In his book By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans *(2001), Greg Robinson revealed Franklin D. Roosevelt's past history of race-based views of Japanese and other Asian Americans and discussed the place of Roosevelt's racial views (among other factors) in his decision to sign Executive Order 9066, which authorized the US army to remove 112,000 West Coast Japanese Americans from their homes and to confine them in government camps. Now he has turned to studying Eleanor Roosevelt, FDR's wife and political partner, who was also a political power in her own right. In this article, Robinson examines the international travels of Eleanor Roosevelt during World War II, notably her wartime voyages to Canada. As a de facto state visitor (despite her lack of official government position)—a surrogate for the president—and as a professional newspaper columnist, her work to further wartime political alliances involved visiting wounded soldiers, and meeting with groups of women. Her visits with ordinary people and her advocacy of the inclusion of women mark her as a pioneer of the use of soft power diplomacy. The article has been translated and slightly altered from the original French-language text, which appeared in the* Bulletin d'histoire politique *in 2018.*

— *Shelley Fisher Fishkin*

Eleanor Roosevelt in Montreal: Human Rights and Internationalism in World War II

Greg Robinson

Introduction

This article discusses First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's international travels during the Second World War. Mrs. Roosevelt achieved her greatest renown in the postwar period as a champion of international human rights, notably in her role as chair of the committee that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1947–48, and later as leader in the struggle to ratify the Human Rights covenants that enforced the provisions of the Declaration. Yet ER's later concentration on international affairs was prefigured in her experience as semiofficial diplomat in a series of wartime travels across the globe, undertaken at the request of her husband, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and in coordination with the chiefs of the host governments. It is useful to investigate how these travels provided her with an important apprenticeship in diplomacy. At the same time, her speeches and activities on these wartime trips helped shape her later support for peace and justice on an international scale.[1]

One particularly noteworthy example of Mrs. Roosevelt's wartime trips is her one-day journey to Montreal in January 1943, which represented her first official visit to Canada.

[1] The historical and biographical literature on Eleanor Roosevelt is enormous. One excellent scholarly introduction is Joan Hoff-Wilson and Marjorie Lightman, eds., *Without Precedent: The Life and Career* of *Eleanor Roosevelt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). A useful reference work is Maurine H. Beasley, Holly C. Shulman, and Henry R. Beasley, eds., *The Eleanor Roosevelt Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press,

She arrived in Montreal in the early morning and spent the day attending official functions and touring factories to investigate conditions faced by women war workers. In the evening, she attended a rally at the Montreal Forum sponsored by Canadian Aid to Russia, where she addressed a crowd of ten thousand people in attendance and a radio audience of hundreds of thousands more. In her speech, she underlined the necessity of aid to the Soviet Union as well as China, as a first step toward ensuring wartime unity between the Allies and postwar peace. She followed this visit with a stop in Quebec City the following year, where she made a landmark radio address.

Mrs. Roosevelt's trips, however brief, represent an important step in the development of a special relationship that she enjoyed with Canada, one that further developed in the postwar years. More broadly, Mrs. Roosevelt's actions, and the media coverage they attracted, had important implications for Canadian society, especially in regard to women's rights and women's role in the public sphere.

The First of the First Ladies

Eleanor Roosevelt was born in 1884, the first child of Elliott and Anna Hall Roosevelt. Both families belonged to New York's elite society, and Eleanor's uncle Theodore Roosevelt served as president of the United States from 1901–1909.[2] The young Eleanor had nonetheless a difficult and painful childhood. She felt rejected by her mother because she was not a beauty, while her adored father suffered from alcoholism and mental health issues. Both parents died before Eleanor's 10th birthday, while the orphaned girl and her baby brother were sent to live with relatives. Upon reaching mid-adolescence, Eleanor was enrolled at Allenswood, a French-language boarding school for girls in England. There she basked in the supportive instruction of the headmistress, Mlle Marie Souvestre, who taught her to take an interest in social justice.

After returning to New York and entering reluctantly into society, she began seeing Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), a distant cousin who was then a student at Harvard University. The two married in 1905. In the decade that followed, FDR began a political career in New York and Washington, even as the young Mrs. Roosevelt became a wife and mother to six

2000). For Eleanor Roosevelt and the Second World War, see for example Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front During World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume 3: The War Years and After, 1939–1962* (New York: Viking, 2016). For Mrs. Roosevelt and international politics generally, see for example Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1920–1962* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002); Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights: The Battle for Peace and Planetary Decency," in *Women and American Foreign Policy, Lobbyists, Critics, and Insiders*, ed. Edward Crapol (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 91–119.

[2] For Eleanor Roosevelt's early years, see for example Eleanor Roosevelt, *This is My Story* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937); Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014 [1971]).

children (one of whom died in infancy), while taking limited interest in her husband's career. In the years following the birth of her last child, ER was devastated to discover the love affair between her husband Franklin and her social secretary Lucy Mercer. The couple considered divorce but ultimately agreed to stay together for the sake of their children and FDR's political career. In the process, their relationship gradually shifted from a romantic to a political partnership, a process that was accelerated three years later when FDR was paralyzed by an attack of polio. Called on by her husband and his chief political advisor, Louis Howe, to serve as FDR's public substitute, ER undertook a public career of speechmaking, political organizing, and newspaper writing, as well as operating a school and a furniture factory. She continued her outside activities even after FDR returned to politics later in the decade and was elected governor of New York.[3]

The partnership between the two spouses further evolved following FDR's election as president in November 1932. From the early days of the New Deal—the name given to the economic recovery program devised by the Roosevelt administration during the Great Depression—Eleanor Roosevelt occupied a prominent role both within and outside official circles. During these years, Mrs. Roosevelt acted as an informal government public advocate who intervened within the federal bureaucracy to help individuals. Although she publicly denied having any influence on government policy, she was nevertheless known within the Roosevelt administration as a close adviser to the president, one who urged him to adopt ambitious reform measures, such as anti-lynching legislation and national health insurance, and to appoint more women to his team (Mrs. Roosevelt was partly responsible for the selection by the president of Frances Perkins, the first woman cabinet member, as Secretary of Labor). She distinguished herself by the tours of inspection across the nation that she performed as the "eyes and ears" (or more precisely the "legs") of her paralyzed husband, and her public speeches and writings.[4] Both through her advocacy and the symbolism of her presence, she was a leading symbol of women's struggle for independence and rights. She was also the nation's most visible white supporter of the civil rights of black Americans. Mrs. Roosevelt visited black colleges, held White House Forums with black speakers, patronized African American artists, and lobbied for inclusion in the administration of the African American advisors of the "Black Cabinet," most notably her friend Mary McLeod Bethune, college president and director of the Negro Branch of the National Youth Administration.

Mrs. Roosevelt was able to use newspapers and radio to advocate for policies and set her public image. In 1933 she became the first president's wife to hold her own weekly press conferences (in order to push major newspapers to hire women journalists, she only allowed women reporters at these events). In 1935 she began her own daily column, "My Day," which reached a nationwide readership. She likewise published numerous magazine articles and

[3] Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume 1: The Early Years, 1884–1933* (New York: Viking, 1992).

[4] J. William T. Youngs, *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Personal and Public Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1985).

several books, including the first volume of her memoirs, which became a bestseller.[5] By means of her correspondence, which amounted to hundreds of letters per day, she communicated directly with countless Americans, and used the letters she received to keep herself informed on events in the country. For her writings, public speeches, and broadcast conferences, she earned more gross income than her husband, though she used her earnings to contribute to charity. (One of Mrs. Roosevelt's pet projects was to contribute and raise funds for the construction of Arthurdale, an experimental cooperative village established by the federal government in 1934 to assist coal miners devastated by unemployment in West Virginia).[6]

Eleanor Roosevelt and Canada

Even before Eleanor Roosevelt entered the White House, she was known to Canadians. Between 1909 and 1921, she spent each summer with her family at their country house in Campobello, New Brunswick, which she would later describe as the first house where she had ever lived that she felt belonged to her (after FDR was stricken with polio on the island in August 1921, her visits became more irregular). In July 1933, a few months after she entered the White House, ER spent a few weeks as a tourist in Quebec, where she visited the Gaspé region with her intimate friend Lorena Hickok.[7]

In the years that followed, Mrs. Roosevelt's White House activities were discussed regularly in the Canadian press, and her trips to Canada received broad publicity. In June 1935, Ms. Roosevelt made a trip to Montreal to preside over the closing dinner of the American Public Welfare Association and to make a speech. Her arrival was hailed by a crowd at the Hotel Mont Royal, where she held an impromptu press conference. [8] In September 1937, she made her first official trip outside the United States as First Lady when she accompanied her husband on a state visit to Victoria, British Columbia, and was received at the famous Empress Hotel. She attracted further attention in Canada when she joined the president in welcoming King George and Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom for a visit to the White House and to the family home in Hyde Park during summer 1939.

[5] Eleanor Roosevelt, *This is My Story* (New York, Harper and Bros., 1937). On Mrs. Roosevelt and her relations with the media, see Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Transformative First Lady* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010); Maurine H. Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media: A Public Quest for Self-Fulfillment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

[6] Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume II: The Defining Years, 1933–1938* (New York: Viking, 1999).

[7] Andrew Caddell, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Road Trip to Quebec," *Montreal Gazette*, September 18, 2015, *http://*montrealgazette*.com/news/local-news/eleanor-roosevelts-road-trip-to-quebec*.

[8] "La conférence des œuvres sociales," *Le Devoir,* 10 juin 1935, 3; "Mme. Roosevelt, Femme occupée mais tranquille," *La Presse,* 10 juin 1935, 13.

ER's Internationalism: Civil Rights and Collective Security

Despite her active involvement in domestic politics, ER generally refrained from commenting publicly on international issues during the 1930s. This marked a shift from the 1920s, when she had publicly expressed her ideas on international affairs and even attracted controversy when she served as a judge for the Bok Peace Prize Award. To be sure, during her first years in the White House, ER publicly expressed pacifist positions, which reflected her horror over the carnage of the First World War. Her most important pacifist statement was a chapter in a larger book, *Why Wars Must Cease*.[9]

Nonetheless, as the 1930s went on and the threat of armed conflict with Nazi Germany grew more intense, she began to shift her public position. As a fervent partisan of the Spanish Republic in the Spanish Civil War, she feared the eroding of democracy around the world. The events in Spain and the growing threat of armed conflict with Nazi Germany helped lead her away from the peace movement and closer to the anti-fascist cause.[10] Mrs. Roosevelt meanwhile became more and more touched by the fate of European Jews and other refugee populations. In a small book entitled *This Troubled World*, written in 1937 and released in early 1938, she hinted at her developing ideas on collective security and international cooperation to promote peace.[11] Perhaps because it was an expression of opinion by a president's wife, or just because Mrs. Roosevelt's own thinking on the subject was not entirely clear, *This Troubled World* is a sufficiently cautious and subtle work that it is hard to draw substantive conclusions from it. Indeed, the author's most clearly expressed views of policy are negative ones: The League of Nations does not work; it will do no good to dismantle the nation's Armed forces, and no "mechanisms" for conflict resolutions can bring about real peace—in particular, economic sanctions against aggressor nations have no chance of succeeding unless they are truly international in scope and are backed by collective force. Conversely, Mrs. Roosevelt's chief proposal was quite bold: She called for an international body with police power, not only to let nations arbitrate their differences, but to define aggressor nations against whom collective trade embargoes could serve (she was nonetheless careful to avoid mentioning any actual aggressor nation—even the case of Japan's occupation of China, where the USA was not a declared neutral). She also called for the nationalization of the American arms industry, to prevent munitions manufacturers from having an incentive to bring about war.

As she turned her attention toward the international scene, Mrs. Roosevelt expanded and reaffirmed her existing support for equal justice on the home front, most notably civil

[9] Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Because the War Idea Is Obsolete," in Carrie Chapman Catt et al., eds. *Why Wars Must Cease* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), 20–29. On Mrs. Roosevelt and pacifism, see Dario Fazzi, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Anti-Nuclear Movement: The Voice of Conscience* (Palm, Switzerland: Springer, 2017).

[10] Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 737, cited in "Spanish Civil War," *The* Eleanor *Roosevelt Glossary,* The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teachinger/glossary/spanish-civil-war.cfm.

[11] Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Troubled World* (New York: H. C. Kinsey, 1938).

rights for African Americans. As part of her support for collective security and international police efforts, Mrs. Roosevelt repeatedly expressed the contention that American ethnocentrism and the conditions caused by Jim Crow measures for blacks in the southern states of the country would harm the international image of the United States. As she stated in 1938 in an address to the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, an interracial group dedicated to the advancement of civil rights: "We are the leading democracy of the world and as such must prove to the world that democracy is possible and capable of living up to the principles on which it was founded. The eyes of the world are upon us, and often we find they are not too friendly eyes." [12]

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe in September 1939, Canada's immediate entry into war, and the Nazi blitzkrieg in 1940 all confirmed her views on the need to resist Germany and Japan. She took a role in offering official sponsorship to Chinese War Relief and in financially supporting British refugee children. Nevertheless, it was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the entry of the United States into the war that led her to transform definitively the nature of her political leadership. Victory over the Axis, ER contended, depended on the aid of the world's nonwhite majority, who would not join the Allied cause unless the United States made clear its commitment to multiracial democracy by promoting equality for both blacks and Asian Americans. At the same time, she insisted that the interdependence of nations in a postwar world would make racial stratification even more outdated and counterproductive. As a result, Mrs. Roosevelt threw herself into efforts to win opportunities for African Americans, Japanese Americans, and other racial minorities. She also remained concerned over the weakening of civil liberties during the war. The United States could not hope to fight for freedom overseas, she insisted, if it could not defend it within its borders.[13] Finally, she remained vitally interested in the role of women, both in ways that they could assist defense efforts and in how they could be involved in an eventual peace.

Eleanor Roosevelt: International Diplomat

Even as Mrs. Roosevelt called for maintaining democracy at home, she undertook the mission of promoting human rights on an international scale, through her wartime travels overseas. In fall 1942 she visited Great Britain. In 1943 she made an extended tour of the South Pacific, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1944 she toured parts of South America and the Caribbean. In the course of these trips, she inspected military bases and hospitals to visit

[12] Eleanor Roosevelt, address to the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, 22 November 1938, in Eleanor Roosevelt and Allida Mae Black, *Courage in a Dangerous World: The Political Writings of Eleanor Roosevelt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 40–41.

[13] Among the voluminous literature on Eleanor Roosevelt and minorities in World War II is Allida M. Black, "Confronting the Vital Center," in Black, *Casting Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). See also Greg Robinson, "Eleanor Roosevelt and Japanese Americans—A First Look" in Robinson, *The Great Unknown: Japanese American Sketches* (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 129–32.

soldiers and report on conditions. Meanwhile, she asked how locals, especially women, were contributing to the war effort, and investigated the treatment of nonwhite soldiers and citizens—for example she met with Maori chiefs in New Zealand. During her stop in the then-US Territory of Hawaii on the way back from her Pacific trip, ER intensively studied local conditions, interviewed GIs at integrated military bases and met with race relations groups. After her return she repeatedly pointed to Hawaii as proof that interracialism was possible, and posited it as a potential model for the rest of the nation. In April 1943 ER visited Mexico with her husband, and made contact with Mexican authorities. Shortly thereafter, in the wake of the notorious "Zoot Suit" race riots in Los Angeles (and elsewhere), she sparked controversy when she bravely asserted that the riots were a product of longstanding white discrimination against Mexican Americans, a matter that had long concerned her, and called for Americans to realize that they had a race problem and to form intergroup committees to resolve conflicts.[14]

ER's international focus and her emphasis on international cooperation was fueled by her wartime contact with Canada between 1942 and 1945. As we have noted, by the time that the US entered the Pacific War Mrs. Roosevelt had already formed ties with Canadians on a personal level. These expanded with the war to discussion of her official activities. The Canadian press offered front-page coverage to her reports from the West Coast after Pearl Harbor, and from Great Britain in fall 1942 (as well as Australia and New Zealand the following year). Indeed, ER was recognized by the newspaper *Montreal-Matin* as a "longtime inspirer of aid to Great Britain."[15]

It was in January 1943 that ER made her first official visit, to press for international cooperation. Invited by Canadian prime minister Mackenzie King to address a rally for Russian War Relief—the official request pointing up her public role—ER made a brief but well-publicized trip to Montreal on January 19, 1943. On her arrival that morning at Windsor Station, she was warmly welcomed by the Canadian Aid to Russia committee, led by Philippe Brais, Paul Weil, and Allan Bronfman. [16] The Francophone newspaper *Le Canada* reported that "Mme Edgar Watkins" had offered "Mme Roosevelt" flowers on behalf of Montreal's black community. While at the station, she welcomed journalists from both

[14] "Mrs. Roosevelt Blindly Stirs Race Discord," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1943, A4; "'Zoot' Riots Flayed by *CIO* Head; Mrs. FDR Speaks: Sees Mixture of Troubles in Outbreaks," *New Journal and Guide*, June 26, 1943, A19; B4.

[15] "Mme. Roosevelt recevrait aujourd'hui une réception encore plus enthousiaste que celle que fut réservée à Wendell Willkie," *Montréal Matin*, 19 janvier 1943, 3.

[16] My account of Mrs. Roosevelt's trip is drawn primarily from the following news accounts: Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day: Should Voting Age Be Lowered," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 22, 1943, 14; "Notre effort de guerre est apprécié aux États-Unis tout comme en Grande-Bretagne," *Montreal-Matin*, 20 janvier 1943, 1; "En venant au Canada je n'ai pas eu l'impression de changer de pays," *Le Devoir*, 19 janvier 1943, 3; "Les reporters interrogeront Mme Roosevelt," *La Presse*, 16 janvier 1943, 20; "La Place de la femme est au Foyer, dit Mme Roosevelt," *La Patrie*, 20 janvier, 1943, 3, 22; "2000 Cheer Her: Special to the Star," *Montreal Evening Star*, January 19, 1943, 3; "12000 Jam the Forum to Hear Mrs. Roosevelt," *Montreal Gazette*, January 20, 1943, 1, 10.

anglophone and francophone journals at a press conference. After a break at the Windsor Hotel, where she greeted the crowd as guards from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police stood at attention, ER was taken to the Hotel de Ville (Montreal's City Hall) where she signed the guestbook. At an official luncheon at the Windsor Hotel, she met Quebec premier Adélard Godbout (1892–1956). Godbout offered her a copy of Louis Hemon's *Maria Chapdelaine,* the classic 1913 novel about Quebec, to which Mrs. Roosevelt replied in French that she had already read it but that it would be a pleasure for her to have a copy of her own. In her speech at the luncheon, Mrs. Roosevelt underlined the special contribution of British women to the war effort:

> English women's work will make a difference for women in all allied nations. What they have done is to show us that whatever we are called to do or to endure, we will be able to face it as well. Russian and Chinese women have done the same, and the women of this continent will do the same if we are called on to do so. [17]

After lunch, Mrs. Roosevelt left the Windsor Hotel to spend the day visiting a war factory where she met with women workers to learn details about their production and working conditions before taking a break to eat supper at her hotel (Mackenzie King picked her up at the hotel, at which point she reported to him that the ten-hour day women were working, compared with eight hours in US factories, was excessive, while the low wage rates they received were unacceptable).[18]

King proceeded to escort Mrs. Roosevelt to the Forum for a rally. Her speech there stressed the need for aid to both Russia and China with an eye on postwar conditions. As she put it, "[p]eace will not be ensured by a written document, but by more friendly and intimate relations between the people of the different nations of the United Nations. This is the basis of a lasting collaboration." (The fact that she spoke of China as well as the USSR, the nominal target of charitable support, seems to have escaped notice by the journalists who reported the speech).[19] In any case, it was not so much the content of her speech that attracted the most attention, but the fact that she finished it in French. She concluded by saying, "I love your beautiful language, although I do not often have the opportunity to practice it." ["j'aime beaucoup votre belle langue, bien que je n'aie pas souvent l'occasion de la pratiquer"].[20]

[17] "Reception and Lunch are Followed by Inspection Trip to War Plant," *Montreal Daily Star*, January 19, 1943, 5.

[18] Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King, Item 24994, January 19, 1943, 5–8. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/politics-government/prime-ministers/william-lyon-mackenzie-king/Pages/item.aspx?IdNumber=24994.

[19]"Mme. Roosevelt porte la parole à la réunion en faveur de l'aide à la Russie," *Le Devoir*, 20 janvier 1943, 7; "Women of Allies Set an Example to the World Says Mrs. Roosevelt," *Montreal Gazette*, January 20, 1943, 4.

[20] "13000 personnes acclament Mme F D Roosevelt," *Montréal Matin*, 20 janvier 1943, 3.

The fact that Mrs. Roosevelt felt comfortable speaking publicly in French, first at lunch and later in her speech, created a sensation in the francophone press, especially since Prime Minister Mackenzie King was clearly incapable of doing the same (King in fact privately deplored the length of Premier Godbout's bilingual address). "Mme Roosevelt parle français" was the title of an editorial in the journal *Le Devoir* the next morning.[21] *La Patrie*, for its part, noted that Mrs. Roosevelt had offered a great inspiration to unity between Canada's two peoples. "Let us first promote understanding, by becoming honest bilinguals, like Churchill, like Madame Roosevelt, faithful in this to her eminent husband. [Comprenons-nous d'abord, en devenant des bilingues honnêtes, comme Churchill, comme Madame Roosevelt, fidèle en cela à son éminent époux"].[22]

In any case, through her visit to Canada, ER earned a special form of homage as both celebrity and a head of state. This renown became evident at the time of the first Quebec Conference between President Roosevelt and the British prime minister Winston Churchill, later in 1943. Reporting on the conference, the magazine *L'Action Nationale* felt obliged to deny rumors regarding various renowned public figures who were expected at the conference: "The Supreme Pontiff did not come to the Château Frontenac to transmit a peace offer from Marechal Badoglio to the United Nations. It is wrong to argue that a St. John Street barber shaved Joseph Stalin ... Neither Greta Garbo, nor Tchiang Kai-Shek, nor Eleonore [sic] Roosevelt nor Sir Harry Lauder attended the conference" ["Le Souverain Pontife n'est pas venu au Château Frontenac transmettre une offre de paix du Marechal Badoglio aux Nations-Unis. Il est faux de soutenir qu'un barbier de la rue Saint-Jean ait rasé Joseph Staline.... Ni Greta Garbo, ni Tchiang Kai-Shek, ni Eleonore (sic) Roosevelt ni Sir Harry Lauder n'ont participé à la conference"].[23]

Indeed, public reaction to Mrs. Roosevelt's visit to Montreal was so positive, at least as reflected in the media, that on her next trip to Canada, when she accompanied her husband to Quebec City for the Second Quebec Conference in September 1944, she was offered a signal honor. Though she did not attend the conference itself, Mrs. Roosevelt was invited to make a special joint radio address to Canadian women with Clementine Churchill, the wife of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Broadcasting live from a flower-decked salon at the Chateau Frontenac, the conference headquarters, the two women spoke in English and French. It is not clear from newspaper accounts whether it was a mix, and which part was which, or separate consecutive texts. The *Montreal Gazette* stated, "Both Ms. Churchill and Mrs. Roosevelt delivered their addresses in both English and French. In the French version, Mrs. Roosevelt's speech had been shortened somewhat from the English." *La Patrie*, though it lauded ER for addressing Canadian women in French, nevertheless stated that the major portion of the speech was in English, and reprinted the full text with

[21] "Mme. Roosevelt parle français," *Le Devoir,* 20 janvier 1943, 10.

[22] "Une Seule Nation," *La Patrie,* 21 janvier 1943, 8. See also "Reine du Peuple: Mme. Roosevelt," *La Patrie,* 20 janvier 1943, 8.

[23] "Québec, Centre du monde," *L'Action Nationale*, 5 octobre 1943, 91–92.

the note, "[h]ere is what she said in her own language," which suggests that only the English text may have been preserved.[24]

Whatever the case, ER's address presented in stirring form her understanding of the importance of domestic concerns and of women's involvement in the forging of international peace:

> I hope that women in Canada and women in the United States will find the opportunity to get closer to each other; that in all areas, agricultural, social, intellectual or other where they have organizations in which they have a common interest, they will often meet together to get to know each other better ... The influence of women will increase in coming years. They have, therefore, the great responsibility to prepare themselves to serve the cause most dear to their hearts, that of preserving peace in the world, knowing that it is during the years immediately after the war that it will be necessary to lay the foundations on which this peace will be based ... [Women] should also give more effort to their country and strive to better understand the conditions that exist in this world.[25]

She concluded by noting that in the past she had visited many parts of Eastern Canada, and that she wished to return to see the beauties of Montreal and Quebec, but that she also hoped to tour Western Canada in the years after the war.[26]

As with her public statements during her appearance in Montreal the year before, Mrs. Roosevelt's speech touched on a common set of themes—the importance of women's social activism and intellectual activity outside the home, and their potential leadership role in building peace through understanding across national lines. Many of these themes were rather novel for women in Canada, and especially in Quebec (where women had not been enfranchised at the provincial level until 1940, and indeed had actually voted for the first time in a Quebec election just weeks before Mrs. Roosevelt's visit). Even if Mrs. Roosevelt's comments broadly reflected her public statements to domestic American audiences, her expression of such ideas to a Canadian audience represented a radical extension to women of the "One World" liberal internationalism (most commonly identified with Wendell Willkie following his 1943 book of that name) that marked US international diplomacy during the war.

Although ER herself did not mention the speech in her daily column, "My Day," and it was not widely reported in the American press, it clearly struck a chord among her listeners. Several newspapers published transcripts of the speech, accompanied by photos of ER and Clementine Churchill speaking together on the radio from the Chateau Frontenac. *La Presse*

[24] "British Never to Forget Score," *Montreal Gazette*, September 14, 1944, 1, 18; "Mmes Churchill et Roosevelt nous parlent en fançais et rendent homage 'à notre vaillance,'" *La Patrie*, 14 septembre 1944, 5.
[25] "Mmes Churchill et Roosevelt rendent hommage aux nôtres," *La Canada,* 14 septembre 1944, 12, 2.

[26] "Elogieux Hommage à la vaillance canadienne," *La Presse*, 14 septembre 1944, 4. Perhaps tellingly, the account in *La Presse* cut out the portion of ER's speech addressed to Canadian women. Instead it cited mainly her paean to the cachet of Quebec City as resembling a European city: "Elle pourrait être une veille ville française et elle est britannique en même temps."

editorialized that the Quebec conference had been an enormous success on several fronts: "Let us note finally the words full of sympathy that Mmes Churchill and Roosevelt addressed towards Canada and particularly our soldiers. In English and French, our distinguished visitors, who form such a charming trio with their hostess Princess Alice, the spouse of the governor general of our Dominion, were able to express themselves in ways that could not fail to touch the hearts of the people of Canada" [Notons enfin les paroles pleines de sympathie que Mesdames Churchill et Roosevelt on eues à l'endroit du Canada et, particulièrement, nos soldats. En anglais et en français, nos dinstinguées visiteuses, qui forment un si charmant trio avec la princesse Alice, épouse du gouverneur general de notre Dominion, ont su trouver des accents qui sont à coup sûr allés au Coeur de la population canadienne"].[27]

Homing in on ER's message about the role of women, the editors of *La Patrie* commented that Churchill and Roosevelt could not have found better interpreters for their war aims than their respective spouses, and added approvingly:

> Both women marked the role that women are playing in the war and the mission that has therefore been laid out for them in the work of building peace. It is quite true, as Mrs. Roosevelt stated, that the influence of women in all areas of human activity will grow larger. They therefore have the duty to prepare themselves to exert this influence in the service of the causes they hold dear, in first place among them the cause of peace and understanding. It is their responsibility to demonstrate that in a world where their influence is growing and where their voice is heard in popular consultations, with an authority equal to that of men, humanity can turn away from its age-old quarrels and live in peace." [L'une et l'autre ont amrqué le role que le femmes jouent dans la guerre et la mission qui leur a ainsi été crée dans la tâche d'assurer la paix. Il est bien vrai, comme l'a dit madame Roosevelt, que l'influence des femmes ira en grandissant, dans toutes les spheres de l'activité humaine. Elles ont le devoir de se preparer à exercer cette influence au service des causes qui leur sont chères, parmi lesquelles s'inscrit en permier lieu la cause de la paix de de la concorde. Il leur appartient de démontrer que dans un monde où leur influence grandit et où leur voix se fait entendre, dans les consultations populaires, avec une autorité égale à celle des hommes, l'humanité peut de détourner de ses querelles séculaires et vivre dans la paix."][28]

In the end, much of the rhetoric about women taking part in building peace efforts remained unrealized. In the postwar era of the "feminine mystique," women in both countries not only remained generally excluded from inclusion in deciding international policy (Eleanor Roosevelt herself excepted), but experienced a backlash against their public role in the workforce and in public life. Nevertheless, the speech can be said to have anticipated the rhetorical strategies of postwar women's peace activism in groups such as Women Strike for Peace.

[27] "Tout va très bien," *La Presse*, 14 septembre 1944, 6.

[28] "La voix de le femme: Pour la paix mondiale," *La Patrie,* 14 septembre 1944, 8.

Conclusion

Why does Eleanor Roosevelt's wartime activism, encapsulated by her trips to Quebec province, merit our attention? First, the visit heralded the formation of a special relationship between ER and Canada. Beginning in the postwar years, and until the end of her life in 1962, Mrs. Roosevelt made no fewer than twenty visits to Canada, where her appearances were sponsored by a variety of people and institutions. In 1947, while working with the UN Human Rights Commission, she lectured at McGill about the United Nations, and was given a guided tour of the Université de Montréal's campus. In 1953 she was awarded an honorary doctorate by McGill University. In the fall of 1959, Mrs. Roosevelt was the subject of an extended interview in French on Radio-Canada television by the journalist René Lévesque (who left journalism for political life himself soon after).

More broadly, I am inclined to believe that Mrs. Roosevelt's time in Quebec, however brief, offered Canadians a new vision of the role of women in society. As mentioned, in her speeches and public statements ER claimed on behalf of all women the essential right to participate in the public sphere. Beyond her words, she shone as an example of a dynamic woman, independent of her husband, who was involved in public affairs. It should be noted that at that time there was no large-scale female figure accepted in a public role in Canada. Many Canadians kept themselves informed on her activities, and praised her as a model of social activism. During Ms. Roosevelt's visit, for example, Quebec premier Adélard Godbout underlined her contributions to the positive development of women during the war years, a phenomenon that Godbout insisted should attract the attention of all sociologists:

> Madame Roosevelt, Quebec is pleased to greet you and express to you its admiration and affection. We have known of you for a long time and have followed with keen interest the development of the charity work and social justice activism for which you are renowned. It was not enough for you to be the wife and, in a sense, the collaborator of one of the greatest statesmen of our time; you wanted, through your own personal action, to extend, if possible, the happy influence of your illustrious husband who strives to realize the moral unity of all the countries of America allied against an enemy ... By your pen, your words and your positive example, you exert an incontestable ascendency around you, that your dignity, your kindness, your tact, enhance still more. Yes, madam, women are great, and to the millions of mothers of the women and girls of the entire civilized world, you give a voice, your role is beautiful.
>
> [Madame Roosevelt, le Québec est heureux de vous saluer et de vous exprimer son admiration et son affection. Nous vous connaissons de longue date et suivons avec un intérêt très vif le développement des œuvres de charité et de justice sociale auxquelles vous attachez votre nom. Il ne vous a pas suffi d'être l'épouse et en quelque sorte la collaboratrice de l'une des plus grands hommes d'état de notre temps, vous avez encore voulu, par votre action personnelle, étendre, s'il se peut davantage, l'heureuse influence de votre illustre mari qui s'emploie à réaliser l'union morale, de plus en plus étroite, de tous les pays

> d'Amérique ligués contre un ennemi ... Par la plume, la parole et l'exemple vous exercez autour de vous un ascendant incontestable que votre dignités votre bonté votre tact viennent encore rehausser ... Oui madame, la femme est grande, et au millions de mères des épouses, et des jeunes filles du monde civilisé tout entier, vous donnez un voix, votre rôle est magnifique.][29]

In sum, Eleanor Roosevelt's wartime travels, including those to Canada, form part of her larger transformation into a public diplomat. Her wartime campaigns tie together different facets of her career—support for minorities, feminism, and internationalism—that are all too often considered separately in the study of her career. Her overseas travels during the war provided her with experience in international affairs, a background that would prove useful when she took a leadership position in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

[29] "Mme Roosevelt lance un appel convaincant," *La Presse*, 20 janvier 1943, 2, 12.