

Internationalism at Sweet Briar College

The Cold War helped to change the way that the world viewed itself. It revolutionized the relationships between nations and increased the level of awareness to global issues. While it occurred in the large international and even the national scale, it also affected smaller regions. At Sweet Briar College President Lucas and Pannell both tried to make Sweet Briar College a better place. For President Lucas it was internationalism and the need to make the women at Sweet Briar aware of their global responsibilities while for President Pannell it became an issue of human rights and the importance of education. These two women provided the college with programs that have lasted into the 21st century from JYF, to academic buildings and dorms that are still in use today.

In the aftermath of World War II, the ideologies that followed and the actions taken by each country created a new paradigm, which altered the perceptions of the world. World War II completely devastated the world and created a shift in global politics, which led to the Cold War. The Cold War was a time of rising tensions between the United States and the USSR. These tensions consumed the world and created a state of fear that World War III might happen. WWII would have been, without a doubt, a nuclear war. This shift in the global tensions affected everyone and everything. There were proxy wars that were ripping apart nations, the fear of the spread of communism, the pressure to rebuild Europe, and the constant threat of nuclear war hung over everyone's head.

Internationally, the Cold War had everyone's attention. Not just politicians were paying attention to the events unfolding on the global stage. Beginning in 1946, with the dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and the amount of destruction that was now possible with a single weapon there was a turning point in how warfare would be fought from that point

onwards there was also a shift in the way each nation saw itself. After WWII, a global competition between the United States and the USSR began to dominate politics. These tensions lead to proxy wars that would rip apart nations. For example, in 1950 the Korean War and then in 1955 the Vietnam Wars. These two proxy wars were fought due to the fear of the spread of communism. In between these two wars in 1952, the United States had developed an even deadlier bomb, the H-Bomb. All of these events were significant for various reasons. First, there was a shift in warfare and the sheer capacity for destruction. Now with the use of atomic bombs and then the H-bomb war was definitely more destructive. Second, due to fear of nuclear weapons the US and USSR fought each other through these proxies. This turn of events made the world seem a lot smaller. Wars were no longer small armies facing each other and firing in fact warfare had been revolutionized. Third, the concept of isolationism was destroyed, because it could no longer be followed. No nation could safely remain isolated with these new threats. The advances in technology did not stop just at warfare in fact technology had connected the world in a way that had not been possible before. Furthermore, the 1950s saw the Civil Rights movement gain stronger footing in the United States. For example, in 1954, *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* established that segregated schools were now illegal. There was also the post-war economic boom. All of these events were turning points for the United States, internationally and nationally everything had changed. These events affected all branches of American society.

While all of these events were, occurring President Martha Lucas attempted to make the women of Sweet Briar more aware of their global responsibilities. Martha Lucas had become president at 33. Described as young and energetic, she firmly believed that everyone had a global responsibility. The post-war era, focused on international problems rather than the isolationism

of the previous era. The world had changed, technological advances, and the global tensions had made it impossible to remain inside a bubble. On May 7, 1949, the Alumnae News published “How Can a Liberal Education Develop a Sense of Moral Responsibility” which had been written by President Lucas. In which she pointed out that a Liberal Education in the United States needed to move forward and broaden to include views that were more global. She firmly believed that a liberal education had the potential to broaden a person’s mind and give students a new perspective. She recognized that history needed to be broadened to include Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. Since this publication appears in the Alumnae News it demonstrated that once again Sweet Briar College was progressive. Furthermore, President Lucas delivered this speech at a symposium. She firmly believed that a liberal education could help students to develop a moral responsibility not just for themselves and their community, but also for the world.

President Lucas’ speeches during her presidency demonstrated that, at least, she was politically aware of international issues and the tensions that were slowly consuming the world. She recognized that the world was changing and that liberal arts colleges had a place in the grand scene of education. Lucas wrote speeches during the Cold War urging students to recognize their responsibility as citizens of the world. These speeches also demonstrated the uncertainty and turmoil of the time. In one of her speeches, President Lucas used a quote from Professor Paulo de Berredo Carneiro, which stated, “the world has been drawn closer together materially by modern means of transport and communication: but it is more than ever divided spiritually by cultural and ideological antagonisms”.¹ This quote encompassed all the global issues such as the Cold War, social tensions, and everything else that was going on. In this speech, which was

¹ Lucas, Martha B. "How Can a Liberal Education Develop a Sense of Moral Responsibility." *Internet Archives*. Alumnae News

given while she was a president of Sweet Briar, she established that there was a need for students to be educated with an enlarged moral responsibility that would enable people to see the world in a larger context based on both history and the diversity of cultures. President Lucas wanted to make students at Sweet Briar realize that they were not just citizens of the countries in which they were born, but also citizens of a global community.

During her, rather short time at Sweet Briar President Lucas was able to have symposiums on campus and create the program Junior Year on France in 1948. Even so, President Lucas has not always been portrayed in a positive light; in fact, Martha Stohlman in her “Story of Sweet Briar” addressed President Lucas in a curious manner. Stohlman does agree with others that President Lucas was globally aware and especially dedicated to internationalism and promoting world peace she does not address her desire to make students global citizens. In fact, she tended to add superfluous information that was completely irrelevant to President Lucas’ presidency. She made it seem like President Lucas took her presidency and anything related to it as being tedious. Even though as president she brought many honors to Sweet Briar, she learned that “a president’s words or acts should cost him criticism, the institution must also pay”.² Stohlman concluded the 14 paged chapter on President Lucas with her commencement speech in 1950 in which Lucas gave a “forceful summary of her beliefs with an earnest plea”³ It was not until years later that a newspaper interview with President Lucas revealed the reasons behind her early retirement. In the 1970s there was a news article where President Lucas

² Stohlman, L.L. Martha. “The Story of Sweet Briar College.” The Alumnae Association of Sweet Briar College. (1956), 209.

³ Stohlman, L.L. Martha. “The Story of Sweet Briar College.” The Alumnae Association of Sweet Briar College. (1956), 211.

revealed that she left Sweet Briar, because of issues with the board of directors. She wanted to integrate the school, but was unable to.⁴

In 1950, President Pannell took over the Sweet Briar presidency. Her presidency lasted for over 20 years. Unlike President Lucas, President Pannell was not focused on internationalism and was more successful in getting her policies approved. She was more interested in education and human rights. She held that education was necessary for the betterment of humanity. In 1965, President Pannell gave a speech before the International Federation of University Women at Zurich Switzerland in which she stated, “education is the foundation of a free world. Without the right kind of teachers and teaching, the right kind of schools and colleges, there will be no freedom. There are those in the world today who believe on the contrary, that a government can produce and form the education it desires. They oppose universal concepts of justice, freedom, and human rights. [...] Through the study there of the Greco Roman classics the idea of the ‘good man’ is developed as the pursuer of virtue and excellence with discipline, will, and desire to distinguish between good and evil, standing above interest conflicts, and reflecting the ideals of truth and justice to which humanity constantly aspires”.⁵ Here President Pannell addressed the need to develop a virtuous and excellent discipline, which would allow education to be used for the betterment of society. While perhaps not as straight forward as President Lucas, it was apparent that they both had strong opinions and views on the role that Sweet Briar should play nationally. President Lucas and President Pannell were at Sweet Briar during the Cold War, which perhaps sparked their interest in liberal policies. Both of these women were aware the the world was changing and it was necessary to defend the rights of others.

⁴ "Ex-Sweet Briar president dead." Daily Advance. (1983).

⁵ Pannell G. Anne. “Education and Human Rights.” Sweet Briar College Alumnae News. (Oct 1950), 2-3.

Even so not everything was perfect at Sweet Briar. While Sweet Briar College did not have a problem like selective services it did have financial problems and had to constantly reevaluate the role it played in higher education.⁶ Interestingly enough during her presidency, the endowment was increased six fold, physical plant expanded to include Meta Glass and Dew as well as Badcock and Guion, and the College was integrated in 1967 after a court case. **[INFO ON COURT CASE]** She also continued the Junior Year in France that was started during President Lucas' presidency. So even though Sweet Briar was facing financial problems the JYF was considered important enough to continue to receive funding. President Pannell did a little bit of everything she was a historian, a teacher, writer, and did a lot of fundraising.⁷ She was also well aware that women did not have the same job opportunities as their male counterparts. Therefore, while President Lucas' liberalism was too much for the Board of Directors, at least in her opinion, President Pannell was a bit more successful. President Pannell continued the legacy of strong female president at Sweet Briar College and definitely continued the liberalism at Sweet Briar.

[INSERT PARAGRAPH ON STUDENT REACTIONS/OPINIONS]

In conclusion, internationalism at Sweet Briar College took on different phases. While under President Lucas internationalism was at the forefront of everything she did. For President Lucas, raising awareness to the need for a global citizenship in which everyone was aware of the world around them was of paramount importance. These strong ideologies led to her attempting to educate the women at Sweet Briar to recognize these ideals; however, she ran into some problems with the Board of Directors and resigned after four years. President Pannell also faced

⁶ Crist, Judith. "College Women's Role in Uneasy Era." January 20, 1952.

⁷ Crockford, Hamilton. "Profile of a President." Summer 1960.

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some adversity, but overall she was a lot more successful in getting her programs and ideology across. She was a believer that education was necessary for the improvement of humanity as a whole. Internationalism at Sweet Briar began with the Cold War, while the international tensions were prevalent; the perceptions of each person's role in society began to change. **[INSERT STUDENT REACTIONS ANALYSIS/CONCLUSION].**

Bibliography

"College Head to Quit to Write About Religion." Louisville Courier Journal. October 9, 1949.

Demonstrates the speculation surrounding President Lucas resigning.

Crist, Judith. "College Women's Role in Uneasy Era." January 20, 1952.

President Pannell mentions that financial problems were a problem faced by all women's colleges and since she was able to increase the endowment six fold, add two dormitories, and two academic buildings this seems important.

Crockford, Hamilton. "Profile of a President." Summer 1960.

Demonstrates Pannell's versatility and her achievements.

"Ex-Sweet Briar president dead." Daily Advance. (1983).

Discussed her resignation due to the integration problem.

Lucas, Martha B. "Commencement Address." June 5, 1950.

Lucas' commencement address in which she reminded students of their global responsibilities.

Lucas, Martha B. "How Can a Liberal Education Develop a Sense of Moral Responsibility." Sweet Briar College Alumnae News. 18(4) (June 1949), 4-6.

Her desire to create a globally aware sweet briar and remind people that we all have a global responsibility. The world has been drawn together and it is bigger than just the Western hemisphere.

Pannell G. Anne. "Education and Human Rights." Sweet Briar College Alumnae News. (Oct 1950), 2-3.

Pannell's believe that education should be used for a good purpose and in an effort to develop tolerance.

Pannell G. Anne. "The Educated Woman a President's Perspective." (Mar. 1965).

Demonstrated Pannell's excitement for female students of the time and the desire to continue the ideal of a "Renaissance man".

Stohlman, L.L. Martha. "The Story of Sweet Briar College." The Alumnae Association of Sweet Briar College. (1956), 198-211.

Although this is a very glorified, romanticized, version of history it does provide useful information about the presidents' and what they did.