



# 'Not by might, nor by power, but by spirit': the global reform efforts of the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States, 1895-1939

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**Title:** 'Not by might, nor by power, but by spirit': the global reform efforts of the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States, 1895-1939

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**Abstract:** My dissertation uses the activities of the United States Young Women's Christian Association (USYWCA) as a case study to explore U.S. cultural imperialism in India, Argentina, the Philippines, and Nigeria. USYWCA Secretaries aspired to create an apolitical and non-governmental space, which I have labeled "Y-space." According to its proponents, Y-space would not only be located in physical places and programs, but would also extend to create a global fellowship of women. Liberal, emancipatory, and ecumenical, this space would be tied in Christian fellowship to other organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association and the World Student Christian Federation. However, it would also ideally reach beyond a purely religious fellowship. USYWCA Secretaries intended that Y-space would be a feminist space, which would advance women's interests and equality with men. They envisioned Y-space as modern, egalitarian, and based in voluntary association that valued individualism and was ultimately generated from the grass-roots. USYWCA Secretaries also envisioned Y-space as transformative, as it enabled women to absorb a common sensibility, regardless of their geographic location. Women within Y-space would therefore be cosmopolitan and color blind, valuing women from diverse classes, races, and nations. Because USYWCA Secretaries generally eschewed rhetorics of nation and empire, they tended to view their efforts as politically neutral and even at times anti-imperial. However, I find their efforts to be more mixed and nuanced. Each of the chapters therefore addresses not only the intentions of the USYWCA Secretaries, but also the ways that their attempts to achieve Y-space often served to bolster or perpetuate existing race, class, and national hierarchies. In chapter one, I assess the efforts of USYWCA Secretaries to establish Y-space in the United States. While the Secretaries generally believed that they were meeting the needs of women and that their programs were egalitarian and democratic, I find that their efforts had racial and class limits, and often excluded poor and non-white women. Chapter two examines the USYWCA Secretaries' attempts to create a type of egalitarian and multicultural Social Gospel in India. However, I find that they were unable to transcend their colonial context, and despite their anti-imperial protestations, they served the interests of the British Empire. Chapter three considers the YWCA's building in Buenos Aires, which USYWCA Secretaries intended would help women enter the public sphere by providing a physically safe place for migrating women and a socially respectable space for working women. However, rather than serving the needs of poor women or women from Buenos Aires, the YWCA focused its efforts on the needs of white-collar and Euro-American women, and it served the interests of U.S. and British capital in Argentina. In the Philippines, the subject of chapter four, YWCA recreation programs appeared to value Filipinas and to overturn many colonial assumptions. However, these programs were also geared to facilitate women's internalization of colonial constructions of the body, establish U.S. women as experts, and perpetuate national difference and colonial culture. In the final chapter, I examine the activities of Celestine Smith, the only African-American USYWCA Secretary to go abroad with the YWCA prior to World War II. In Nigeria, Smith attempted to create the same types of programs that the USYWCA developed elsewhere. However, the USYWCA refused to support her work—not only because the overtly race-based British colonialism in Nigeria disrupted USYWCA Secretaries' sense of Y-space as race-blind, but also because white USYWCA leaders were unable to fully confront their own racism. Taken together, these case studies show that although the USYWCA Secretaries viewed their projects as both liberatory and exceptional, their work tended to advance U.S. interests. First, while USYWCA Secretaries believed that they were creating an apolitical and value-free space, Y-space was rooted in their conception that women should aspire to U.S. standards, regardless of who the women were or where they were located. This meant that the end goal of Y-space was Americanization, and it served imperial political functions that the Secretaries failed to recognize. For example, while USYWCA Secretaries perceived themselves as being exceptionally inclusive—particularly when compared against the exclusivity of other Euro-American entities—there were ways in which they maintained exclusivity. Whereas they saw themselves as anti-imperial, not only did they depend upon existing colonial structures, but they also often contributed to them. While they saw themselves as cosmopolitan, they advanced U.S. national interests as well as those of individual women. Second, once in the various locations—spanning different geographic, economic, and political contexts—USYWCA Secretaries had to contend with the politics of these places, which were often already deeply intertwined with both formal and informal colonial infrastructures. Because of this, Y-space could not escape local politics, either in the United States, where politics had a great deal to do with racial segregation and immigration, or outside of the United States, where the U.S. was a formal imperial power, an economic power, and a participant in the early 20th century global imperial system that was dominated by Great Britain. This meant that the USYWCA's work was intrainperial, rather than apolitical. The importance of this research goes beyond the insights it provides into the USYWCA and its international programs. The case of the USYWCA's work abroad reveals how the denial of empire contributed to multiple forms of it: cultural transformation, economic dominance, direct colonial rule, and intrainperial collaborations.

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In the real world of legitimate votes, Trump achieved such an overwhelming victory in swing states like Michigan that the Dominion software had to switch hundreds of thousands of votes to give Biden the “win.” This massive fraud left a trail of evidence so large that people began to notice. Manual recounts of selected ballots revealed the “glitch” had switch votes exclusively away from Trump in in favor of Joe Biden. Welcome to nginx! If you see this page, the nginx web server is successfully installed and working. Further configuration is required. For online documentation and support please refer to [nginx.org](#). The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is an active international temperance organization that was among the first organizations of women devoted to social reform with a program that "linked the religious and the secular through concerted and far-reaching reform strategies based on applied Christianity." It plays an influential role in the temperance movement. The organization supported the 18th Amendment and was also influential in social reform issues that came to prominence in the