, following the Soviet Union's non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939 and the resulting dislocations of the Popular Front in Chile.[2] After this time, Vergara and Chamudes lived off and on in the United States, and Vergara maintained her friendship with Doris Stevens. Vergara also acted as the Chilean delegate to the Inter-American Commission of Women into the 1940s, but she disliked its new leader Minerva Bernardino, whom she believed too closely affiliated with the Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Trujillo. Vergara regretted her friend Doris Stevens's removal from the chairmanship of the IACW, hailing her as the last U.S. feminist who stood strongly for women's rights. Other U.S. female reformers, Vergara wrote, including "the minister of work, Frances Perkins…Mary Anderson, and a U.S. delegate to our [Inter-American]

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[1] Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, *50 años de una vida* (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971), 135.

[2] Corinne A. Antezana-Pernet, "Mobilizing Women in the Popular Front Era: Feminism, Class, and Politics in the Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer Chilena (MEMCh), 1935-1950," (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 1996), 331-332; see Marta Vergara, *Memorias de una mujer irreverente* (Santiago: Zig-zag, 1961), 161-175.

Commission [of Women], Mary N. Winslow," had abandoned the cause of feminism. "All were friends of Mrs. Roosevelt," Vergara explained, "All wanted to be considered distinguished humans in this or that profession or work…beyond the fact of being female."[3]

Doris Stevens never recovered from her removal as chairman of the Inter-American Commission of Women and disassociated herself from the international feminist movements in the 1940s through 60s. She became a virulent anti-Communist and devoted many of her last years to collaborating with her husband Jonathan Mitchell on a memoir about her work in the Inter-American Commission of Women. She wanted to show how the Roosevelt administration, infiltrated by Communists, had been instrumental in her removal. Stevens died in 1963, before the second-wave feminism burst onto the scene in the United States, and before publishing her memoirs.

Years later, in the 1960s and 70s, with the re-emergence of feminist movements around the globe the context for international feminism dramatically changed. The Cold War and the resulting division of the world into "first," "second," and "third," with most of Latin America grouped in the latter, promoted a vision of liberal feminism that was distinctly a "first-world" product of U.S. and Western Europe. Although Latin American feminists contributed to the politics of international feminism in the 60s and 70s, their ideologies were often viewed, as a group, as unique from U.S. and Western European feminism. Latin American feminism was often viewed as leftist, maternalist, and often incompatible with the liberal feminist discourse of "equal rights." For many years, the contributions of Pan-American feminists were overshadowed by a history of feminism that privileged a U.S. and European narrative of the spread of international women's rights.

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[3] Vergara, *Memorias*, 190. Vergara quoted *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir: "Surely woman is, like man, a human being; but such a declaration is abstract. The fact is that every concrete human being is always a singular, separate individual…"

Bertha Lutz was conscious of the collective amnesia around Pan-American feminism. Her own her contributions to international feminism, she realized, had been forgotten. In 1975, a U.S. member of the Society of Women Geographers traveled to Rio de Janeiro to interview the then-eighty-year-old Lutz and spent most of the forty-five minutes of the interview asking Lutz about her scientific work on frog mating calls. When the interviewer mentioned the role Lutz played as a delegate to the San Francisco conference that founded the United Nations, Lutz cried out, "Yes, and the Commission on the Status of Women was proposed by me! And now nobody ever thinks I really did that, I get no credit for it." When asked what had given Lutz the "most satisfaction" in her life, Lutz said it was the posthumous publication of her father's scientific work, and the work she had done in San Francisco at the UN conference.[4]

Later that year, however, Lutz was likely satisfied to see her goals come to fruition when she was an honored guest at the 1975 UN's International Women's Year conference in Mexico City. There, the year before her death, Lutz witnessed the realization of her efforts and those of others that began so many years earlier, to integrate equal rights and social justice goals in one international feminist vision. This meeting, including six thousand participants from all over the world, launched the UN Decade of Women and what scholars have described as a new and truly global feminist activism. In the 1970s and 80s a powerful re-emergence of a global feminism centered around the United Nations and allowed activists from Latin America, Asia, and Africa to direct international agendas on an equal footing with those from Western Europe and the United States.

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[4] Interview with Bertha Lutz, January 2, 1975, Rio de Janeiro, by Eleanor Mitchell, Society of Women Geographers. Cassette tape of the interview from Society of Women Geographers, Washington, D.C., in author's possession.

The history of Pan-American feminism reveals that the "global feminism" of the 70s and 80s had an important precursor. The Pan-American feminist movement in the 1920s through 40s not only saw Latin American feminists taking the lead, but also presaged dynamics that would reoccur within international feminism in later years.

These Pan-American feminists of the 1920s through the 40s were vanguards in establishing women's rights as human rights. They were also forerunners in understanding the complexity of power relations in international affairs and developing a feminism that was sensitive to multiple forms of oppression. Second-wave feminists usually receive credit for the notion of "intersectionality," the sophisticated understanding of the interconnectedness of racial, class, and sexual oppressions. While Pan-American feminists of the 1920s-30s did not use the word "intersectionality," they clearly understood that equal rights for men and women was not only connected to but dependent upon equal rights for all nations. As the Chilean feminist Aida Parada wrote to Ofelia Domínguez Navarro in 1931, feminism was not just about women's equal rights; feminism was about politics -- democracy, social welfare, anti-imperialism, and social justice.[5]

Despite internecine conflict in Pan-American feminism, a group of Latin American and U.S. feminists took on the mantle of "Pan-Americanism" and "equal rights for the Western Hemisphere." They worked together to leverage international pressure in their national movements and to make innovations in international women's rights. The activists portrayed in these pages, their relationships bolstered by an ethical imperative, believed that, together, they could change the world. Their goals combined a belief in insurgent individualism – and the belief that women were equal in capability and value to men – with collectivism and a dream of a global sisterhood. Together, their stories reveal multi-valent meanings of "democracy," "feminism" and "Pan-Americanism." Unpacking their politics and relationships also provide new understandings of the international politics behind the revolutionary notion that they gave to us, and that lives on today – that "women's rights are human rights."

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[5] Aida Parada to Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, March 23, 1930, Caja 673, No. 2, Archivo de Ofelia Domínguez Navarro, Archivos del Instituto de Historia, Havana, Cuba (OD-AIH).

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