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**Bridging Boundaries:
Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge and the
International Child Welfare Movement, 1910-1948**

As a social worker and social reformer in Chicago, a policy consultant for the U.S. Children's Bureau, and an active participant in both European and Latin American reform movements, Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge (1866-1948) was an integral part of the child welfare movement at the local, national, and international levels throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Summing up Breckinridge's four decades of child welfare advocacy, Children's Bureau Chief Katharine Lenroot declared, "The children of the world are richer because she lived and cared."¹ Indeed, Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge and the international child welfare movement advanced child welfare, international cooperation, and human rights in the first half of the twentieth century.

Because of her wide-ranging and well-documented participation in child welfare activities both at home and abroad, Breckinridge offers an ideal case study of the international child welfare movement.² While they have called attention to the linkages between the local and the national child welfare movement in the United States, especially the connections between the Chicago reform community and the Children's Bureau, U.S. historians have devoted less attention to the transnational dimensions of the child welfare movement. European historians have engaged in some comparative scholarship on the origins of the welfare state, but with the exception of Donna Guy, Latin Americanists have barely begun to address international movements for social welfare. Yet, as Guy points out, child welfare was one of the most truly international social movements of the early twentieth century.³ An examination of Breckinridge's child welfare work combines the study of child welfare advocacy in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century and suggests the synergistic nature of the international child welfare movement.

A study of Breckinridge's child welfare work also brings together policy history and the study of childhood. Although women's historians influenced by the "policy turn" and social policy scholars taking the "gender turn" have for some time been producing studies of the gendered (and racialized) welfare state, scholars have only begun to contemplate a child-centered analysis of social policy history.⁴ However, the publication of several recent think-pieces in the *Journal of Policy History* and the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* suggests increasing interest in the ways in which policy history and the history of childhood intersect.⁵ Studying Breckinridge's child welfare advocacy as one aspect of her long career as a social researcher and policy consultant brings together the histories of child welfare reform and public policy.

Breckinridge's career in child advocacy also broadens the history of social policy to include foreign policy. In 2005, Jacob Hacker characterized scholarship on social policy as "remarkably parochial." The same year, Robert McMahon observed, "It is difficult to imagine two fields of scholarly inquiry with so much in common and yet so little interaction as diplomatic and policy history."⁶ Because Breckinridge was active at local, national, and international levels, analysis of her child welfare work is a fruitful place to explore the connections between domestic policy and foreign policy.

Finally, an examination of Breckinridge's child welfare activities adds a gendered dimension to the history of foreign policy, broadly defined. In 2005, Kristin Hoganson urged historians to pay more attention to gender and women's role in foreign relations history. By broadening our definition of "U.S. foreign relations" to include grassroots activism and international development, she commented, feminist scholars in a variety of fields have created "a new kind of U.S. history . . . that mixes the local and global."⁷ Because Breckinridge linked

child advocacy to advancing internationalism and because she was involved in child welfare work at multiple levels, an examination of her career responds to this call to engender the history of foreign relations and to ground it in local activism.

Breckinridge's involvement in the international child welfare movement thus offers new perspectives on the intertwined histories of childhood and youth, public policy and the welfare state, and foreign policy and international relations by bridging the boundaries between these subfields and between local, national, and international developments. This essay will examine the international child welfare movement through the lens of Breckinridge's participation in child advocacy, from her earliest promotion of child welfare policy in 1910 to her death in 1948, with special attention to the major conferences she attended that produced significant policy statements: The White House Conferences of 1919, 1930, and 1940, and the Pan American Congress of 1930. Neither a comprehensive study of Breckinridge's career nor a complete account of the child welfare movement, this essay seeks to highlight the synergistic nature of local, national, and international child welfare policymaking and the ways in which child welfare advocacy intersected with women's involvement in domestic policy, foreign relations, and, ultimately, international human rights. Within the context of the international child welfare movement, Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge promoted children's welfare, improved international relations, and advanced human rights.

Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge came to Chicago in 1895 in search of an education as a social scientist and found a career as a social worker. Born in Kentucky in 1866, she earned her B.A. at Wellesley College in 1888 and then qualified for the bar in her home state but failed to establish a successful practice. Even after earning advanced degrees at the University of Chicago—an M.A in political science in 1897, a Ph.D. in political economy in 1901, and a J.D. in 1904—Breckinridge

struggled to find an academic post, holding a variety of part-time teaching and administrative positions at the University of Chicago and the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy from 1905 until 1920.⁸

Ultimately, Breckinridge found her niche as an activist academic, using social scientific research as the basis for social reform. She published extensively, establishing a national reputation as an expert on social welfare and legal issues, especially child welfare, women's rights, and specialized courts. With her fellow professor, frequent co-author, and life partner, Edith Abbott, Breckinridge established the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, the nation's first graduate program in social work, in which she finally achieved a permanent position as a professor of public welfare administration.⁹

At the same time that Breckinridge developed a reputation as a social policy expert and a social work educator, she formed close ties with the women's reform community based at Hull House, where she spent her summers from 1907 until 1921. She helped organize the Immigrants' Protective League and the Women's Peace Party, joined the Consumers' League and the Women's Trade Union League, served on the board of the Juvenile Protective Association, and was elected, with Jane Addams, Vice President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.¹⁰

From the beginning of her career as a researcher-reformer, Breckinridge was an advocate for children. Indeed, Hull House resident Julia Lathrop, later the first Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau, helped establish Breckinridge as both a scholar and social reformer by obtaining funding for Breckinridge's earliest publications on juvenile justice and school attendance and offering her teaching and administrative opportunities at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, which Breckinridge ultimately transformed into the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration.¹¹

Breckinridge launched her career in child welfare at the Illinois State Conference of Charities and Corrections in 1910, where she advocated the nation's first "mothers' pension," enacted the following year. Her rationale for backing this model program—substituting state funds for an absent male breadwinner to allow the female householder to fulfill "her natural duties of caring for the home and the children" rather than entering the workforce—was common in the early twentieth century, progressive in its insistence on keeping poor children in their own homes rather than institutionalizing them, and conservative in its insistence on conventional gender roles. As feminist critics of mothers' aid programs have pointed out, supporters adhered to a definition of proper family life and rigid gender roles that assigned wage-earning to men and childcare to women, ultimately resulting in a "two-tier" welfare state in which programs for women and children were stigmatized as "welfare" while programs for men were regarded as "entitlements."¹²

Similar assumptions about family composition and gender roles informed Breckinridge's work on establishing "Minimum Standards of Child Welfare" at the Second White House Conference on Children, held in 1919. Ten years earlier, delegates to the 1909 White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children had affirmed that "home life is the highest and finest product of civilization," opined that children should not be institutionalized "except for urgent and compelling reasons," and, in Children's Bureau historian Kriste Lindenmeyer's words, "decreed that every child was entitled to a family consisting of a father who served as breadwinner and a mother who worked at home."¹³ Breckinridge's initial support for mothers' pensions in Illinois followed from these principles. By 1919, she was making the same case on a national level. "A level can be fixed below which no one should be allowed to fall," she pronounced. "Having seen the possibility, we can 'do no other' than seek it as a matter of national honor."¹⁴

Breckinridge argued that the federal government had a responsibility to ensure or subsidize “an adequate economic level maintained by the earning capacity of the father, thus enabling the mother to specialize in the exercise of the maternal function.”¹⁵ In doing so, she suggested the usefulness of the mothers’ pension movement—and the related movements for child labor legislation and protective legislation for working women—as an “opening wedge” for insisting on a national minimum wage for all workers. Like Florence Kelley and other leaders of the National Consumers’ League, of which Breckinridge was a member, Breckinridge may have used “maternalism” as a political strategy more than she adhered to it as a coherent ideology.¹⁶

The 1919 Conference asserted the “fundamental duty of the State toward children” and produced “Minimum Standards” in three broad areas: child labor; maternal and infant health; and “the protection of children in need of special care,” which included poor, illegitimate, “mentally defective,” rural, and delinquent children. Breckinridge made key contributions in several of these areas. She was a member of the of the committee on child labor, and her research informed the committee’s recommendations to impose age, educational, and physical minimum requirements for employed children; monitor employment conditions, hours, and wages; and enforce compulsory school attendance laws.¹⁷

Breckinridge also influenced the standards on the “special care” of certain groups of American children. Her report on “Family Budgets” was reflected in the minimum standard of “adequate income,” which indicated that “private and governmental agencies charged with the responsibility for the welfare of children in need of special care should be urged to supplement the resources of the family wherever the income is insufficient, in such measure that the family budget conforms to the average standard of the community.”¹⁸

Breckinridge's special interest in the law, in particular her publications on the juvenile court, was reflected in the 1919 conference's conclusion that "every locality should have a court organization providing for separate hearing of children's cases."¹⁹ A provision urging review and standardization of child welfare legislation likewise echoed Breckinridge's emphasis on the law.²⁰ And her insistence on using social science as the basis for social policy came through clearly in the final set of recommendations, which included a subheading on "Scientific Information" that contended: "There is urgent need of a more adequate body of scientific literature dealing with principles and practice in the children's field of social work."²¹

Breckinridge played a minor role in the crafting of the standards for maternal and child health, which called for prenatal, maternal, and infant health care; registration of vital statistics; child care instruction; dental, venereal, and eye care clinics. These provisions would soon be addressed in the Children's Bureau's maternity and infant health program, the Sheppard-Towner Act. First proposed in 1918 and finally enacted in 1921, the act provided matching federal funding for state clinics; the Children's Bureau administered the program and coordinated local, state, and federal public health care for pregnant women, new mothers, and young children. Also included in the 1919 Minimum Standards for maternal and child health were measures pertaining to older children in public schools, including school nurses, open-air classes, vaccination services, psychiatric care, and sex education. Although Breckinridge would become a fervent advocate of the Sheppard-Towner Act, the only aspect of this section of the standards that directly reflected her own professional expertise and policy recommendations was the demand for compulsory education.²²

The Minimum Standards adopted at the White House Conference of 1919 reflected a growing international child welfare movement, particularly in the U.S., England, France, and Germany. In all of these countries, clubwomen, feminists, and social workers worked to establish

nascent welfare states, often beginning with child welfare. Health care services for pregnant and nursing women, infants and small children, and schoolchildren were especially widespread, reflecting pronatalist ideology and concerns about depopulation as well as responding to shockingly high infant death rates. Several countries also adopted mothers' pensions and protective legislation for women and children. France even provided paid maternity leave and public childcare for working mothers.²³

The participants in the 1919 conference were well aware of developments overseas. Prior to the conference, Children's Bureau Chief Julia Lathrop and Assistant Chief Grace Abbott (Edith Abbott's sister) traveled to France, England, and Belgium to speak with European child welfare advocates and invite them to attend, indicating the Children's Bureau's efforts to coordinate efforts at an international level. In addition, the Bureau solicited the participation and advice of child welfare experts from Great Britain, France, Canada, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, and Japan. Both before and after the conference, the Children's Bureau sent representatives to international gatherings on child welfare, international relations, public health, and human rights.²⁴

After the 1919 White House Conference, Breckinridge maintained a close alliance with the Children's Bureau and its first three chiefs, Julia Lathrop (1912-1921), Grace Abbott (1921-1934), and Katherine Lenroot (1934-1951). Indeed, the close connection between the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and the U.S. Children's Bureau in Washington, D.C., was vital to what Robyn Muncy termed a "female dominion" in social reform and social policy in the opening decades of the twentieth century.²⁵

She also continued to play a central role in the expanding international child welfare movement. Breckinridge was an official delegate to the First General Congress on Child Welfare in Geneva, Switzerland, August 24-28, 1925, where she presented a paper on "The Public Protection of

Mothers and Children in the United States.”²⁶ The First Pan American Child Congress, held in 1916, predated the European congress, but the United States did not send official delegates to the Pan American congresses until 1924, when Katharine Lenroot, then Assistant Chief of the Children’s Bureau, attended the Fourth Pan American Congress in Chile, although the U.S. had an unofficial presence at the earlier meetings in 1916 (Argentina), 1919 (Uruguay), and 1922 (Brazil).²⁷

Breckinridge soon joined this international group as well, providing a paper on “The Education of Professional Workers in the Field of Child Welfare” for the Fifth Pan American Child Congress in Cuba in 1927, the same year that the United States joined nine other nations in establishing a Pan American Institute for the Protection of Children (Instituto Internacional Americano de Proteccion a la Infancia) in Montevideo, Uruguay.²⁸ Although involved in child welfare on numerous fronts, Breckinridge arguably played her most important role in international child welfare at the Sixth Pan American Child Congress, held in Lima, Peru, in 1930.

In selecting delegates for the Congress, Lenroot sought to highlight the experience of the Bureau and the expertise of U.S. professionals. The U.S. delegation therefore emphasized maternal and child health care and the development of professional social work. While the emphasis on health and hygiene reflected the experience of the Children’s Bureau in the administration of the Sheppard-Towner Act, the focus on social service administration and social work education more closely aligned with Breckinridge’s areas of expertise. Indeed, the official report described her as “a notable pioneer and leader in the professional preparation of social workers,” and her presence, together with that of representatives from several social service agencies, balanced the participation of a total of five “physicians engaged in public-health work” on the U.S. delegation.²⁹

Of the nineteen countries that sent delegates to the congress, only the United States delegation included women. As Donna Guy explains, although Latin American feminists began

the Pan American Child Congresses, by the 1920s, the gatherings had become male-dominated and narrowly focused on medical issues. The U.S. promoted both its own role and the role of women in Latin American child welfare work by carving out a distinct role for women as public health nurses and social workers rather than competing with male physicians for leadership. Noting that child welfare experts in Latin America were predominantly male physicians, Lenroot optimistically predicted: “As the newer professions of public health and social service develop, women will inevitably receive more recognition in Pan American child-welfare gathering.”³⁰ This was an area of special interest for Breckinridge. In her handwritten comments on the conference, which were incorporated in Lenroot’s final report, Breckinridge applauded the Congress’s expansion of its scope from purely medical matters to “problems of a social character” and the resulting attention “to the supply and education of social workers.”³¹

Ten of the twelve U.S. delegates, including Breckinridge, sailed from New York on June 20, arriving in Lima on June 29. During the voyage, the delegates met daily to discuss the organization of the congress, review information on Latin American child welfare, and study Spanish. The delegates also “prepared a statement covering the essential principles of child health and child-welfare work” and formulated a series of twenty resolutions to present at the Congress.³²

At the Congress itself, U.S. delegates joined delegates from eighteen other countries in plenary sessions on hygiene, social welfare, and legislation to discuss maternal and child-health work in Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and the U.S.; juvenile courts and the care of dependent and delinquent children in Argentina, Chile, Peru, and the U.S.; and social services for children in Argentina and the U.S.³³ In addition, Lenroot and Breckinridge met with delegates from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay to prepare resolutions

concerning social work and public health nursing. Ultimately, “practically all the material submitted by the United States delegation in its resolutions was incorporated in the final resolutions of the congress.”³⁴

The Pan American Congress adopted an ambitious program for child welfare. As Lenroot observed, the final set of approximately seventy resolutions “constitute goals which no country has yet attained, and which it will take years of effort to reach, but they should be of great value as indicating the general directions which . . . should govern the development of child health and child welfare undertaking.” The “general directions” closely resembled the pilot programs of the Children’s Bureau, the “home life” emphasis of the White House conferences on child welfare, and the priorities of Breckinridge and the groups to which she belonged, such as the League of Women Voters and the National Consumers’ League. The guiding principle of all the resolutions was the conviction that “the protection of children is an obligation of the State.” Specific measures also mirrored Children’s Bureau programs, such as the recommendation of “a general program of maternal, infant, and child care” that included “vital statistics,” prenatal care, public nursing, and well-baby clinics—all aspects of the Children’s Bureau’s early research and its maternity and infancy program. Proposals for direct financial support, protective legislation laws, and unemployment insurance “in accordance with the primary aim of conserving home life” similarly echoed the 1909 White House conference’s emphasis on the family unit as well as reflecting U.S. women activists’ longstanding interest in such programs as mothers’ pensions and labor legislation. Proposed measures for state funding and supervision of schools and institutions for dependent children and an insistence on education for social workers and the collection of statistical data likewise were common features of U.S. child welfare, but particularly reflected Breckinridge’s commitment to public welfare and professional social work. Lenroot’s closing comments indicated

that the “whole child” philosophy of the Children’s Bureau infused the Pan American Congress: “Those who set their faces toward the dawn of a new day for children,” she intoned, “find no aspect of health or human welfare alien to their interest.”³⁵

While the U.S. delegates found a friendly reception in Latin America, they collaborated with, rather than dictating to, Latin American child welfare advocates. Latin American delegates chaired all of the sessions, and the U.S. delegates submitted less than a third of the approximately seventy resolutions adopted by the Congress. Moreover, although the Congress adopted all of the U.S. delegates’ resolutions, the assembled delegates—U.S. and Latin American— also significantly added to the U.S. contingent’s proposals. The Congress unanimously adopted new language that more explicitly insisted on “the rights of motherhood” and the adoption of “maternity insurance laws.” The Latin American countries at the Congress further added resolutions that more forcefully sought to determine paternity and enforce paternal responsibility; devoted more attention to alcoholism and morality; more explicitly addressed the issue of venereal disease; and included more specific medical recommendations regarding disease-caused physical disability. The Congress (countries unspecified) also adopted twenty-three resolutions on education, including special attention to international friendship; education about sex and alcohol; school lunch programs, theater programs, and field trips; parental education and parental associations; and better aboriginal education and protection of Indian land ownership.³⁶

Most significantly, Latin American delegates added language that gave greater authority to the nation-state. Latin American child welfare advocates, like their European counterparts, favored a stronger central government and thus a stronger welfare state. Among the additional resolutions proposed by Latin American countries (Mexico, Venezuela, and Peru) was the

statement that “the protection of children [is] a duty of the State.” This statement affirmed the position of the Children’s Bureau, but it used stronger language than the White House Conferences had used in the past. Despite the Children’s Bureau’s traditional reluctance to assign primary authority to the federal government rather than share it with state and local entities, both public and private, the U.S. delegates wholeheartedly embraced the proposed language. Indeed, Lenroot even incorporated the statement (without attribution) in her preliminary report. This statement also aligned with Breckinridge’s advocacy of public responsibility for social welfare. As she explained in the introduction to her 1927 book, *Public Welfare Administration*, public assistance was preferable to private charity, “for the social worker can be satisfied with nothing less than a universal provision for a continuous service,” and “only the state can be both universal and continuous.”³⁷

A lengthy new section on juvenile justice in the Congress’s recommendations also reflected Breckinridge’s priorities. Along with mothers’ pensions, juvenile courts were one of Breckinridge’s earliest interests. Chicago pioneered the juvenile court movement by establishing the nation’s first juvenile court in 1899 in response to the concerted efforts of the Second City’s clubwomen, settlement house workers, and legal reformers. One of these reformers was Breckinridge’s graduate school mentor, Ernst Freund. First under Freund’s tutelage and later in collaboration with him, Breckinridge developed a commitment to “sociological jurisprudence”: using social legislation to advance social justice. In an address at the National Conference of Social Work in 1925, she insisted that “from the law alone can come protection” from abuse. Reflecting her commitment to both social work and the law, Breckinridge published extensively on “socialized justice,” advocating incorporating social services into the judicial system.³⁸

Throughout her career, Breckinridge promoted juvenile justice in local, national, and international settings. She co-authored works on juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice in Chicago in 1912 (*The Delinquent Child and the Home*, with Edith Abbott) and 1922 (*The Chicago Juvenile Court*, with Helen Jeeter). In 1925, Breckinridge was a delegate to the Ninth International Prison Congress held in London August 3-10, where participants discussed juvenile delinquency. In 1931, Breckinridge delivered an address on “children’s courts” at a joint meeting of the National Conference of Social Work and the National Probation Association. In these and other contexts, Breckinridge advocated a non-punitive approach to child offenders in which court officials worked closely with social service providers to address poverty and neglect. She also recommended that both police and probation officers—preferably women—receive social work training to facilitate the rehabilitation of young offenders. These beliefs were reflected in the Pan American Congress’s insistence that “children’s delinquencies should not be considered in themselves as punishable offenses, but rather as the results of conditions of neglect or danger which require State protection” and its call for “protection and constructive treatment” coordinating the efforts of juvenile court judges, social agencies, child guidance experts, and female police officers with social work training.³⁹

At the Pan American Congress of 1930, several streams of child welfare advocacy converged to produce a demand for a strong welfare state that provided health care, education, financial assistance, and legal protection for children. The Congress thus represented the culmination of several decades of child welfare reform in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America and the coming of age of a truly international child welfare movement.⁴⁰ In addition, the Congress highlighted the connections between child welfare and international relations.

The U.S. delegates regarded the Congress as a way to advance international understanding as well as a way to promote child welfare. The opening statement of the final report pronounced: "Cooperation in safeguarding the health and well-being of children truly has been said to afford one of the soundest means of promoting understanding and harmony among nations." After remarking on global interconnectedness resulting from revolutions in transportation and communication, the report's opening paragraph concluded: "As democracy is dependent upon universal education and social well-being within a nation, so international harmony and peace must depend ultimately upon world diffusion of standards of material and cultural life which make possible healthy, prosperous, intelligent, and independent citizenship." The U.S. delegates regarded the protection of children as the fundamental prerequisite both for national self-government and international human rights.⁴¹

Representatives from other countries also emphasized child welfare as a form of international cooperation. Pedro M. Oliveira, Peru's Minister of Foreign Relations, officially opened the conference with the statement: "America has ceased to be a simple geographic term and has become an expression denoting a growing international community." He asserted that the Pan American Child Congress was an effective tool to promote "permanent relations of trust, respect, and confidence among nations, which will create American public spirit."⁴²

One reason that the Congress was so effective in promoting friendly international relations was that the U.S. delegates were careful to recognize and applaud the child welfare work of Latin American countries. "The oldest hospitals and orphanages in the Western Hemisphere were established in those sections which were under Spanish rule," Lenroot noted, and "the first national department with cabinet rank devoted to health and welfare in the Western Hemisphere was the Cuban department of health and welfare."⁴³

Breckinridge shared Lenroot's emphasis on mutual respect and international cooperation. Breckinridge, who studied Spanish in preparation for the Sixth Pan American Child Congress, seems to have been quite sincere in her statement at the First International Conference of Social Work: "It has been suggested that the Americans have come here with an idea that they are in the forefront of this great effort. We do not feel that we are in the forefront. We are all marching together."⁴⁴

The U.S. delegation also recognized different approaches to child welfare and tailored recommendations to specific countries' needs. "Programs can not be transplanted from one country to another without adaptation to particular national needs and conditions," observed Lenroot, adding that the U.S. delegates had much to learn from personal conversations with Latin American reformers and direct observation of Latin American conditions. "Appreciation of the fundamental progress that is being made in a number of countries can not come from study at a distance," she pronounced. By learning with and from Latin American child welfare advocates, the U.S. delegates ensured that, as intended, "Pan American child congresses afford an invaluable means for the development of international understanding and friendship, the exchange of information and the promotion of cooperation in the field of child welfare."⁴⁵

In particular, Lenroot suggested, the U.S. delegates could use the advice and wisdom of Latin American child advocates as they planned the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, scheduled to take place later that year. The preliminary work on that conference, she remarked, "has shown how much remains to be done before principles generally agreed upon as fundamental are actually applied for the benefit of all the children throughout the Nation. Delegations from the United States to Pan American child conferences have much to learn as well as much to give." Indeed, Lenroot added as a pointed critique of domestic child welfare

policy, especially political attacks on the Children's Bureau and its programs, "measured on an impartial scale, according to our resources and opportunities, we should probably find no cause for complacent self-approval."⁴⁶

The Children's Bureau fought from its inception to maintain its autonomy, funding for its programs, and its vision of the "whole child." In particular, the Bureau's maternal and infant health care program, the Sheppard-Towner Act, struggled throughout its tenure, from 1921 to 1929, to maintain political support and essential funding, despite its success rate and its popular appeal, due to opposition from both red-baiting anti-feminist women's groups and the male-dominated medical establishment, which wished to maintain control over health care. Breckinridge was a passionate supporter of the Sheppard-Towner Act, which she described as a "magnificent and successful experiment of federal-state cooperation," and she blasted the Hoover administration, which allowed funding for the program to lapse, for its "indifference with regard to the chances of life provided for mothers and babies."⁴⁷

These tensions led to a major battle between women child welfare reformers and male public health officials at the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1930. Women activists, including Breckinridge, strongly opposed efforts to transfer child health services from the Children's Bureau to the Public Health Service, a proposal that not only threatened women's control over child welfare but undermined the Bureau's commitment to caring for the "whole child." Breckinridge, who described herself as "greatly interested" in the White House Conference, was one of the people who protested the transfer of responsibility for child health from the Children's Bureau to Public Health Services. A fervent supporter of the Bureau and its programs, she once remarked: "What I want is what the Children's Bureau wants, because I think they know more what is needed and what can be done than anyone else in the

country.”⁴⁸ Ultimately, the “overwhelming opposition” presented by approximately 500 angry Bureau supporters prevailed, and the conference not only preserved child welfare under the purview of the female-dominated Children’s Bureau but also produced a nineteen-point Children’s Charter recognizing “the rights of the child as the first rights of citizenship.”⁴⁹

The Children’s Charter adopted at the 1930 White House Conference, while considerably less specific in its recommendations, echoed several of those at the 1930 Pan American Child Congress, including some originally proposed by other countries. While the Charter did not go so far as to demand health or employment insurance, public financial support, or to assert the state’s responsibility for child welfare, it did insist on “an adequate standard of living and the security of a stable income” and on better coordination of child welfare efforts with public agencies. Like the Pan American Congress, the Charter insisted that juvenile delinquents should be regarded as troubled youth, not criminal elements—as “society’s charge, not society’s outcast.” The Charter also added a provision specifying that these standards should apply to children in rural areas and that aid should be rendered “regardless of race, or color, or situation.”⁵⁰ This last measure must have particularly pleased Breckinridge, who, with Abbott, pioneered a foster care program for African American children in Cook County in 1920. Originally funded by philanthropists, private charities, and the University of Chicago’s social science research fund, in 1932 the program finally received public funding as part of the Children’s and Minors’ Service, which provided services to children regardless of race.⁵¹

The influence of the Pan American Congress and the international child welfare movement of which it was a part shaped U.S. public policy as well as the Children’s Charter. Some of the resolutions at the Congress—originally several introduced by Latin American representatives although endorsed by U.S. delegates—were eventually incorporated into U.S.

domestic policy. In particular, the inclusion of the aid to dependent children program (later AFDC) in the Social Security Act of 1935 finally committed the federal government to responsibility for child welfare—something the Pan American Congress had demanded five years earlier. The inclusion of unemployment insurance in the U.S.’s nascent welfare state likewise echoed the resolutions of the Congress. Although ultimately defeated, the call for national health insurance also reflected the thinking of the 1930 meeting. And the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act, which finally outlawed child labor in the United States, reflected not only decades of domestic agitation but also an international consensus among child welfare advocates on child labor. In 1939, revisions to the Social Security Act, establishing civil service requirements for public welfare workers, likewise reflected the United States’ belated adoption of a recommendation regarding the training of social workers that Breckinridge drafted in consultation with Latin American delegates at the Pan American Congress in 1930.⁵²

Breckinridge advocated all of these measures, including the unsuccessful health care proposal. As American Public Welfare Association head and Social Security Board executive Frank Bane remarked, “In setting up the various relief administrations and Social Security, it was Edith Abbott with Sophonisba and a few others. . . . who gave us the greatest help in organizing government for the administration of welfare programs.” Breckinridge was an integral part of an influential network of New Deal women who shaped the emerging welfare state. As a member of the section on the care of children with disabilities at the 1930 White House Conference, she probably played a behind-the-scenes role in designing the provisions for these programs under the Social Security Act. She almost certainly shared her thoughts on public welfare with members of the Committee on Economic Security, which drafted the act, and she was in close contact with Katharine Lenroot and Grace Abbott, who drafted the child welfare sections.⁵³

However, Breckinridge probably deserves the most credit for establishing national standards for public welfare administration. As president of the American Association of Schools of Social Work from 1933 to 1935, she helped design the organization's membership standards, which required member schools to cover a prescribed minimum curriculum, and she collaborated with FERA officials on a pilot program to train social workers only in member schools. Breckinridge's former student and successor as president of the American Association of Schools of Social Work, Elizabeth Wisner, subsequently served on the advisory council that designed the 1939 amendments to the Social Security Act.⁵⁴

Breckinridge remained a loyal supporter of the Children's Bureau and played an active role in the administration of the Social Security Act. In the mid- to late-1930s, she served on numerous advisory committees for the Children's Bureau, including the Advisory Committee on Maternal and Child-Welfare services, which consulted with the Bureau on the administration of programs placed under the Bureau's authority by the Social Security Act (Title V, Parts 1, 2, and 3).⁵⁵ She repeatedly defended the Bureau against threatened reorganization and funding cuts and corresponded regularly with Lenroot, who valued Breckinridge's friendship as well as her expertise. "I know that you know . . . how much it means to me to be able to turn to you for advice and help regarding the Bureau," Lenroot wrote in 1939.⁵⁶

While administering new federal programs for child welfare in the U.S., the Children's Bureau continued to emphasize international cooperation. Throughout the 1930s, the Bureau represented the United States at the League of Nations on advisory committees on child welfare and protection, the traffic in women and children, and the Advisory Committee on Social Questions, which combined the activities of the earlier committees in the mid-1930s. The Bureau also regularly provided information and reports to such groups as the International Labor Office

in Geneva and the Pan American Institute for the Protection of Childhood in Montevideo as well as to the League of Nations.⁵⁷

Breckinridge also continued her involvement in international child welfare, often, although not only, in collaboration with the Children's Bureau. Immediately after the Sixth Pan American Child Congress, a working group of seven U.S. representatives to the Congress, including Breckinridge, who were "greatly impressed with the opportunity for constructive service to children throughout the hemisphere which inter-American cooperation presents," established the U.S. Committee on Cooperation in Pan American Child Welfare Work, designed "to promote closer relationships between those engaged in service to children in the United States and other nations of the western hemisphere." Grace Abbott, Julia Lathrop, and Katharine Lenroot of the Children's Bureau quickly joined the original group as charter members of the new organization. Like the Pan American Congress from which it grew, this group emphasized the advantages of hemispheric child advocacy both for children's welfare and for international understanding. As one early statement of principles explained, "The United States has much to learn, as well as something to teach."⁵⁸

International cooperation was also the theme of the Seventh Pan American Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1933, at which the U.S. formally announced its "Good Neighbor" policy (which opposed U.S. armed intervention in Latin America) and assembled delegates from nineteen countries adopted the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, which established the declarative theory of statehood as international law. At Lenroot's urging, Breckinridge attended this historic gathering as the United States' first official female delegate to an official diplomatic conference. While Breckinridge's work at this conference was not restricted to child welfare issues, she played a leading role in the sessions regarding child welfare, particularly in

her work on a subcommittee on the Pan American Institute for the Protection of Childhood, which the U.S. Committee on Cooperation in Pan American Child Welfare Work was pledged to promote.⁵⁹ “The possible scope of the Institute’s work is as wide as that of the United States Children’s Bureau,” she optimistically predicted, if only its financial resources were increased.⁶⁰

Breckinridge continued to play a prominent role in both U.S.-Latin American relations and the international child welfare movement. She participated in the Seventh Pan American Child Congress held in Mexico in 1935. In addition to presenting a paper at the conference, she served on the U.S. Executive Committee, a position she used to push the Latin American delegates to familiarize themselves with the League of Nation’s report on the trafficking in women and children. She also continued to correspond regularly with acquaintances from her repeated trips to Latin America, particularly those she met in Montevideo at both the Sixth Pan American Child Congress and the Seventh Pan American Conference.⁶¹ Writing from the U.S. embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1942, Mildred Brendon commented, “I have met many of the Senoras who know you and they always ask about you. Senora Araujo told me that many North Americans had visited Montevideo but none of them had made the wonderful impression that you did. She takes especial delight in telling everyone that you are the only North American that said you would write after you left and really did.”⁶²

Breckinridge continued to work closely with the U.S. Children’s Bureau. She attended the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, organized by the Children’s Bureau, in Washington from January 18-20, 1940.⁶³ Following the conference, the *Social Service Review* included a favorable account of the proceedings, “A Delegate’s Notes,” that greatly pleased Lenroot. Although Abbott was the official editor of the *Review*, Breckinridge probably drafted the piece. Certainly Lenroot considered both women to be responsible for the final result. “I am

so proud of the frontispiece and the account of the Fourth White House Conference,” she wrote Abbott. “I am sure you and Nisba know how much it means to me.”⁶⁴

According to the “Delegate’s Notes,” the 1940 White House Conference produced “a broad and forward-looking program” for child welfare.⁶⁵ Indeed, like previous child welfare gatherings in the U.S. and elsewhere, this meeting produced an ambitious long-term plan for child welfare. As Lenroot pointed out in her preliminary report, it represented “a program for the next decade or even longer.” The Conference produced ninety-eight “recommendations covering practically all phases of the relationship between children and our democracy.”⁶⁶ Several of the conference’s recommendations were familiar, echoing the White House Conferences of 1909, 1919, and 1930 as well as the Pan American Congress of 1930. For instance, the 1940 Conference called for publicly funded and compulsory education, including school health and recreation programs; community space for recreation and leisure; limits on and regulations of child labor; maternal and child health care programs, including public health nursing; social services for disabled children; and socialized justice for juvenile delinquents—all items that appeared on the agendas of earlier White House conferences and the Pan American Congress.⁶⁷

Some recommendations were unique to the historic moment, however. By the time the conference took place, it was increasingly clear that the U.S. might enter the war that had been raging in Europe and Asia for several years. Indeed, as “A Delegate’s Notes,” commented somewhat acerbically, the conference was advanced by three months “because someone was afraid we might be getting ready for war.”⁶⁸ The conference’s theme on “children in a democracy” reflected threats to national self-determination overseas and the need to strengthen democracy at home. The official report repeatedly alluded to preparation for citizenship, touted respect for individuality, and indicated that a successful democracy depended on the nation’s

children. Ultimately, the report defined participants' goals as to preserve democratic principles and prepare the next generation to "successfully participate in our democratic way of life."⁶⁹ According to "A Delegate's Report," the conference "helped us all to renew our faith in the cause of making our democracy fulfil [sic] the hope of all democracies—the hope of making the world a better place for children to live in."⁷⁰

One aspect of the conference's emphasis on civic responsibility and democratic freedoms—the attention to racial and ethnic minorities—built upon ideas about African Americans and indigenous people expressed in the educational resolutions at the Pan American Child Congress of 1930 and in the U.S.'s 1919 "Minimum Standards" and 1930 "Children's Charter." The 1940 report considerably strengthened the claims of immigrant children, however, by devoting a special section to migrant workers and placing responsibility for their children on the federal government. In addition, the 1940 report devoted a special section to voting rights, condemning "limitations on suffrage through intimidation, coercion, the levying of poll taxes, and other undemocratic practices" and asserting that "nothing less" than equal voting rights "is a suitable goal for a democracy; nothing less can see our democracy through the difficult problems which confront the world." Given that children obviously could not vote, the strongly-worded resolution in favor of voting rights probably reflected support for the NAACP's "Double V" campaign—victory against the Axis abroad, victory against racism at home—and concerns about genocide in Europe.⁷¹

Breckinridge, a long-time member of the NAACP, an outspoken advocate of a federal anti-lynching bill, and an active participant in a network developed to assist European Jewish refugees since the mid-1930s, played a key role in the development of these measures. After reviewing the preliminary reports, she wrote to Lenroot to express her concern over the use of

the term “minorities” in the report. “It seems to me extremely dangerous to use the word ‘minorities’ and to give anybody justification for thinking that there might be developed in this country policies and programs analogous to those developed in Europe with reference to these special groups.”⁷² Ultimately, the final report retained the language of “minority groups” but defined these “sufferers from discrimination” as African Americans, Native Americans, Mexicans, Jews, and immigrants. The report also included a new statement that strongly repudiated white supremacy: “Science has made it clear that strict race lines cannot be drawn and also that no factual basis exists for any assumption that one race is superior to another.”⁷³

While many of the themes of the Conference on Children in a Democracy reflected international developments, other recommendations reflected domestic issues, especially the impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal. As Breckinridge observed, “the decade” of the 1930s “was affected by two influences”: the depression, which “brought the Federal Government again into positive service relationships,” and “the great date of the decade . . . when the Social Security Act became effective,” resulting in “the expansion of Federal Authority.”⁷⁴ The conference report defined the family as “the threshold of democracy” and encouraged increased financial assistance for needy families, reiterating U.S. child welfare advocates’ long insistence on family preservation and support. Reflecting the changed circumstances since the adoption of the Social Security Act, however, the 1940 recommendations were the first demands at a White House Conference for unemployment compensation, workers’ compensation, and old age benefits, although these items had been on the agenda of the Pan American Congress in 1930.⁷⁵ The 1940 Conference also recommended federally funded work programs, less stringent residence requirements for state aid, and federal

support for affordable and subsidized housing. These unprecedented recommendations reflected the unemployment, eviction, and migration of many families during the 1930s.⁷⁶

Breckinridge approved of the conference's recommendations but believed there should be greater emphasis on and clarity about public welfare. As she noted in 1940: "The relationship of the state or public authority to the private institution or agency is one of the questions always raised in connection with the further development of public activities," and despite "many attempts . . . to formulate principles and secure agreement on these questions," the practice of providing public funds to private agencies continued to create difficulties. Breckinridge regretted that the White House Conferences had never been "clear cut on this subject" and that even the Conference of 1940 was only "slightly more specific" in the principles guiding the practice.⁷⁷

Breckinridge apparently objected to a statement that appeared in both the preliminary and final conference reports that referred to "interdepartmental cooperation" between private and public agencies. "I should have been glad," she remarked, "if it had been found possible to have a more definite statement about the relations between public authorities and private institutions. It seems to me that this statement, while good as far as it goes, is very far from going to the point at which I had supposed we would be ready to go now. Public money in public hands is one of the principles adopted generally if not always carried into effect in connection with relief funds and I see no reason why the same principle shouldn't apply in connection with services and support. It is the only principle any hope can be based on securing standards not too low and a comprehensive service."⁷⁸

Despite these reservations, Breckinridge remained an enthusiastic supporter of the Children's Bureau. In a draft version of a 1940 article on "The Changing Role of the State in

Child Welfare,” she reported “most encouraging gains” in “public responsibilities on the governmental side,” which she attributed to the Children’s Bureau.⁷⁹ And “A Delegate’s Notes” devoted most of its space not to an account of the White House Conference proceedings, but rather to an impassioned defense of the Children’s Bureau. Commenting on “the high regard in which the Bureau is held throughout the country,” the importance of soliciting the advice of experts, and the advantages of “keeping the Children’s Bureau on a nonfunctional basis so that all the needs of children may be considered and related in one government bureau organized to serve the ‘whole child,’” the report pointedly refuted rumors that the Bureau might be moved from the Labor Department and explicitly criticized the president for cutting appropriations for its programs.⁸⁰

Breckinridge’s boosterism reflected new political pressures and economic constraints for U.S. child welfare advocates. Kriste Lindenmeyer suggests that the 1940s were a period of waning enthusiasm for the Children’s Bureau’s “whole child” philosophy and increased challenges to the Bureau’s control of domestic child welfare policy.⁸¹ Confronted with external challenges to its authority, the Bureau re-emphasized its unique expertise on all aspects of child welfare. The 1940 White House Conference reiterated the Bureau’s “whole child” philosophy. Urging coordinated child-welfare efforts, the report warned: “Too often people have failed to recognize the simple truth that the child cannot be broken up into parts—one for the parent, another for the teacher, one for the public official, another for the playground, and still another for the church. The child is an indivisible whole . . . and must be planned for and served as such.”⁸²

With Breckinridge’s enthusiastic support, Edith Abbott organized an emergency committee to “Save the Children’s Bureau” from proposed government reorganization schemes

that would reduce its autonomy and the authority of its chief. Urging supporters around the country to contact their state representatives and the president, write supportive editorials for local and national newspapers, and remain vigilant in defending the Bureau against accusations of lack of patriotism, the emergency committee waged an ongoing battle against the Bureau's detractors throughout the 1940s. Although not officially a member of the committee, Breckinridge participated in its campaign. She wrote to her elected representatives to urge them to oppose reorganization. She also planted pro-Children's Bureau editorials in the hometown newspaper, the Lexington (Kentucky) *Herald*, previously edited by her brother Desha, under the name of the current editor, Tom Underwood. "You know how much I care and how I'd like to help," she wrote to Lenroot in June 1946, signing herself, "always faithfully Sophonisba P. Breckinridge."⁸³

If the Children's Bureau was losing influence over domestic child welfare policy, it retained leadership in the international child welfare movement. Indeed, Lenroot expanded the Bureau's international activities in the early 1940s by helping to establish the United States Committee for the Care of European Children and by organizing the first meeting of the Pan American Child Congress in the United States in 1942. The Bureau also increased its representation in international health organizations, regularly sending emissaries to the World Health Organization in Geneva and, in 1945, sending delegates to the Third Annual Conference of the U.S. Mexico Border Public Health Association. As at the Pan American Child Congress in 1930, U.S. child welfare advocates continued to combine advocacy for child welfare with promotion of world peace. In 1945, the Bureau sent representatives to the Inter-American Conference on Problems of Peace and War in Mexico City.⁸⁴

Breckinridge also maintained an interest in international affairs and child welfare. She held membership in a dizzying array of organizations dedicated to civil rights, national independence, and world peace in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as well as several organizations to aid refugee children, including the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children. Breckinridge also remained active in local, state, and national organizations dedicated to reforming legislation pertaining to child welfare, including laws on child labor, adoption, guardianship, and citizenship.⁸⁵

Both the Children's Bureau's leadership and Breckinridge's participation in the international child welfare movement were apparent in 1942, when the Pan American Child Congress met for the first time in the United States. The Eighth Congress proposed the idea of a comprehensive children's code and issued a Declaration of Opportunities for Children, which included as categories family life, health, education, work, recreation, and citizenship. Breckinridge's Latin American correspondents gleefully informed her that the Pan American Institute adopted most of the Congress's recommendations, so that "it was a success in general."⁸⁶

While U.S. child welfare advocates increased their influence overseas, they fought an increasingly unsuccessful battle at home. In 1946, over Breckinridge's and other supporters' protests, the Children's Bureau was transferred from the Labor Department to the Federal Security Administration. Lindenmeyer asserts: "The 1946 bureaucratic reshuffle ended the life of the Children's Bureau as a largely self-governing federal enclave for children's interests." Yet the failure to preserve the autonomy of the U.S. Children's Bureau was balanced by the Bureau's success in incorporating its aims into international movements for child welfare and human rights.⁸⁷

Child welfare and human rights movements converged in the 1940s and culminated, in 1948, in the creation of two major instruments of international scope: The Pan American Children's Code and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Together, these documents represented the apogee of the international child welfare movement and demonstrated the lasting impact that U.S. child advocates—many of them, like Breckinridge, affiliated with the Children's Bureau—had on both child welfare and human rights in international context.

Like the 1930 Pan American Child Congress, the Pan American Children's Code of 1948 combined elements of U.S., European, and Latin American child welfare policy. Building on the national children's codes in Costa Rica (1932) Brazil (1927), Uruguay (1934), Ecuador (1938), and Venezuela (1939), Latin American representatives hoped to further expand government authority over child welfare. However, the 1923 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of Children had taken a different tack by emphasizing the rights of individual children and the importance of family life—themes that were consistent with the various U.S. White House Conferences, especially the 1940 Conference on Children in a Democracy. Ultimately, the Pan American Children's Code of 1948 enumerated ten “rights of children.” These included: 1. The right to know their parents' identity; 2. The right to be cared for, fed, and provided with health care; 3. The right to protection from exploitation in the workplace; 4. the right to an education; 5. the right to be aided by special courts; 6. the right to non-criminal treatment in those courts; 7. the right to free legal defense; 8. the right to remain with their families wherever possible; 9. the right to religious freedom; and 10. the right to not be stigmatized by illegitimacy. Significantly, these rights reflected many of the child welfare demands enunciated at previous Pan American Child Congresses as well as the White House Conferences; however, more in line with the White House Conferences, especially the Children's Charter of 1930, the Pan American Children's

Code did not specify who was responsible for ensuring these rights—the state, the family, or private organizations.⁸⁸

The language of “children’s rights” that appeared in the Pan American Children’s Code reflected a new discourse of human rights that gained popularity after the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. The Pan American Congresses had always emphasized international cooperation, so it was fitting that later in the same year that the Pan American Children’s Code was adopted, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). While the UN did not issue a formal declaration specific to children until 1989, many of the provisions in the UDHR reflected the ideas of the international child welfare movement. Article 1, which declares, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” emphasizes birth and thereby the rights of children; it also echoes child advocates’ insistence that circumstances of birth should not handicap individuals. Article 2, reading, “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,” while going considerably beyond the White House Conferences, encompasses their insistence that child welfare provisions be extended to minority groups. Article 16, Section 3, asserting, “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society,” sounds remarkably similar to the White House Conference of 1909’s celebration of home life, while the remainder of the statement, “and is entitled to protection by society and the State,” reflects longstanding opinions of child welfare advocates. Article 22, asserting everyone’s “right to social security” and responsibility of the nation-state to ensure “the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for [each person’s] dignity and the free development of [each individual’s] personality,” likewise reflects the child welfare agenda,

as does Article 24, asserting “the right to rest and leisure.” Article 25, specifying “the right to a standard of living adequate for . . . health and well-being. . . . including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services,” encapsulates decades of child welfare reformers’ demands for economic support for needy children, especially in the statement: “Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.” Finally, Article 26, “Everyone has the right to education,” reflects child advocates’ longstanding demands for state-funded education.⁸⁹ By the end of the 1940s, international child welfare had been incorporated into international human rights.

Breckinridge’s health declined in the mid-1940s. Her retirement in 1942 also meant that she no longer had a secretary to type her correspondence and save carbon copies of her outgoing letters. As a result, Breckinridge’s thoughts on the adoption of Pan American Child Code and the creation of the United Nations have not been preserved in her papers. Breckinridge died on July 30, 1948, at the age of eighty-two, and thus did not live to celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, all of her earlier writing and actions indicate that she would have been fully supportive of these efforts to advance international child welfare, international law, and international human rights.

In addition to participating in the international child welfare movement, Breckinridge joined an international network of social justice feminists. In 1915, during World War One, Breckinridge participated in the International Congress of Women at The Hague, which called upon European countries to seek peaceable resolutions to conflict, including the creation of an international court. After this gathering, pacifists in twenty-one countries formed the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). As a founding member of the Women’s Peace Party, which became the U.S. branch of WILPF, Breckinridge was also a charter member

and lifelong supporter of WILPF, which promoted internationalism and opposed militarism. Breckinridge never abandoned her opposition to military solutions to international differences. In 1940, during World War Two, Breckinridge used a book review of a history of the Women's Peace Party as an opportunity to defend opponents of U.S. entry into the war against "the charge of lack of patriotism" and to celebrate pacifism as "true patriotism."⁹⁰

In her private correspondence, Breckinridge contended that world war was the result of a tragic "failure to establish a world state." She argued that just as law governed interpersonal relationships to prevent duels and murder, it also should govern international relations to prevent destruction and war. It is only logical, therefore, that Breckinridge would have approved of both the formation of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which addressed many of the issues to which she had dedicated her life, including the international child welfare movement.⁹¹

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a suitable coda for Breckinridge's life work as well as for the international child welfare movement. From 1910 until 1948, Breckinridge promoted child welfare in local, national, and international settings. Her participation in several major conferences indicates the high degree of cooperation among child welfare advocates in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe as well as the connection between child welfare and international relations. All of these factors came together in the last year of Breckinridge's life, leading to the adoption of a hemispheric Children's Code and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These documents marked the convergence of child welfare and human rights and a new era in international relations. The international child welfare movement paved the way for international human rights. Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge played a central role in this process.

Abbreviations used in the notes include *JPH* (*Journal of Policy History*); *JHCY* (*Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*); and *SSR* (*Social Service Review*).

¹ Katharine F. Lenroot, “Friend of Children and of the Children’s Bureau,” *SSR*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Dec. 1948), 427-430 (quotation).

² This article is based on research for my work-in-progress, a biography of Breckinridge, which in turn is based on her extensive publications and voluminous correspondence, especially the Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter SPB Papers).

³ For U.S. examples, see especially Molly Ladd-Taylor, “Hull House Goes to Washington: Women and the Children’s Bureau,” in Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, eds., *Gender, Class, Race and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1991); and Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (New York, 1991).

On the European context see especially Valerie Fildes, Lara Marks, and Hilary Marland, eds., *Women and Children First: International Maternal and Infant Welfare, 1870-1948* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Alisa Klaus, *Every Child a Lion: The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States and France, 1890-1920* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).

On Latin America, see Donna J. Guy, *White Slavery and Mothers Alive and Dead: The Troubled Meeting of Sex, Gender, Public Health, and Progress in Latin America* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); and Donna J. Guy, “The Pan American Child Congresses, 1916 to 1942: Pan Americanism, Child Reform, and the Welfare State in Latin America,” *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (July 1988), 272-292. I am indebted to my colleague Jody Pavilack for introducing me to Donna Guy’s scholarship.

⁴ Eileen Boris, “Politicizing Women’s History, Engendering Policy History,” *JPH*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2007), 431 (quotation) -438; see also Boris, “On the Importance of Naming: Gender, Race, and the Writing of Policy History,” *JPH* 17: 1 (2005), 75 (quotation) – 92. See also Julian E. Zelizer, “New Directions in Policy History,” *JPH*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2005), 1– 11; and Zelizer, “Clio’s Lost Tribe: Public Policy History Since 1978,” *JPH*, 12:3 (2000), 369-394.

⁵ See Barbara Beatty and Julia Grant, “Entering into the Fray: Historians of Childhood and Public Policy,” *JHCY*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 2010), 107-126; Linda Gordon, “The Perils of Innocence, or What’s Wrong with Putting Children First,” *JHCY*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 2008), 331-350; Judith Sealander, “The History of Childhood Policy: A Philippic’s Wish List,” *JPH*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2004), 175-187.

⁶ Robert J. McMahon, “Diplomatic History and Policy History: Finding Common Ground,” *JPH*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2005), 93 (quotation)-109; Jacob S. Hacker, “Bringing the Welfare State Back In: The Promise (and Perils) of the New Social Welfare History,” *JPH*, 17: 1 (2005), 125-154. Quotation on p. 143.

⁷ Kristin Hoganson, “What’s Gender Got to Do with It? Women and Foreign Relations History,” *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (March 2005), 14-18 (quotation p. 17). Although scholars of social welfare and social work in the United States devote some attention to Breckinridge, scholars of international relations have largely ignored her. For instance, Leila J.

Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) does not include Breckinridge.

⁸ For biographical information, see Virginia Kemp Fish, "Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge," in *Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990: A Biographical Dictionary*, eds. Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 114-116.

⁹ See especially Robyn Muncy, "Gender and Professionalization in the Origins of the U.S. Welfare State: The Careers of Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, 1890-1935," *JPH*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1990), 290-315. See also Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progress Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Breckinridge's early publications were co-authored with Edith Abbott: *Housing Problems in Chicago* (1910); *Wage-Earning Women and the State* (1910); *Delinquent Child and the Home* (1912); *Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Public Schools* (1917); and *Administration of Aid-to-Mothers Law* (1921). Her solo publications on women included *Marriage and the Civic Rights of Women* (1931) and *Women in the Twentieth Century* (1933). Her documentary collections on social work and socialized justice included *Family Welfare Work* (1924); *Public Welfare Administration* (1927); *The Family and the State* (1934); and *Social Work and the Courts* (1934). As I will explore in more detail in my larger project, Breckinridge and Abbott were closely associated both professionally and personally for more than forty years. On women's intimate relationships and changing definitions of lesbianism in Breckinridge's lifetime, see especially Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done for America—A History* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); and Estelle B. Freedman, "'The Burning of Letters Continues': Elusive Identities and the Historical Construction of Sexuality," *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter 1998), 181-200.

¹⁰ Muncy, "Gender and Professionalization."

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The speech was printed as "Neglected Widowhood in the Juvenile Court," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (July 1910), 53-87 (quotation p. 58); see also Joanne L. Goodwin, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1900-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). For critical analyses of the mothers' pensions programs and their successor program, AFDC, see especially Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (New York, 1994); Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917-1942* (Ithaca, 1995); Sonya Michel, *Children's Interests/Mothers' Rights: The Shaping of America's Child Care Policy* (New Haven, 1999); and Barbara J. Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mothers' Aid," in Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 123-151. As Margo Canaday has recently argued, U.S. social policies, including welfare policies, also defined homosexuality and enforced heterosexuality. See *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009). For a different perspective on mothers' pensions, see Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹³ Kriste Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood": *The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-1946* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 21-22.

¹⁴ S. P. Breckinridge, "Family Budgets," *Standards of Child Welfare: A Report of the Children's Bureau Conferences, May and June, 1919* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1919), 34-43 (quotation).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ In her inconsistent views on gender equality, Breckinridge was typical of other reformers of her generation. Although in other contexts Breckinridge championed women's political and legal equality, her positions on women's economic status and her views on proper family life were more equivocal: she both defended women's right to engage in paid work and insisted on the importance of full-time motherhood, even though she also recognized the necessity of women's wage work in her 1922 book, *Children of Wage-Earning Mothers*, and the existence of alternative forms of family life in her publications on illegitimacy, stepfathers, and guardianship. Breckinridge's views on women's role, while seemingly inconsistent to modern scholars, were typical of American women activists in the opening decades of the twentieth century, who insisted on "protective legislation" for working women and opposed the Equal Rights Amendment at the same time that they demanded the right to vote and promoted equal citizenship rights in the form of the Cable Act.

On maternalist ideology and feminist activism in the early twentieth-century U.S., including the notion of the "opening wedge," see especially Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Landon R. Y. Storrs, *Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers' League, Women's Activism, and Labor Standards* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Jan Doolittle Wilson, *The Women's Joint Congressional Committee and the Politics of Maternalism, 1920-30* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007). See also Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1993), 110-113.

Recently, some scholars have challenged the notion of maternalism and called attention to other definitions of female citizenship, including "economic citizenship," or "the right to earn," which some argue is meaningless as a civil right without the "social rights" of child care. See especially Eileen Boris and Sonya Michel, "Social Citizenship and Women's Right to Work in Postwar America," in *Women's Rights and Human Rights: International Historical Perspectives*, ed. Pat Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, and Katie Holmes (New York, 2001), 199-219. See also Eileen Boris, "'The Right to Work Is the Right to Live!' Fair Employment and the Quest for Social Citizenship," in Manfred Berg and Martin H. Geyer, eds., *Two Cultures of Rights: The Quest for Inclusion and Participation in Modern America and Germany* (New York, 2002), 121-41; and Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Men, Women, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (New York, 2001). This approach may help bridge the seeming divide between equity and protection. For thoughtful discussions of this issue, see Wendy Sarvasy, "Beyond the Difference versus Equality Policy Debate: Postsuffrage Feminism, Citizenship, and the Quest for a Feminist Welfare State," *Signs* 17 (1992): 329-63; and Storrs, *Civilizing Capitalism*, Chap. 2.

Breckinridge's paradoxical policies also may appear more comprehensible to contemporary social justice activists when placed in the context of international human rights theory, which makes a distinction between political, civil, social, and economic rights. By simultaneously promoting women's political and civil equality and demanding protection for

women's social and economic rights, Breckinridge was in some sense anticipating the work of such organizations as the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, both of which she wholeheartedly supported. Seen in the light of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted in her last year of life, Breckinridge appears not so much paradoxical as prescient. See especially Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998, 2003, 2011). I am grateful to Paul Lauren for allowing me to audit his class at the University of Montana on the history of international human rights, which introduced me to these concepts.

¹⁷ *Standards of Child Welfare*, 431, 433-435, 440.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 440.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 442.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 444.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 443.

²² *Ibid.*, 436-439; see also Molly Ladd-Taylor, "My Work Came Out of Agony and Grief": Mothers and the Making of the Sheppard-Towner Act," in Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World*, 321-342; and *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Breckinridge addressed the issue of compulsory school attendance in *Truancy and Non-Attendance*, co-authored with Elizabeth Abbott in 1917. The pair first presented their ideas on this subject, based on research conducted for the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy with the financial support of the Russell Sage Foundation, in a 1911 report to local clubwomen. See *Finding Employment for Children Who Leave the Grade Schools to Go to Work: Report to the Chicago Woman's Club, the Chicago Association of Collegiate Alumnae and the Woman's City Club* (Chicago: Manz Engraving Co., Hollister Press, 1911).

²³ Specifics varied from country to country, and scholars debate the role of women in "weak" welfare states (Great Britain and the U.S.) versus "strong" welfare states (France and Germany), with some scholars suggesting that women had the greatest influence (if the fewest services) in nations with less centralized state power. In addition, as Sonya Michel points out, "waged labor for mothers was a decisive fault line in social-policy debates," and Eileen Boris points out that only white women exercised this authority in the emerging welfare state in the U.S. However, in all of these nations, social work emerged as a women's profession closely associated with women's voluntary associations and organized feminism. To lay claim to authority within national welfare policy or to establish "shadow welfare states" in nations lacking such policies, voluntary women's associations and professional social service groups used both the language of maternalism, which valorized women's role as mothers and applied it to society more broadly as "social mothers," and the discourse of social science, which allowed educated women to claim a role in public policy as social workers. See Jane Jenson, "Representations of Gender: Policies to 'Protect' Women Workers and Infants in France and the United States before 1914," in Gordon ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare*, 152-177; Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and The United States, 1880-1920," *American Historical Review* 95 (1990): 1076-1108; Seth Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840-1914," in Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World*, 94-135; Christoph Sachsse, "Social Mothers: The Bourgeois Women's Movement and German Welfare-State Formation, 1890-1929," in Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World*, 136-158;

Eileen Boris, "The Power of Motherhood: Black and White Activist Women Redefine the 'Political,'" in Koven and Michel, *Mothers of a New World*, 213-245; Jean H. Quataert, "Women's Work and the Early Welfare State in Germany: Legislators, Bureaucrats, and Clients before the First World War," in Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World*, 159-187; Alisa Klaus, "Depopulation and Race Suicide: Maternalism and Pronatalist Ideologies in France and the United States," *Ibid.*, 188-212; Sonya Michel, "The Limits of Maternalism: Policies Toward American Wage-Earning Mothers During the Progressive Era," *Ibid.*, 277 (quotation)-320; and Ann Orloff, *The Politics of Pensions: A Comparative Analysis of Britain, Canada, the United States, 1880-1940* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

²⁴ Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood*, 74; *Standards of Child Welfare*, 12-13. **On the Bureau's international activities, see Katharine Lenroot to Martha Eliot, January 7, 1974, contained in Reminiscences of Katharine F. Lenroot, Social Security Project, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, New York, New York;** and Katharine F. Lenroot Papers, 1909-1974, Subseries II.3: International Activities, 1924-1974, Boxes 20-21, especially "International Activities of the Children's Bureau," Box 21, Folder 10. See also the various annual reports of the Bureau. The Bureau sent representatives to the League of Nations in Geneva as well as numerous Latin American gatherings.

²⁵ Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in America Reform*, Chap. 3.

²⁶ *First General Congress on Child Welfare: Official Program* (Geneva: Save the Children Fund, 1925); and *First General Congress on Child Welfare: Reports* (Geneva: Save the Children Fund, 1925), Document 63.

²⁷ Guy, "Pan American Child Congresses."

²⁸ Although Lenroot indicates that Breckinridge attended the Fifth Congress in Cuba, even relating personal anecdotes of their time in Havana, other accounts suggest that her paper was delivered by proxy, perhaps due to illness. See Martha Branscombe, "A Friend of International Welfare," *SSR*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (December 1948), 436-441, especially p. 438; and Katharine F. Lenroot, "Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, Social Pioneer," *SSR*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (March 1949), 88-92, especially p. 88. Breckinridge was not an official delegate and does not appear on the abbreviated program contained in *Fifth Pan American Child Congress, Havana, Cuba, December 8-13, 1927: Final Act* (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1954).

²⁹ *Sixth Pan American Child Congress, Lima, July 4-11, 1930: Report of the Delegates of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), 4.

³⁰ Indeed, the official U.S. delegation included men and women in equal numbers (six of each), thus embodying Lenroot's vision of "the day when men and women together and on an equal footing will labor for racial betterment and social progress." The official delegation and unofficial representatives included women representing social work education (Breckinridge), social service agencies (Neva Deardorff of the Welfare Council of New York City), and public health (Dr. Blanche Sterling of the Public Health Service), as well as representatives of juvenile courts (Judge Kathryn Sellers from Washington, D.C.), public schools (Bess Goodykoontz, Assistant Commissioner of Education, and Ohio schoolteacher Marcella Boylan), private agencies (Marguerite Boylan of the National Council of Catholic Women), and the American Red Cross (Lucilla Boylan). See Katharine F. Lenroot, *The Sixth Pan American Child Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1930), 3.

Lenroot's final report noted that since the Fifth Pan American Child Congress in Lima in 1927, Peruvian women had significantly increased their political and social activism. "Those

delegates who had been in Peru before were especially impressed with the development of women's activities in that country in the last six years," observed Lenroot, somewhat immodestly, although perhaps accurately, attributing the change "in part at least to the impetus given by the Pan American Congress of Women which met in Lima in 1924." U.S. delegates met both officially and unofficially with representatives from several women's groups and charitable institutions as well as touring the local women's prison. See *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Reports*, 18-19. In addition to the Pan American Child Congresses, there were also Pan American women's gatherings, to which Lenroot referred. See Megan Threlkeld, "The Pan American Conference of Women, 1922: Successful Suffragists Turn to International Relations," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 31, No. 5 (November 2007), 801-828.

Subsequent meetings of the Pan American Child Congress did indeed feature more women delegates (from both the U.S. and Latin American countries). The intervention of Children's Bureau delegates, and especially the new focus on social workers as female professionals, shifted attention back to mothers and resulted in greater gender equity in terms of participation and leadership. See Guy, *White Slavery and Mothers Alive and Dead*, pp. 54-71; and Guy, "Pan American Child Congresses."

³¹ "Pan American Child Welfare Congress," [1930], SPB Papers.

³² Lenroot, *Sixth Pan American Child Congress*, 15-16.

³³ Latin American delegates chaired all of these sessions. See *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 12, 42.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁵ Lenroot, *Sixth Pan American Child Congress*, quotations pp. 5, 6, and 10. All 20 of the U.S. resolutions were adopted by the entire Congress, which forwarded a total of 45 recommendations from the largest group, the "Sections on Hygiene, Social Welfare, and Legislation," which most closely mirrored the U.S. delegation and the Children's Bureau. Other sections included the "Section of Medicine and Surgery," which forwarded four resolutions, and the "Section of Education," which forwarded 23 recommendations. However, several of the recommendations were repetitive and/or mutually reinforcing. See *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*.

³⁶ See *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 55.

³⁷ For quotations, see *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 55; Lenroot, *Sixth Pan American Child Congress*, 6; and Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, *Public Welfare Administration in the United States: Select Documents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 3.

³⁸ Quoted in Lenroot, "Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, Social Pioneer," 90. Breckinridge's address was printed as "The Family and the Law," *Journal of Social Hygiene*, Vol. 11, No. 7 (October 1925).

Breckinridge's extensive legal publications included "Legislative Control of Women's Work," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 1906), 107-; "Child Labor Legislation," *Elementary School Teacher*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (June 1909), 511-516; "The Illinois Ten-Hour Law," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 18, No. 6 (June, 1910), 465-470; *A Summary of Juvenile-Court Legislation in the United States*, with Helen R. Jeter (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920); *Re-Examination of the Work of Children's Courts* (New York: National Probation Association, 1931); "New Chapters in the History of the Courts and Social Legislation," with Grace Abbott, *SSR*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (September 1936), 483-499; "Social Workers in the Courts of Cook County," *SSR*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 1938), 230-250; "Legal

Problems of the Juvenile Court,” *SSR*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (March 1943), 12-14; and “The Law of Guardian and Ward with Special Reference to the Children of Veterans,” (with Mary Stanton), *SSR*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (September 1943), 265-302.

On sociological jurisprudence and socialized justice, including Freund’s role, see especially Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). I am grateful to my colleague Kyle Volk for introducing me to Willrich’s scholarship.

³⁹ See B. Ogden Chisolm, *Brief Report of the Proceedings of the Ninth International Prison Congress* (New York: International Prison Commission, 1925), 3; and *The Ninth International Prison Congress* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1926); Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, *Re-examination of the Work of Children’s Courts* (New York: National Probation Association, 1931); and *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 54-55.

⁴⁰ Lenroot’s final report noted that representatives to the Pan American Congress drew upon the experience of European countries, especially France, Belgium, Germany, and England, all of which were at the forefront of the creation of welfare states, and in particular in the protection of maternal and child health. See *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 2.

⁴¹ *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 1. Several proposed measures, including a resolution to encourage youth to conduct international correspondence and engage in theatrical productions to promote “international friendship,” explicitly linked child welfare to international relations. See p. 57.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴ *First International Conference of Social Work*, Vol. 2, p. 235. See also Transcripts of Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, Registrar’s Office, University of Chicago.

⁴⁵ *Sixth Pan American Child Congress: Report*, 23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁷ “The Changing Role of the State in Child Welfare,” ca. 1940, draft, Miscellany, 1940-1941, SPB Papers. See also Molly Ladd-Taylor, “Why does Congress wish women and children to die?”: The Rise and Fall of Public Maternal and Infant Health Care in the United States, 1921-1929,” in Fildes, Marks, and Marland, eds., *Women and Children First*, 121-132.

⁴⁸ SPB to Jane Chandler, April 7, 1930; SPB to Marguerite Owen, January 13, 1932, SPB Papers; see also Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood*, especially pp. 164-170.

⁴⁹ *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Chief of the Children’s Bureau* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1931), “overwhelming opposition” quote on p. 62; see also *White House Conference, 1930: Addresses and Abstracts of Committee Reports* (New York: The Century Company, 1931).

⁵⁰ These last items previously appeared in the 1919 Minimum Standards; “rural social work” was to be promoted as well as “the abolition of racial discrimination.” See *Minimum Standards for Child Welfare* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 13, 15; and *White House Conference, 1930*, 45-47.

⁵¹ Sandra M. Stehno, “Public Responsibility for Dependent Black Children: The Advocacy of Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge,” *SSR*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (1988), 485-503.

⁵² On the original Social Security Act of 1935 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, see especially Lindenmeyer, “*A Right to Childhood*,” 179-198; and Storrs, *Civilizing Capitalism*, Chaps. 7 and 8; on the 1939 amendments to the SSA, see Jacob Fisher, *The Response of Social*

Work to the Depression (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980), 180-81. Although Breckinridge did not serve on the Committee on Economic Security, her professional ally and Secretary of State Frances Perkins was chair, and her FERA colleague, Harry Hopkins, was a member. Her colleagues in the Children's Bureau also exercised strong influence: Katherine Lenroot, Martha Eliot, and Grace Abbott drafted the child welfare sections of the bill. On Breckinridge's work on care for disabled children, see *White House Conference of Child Health and Protection: Directory of Committee Personnel, July 1, 1930*, in Lillian Wald Papers, Reel 33, Box 47, Folders 3-4, New York Public Library.

⁵³ Frank Bane to Arlien Johnson, copy in Frank Bane to Wilma Walker, October 24, 1957, Abbott Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago. On women and the New Deal, see especially Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

⁵⁴ Alice Kessler-Harris, "Designing Women and Old Foods: The Construction of the Social Security Amendments of 1939," in Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, eds., *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 87-106, esp. p. 93; Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, "New Horizons of Professional Education for Social Work," in *National Conference on Social Welfare, Official Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, 1936.*, pp. 119-132 (URL <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/>); Josephine Brown, "What We Have Learned About Emergency Training for Public Relief Administration," *National Conference on Social Welfare, Official Proceedings of the Annual Meeting., 1935*, pp. 237-245 (URL <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/>); and Walter Trattner, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Social Welfare in America*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press: 1986), 783-784.

⁵⁵ *The Children's Bureau: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), 42-43, 52-53.

⁵⁶ Katharine Lenroot to SPB, December 22, 1939, and Minutes, Advisory Council, March 4-5, 1940, both in SPB Papers.

⁵⁷ *Children's Bureau: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, 41-42.

⁵⁸ Neva Deardorff to Lillian D. Wald, January 12, 1931; Constitution of the United States Committee on Cooperation in Pan American Child Welfare Work; and "United States Committee on Cooperation in Pan American Child Welfare Work," all in Folder 5, Box 41, Lillian Wald Papers. Columbia University, New York. The group's objectives included: establishing child welfare fellowships in the U.S.; arranging visits of specialists in child welfare between the U.S. and Latin America; cooperating with the Pan American Institute for the Protection of Childhood; promoting U.S. participation in Pan American Child Congresses; collaborating with the Institute in developing demonstrations of child welfare methods; and translating English-language child welfare publications into Spanish.

⁵⁹ "The Inter-American Institute," Draft Report, Miscellany, 1940-1941, SPB Papers. The conferences were formally known as the International Conferences of American States, and the Pan American Union ultimately became the Organization of American States. Of course, women had informally represented the U.S. at previous international conferences, including meetings of the League of Nations, as well as formally at specialized conferences such as the Pan American Child Congresses.

⁶⁰ "The Pan American Institute of Child Welfare," ca. 1933, Speeches and Articles, SPB Papers. On Lenroot's desire for Breckinridge to participate, see Lenroot, "Sophonisba

Breckinridge, *Social Pioneer*,” 88; and SPB to Katharine Lenroot, October 27, 1933, Folder 13, Box 27, Lenroot Papers.

⁶¹ Guy, “Pan American Conference”; see also U.S. Children’s Bureau, Press Release, August 2, 1935; Katharine Lenroot to SPB, August 12, 1935; Assistant Secretary of State to SPB, September 20, 1935; SPB to Spruille Braden, September 24, 1935; SPB to Alexander W. Weddell, September 24, 1935; Warren Kelchner to SPB, February 18, 1937, all in SPB Papers. Breckinridge probably referred the 1927 report, which Grace Abbott played a key role in producing. See Lela B. Costin, *Two Sisters for Social Justice: A Biography of Grace and Edith Abbott* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 90-97.

⁶² Mildred Brendon to SPB, September 2, 1942, SPB Papers.

⁶³ [Annual] *Report of the Chief of the Children’s Bureau, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1940* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 149. Prior to the conference, members of a planning committee circulated topical reports and draft reports representing research and deliberations of the Children’s Bureau staff and “the active participation of about 160 Conference members who are experts in various fields,” including Breckinridge. Ultimately, nearly 700 people participated in the Conference in some fashion, although only about 450 attended the conference proceedings. Breckinridge was unable to attend the initial session on April 26, 1939, but she offered comments about the preliminary statements drafted at that session prior to the conference itself. See Richard Klein to SPB, October 30, 1939, Katharine Lenroot to SPB, December 13, 1939, SPB to Philip Klein, December 19, 1939, SPB Papers; and *Conference on Children in a Democracy: Papers and Discussions at the Initial Session, April 26, 1939* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), 125; See also Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood,” 203-210.

⁶⁴ “The Fourth White House Conference: A Delegate’s Notes,” *SSR*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (March 1940), 119-123; Katharine Lenroot to Edith Abbott, April 5, 1940, Lenroot Papers.

⁶⁵ “Fourth White House Conference: A Delegate’s Notes,” 119.

⁶⁶ *Report . . . 1940*, 150 (quotation) – 152..

⁶⁷ *Children in a Democracy: General Report Adopted by the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, January 19, 1940* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), 35-41, 45-46, 57-61, 64-67.

⁶⁸ “Delegate’s Notes,” 119. For Lenroot, this meant that “plans for safeguarding the health and well-being of the others and children of the Nation are matters of vital importance in an adequate program of national preparedness.” She submitted copies of the conference report to the Council of National Defense, recommending close coordination of national and state councils of defense and Children’s Bureau child protection efforts. “Good teamwork is essential in order to safeguard the gains for childhood that have been won and to make further progress toward the goals of the people of the United States for their children.” See *Report . . . 1940*, 151.

⁶⁹ *Children in a Democracy: General Report*, 3.

⁷⁰ “Delegate’s Notes,” 119.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 73-74, 82 (quotation).

⁷² Quoted in Lenroot, “Friend to Children,” 429. See also Katharine Lenroot to SPB, January 9, 1940, and SPB to Joseph Gavagan, January 9, 1940, SPB Papers.

⁷³ *Children in a Democracy: General Report*, 67-68. See also *Conference on Children in a Democracy: Preliminary Statements*, 245-257.

⁷⁴ “Government’s Role in Child Welfare,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 212, *Children in a Depression Decade*, edited by James H. S. Bossard (November 1940), 42-50, quotations pp. 42, 46.

⁷⁵ *Children in a Democracy: General Report*, 10 (quotation), 22-24.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 23-24, 27-28.

⁷⁷ “The Changing Role of the State in Child Welfare,” [1940], draft, Speeches and Articles, SPB Papers; published as “Government’s Role in Child Welfare.”

⁷⁸ SPB to Philip Klein, December 19, 1939; *Children in a Democracy: General Report*, 67. The report also was rather vague about cost-sharing and civil service qualifications, which were issues that concerned Breckinridge. See pp. 75-81. The final report did not differ substantially, with respect to these issues, from the preliminary report that Breckinridge objected to. See *Conference on Children in a Democracy: Preliminary Statements*, 239-242.

⁷⁹ “The Changing Role of the State in Child Welfare,” ca. 1940, draft, Miscellany, 1940-1941, SPB Papers. See also “Government’s Role in Child Welfare.”

⁸⁰ “Delegate’s Notes,” 120.

⁸¹ Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood*, Chap. 8.

⁸² *Children in a Democracy: General Report*, 9.

⁸³ On the committee, see Series II.2 (Box 18, Folders 9, 10, and 11); and Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood*, 250-252. On Breckinridge’s activities, see SPB to Katharine Lenroot, June 11, 1946, Lenroot Papers, Box 18, Folder 11; and SPB to Katharine Lenroot, May 8, 1946, with enclosed clipping, “Save the Children’s Bureau,” Folder 2, Box 27, Lenroot Papers.

⁸⁴ *Report . . . 1940*, 151; **Katharine Lenroot to Martha Eliot, January 7, 1974, included in Reminiscences of Katharine F. Lenroot.** See also annual reports for the Bureau. Dr. Martha Eliot later left the Children’s Bureau to take a job as Assistant General Director of the World Health Organization. See Secretary for Katharine Lenroot to Edith Abbott, April 26, 1949, Folder 9, Box 18, Lenroot Papers.

⁸⁵ Some of those in which Breckinridge was most active, speaking at conferences and/or serving on boards, committees, and councils, included Aid to Great Britain, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, the American League Against War and Fascism, the American Palestine Committee, the Committee on Colored Children (Chicago), the U.S. Committee on Needs of Children in Wartime, the Congress of American Women, the Fighting French Committee in America, German Scholars in Exile, the Illinois Child Welfare Committee, the International Relief Association for Victims of Nazism, Keep America Out of War, the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Child Labor Committee, the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War, the National Council of Soviet-American Friendship, Pan American Council of Chicago, the People’s Mandate to End War, the Post War World Council, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. List compiled from correspondence, membership cards, receipts for pledges, and Breckinridge’s handwritten lists of donations, SPB Papers. On the peace groups to which Breckinridge belonged, see Harriet Hyman Alonso, *The Women’s Peace Union and the Outlawry of War, 1921-1942* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), Appendix 1, pp. 181-186.

⁸⁶ Mildred Brendon to SPB, September 2, 1942, SPB Papers.

⁸⁷ Lindenmeyer, *A Right to Childhood*, 252. On the connections between the child welfare movement and movements for human rights, see Kriste Lindenmeyer, “Children and Human

Rights (20th c.)," in *Children and Youth in History*, Item #122, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/case-studies/122> (accessed June 9, 2011). Bureau supporters continued to agitate for greater influence for the Bureau, including the potential creation of a new Department of Health, Education, and Welfare with a female official in charge. See Lenroot Papers, Series II.2, Box 18, Folders 9 and 10. On the possible new department, see especially Chase Going Woodhouse to Alice Hamilton, September 10, 1946; and Anna Kelton Wiley to Edith Abbott, August 24, 1946, Lenroot Papers, Box 18, Folder 10.

⁸⁸ Guy, "Pan American Congresses." The meeting approving the Code was held in January 1948 in Venezuela. Also in 1948, the Pan American Conference adopted the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man. Drafters of the UNDR consulted draft versions of this document and incorporated the ideas of Latin Americans about social and economic rights, including special protections for families, into the final version of the UDHR, Article 25 ("Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance."). See Mary Ann Glendon, *The World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Westminster, Md.: Random House, 2001), 140-141, 162; and Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 130-132.

⁸⁹ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948. See also Glendon, *World Made New*.

⁹⁰ S. P. Breckinridge, Review of Mary Louise Degen, *The History of the Woman's Peace Party*, *SSR*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (June 1940), 383. Breckinridge opposed U.S. entry into the war. See "People's Peace Group Formed," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 12, 1939, p. 8. On the Congress of Women, see Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch, and Alice Hamilton, *Women at the Hague* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1915). On WILPF's founding and its U.S. branch's foreign policy recommendations, see Lillian Wald Papers, Box 35, Folders 4.1-4.5, Columbia. See also Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace As a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (1993); and Kathryn Kish Sklar, Anja Schuler, and Susan Strasser, eds., *Social Justice Feminists in the United States and Germany: A Dialogue in Documents, 1885-1933* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), Introduction.

⁹¹ SPB to Virginia Wieland, March 25, 1942, SPB Papers. Despite the lack of correspondence regarding the UN and the UDHR, Breckinridge was almost certainly well aware of these events. Breckinridge was an avid reader of several newspapers; she was well acquainted with Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the UN Human Rights Commission; and the League of Women Voters, to which Breckinridge belonged, kept its members informed about the UN and its activities through such publications as *Action*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1945), 2-8; and *The Story of Dumbarton Oaks* (Washington, D.C.: National League of Women Voters, 1945). See also Elisabeth Israels Perry, *Women in Action: Rebels and Reformers, 1920-1980* (Washington, D.C.: National League of Women Voters), 48-52. Breckinridge was also a member of numerous NGO's who influenced the UN and the UDHR, including the ACLU, the American Jewish Congress, the NAACP, and the Red Cross. See William Korey, *NGO's and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "A Curious Grapevine"* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).