

*SYMPOSIUM: THE 19TH AMENDMENT AT 100: FROM THE
VOTE TO GENDER EQUALITY*

**“WE MUST FORGET EVERY DIFFERENCE AND UNITE IN
A COMMON CAUSE – VOTES FOR WOMEN”:
LESSONS FROM THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT¹
(OR, BEFORE THE NOTORIOUS RBG, THERE WERE THE
NOTORIOUS RGBs²)**

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As we commemorate the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, it is critical to consider both the history of the woman’s suffrage movement that led to the Amendment as well as the efficacy of the Amendment to secure women’s full legal, political, civil, and social equality. Our understanding of the woman’s suffrage movement in the United States has changed significantly over the last 100 years. Most prominently, beginning in the last decades of the twentieth century, the studies of divisions among women suffragists over issues of race and class both enlighten the historical narrative and critically inform the racial and class divisions among women activists that persist in the twenty-first century.³ This article argues that it is equally essential to examine the select contingents of women suffragists who engaged an opposite strategy; those who worked to overcome race and class divisions as they united across their differences and geographic, political boundaries. These

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1. *Club Notes*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, June 9, 1912, at 4.

2. See IRIN CARMON & SHANA KNIZHNIK, NOTORIOUS RBG: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF RUTH BADER GINSBURG (2015).

3. See ROSALYN TERBORGH-PENN, AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE VOTE, 1850–1920, 24–26, 42–43, 47 (1998); Jen McDanel, *White Suffragist Dis/Entitlement: The Revolution and the Rhetoric of Racism*, 30 LEGACY 243, 243–46, 260 (2013).

women believed their unified voices would provide them more power in their campaigns for the right to vote at local and national levels and in their quest for additional rights. They believed, as many suffragists did, that the vote was a critical step in their campaign, but they understood that suffrage alone was not sufficient to end women's inequality.⁴ These women chose a united transnational strategy to secure their aims.

Many of the leaders of the unifying factions were professionals, primarily doctors and lawyers. This article highlights two of the leaders of this movement—Rosa Goodrich Boido and Rosalind Goodrich Bates—both of whom led and embodied the unification of women across borders. This article illustrates how, first Boido, and then her daughter Bates, enacted this strategy of uniting women to demand their rights. It culminates in Bates's achievement of uniting women lawyers around the world in a new organization, Federación Internacional de Abogadas (FIDA), in the critical period after World War II to ensure that women's voices and women's issues were included in the creation of the new post-war world order. It argues that uniting women across differences remains a relevant strategy in our continued, incremental, pursuit of women's full equality.⁵

DR. ROSA BOIDO

Rosa Meador Goodrich Boido earned her medical degree in 1895 from Cooper Medical College (now Stanford University Medical School). She was one of seven women in a class of sixty-three.⁶ A native Texan, she had married fellow medical student, Lorenzo Boido, a Mexican native, while matriculating in 1893.⁷ After graduating, the couple moved first to Guatemala, and then El Salvador, practicing medicine there for four years. The Boidos had two children, Roland Sutherland Bates born October 24, 1897 and Rosalind Anita Goodrich Boido (Bates) born July 29, 1894, in El Salvador. Throughout Rosalind's childhood, her parents practiced medicine in Mexico, Central America, and Arizona.⁸ Dr. R. G. Boido specialized in "diseases of women, obstretics [sic] and diseases of

4. See, e.g., Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Speech of Mrs. F. E. Watkins Harper*, PROC. ELEVENTH WOMEN'S RTS. CONVENTION, 45–48 (1866).

5. Nancy Abudu, Deputy Legal Director, S. Poverty Law Ctr., Opening Address at The 19th Amendment at 100: From the Vote to Gender Equality: Voting Rights Today (Sept. 20, 2019) (urging women to come together to address and embrace diversity).

6. *Commencement Night at Cooper College*, S.F. CHRON., Dec. 6, 1894, at 5.

7. Letter from Rosa Meador Goodrich Boido to Rosalind Goodrich Bates (Feb. 16, 1938) (on file with author).

8. *Sonora Siftings*, OASIS, (Arizola, Ariz.), July 27, 1907, at 4.

children.”⁹ In 1903, she became the first woman to earn a medical license in Tucson, Arizona.¹⁰

Boido was also an ardent suffragist and a women’s rights activist. She was president of the Equal Suffrage Club of Tucson during its final suffrage campaign (secured in November 1912) and a leader of the women’s Phoenix Civic League.¹¹ She traveled throughout the country to assist in women suffragists’ state campaigns¹² and agitated for women to register to vote in the states where women had secured suffrage.¹³ Yet, as most of her sister suffragists understood, she knew that suffrage alone would not secure women’s equality.¹⁴ Boido, therefore, also fought for women to run for public office. She ran herself, in 1912, for a seat on the Tucson School Board.¹⁵ Although Boido was soundly defeated, the local paper exclaimed “there was never a hotter school election in Tucson,” noting that local businessmen were particularly interested in the election.¹⁶ Boido also advocated for greater women’s property rights and for women to be appointed as police matrons and police officers.¹⁷

Boido, most importantly, urged women to unite across their differences and use their collective power to advance women’s rights and interests. She did this during the suffrage campaigns explaining, “Women are never going to succeed until they put aside the personal equation We must forget every difference and unite in a common cause—Votes for Women.”¹⁸ She continued to emphasize power through unity in her campaigns after suffrage and declared, “The women’s clubs of Phoenix

9. *Welcome Arrivals*, ARIZ. DAILY STAR, Feb. 18, 1900, at 4.

10. *Rise of Women in Arizona Medicine*, ARIZ. DAILY STAR, Dec. 5, 1967, at B18.

11. *Equal Suffrage Notes*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Oct. 27, 1912, at 6; *Club Notes*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Dec. 6, 1914, at 2. *See also Will Not Control Election*, HUTCHINSON GAZETTE, June 23, 1912, at 10–11 (describing the Tucson Equal Suffrage club as “one of the strongest in the state.”).

12. *See Club Notes*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Oct. 24, 1915, at 1.

13. *Women Must Register Now*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Aug. 13, 1914, at 9.

14. *See Club Notes*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Oct. 12, 1913, at 24. *See also* KATHERINE M MARINO, FEMINISM FOR THE AMERICAS: THE MAKING OF AN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT 48 (2019) (describing how Cuban lawyer Ofelia Dominguez Navarro argued that the vote was, in Marino’s words, “a significant step forward for social justice”).

15. *Announcement*, TUCSON CITIZEN, Feb. 16, 1912, at 9.

16. *Geo. Roskrige Re-Elected School Board*, ARIZ. DAILY STAR, Mar. 31, 1912, at 8.

17. *Women Meet in District*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Oct. 29, 1914, at 12. Dr R. G. Boido was also an advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. She was one of the founders of the Social Service League established in Phoenix in 1914 for that purpose. *Form Anti Capital Punishment League*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, May 29, 1914. Dr. R. G. Boido was also an advocate for labor unions. *Annual Labor Celebration in Phoenix Today*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Sept. 7, 1914, at 4.

18. *Club Notes*, 1912, *supra* note 1, at 4.

are a power but they don't know it," instructing, "'In Union there is strength.'"¹⁹

Boido additionally worked to advance women's reproductive rights. In 1915, she was among the first doctors in the US to use the medical treatment "twilight sleep," which offered pain relief and erased the memory of the pain for pregnant women giving birth.²⁰ She became an expert on this process, giving lectures and working at several hospitals in New York.²¹ Dr. Boido and her husband established a Twilight Hospital in Phoenix. Three years later, in 1918, she was arrested for performing an abortion at the Twilight Hospital.²² At her trial, Bates, Boido's daughter, testified on behalf of her mother.²³ The jury returned a verdict of guilty but asked the judge to give Boido "clemency" or a suspended sentence.²⁴ The judge sentenced Rosa to two to three years in prison;²⁵ although, she served just a few weeks in prison before she was paroled.²⁶

ROSALIND GOODRICH BATES

Boido taught the lessons of unification and a commitment to women's rights to her daughter. Bates started her career as an actor. At eighteen, she married a professor, had two children, and moved to New York. After two divorces, in 1923 at the age of 29, Bates moved to Los Angeles.²⁷ Through these years, Bates stayed close to her mother who

19. Rosa Goodrich Boido, *A Suggestion to Clubs*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Aug. 16, 1914, § 2 at 2.

20. *Twilight Sleep*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, May 19, 1915, at 3.

21. *Dr. Rosa G. Boido Returns*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Apr. 14, 1915, at 6.

22. *Dr. Rosa Boido Arrested Upon Serious Charge*, TUCSON CITIZEN, Feb. 12, 1918, at 6.

23. *Testimony Finished Jury to Get Boido Case at Noon Today*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Apr. 4, 1918, at 3. [hereinafter *Testimony Finished*].

24. *Dr. Boido Is Found Guilty but Jurors Asked for Clemency*, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Apr. 5, 1918, at 7.

25. *Dr. Rosa Boido Is Taken to Florence, Arizona* ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, April Apr. 24, 1918, at p. 10. During this time, Rosalind Bates's father was also plagued with criminal charges of bastardy by a former hospital employee. Lorenzo Boido fled to Mexico to avoid the charges. *Arizona Notes*, THE BORDER VIDETTE, (Nogales, Ariz.), Feb. 23, 1918, at p. 1; *Testimony Finished*, *supra* note 23, at 3.

26. *Colter Dodges Big Issues in His Statement*, ARIZ. DAILY STAR, Aug. 18, 1918, § 1, at 4.

27. *Santa Rosa Girl to Go on Stage in East*, S.F. CALL, Aug. 20, 1911, (Magazine), at 46. When she married Ernest Bates, an English professor at the University of Arizona in 1913 at the age of 18, Rosalind was described as a "charming, cultured and clever young woman." The Bates had two children, Roland Sutherland Bates (b. August 3, 1914), who became a lawyer, and Vernon Boido (b. August 23, 1917) (who took his Grandmother's surname) who became a medical doctor. Rosalind divorced Ernest in 1918 or 1919. She married Leslie Blades in 1919 in New York where she worked as an assistant editor to *El Comercio* and as an actress but divorced again in 1923.

continued to be a pioneer and an activist for women despite intense opposition.²⁸

In 1924, Bates began studying law at Southwest University Law School. The following year, she joined with three other women students to found the first chapter of the Iota Tau, a women's legal honor sorority.²⁹ Bates served as the editor of its publication, *Double Tau*, for several years.³⁰ In 1926, Bates became the first licensed Latina lawyer in California and one of the first Latina lawyers in the US. She practiced law in Los Angeles and Mexico City³¹ and was active in both local and national women's bar associations. She quickly assumed leadership positions at every level.³²

Rosalind Goodrich Bates, like her mother, focused on advancing the status and opportunities of women. And like her mother, Bates urged women lawyers to stand together for their advancement and the advancement of all women. "All over the west," she wrote, "women in the practice are realizing that only when they put personal differences aside and support their own will they be successful."³³ "As women lawyers," Bates explained, "we owe a duty to women in every walk of life. The discriminations against women must be met by intelligent advocates with the real interest of the race at heart."³⁴

Bates was active in the Southern California Council (SCC), a local women's bar association affiliated with the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL). She was elected vice-president of the SCC in 1930 and president in 1934.³⁵ Bates celebrated her sister women lawyers and lamented their small numbers in the practicing bar and even smaller numbers on the bench.³⁶ As a leader of the SCC, she helped fight for the election of women judges in the state and urged women lawyers to stand

28. *Santa Rosa Girl to Go on Stage in East*, *supra* note 27, at 46.

29. *Installation of Nu Chapter Set for Today*, L.A. TIMES, 11 Nov, 1934, § 3, at 5.

30. *Law Group Fetes National Leader*, IND. STAR, Sept. 26, 1931, at 5; *Sorority Names Supreme Dean*, L.A. TIMES, Aug. 23, 1932, § 2, at 5.

31. See Rosalind Bates, *Former S.R. Woman Here Enroute East*, PRESS DEMOCRAT (Santa Rosa, Cal.), Aug. 12, 1931, at 6; see also Biography of Rosalind Goodrich Bates (on file with author).

32. *Women Lawyers Name Ida Adams*, L.A. TIMES, Nov. 30, 1930, § 2, at 2; *New President Women Lawyers Startles Them*, SAN BERN. DAILY SUN, July 17, 1935, at 8.

33. Rosalind Goodrich Bates, *History of Western Women Lawyers*, 19 WOMEN L. J. 20, 21 (1931).

34. *Id.* at 22.

35. *Women Lawyers Name Ida Adams*, *supra* note 32; *Women Lawyers Name President*, L.A. TIMES, June 17, 1934, § 3, at 3.

36. Bates, *supra* note 33, at 21.

together for their advancement.³⁷ Bates even ran herself for municipal judgeship in 1935, although she was defeated.³⁸

Bates was also active at the national level. She served as editor of NAWL's quarterly publication, the *Women Lawyers Journal*, for several years.³⁹ Bates championed NAWL's core mission, which was to fight for women's "complete equality."⁴⁰ Additionally, Bates was active within the male dominated bar. She was a member of the American Bar Association and was an officer in the Lawyers' Club.⁴¹ In every one of the organizations she joined, Bates led a campaign for law reforms to advance women's rights and positions. These efforts included campaigns for women jury service; women lawyers' admission to local, state, and national bar associations on the same basis as men; against the movement to eliminate married women from civil service, state and government positions; and for uniform divorce laws in the US and for divorce by mutual consent.⁴²

During these interwar years, Bates also joined the newly formed National Association of Working Women (NAWW). Working women across the country had come together to fight a movement that sought to prohibit married women from holding public office and to exclude women from working in business and professional fields. Florence Thacker, an attorney and one of the NAWW founders, understood the right to work was essential to give meaning to the right to vote. "Women have fought valiantly for the right of suffrage," Thacker explained, "but to vote in a country where you had no right to work would be rather a sorry travesty upon freedom."⁴³

Beyond Bates's local and national campaigns, she had long worked to join together women across national borders, especially across the Americas. In 1939, as President of the California Business Women's Council, Bates hosted a delegation of "[s]ix distinguished women from the Latin American republics" who were on a tour of the US.⁴⁴ In the spring of 1944, Bates joined together with sister women lawyers, doctors, and dentists to sponsor a talk by Dr. Elena Trejo, who had practiced

37. *Id.*

38. *Bar Tallies Vote Stand*, L.A. TIMES, Mar. 22, 1935, § 2, at 5.

39. *Prominent Woman in Practice of Law is Visitor in the City*, ALBUQUERQUE J., Oct. 11, 1931, at 9.

40. *Women Lawyers Demand Sex-Equality in Work*, L.A. TIMES, July 16, 1935, at 2.

41. See Rosalind Bates, *Former S.R. Woman Here Enroute East*, *supra* note 31; see also *Lawyers' Club Seats Officers*, L.A. TIMES, Jan. 17, 1936, § 2, at 1.

42. *Teachers Obtain Divorces to Keep Jobs*, RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL, Jul. 16, 1935, at 2.

43. *Wives with Jobs Want to Keep 'Em*, RUTLAND DAILY HERALD (Del.), Oct. 15, 1932, at 6.

44. *Business Council Plans Honors for Latin Envoys*, L.A. TIMES, Oct. 15, 1939, § 4, at 11.

medicine in both the US and Guatemala. Bates also addressed the group, speaking on “Mexican and Central American laws, health and family legislation.”⁴⁵

In July of 1944, Bates traveled to Mexico City to join several other women lawyers from North, South, and Central America to attend the 3rd Inter-American Bar Association meeting. The IABA was founded in 1940 during WWII by lawyers from thirteen countries across the Americas to “establish and maintain relations between associations and organizations of lawyers, . . . in the various countries of the Americas, to provide a forum for exchanges of views.”⁴⁶ The initial members from the United States included three women’s local bar associations from Baltimore, Washington D.C., and Illinois.⁴⁷ Its first conference, held in Havana in 1941, attracted more than 600 registrants including 50 women lawyers.⁴⁸

The subject and aims of the first conference were directed by the exclusively male leadership. They prioritized issues of property law, commercial trade, immigration and criminology as well as the threat of fascism and foreign aggression. The leadership believed that bar associations have had a “profound influence . . . upon the development of national institutions” and that lawyers could and should play a critical role in defending the “principles of democracy” against the current threats and aggressions from alien systems.⁴⁹

The women lawyers in attendance shared the IABA’s aims of preserving democracy and peace, however, they fought to include women’s issues into its agenda. Elizabeth M. Cox, President of the Washington D.C. Women’s Bar Association and one of the only women allowed to speak at the conference’s banquet, articulated the position of the women lawyers in attendance: “The words, good neighbors, friendship and peace are associated with women as women the world over.”⁵⁰ Cox then educated the audience on the law reform efforts in which women across the Americas had been engaging for the past 14 years: “The women of the Americas have long nurtured the thought that these ideas should be applied to the countries of this hemisphere. As early as 1927, the Inter-American Commission of Women . . . was conducting a comparative study of the laws affecting women in the twenty-one Latin American

45. *Professional Group Books Dr. Trejo*, L.A. TIMES, May 26, 1944, § 2, at 6.

46. Beatrice A. Clephane, *The Significance of the Havana Conference of the Inter-American Bar Association*, 27 WOMEN L. J. 14, 14 (1941).

47. *Id.*

48. *Id.* at 15.

49. William Roy Vallance, *Some Outstanding Events at the Havana Conference of the Inter-American Bar Association*, 20 CAN. B. REV. 28, 29 (1942).

50. *Id.* at 38.

republics.”⁵¹ Cox informed those in attendance that the women members of the International and Comparative Law Section of the American Bar Association were instrumental in the formation of IABA and attempted to cement their role as essential to the future work of the association. She noted, “More than fifty women lawyers,” had traveled to the conference from across the hemisphere to “contribut[e] their bit, devoting their time and energy to what they believe is one means of perfecting and making effective our democratic way of life.”⁵²

Following the conference, the US National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), of which Bates was a leading member, determined to be part of the international movement to use law to secure peace and democracy and to ensure that women’s interests would be part of the movement.⁵³ These women believed that law was one of, if not the, most important means of securing world peace and freedom. “Whatever the future may ordain for the shape of things to come,” one member expressed, “it is certain that the framework of the structure will be supplied by the legal profession.”⁵⁴ Women lawyers throughout the US were intent on being part of the movement to shape the new world order after the war and that in that world, women would be considered “as persons.”⁵⁵ These women held regional and national conferences to prepare their strategy and traveled to Mexico City in 1944 with their sister women lawyers from Central and South America for the third annual Inter-American Bar Association conference.⁵⁶

At the conference, delegates debated racial equality and anti-imperialism; however, there were no discussions about securing women’s equality.⁵⁷ The male lawyers who dominated IABA excluded all but one of the local Mexican women lawyers from the meetings.⁵⁸ Only Esther

51. *Id.*

52. *Id.*

53. Elsa C. Beck, *National Association of Women Lawyers First General Session*, 29 *WOMEN L. J.* 32 (1943).

54. Irene Steyskal, *Women Lawyers Make Plans for Meeting in February*, *CHI. TRIB.*, Jan. 2, 1944, § 7, at 1.

55. *Postwar Women*, *DET. FREE PRESS*, Apr. 10, 1945, at 7.

56. See Beck, *supra* note 53, at 33; see also Anna B. Hogan, *The National Association of Women Lawyers Goes International*, 29 *WOMEN L. J.* 11 (Jan. 1943); and see *Current Events*, 30 *WOMEN L. J.* 5, 6, 26 (1944).

57. Martin Popper, *Report on the 3rd Conference of the Inter-American Bar Association*, 4 *LAW. GUILD REV.* 14, 14–17 (1944).

58. BEATRICE FISHER, *A TRIBUTE TO WOMEN LAWYERS WORLDWIDE* xi (2012) (suggesting that the women lawyers from Mexico were not invited to the conference); Marion Porter, *Laura Miller Talks About Divorce (Mexican) and Marriage (Hers)*, *THE COURIER-JOURNAL*, Aug. 20, 1944, at 14; *History*, *Federación Internacional de Abogadas Ninth Conference*, 1956.

Talamantes, one of Mexico's leading women's rights activists, was allowed to attend.⁵⁹ Although the male leadership allowed the foreign women lawyers to attend the IABA meetings, they denied the women any leadership in the organization and refused to entertain the issues the women lawyers raised.⁶⁰ Several of the women lawyers, including Bates and Talamantes, gathered together outside the meeting and determined to establish their own organization and to broaden its membership to women lawyers around the globe.⁶¹ They called their association by its Spanish name, Federación Internacional de Abogadas (FIDA).⁶² The New York Times reported that the impetus of the association was "to push suffrage,"⁶³ however, that was only a small part of the reason for the formation of the association and just one of its many aims.

FIDA held its first convention the following year in Havana, Cuba. The founders sent invitations to 68 sovereign countries to have their women lawyers attend the first convention and to become members of the federation. Bates described that it was a disappointment when the "Iron Curtain" countries refused to allow its women lawyers to attend, especially since the federation's program was "essentially non-political," but "thirty-eight countries did accept, and the federation soon became a working organization."⁶⁴ Bates understood the importance of centering FIDA as an Inter-American association, not a US dominated one. She wanted to ensure that the Central and South American representatives had an equal voice in setting the agenda and determining the strategy. Women lawyers from Cuba, Haiti, Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Australia, the Philippines, and the US attended.⁶⁵ FIDA's membership grew quickly and included the most prominent women lawyers from their home countries, many of whom had international reputations.

A US news reporter discerned the connection between the Nineteenth Amendment and FIDA and the power of women uniting across differences. "They've had the vote for years," the reporter wrote, "but it

59. Maria Esther Talamantes Perales, at 25 <http://www.ieez.org.mx/PEG/Doc/ESTHER%20TALAMANTES.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/BP8C-MAVM>].

60. *History*, *supra* note 58; *History*, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS, UNITED KINGDOM, <https://www.fida-uk.org/history/> [<https://perma.cc/L9F8-WYMY>].

61. *History*, *supra* note 58; *History*, *supra* note 61; Barbara Eckhardt, *Rosalind Bates Tells of Women Lawyers' Aims*, 1950, at 26.

62. Agnes Snyder, *Convention in Cuba Held a Thrill for Lady Lawyer*, THE COURIER-JOURNAL, Oct. 4, 1945, at 18.

63. *Woman Lawyers Unite*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, Aug. 6, 1944, at 19.

64. Eckhardt, *supra* note 61, at 26.

65. Snyder, *supra* note 62, at 18; Dorothy Hughitt, *The International Federation of Women Lawyers*, 32 WOMEN L. J. 19 (1946).

took the stress of a great war to waken them fully to their immense power. They have been slow to learn,” the reporter emphasized, “that as a united body there is no stopping them with their minds made up.”⁶⁶ FIDA began to harness that power.

FIDA developed a global and comprehensive women’s rights agenda. It built on the work that some of its members, and other activist lawyers, had worked at the League of Nations during the interwar years.⁶⁷ It established its motto as “The Science of Law for the Service of Humanity”⁶⁸ and enumerated its many aims, including: “protection of children; advancement of opportunities for women in business, industry and professions; equal rights for women under the law in every country; advancement of women through legislative action; creation of national organization of women lawyers in every country; and provision of an open forum for all matters affecting women and children in the world.”⁶⁹ Its first resolution was “that delegates should recommend to Governments the solution of problems, penal, civil, political which concern women.”⁷⁰

The members of FIDA felt it imperative that post-war international associations consider and appropriately address the issues of women and children. They believed that to ensure this, women lawyers needed to be members and leaders of those associations. One of FIDA’s first recommendations was “to the governments of different countries that when commissions are appointed to consider post-war problems, national or international, at least one woman attorney be appointed.”⁷¹ FIDA used three primary strategies: most prominently, advancing its work through the United Nations. FIDA’s Latin-American members were critical to establishing women’s equality in the United Nations charter. “The women of the world,” Bates publicly proclaimed, “owe [a debt] to the Latin-American women delegates to the San Francisco Conference.”⁷² She identified Dr. Betha Lutz (Brazil), Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic), and Senator Isabel P. De Vidal (Uruguay) as the “Latin

66. *Women Lawyers Set Pace: International Session of Noted Women Held in Havana, Cuba*, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, Sept. 11, 1945, at 8.

67. Sara L. Kimble, *The Rise of ‘Modern Portias’: Feminist Legal Activism in Republican France, 1890s–1940s*, in NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPEAN WOMEN’S LEGAL HISTORY 141–142 (Sara L. Kimble & Marion Röwekamp eds., 2017); Ellen Carol DuBois, *Storming The Hague - The 1930 Campaign for Independent Nationality for Women Regardless of Marital Status* 16 TIJDSCHRIFT VOOR GENDERSTUDIES, no. 4, December 2013, at 18–29, 27.

68. Hughitt, *supra* note 65, at 20.

69. *Women Lawyers Set Pace*, *supra* note 66, at 8.

70. Hughitt, *supra* note 65, at 20.

71. *Id.*

72. Rosalind Goodrich Bates, *Comparative Political Rights of Women in the Americas*, 34 WOMEN L. J. 11 (1948).

American delegates [who] were the authors of the amendments giving women equality in the Charter of the United Nations.”⁷³

FIDA closely supported and assisted the work of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), especially its objective to enfranchise all women.⁷⁴ The CSW aims included securing for all women “equal participation in governments and possibility to exercise all the rights of citizenship, irrespective of race, language, or religion and assume all the duties of citizenship which comprises: 1. Adult universal suffrage; 2. Equal right to vote; 3. Equal right to be elected; 4. Equal right to hold public office.”⁷⁵ Bates noted that although the Nineteenth Amendment had not secured full political and civil rights for women in the US, it was a critical, incremental step in that process.⁷⁶

In 1952, FIDA was granted Consultive Status as an NGO in the Economic and Social Council of the UN.⁷⁷ By 1957, FIDA’s influence at the UN was widely acknowledged.⁷⁸ A number of its leaders served in prominent positions at the UN, specifically helping to pave the way to the 1975 International Women’s Year.

FIDA’s second strategy was to use its collective capital to advance the rights of women and children in its members’ nations.⁷⁹ Specifically, asking each country to end discriminations against women in marriage and divorce (including allowing women to maintain their nationality upon marriage), to ensure that women have equal rights (specifically urging the US to pass the ERA to the US Constitution), and to establish juvenile courts that focused on treatment and service to assist (rather than punish) delinquent juveniles.⁸⁰ FIDA’s third strategy to secure its objectives included a dispersion method—the practice of sending its members around the world to speak out for its aims to a diversity of audiences and venues. Women delegates from 48 countries spoke in their home countries and traveled around the world spreading their message and garnering support for their local, national, and international legislative reforms. Bates was its most active speaker, including her speech on human rights

73. *Id.*

74. *Id.* at 12–13.

75. *Id.* at 13.

76. *Id.*

77. Nadine Lane Gallagher, *New Delhi’s Welcome to Women Lawyers*, 51 *WOMEN L. J.* 53, 54 (1965).

78. *Women Lawyers in the News*, 43 *WOMEN L. J.* 19, 19 (1965).

79. *Id.*; Kimble, *supra* note 67, at 127.

80. Rosalind G. Bates, *International Federation Meets in Los Angeles*, 35 *WOMEN L. J.* 19, 21 (1949).

in 1949 at the opening event of the International Bar Association at the Hague, Netherlands.⁸¹

In 1961, Bates was murdered.⁸² Her killer was never caught. Members of FIDA were devastated. They acknowledged that Bates was the heart and soul of the organization. As Shirley Yap, a lawyer from the Philippines wrote, “We really lost our most loved international mother. The Philippine women lawyers and all the people are extending their deepest condolences.”⁸³ But Bates’s work with FIDA was so effective that the association carried on after her passing. As Mildred Bixby, a US lawyer and longtime FIDA member wrote, “I have said to many of the girls that we must find a way to carry on FIDA as I think that would be what she would want most, as it was really her baby.”⁸⁴

FIDA did carry on. It was essential in establishing the foundation for the 1975 International Women’s Year. Helvi Siplia, a Finnish lawyer and longtime member and leader of FIDA (and its president from 1954-56), served as the UN Secretary-General in charge of planning the International Women’s Year. In 1975 she presided over its world conference in Mexico City.⁸⁵ And FIDA continues today.⁸⁶

CONCLUSION

The lawyers of FIDA understood the importance of women, and particularly women lawyers, participating in the formation of a new world order during the global Cold War era. Many of them were suffragists. They knew that the vote was a critical first step in securing women’s full equality, but they knew more was needed. They organized to enhance their political capital. They united across differences and borders, and they positioned themselves as intermediaries in the interplay between national and international movements to secure women’s legal emancipation and their social, civil and political advancement.

Their agenda of ending patriarchy was radical. These women were trained in the masculine legal profession and experienced at operating in male organizations. They used the language and power of law to give them legitimacy, to give them access to institutional spaces, and to effect

81. *International Bar to Hear Angelenos*, L.A. TIMES, July 26, 1948, at 2.

82. *L.A. Woman Lawyer Murdered in Mystery*, L.A. TIMES, Nov. 15, 1961, at 2.

83. Letter from Shirley Yap to Elizabeth (Betty) Bates (Dec. 3, 1961) (on file with author).

84. Letter from Mildred Bixby to the Bates (Nov. 1961) (on file with author).

85. Judy Klemesrud, *Highly Respected U.N. Official IWY Conference Planning Done by 60-Year-Old Lawyer*, RAPID CITY J., June 20, 1975, at 13.

86. The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), <http://fidafederation.org> [<https://perma.cc/AYA3-2JXV>].

change. They used their organization to create a space where they could strategize and act. They believed in law as an agent of change. From its inception and through its existence, FIDA has been a “compelling force. . . in the battle to obtain equality for women and human rights for all in the world.”⁸⁷ FIDA’s essence of uniting across differences and borders in the incremental pursuit of women’s equality is both a legacy of the women’s suffrage movement and an example of a path forward.

87. FISHER, *supra* note 58, at 57.