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CONGRESSMAN USHER BURDICK OF NORTH DAKOTA AND THE “UNGODLY MENACE” ANTI-UNITED NATIONS RHETORIC, 1950-1958

BERNARD LEMELIN

In the rare studies dealing with American post-World War II isolationism, the state of North Dakota always holds a special place, as it has acquired the reputation of having been “the nation’s most isolationist state during [the] postwar decade.”¹ To a large extent, this reputation can be ascribed to the attitude of some of its prominent members on Capitol Hill, such as Senators William Langer, who voted against the United Nations Charter in 1945, and his colleague Milton Young, an opponent of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949.² Representative Usher Burdick, who sat

between 1949 and 1959, also contributed to the isolationist label given to this midwestern state. This Republican politician, not enthusiastic about US participation in the Korean War, eagerly lambasted foreign aid during the Truman-Eisenhower years.³ Above all, the North Dakota congressman attracted attention during the postwar period for his vehement criticism of the United Nations Organization and for his advocacy of an American withdrawal from this international body created in 1945.

This article, which is largely based on an examination of the politician’s rich manuscript collection at the University of North Dakota (Grand Forks), seeks to examine and comprehend Burdick’s position toward the United Nations (UN) during the Truman-Eisenhower era. Such a study seems justified on several grounds. First, Burdick’s stance in the field of foreign policy during the early Cold War years, notably his opposition to the United Nations, was sufficiently unusual in itself to be intriguing for any attentive observer of the period. In fact, the Republican congressman was incontestably one of the earliest public critics of the international organization in the United

KEY WORDS: *Usher Burdick, Cold War, Congress, Dwight D. Eisenhower, isolationism, North Dakota, Harry S. Truman, United Nations, US foreign policy*

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States. Second, such a study is relevant given the contemporary US perspective, which is marked by an "often turbulent relationship"⁴ between the American nation and the international body as well as a growing anti-UN sentiment in Congress and among the public.⁵ This theme is all the more warranted inasmuch as some key elements of Burdick's rhetoric still hold a prominent place in the recent anti-UN discourse of conservative commentators and politicians such as Jesse Helms of North Carolina,⁶ the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the same vein, Burdick's denigratory comments (as we will see) about the UN-affiliated United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization still find echoes at the dawn of the twenty-first century, for instance: "[UNESCO] was a corrupt, anti-American organization," said California representative Tom Lantos in the spring of 2001.⁷ Incidentally, some current websites railing against the United Nations cite Usher Burdick as having warned, a half century ago, of some dangers associated with an American membership in the international body.⁸

In order to attain our goal of understanding Usher Burdick's attitude and also to enlarge our comprehension of the context in which his views evolved, I draw on a wide range of primary sources: in addition to Burdick's papers and congressional documents, newspapers, and magazines, I have consulted the manuscript collections of Burdick's contemporaries and colleagues on Capitol Hill. But before reviewing Burdick's stance concerning the United Nations, some biographical information and a brief look at his domestic record is necessary in order to better understand the foreign policy viewpoint of this man depicted by a Massachusetts colleague as "one of North Dakota's most distinguished sons."⁹

LANDMARKS

Born in Owatonna, Minnesota, in 1879, Usher Lloyd Burdick, the youngest of six children, moved with his parents to Dakota Terri-

tory three years later. Such a family relocation was unavoidable, as he later recalled: "In the spring of 1882 it was apparent to father that he could never pay for [our] farm [in Owatonna]. He had struggled from 1866 to 1882 and still the debt was bigger than when he started."¹⁰ Raised among the Sioux,¹¹ the young Usher, who tried unsuccessfully to enlist in a North Dakota company that intended to serve in the Spanish-American War,¹² graduated from the State Normal School at Mayville in 1900. The following year, he married Emma Rassmussen who ultimately gave him three children. The year 1904 was particularly important: he graduated from the Law Faculty of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, was admitted to the bar, and set up practice in Munich, North Dakota. Two years later, he was first elected to public office as a representative to the State House of Representatives. His entry into politics was encouraged by a prominent Progressive Republican, State Senator George Winship, founder and publisher of the *Grand Forks Herald*.¹³ Member of the legislative assembly in 1907-1908, Burdick, who represented Cavalier County, was reelected in 1909 and demonstrated his popularity by being elected Speaker of the House. He had the distinction in that same year (1909) of being, at the age of thirty, the youngest speaker in the United States.¹⁴ In 1910 he moved to Williston, North Dakota, where he established his ranch and continued practicing law. In subsequent years, he proved himself to be successful in office, being appointed lieutenant governor (1911-1913), state's attorney of Williams County (1913-1915), special prosecutor (1915-1920), and assistant US district attorney for North Dakota (1929-1932). However, Burdick, especially sensitive to the plight of the farmers in his own state and their efforts to control market forces, failed in his first attempt as a Progressive Republican to win election to US Congress in 1932. In fact, his advocacy of abrogating Prohibition and his backing of Franklin Roosevelt over Herbert Hoover were rather unpopular in North Dakota. After los-

ing that election, he was named president of the North Dakota Farmers' Holiday Association (NDFHA), an organization that aimed to prevent farm foreclosures and the eviction of farm families caused by the drought and low prices of the early 1930s. Burdick, who served as president until 1936 and who described agriculture as the "basic industry,"¹⁵ saw his organization grow rapidly: "In the first six months we put on the rolls 46,000 members and at the height of the movement, which was in the fall of 1933, the membership had reached . . . close to 70,000."¹⁶

Engaged in livestock breeding, farming and writing, he was elected, with the support of the Nonpartisan League,¹⁷ to the Seventy-fourth Congress and remained for four more terms thereafter (1935-1945). While in Congress, Burdick, who lived on a farm in Maryland because "he [could not] endure the capital's hotels,"¹⁸ rapidly emerged as a maverick politician because of his independent voting habits. This seems to give credence to historian David Danbom's contention to the effect that "North Dakota had a reputation for sending mavericks . . . to Washington."¹⁹ Burdick, a supporter of North Dakotan presidential candidate William Lemke in 1936,²⁰ gave his assent to some New Deal programs such as FDR's work relief legislation and the Wagner Housing Act, and at the same time opposed the establishment of Social Security and banking laws restricting institutional freedoms. Still highly compassionate toward farmers and their plight,²¹ Burdick occasionally reserved laudatory words for Herbert Hoover's successor, as these remarks of January 1939 suggest: "It must be admitted by all that the President [Roosevelt] has been actuated by the highest motives, and that his intent . . . to aid and assist the lower one-third of our population wallowing in distress has never faltered. I deem it only fair to say that he has given poor people more consideration than any President since Jackson and Lincoln."²² Unsuccessful candidate for the Republican nomination for US senator in 1944, he also failed during the same year to secure a seat as an independent

candidate. The North Dakota politician then returned to his Williston ranch and his law practice. It was not for long, as he was re-elected to the Eighty-first Congress, as well as the four succeeding ones (1949-1959).

With his return to Capitol Hill, Burdick, depicted as "the only [f]ederal legislator who [spoke] fluent Sioux,"²³ continued his independent voting habits on federal government programs. This was evidenced by his support for parts of President Truman's Fair Deal, including long-range public housing and rent control, and his opposition, for example, to repeal of federal taxes on oleomargarine. He did, however, favor a repeal of the antilabor Taft-Hartley Act of 1947²⁴ and, in spite of Joseph McCarthy's warnings, appeared rather skeptical about the so-called communist threat on American soil, saying in September 1950 that "there is no occasion to be alarmed over the spread of communism in the United States."²⁵

The North Dakota politician also expressed considerable interest in agricultural affairs in this postwar era. Thus, Burdick, a strong supporter of the establishment of a Missouri Valley Authority on the Northern Plains,²⁶ devoted several speeches related to farm issues in the lower house, reminding in one of them that "a healthy agriculture is the key to the prosperity of the whole Nation."²⁷ In another address, he exploded in indignation over the fact that "the consumers of the East seem determined that the farmers are the villains in the high cost of living, and [that] representatives of the large eastern centers like New York lost no time in sniping away at the farmers."²⁸ During the Eisenhower years, he frequently opposed Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson and even demanded his removal from the Cabinet. In fact, the North Dakotan strongly objected to Benson's program of regulating production to demand, which, ultimately, was designed to eliminate surpluses.²⁹ Indian matters, as well, remained a constant preoccupation for Burdick during the postwar period. For instance, he denounced in 1949 the starving condition of more than twelve

hundred Indians on two North Dakota reservations and introduced, some years later, different bills to alleviate the fate of the first Americans.³⁰ Finally, the North Dakota politician was not a candidate for renomination in 1958—the same year that saw his son Quentin elected as a Democrat to the Eighty-sixth Congress. Usher Burdick died in Washington, D.C., on 19 August 1960.³¹

“I AM ABSOLUTELY AGAINST THE UNITED NATIONS. PERIOD.”

Regarding US foreign policy during the Truman-Eisenhower era, the attitude of Usher Burdick was, to say the least, fundamentally isolationist. But what is meant by the notion of “isolationism” during these years? Although the term has never been easy to define,³² most scholars have tended to equate isolationism “with opposition to *certain* types of commitments in *particular* areas of the world.”³³ For his part, historian John Findling has defined isolationism as “a term used to indicate a policy of abstaining from an active role in international affairs.”³⁴

Having said that, the discussion over the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 was really the first foreign policy debate of the Truman era in which the North Dakota congressman was involved. Like some of his North Dakota colleagues on Capitol Hill, Burdick, a fiery isolationist before Pearl Harbor³⁵ and an opponent of the postwar loan to Great Britain as well as of the European Recovery Program,³⁶ was not enthusiastic about NATO: “History has shown that military alliances, instead of preventing war, actually lead to new wars. There is no evidence to indicate that things will be different this time. Further, the Atlantic Pact is . . . unconstitutional. . . . It will bind us to declare war on any nation which attacks a signatory nation. In that case, we will have war without any further action than the Senate approval of the Pact. The Constitution says that war can be declared only by both Houses of Congress acting jointly.”³⁷ Likewise, the Korean War, especially with the Chinese interven-

tion of November 1950 and the subsequent retreat of United Nations forces, was not viewed favorably at all by the North Dakota politician, who stated bluntly that “we have no business in Korea.”³⁸ Burdick, who reminded a constituent that the Korean conflict “is costing us one billion dollars every month,” expressed equally strong reservations about the decision to fire General Douglas MacArthur in the spring of 1951.³⁹

Burdick’s isolationism during the Truman-Eisenhower years is best illustrated by his attitude *vis-à-vis* the United Nations, an organization that he successively depicted as an “incompetent, unaccountable body,” a “supinely weak organization,” an “enemy of this Republic,” a “paper organization,” an “anti-American organization,” an “ungodly menace,” and a “Russian-created organization.”⁴⁰ His denigration of the United Nations was already easily perceptible during the Truman years. As early as 1950, the North Dakota congressman was delivering embittered speeches about this international body, and in August 1951 he even went so far as to introduce a bill (H.R. 5081) which had as its goal “to rescind and revoke membership of the United States in the United Nations.”⁴¹ Yet Burdick, who said in the spring of 1952 that “there is no end to the difficulties we face in this United Nations,”⁴² was nevertheless the same politician who, after Pearl Harbor, had supported FDR’s wartime policies (including precisely the proposal to establish the United Nations)⁴³ and had fought the isolationist stance of North Dakota senator Gerald Nye.⁴⁴ During his brief retirement from political life between January 1945 and January 1949, Burdick apparently continued to display favorable sentiments toward the world organization. Thus, in a tribute paid to the late President Roosevelt in the summer of 1945, he wrote these hopeful comments: “Roosevelt was not permitted to see the Promised Land. Had the President been permitted to live just a short period more . . . he would have witnessed the execution of a world program to keep the peace of the

world.”⁴⁵ The question, then, that comes immediately to mind is, What were the causes of Burdick’s noticeable change of mind concerning the world organization in 1950?

One key factor lies in the fact that the political context of 1949-1950 certainly encouraged the dissent of Republican members in Congress regarding the manner in which the Truman administration handled foreign policy. These years marked the demise of bipartisanship, namely the agreement among the leaders of the two major parties not to bother the public with foreign policy disputes after World War II. One of the essential causes of the collapse of bipartisanship was the belief among many politicians of the Grand Old Party that America had “lost” China.⁴⁶ Accordingly, it seems plausible that Burdick, who had earlier proclaimed his admiration for the Asiatic country,⁴⁷ was tempted to join his Republican colleagues on Capitol Hill in denouncing the overall conduct of the Democratic administration in the field of foreign policy, including its generally supportive stance with regard to the United Nations.⁴⁸

Unquestionably, the attitude of the North Dakotan during the Truman years was also related to his negative perception of the conduct of the Korean War—a war that his colleague William Langer described as “a United Nations affair since our boys were sent over there without even a vote of Congress.”⁴⁹ Thus, Burdick, who later contended that this war “was born as a result of the Yalta agreement,”⁵⁰ resented the fact that the United States had to bear most of the burden of the UN operations, as he imparted to a constituent several months after the start of the conflict: “We set up a body known as the United Nations to bring about peace and preserve it. But as it has worked out, the brint of the effort has [fallen] on the United States. We are to furnish all the money, . . . we were losing 20 boys to one of all the other nations, except South Korea, combined. This country cannot stand this strain, we can’t sacrifice our best men by the thousands and deplete our great natural resources and still remain able to protect ourselves.”⁵¹

Burdick’s speech was no different at the end of 1952, as his words appearing in an issue of the magazine *Freedom & Union* eloquently revealed: “After we were thrown into the Korean War, we were left there almost alone. We are doing 90 per cent of the fighting and 90 per cent of the dying, and we are paying all the bills.”⁵² The congressman, who had favored the candidacy of Robert Taft for the Republican presidential nomination as had done a myriad of North Dakotans,⁵³ warned readers of his article that an eventual US withdrawal from the United Nations had nothing to do with isolationism: “Many of those who read this will say, ‘Here is a real isolationist.’ Every effort to stop our foreign intermeddling is, of course, branded as isolationism, but I can stand any brands offered. This country has never desired to live by itself. It has always invited trade and commerce with all nations.”⁵⁴ Burdick’s rejection of the “isolationist” label was also manifest in a letter he wrote during the same period to an Illinois citizen: “I am not an isolationist. . . . I believe in friendship and in helping those who cannot help themselves. But I believe in protecting our own rights and freedoms, and our resources in men and goods, first!”⁵⁵

The North Dakota representative also deplored the fact that the United Nations Organization was so saturated with communism. Burdick considered that the Soviet Union’s membership undermined the vitality of the world body created at the San Francisco Conference. As he put forward in 1952, “Russia is still a member, and vetoes every attempt at World Peace. It will always take this attitude, because communism thrives on . . . fear and unsettled conditions. Here we are in Korea, trying to stop aggression—and Russia, a member of the United Nations, is giving aid and comfort to the aggressor.”⁵⁶ The congressman added, “We, the United States, still recognize the Russian government, although we should know that the Soviets are continuously doing their utmost by word and act to destroy the United States. Personally, I am sure that the President will finally arrive at the conclusion

that with Russia recognized here, and a member of the United Nations, no world peace is possible through the instrumentality of the United Nations."⁵⁷

In the same vein, he wrote these evocative words to a constituent: "How did we expect to function in the UN when it contained . . . Poland, Yugoslavia and India, all having communistic dominated inhabitants? . . . [T]he present makeup of the [United Nations] has 560 million people represented by a communistic delegation, while all the other countries have 488 million people represented by non-communistic delegates."⁵⁸ Naturally, the prospect of admitting Red China into the latter organization, which was already evoked in the early fifties, did not please the Republican politician: "[The United Nations] seems determined to let Red China enter the organization, and of course Red China will not contribute anything to world peace but will prevent it. With Russia, Red China, and backsliding England in the United Nations, the people of the world should not repose the slightest faith in this organization."⁵⁹

Burdick's attacks against the United Nations clearly intensified at the beginning of the Eisenhower years and he took great pride in confessing that "I am absolutely against the United Nations. Period."⁶⁰ After introducing a bill (H.R. 2517) to limit "the power of the Security Council of the United Nations . . . to call for troops of the United States to serve in foreign countries, without the consent of Congress,"⁶¹ he declared to a constituent: "A thorough study of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations reveals its purpose to be the formation of a [w]orld [g]overnment in which we will be completely deprived of our sovereignty and will have to subject ourselves to the dictation of that organization whose membership, by population, is overwhelmingly that of nations committed to communistic beliefs."⁶² Such an argument concerning the detrimental effects of an eventual "world government" constituted the core of Burdick's

rhetoric against the United Nations during the Eisenhower years. Indeed, the politician from North Dakota, who held in high regard George Washington's Farewell Address and who denounced on every possible occasion "the evils of internationalism,"⁶³ resorted to this particular argument many times, especially between 1953 and 1955. In a letter of December 1953, for instance, he argued that a simultaneous loyalty to the United States of America and a world government was clearly impossible: "Loyalty to a World Government means that under the charter of the United Nations free speech, a free press and free religion are redefined, and the provisions regarding those rights in our Constitution are abridged, modified and amended. Can we be loyal to both? Under a World Government, with a World Court, citizens of the United States can be tried for crimes against the World Government in any country, and the protection given every citizen under our Constitution denied."⁶⁴ With these remarks, Burdick was referring above all to some of the United Nations' moves of 1948 such as the Covenant of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention which represented, in his views, no less than attempts "to emasculate our Constitution."⁶⁵ As he later elaborated:

In order to get around the provisions of our Constitution in regard to free speech, a free press, and free religion, and deny the citizens of this country that protection, the Genocide Convention and the Covenant of Human Rights boldly attempt to redefine these landmarks of liberty, and a new definition of free speech, a free press, and free religion appear. It flatly denies the terms of our Constitution which guarantee these fundamental rights to the people of this country, and sets up conditions that were not even . . . discussed in our Constitutional Convention. The effect of this new definition of these three basic rights actually is to set aside the provisions of our own Constitution.⁶⁶

For the North Dakotan, often a critic of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,⁶⁷ the Genocide Convention, which came into force in January 1951, was particularly harmful in that respect:

The Genocide Convention provides that a citizen of the United States, who has, in the opinion of the United Nations, libeled or injured the feelings of a race, a group . . . shall be subject to trial for violating the covenant: Will the accused be tried here in the United States, where the crime was alleged to have been committed? No. He will be tried wherever the United Nations may decide. Will he be tried under the Constitution and laws of this country, with the safeguards provided by the sixth amendment? No. He will be tried under such laws as the United Nations World Court shall prescribe. . . . The real, hidden, and treasonable purpose of this provision was and is to tear down our Constitution and make all citizens, who are entitled to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, subject to the provisions of a world court.⁶⁸

UNESCO was also flayed by Burdick. Describing it as a “sinister organization” and “one of the most vicious vehicles of propaganda in the entire UN set-up,”⁶⁹ he asserted that this educational branch of the United Nations, created in 1946 and headquartered in Paris, aimed at perniciously changing American schools: “UNESCO is another attempt to destroy the United States. In that agency patriotism is attacked, and instead of building love of country, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization directly attempts to eradicate it. Children are taught that reverence for the great men of our past tends to build a strong national spirit and that conflicts with the United Nations design to build a strong reverence for a [w]orld [g]overnment.”⁷⁰ According to Burdick, UNESCO’s deleterious efforts to drain the moral fiber of American schoolchildren were

not without concrete applications, as he declared in April 1954: “The first step was to train teachers at Columbia University, . . . principally at the expense of the taxpayers of this country[,] to teach our children ways by which they could become world citizens, and that a strong national spirit interferes with this world venture. The birthdays of our great leaders, like . . . Jefferson . . . and Lincoln[,] were not to be celebrated in honor of these leaders, but the day of celebration should be devoted to propagandizing these children on the benefits of this future [w]orld [g]overnment.”⁷¹ Interestingly enough, radio commentator John Flynn of New York and organizations such as the American Legion later invoked reasons of the same kind in order to explain their respective diatribe against UNESCO.⁷²

Curiously enough, Burdick, who had described himself as “a native of . . . the most agrarian of all the States in the Union,”⁷³ did not seem to address similar grievances towards another important specialized agency of the United Nations: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Established in October 1945 at a conference in Quebec and headquartered in Rome, this organization, for which improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of all agricultural products constituted a main objective,⁷⁴ was depicted as a “pink-dominated bureau”⁷⁵ during those years by the same John Flynn. The North Dakotan, however, railed against the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), that he presented as “one of the myriad side organizations of the United Nations.”⁷⁶ Negotiated in 1947 in Geneva by some twenty-eight countries and made effective from 1 June 1948, GATT aimed to stimulate the postwar economy by reviving trade among nations. Officially, Burdick objected to such a trade agreement, made under the authority of the secretary of state, on the grounds that it was unconstitutional, pleading that “control over commerce and tariffs of this Nation is solely controlled by the Congress of the United

States.”⁷⁷ Beyond this “idealistic” reason, it seems plausible that the Republican representative also feared the consequences that GATT, which had sponsored by 1951 three rounds of tariff reductions that cut average US import duties more than 50 percent to approximately 15 percent,⁷⁸ could have generated for North Dakota. In fact, in this wheat state, “the Nation’s leading wheat-producing [s]tate,”⁷⁹ as once proudly affirmed Burdick, such tariff reductions would have inevitably facilitated the influx of wheat produced by US competitors (Canada, India, Argentina, etc.) on the American market. Burdick’s assumed worries were shared by at least one other North Dakota politician, his colleague William Langer, a supporter of high tariffs on agricultural products, who particularly complained against wheat imports from Canada during the postwar years.⁸⁰

In addition to his criticism of some UN “creations” and his arguments pertaining to the formation of a world government and the threat laid by what he called the “one-worlders,”⁸¹ Usher Burdick gave other reasons for justifying his anti-UN stance in the early years of the Eisenhower administration. In one instance he asked a constituent this cutting question: “How could an instrument which was authored by Alger Hiss, Harry Dexter White and Edward Stettinius have the welfare of the American people at heart?”⁸² He also came back with a familiar argument when he addressed the following remarks to a Fargo citizen: “There is no hope of world peace through the United Nations as that organization is presently constituted. How do you think there can ever be peace in the world as long as Russia remains a member of the United Nations, vetoing every peace proposal that is brought up[?].”⁸³ These positions help us understand why Burdick, who stated in the mid-1950s that the “true object [of the United Nations] is to destroy the Constitution and laws of the only country on earth where it is demonstrated that the government exists for the people,”⁸⁴ introduced in January 1955 an-

other bill (H.R. 3296) providing for American withdrawal from the United Nations.⁸⁵ Praised by the national commander of the United American Veterans,⁸⁶ this bill seemed to meet a positive reception according to its author in a letter of March: “I am glad to say that [my bill providing for our withdrawal from the United Nations] is gaining considerable support from all parts of the nation. As people become better informed they realize that we have nothing to gain from it, and about the only thing I can see that the UN has done is to strip us of our historical rights and make us subject to the decisions of its councils, assemblies and commitments whether we agree to them or not.”⁸⁷ During this same year of 1955, the representative from North Dakota also criticized the State Department for allegedly displaying the flags of the United States and the United Nations in equal prominence at its entrance.⁸⁸ The following year, he even introduced a concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 229) “to conduct an investigation covering attempts on the part of the United Nations to organize a world government.”⁸⁹

Not surprisingly, Burdick’s charges against the United Nations persisted during Eisenhower’s second term. The North Dakota politician still depicted the organization as “a menace rather than a help to this country” and continued to castigate UNESCO.⁹⁰ He also introduced a new resolution (H. Con. Res. 240) relating to the necessity of conducting an investigation into United Nations’ attempts to organize a world government and a new bill (H.R. 207) that was designed to limit the power of the Security Council to call for US troops.⁹¹ Ultimately, Burdick found unacceptable the fact that the Security Council’s leadership was exclusively in Soviet hands, as he acknowledged in January 1957: “The Secretary of the Security Council Affairs is now a Russian, and the [three] men who have held that position since the Security Council was organized are: A. A. Sobolev, 1946-49; Constantin E. Zinchenko, 1950-53; Ilya S. Tchernychev, 1953-. This means that since the Security Council was organized the Russians, through

the secretary, have had close touch with all military plans."⁹²

ISOLATIONISM IN NORTH DAKOTA

As we have seen, although the North Dakota politician clearly articulated his stance toward the United Nations during the Truman-Eisenhower years, we must also explore other factors to fully understand his isolationism.

On the one hand, Burdick's position during the Truman-Eisenhower period must be viewed in light of his deep attachment and scrupulous respect for legislative powers. For him the US Constitution indeed gave Congress fundamental and inalienable rights, such as the power to regulate commerce and declare war, that must be preserved against presidential encroachments. His opposition to GATT and the Eisenhower Doctrine, as well as his denunciation of the Baghdad Pact, aptly reflected this reality. Burdick, incidentally, was very harsh on the US secretary of state's unilateral conduct concerning the latter pact,⁹³ which virtually committed the American nation to defend countries such as Iran, Turkey and Pakistan.

In the same vein, Usher Burdick appeared as a staunch supporter of the Bricker Amendment during the postwar years.⁹⁴ This constitutional amendment, introduced in January 1953 by Republican senator John Bricker of Ohio and defeated in February 1954, was intended to prevent any treaty from taking effect as American internal law unless authorized by special congressional legislation.⁹⁵ Naturally, the prospect that a world government would also encroach upon the powers of the US Congress was not seen in a more auspicious light. Burdick's different bills (H.R. 2517 and H.R. 207) to limit the power of the Security Council to call for American troops to serve in foreign countries, as previously mentioned, exemplified his will to prevent the erosion of the powers of the US Congress and showed his sheer determination to fight the United Nations Organization which, in his

own words, intended "to destroy our independence" and "to rewrite our Constitution."⁹⁶

On the other hand, Burdick, in beginning his public career in state politics before World War I, was for a long time exposed to the "isolationist mind" of the North Dakota citizens who tended to oppose US participation in the two world wars.⁹⁷ The anti-interventionist stance of the Republican congressman prior to Pearl Harbor was therefore hardly surprising, inasmuch as he was fully aware in March 1941 that "North Dakota's share of defense contracts [was] exactly nothing."⁹⁸ Also revealing about Burdick's antecedents was his close political association and personal friendship with William Langer, "a consistent and persistent isolationist."⁹⁹ Above all, it is clear that the isolationist sentiment was still alive in the state after 1945. Although internationalism emerged increasingly as a prevailing trend during the postwar years and attracted innumerable supporters in the state, as well as in the entire Midwest,¹⁰⁰ a significant number of North Dakotans apparently continued to endorse the traditional principles of nonentanglement. Thus, regarding the British loan of 1946, Burdick's colleague Milton Young confessed that "practically all of the mail which has reached me on this subject from the people in North Dakota has been in opposition to the loan."¹⁰¹ Similarly, after the ratification of NATO in 1949, Young stated that "there were not many letters from North Dakota favoring [the North Atlantic Treaty]."¹⁰² Incidentally, President Truman's decision to deliver a speech against isolationism in the city of Fargo in May 1950 was certainly not made at random.¹⁰³ In addition, the North Dakota senate in January 1951 passed a resolution that called "upon Congress and the President to withdraw our troops from Korea."¹⁰⁴ According to a citizen from Washburn (a small town north of Bismarck), such a resolution benefited from enthusiastic support in the state: "I would say from the conversation of the man on the street that 98% of the people in North Dakota want and DEMAND that our troup[s] [sic] be withdrawn from Korea."¹⁰⁵

Also revelatory about the persistence of isolationist sentiment in North Dakota was the fact that the Bricker Amendment seemed to have its contingent of supporters and that a poll at the outset of 1956 demonstrated that the state was overwhelmingly opposed to foreign aid.¹⁰⁶

To a large extent the product of his midwestern environment, Burdick received many letters from constituents who opposed the United Nations. In March 1953, for example, a couple from Minot made quite clear their position on the world organization: "We appreciate your stand against the UN and what you have done toward the abolishment of it. We think the most important job is to get the UN out of the US and the US out of the United Nations."¹⁰⁷ In February 1955 a Fargo citizen lauded Burdick's "commendable stand against the UN" and confided these unequivocal words to the North Dakota politician: "Our incredible [*sic*] folly in getting into this international booby-trap was aptly demonstrated in Korea, a 'police action' which the UN would not allow the free world to win. The sooner we pull out of this crazy thing and throw it out of the country, the better off we will be."¹⁰⁸ Such supportive remarks and pressures, of course, proved to be significant. Recent studies of the US Congress have substantiated the sensitivity of its members to the opinions of constituents in matters of foreign policy.¹⁰⁹

Understanding the persistence of isolationist sentiment in North Dakota during the Truman-Eisenhower years is not an easy matter. Several different explanations of midwestern isolationism exist.¹¹⁰ Was this sentiment linked primarily to the "conservative leanings of the state,"¹¹¹ a state "which normally [voted] about 75 percent Republican?"¹¹² Did the geographical remoteness of North Dakota influence this stance,¹¹³ or feeling that the state "has historically been dominated by outside interests?"¹¹⁴ Was isolationism connected to "the North Dakota fondness for the conspiracy theory,"¹¹⁵ or was it the result of the so-called weak communist presence in the state?¹¹⁶ It is difficult to furnish a clear-cut

response. A review of Burdick's papers, as well as of the archives of other postwar isolationist politicians from North Dakota, however, leads to some observations. First, the relative popularity of nonentanglement in foreign policy among North Dakotans emanated from various sections of the state, including the main cities of the east and the center (Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot), as well as the small towns of the west (Alexander, New England, Columbus, etc.). Second, many isolationists in North Dakota were women, a fact that was especially obvious during the Korean War. Such a reality was hardly astonishing considering the fact that numerous midwestern women's organizations (e.g., American Mothers of Minnesota, Catholic Mothers and Daughters of America, as well as Henry George Women's Club of Chicago, United Mothers of Cleveland, Mothers of Sons Forum of Cincinnati) had opposed US ratification of the United Nations charter a few years earlier.¹¹⁷ Third, although some scholars have minimized the "rural interpretation" of American isolationism,¹¹⁸ ruralism appears to have been a key component in North Dakotan isolationism. In this farm state, which was hit particularly hard during the Great Depression,¹¹⁹ the need for young, physically healthy men was indeed great. Consequently, the participation of young men in foreign ventures, which the world organization would inevitably stimulate, could potentially threaten the economy, an "economy" already weakened in the 1950s by a decline in farm prosperity.¹²⁰ This last element explains the "isolationist upsurge" in North Dakota at the time of that momentous UN operation, the Korean War. Testimony of January 1951 offered by a citizen from Kenmare (a small town northwest of Minot) is revealing: "I would like to know, just how we are going to carry on farm operations, with all our boys drafted[.] Burke County is small in population[;] therefore we feel a great loss of help. We are farming 800 acres, with only one man to do this. . . . Why should we defend Korea?"¹²¹ Also illuminating were these words of William Langer from the summer of 1951: "I

have done all I could to get harvest leaves and discharges for the North Dakota farm boys who are needed so badly at home during this heavy harvest season.”¹²² Usher Burdick’s words of February 1952 proved that he was no less sensitive to this reality: “We are getting into an impossible situation in the farm belt because of this Korean [W]ar. . . . If it is the intention of this Government to continue the production of food, some change must come soon. The farm boys are being taken daily from the farms, and those farms will soon be idle.”¹²³ For Burdick, the drafting into the US army of countless farm boys was hardly surprising since “they know machinery, and practically every one of them is a mechanic.”¹²⁴ Having said that, universal military training was not popular in the largely agricultural state of North Dakota; a poll conducted during the Korean conflict, for instance, showed that almost 60 percent of its inhabitants opposed it.¹²⁵

Needless to say, Usher Burdick was not alone in his indictment against the United Nations during the Truman-Eisenhower era; several individuals and various groups in the United States also crusaded against it. The *Chicago Tribune* was no different in that respect. Describing the United Nations as an “agency of calamity” and “a hopeless failure,”¹²⁶ the influential newspaper contained many derisive and vitriolic cartoons relating to the world organization during the first part of the 1950s.¹²⁷ The Public Affairs Institute, a non-partisan research organization seeking to promote wider public knowledge of current problems, published in 1953 a booklet entitled “The Assault on the UN” which, naturally, evoked Burdick’s activities in that area.¹²⁸ For his part, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the US representative in the United Nations, referred during the same year to an “American lack of confidence in the United Nations.”¹²⁹ In 1955 the pressure group “For America,” convinced that “the UN [had] established a permanent international stage on which Godless communism is given a daily forum for hate, recrimination, and moral aggression,” recommended

a prompt reconstitution of the world organization without the Soviet Union or any other communist state.¹³⁰

Yet many Americans, in spite of occasional dissatisfaction,¹³¹ tended to support the United Nations during the postwar period, a reality of which the North Dakota politician was fully apprised.¹³² Thus, to the question “Are you in favor of the United Nations organization?” asked in August 1947 by a Gallup poll, no less than 85 percent of the interviewees answered in a positive manner, compared to a meager 6 percent who responded negatively.¹³³ Ten years later, the percentages had changed very little: a Gallup poll of September 1957 revealed that 77 percent of the interviewees approved the United Nations, compared to 7 percent who expressed their disapproval.¹³⁴ These figures undoubtedly help us understand why the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, at the end of the 1950s, affirmed “that the American people, by a wide and fairly consistent margin, support the [United Nations] and believe in its principles.”¹³⁵

It is important to point out, however, that Burdick’s “followers” during the postwar years were from all parts of the nation. During Eisenhower’s first term only, the National Society of New England Women’s Organizations severely censured the United Nations, and at the same time twenty-four citizens of Santa Barbara, California, petitioned Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, praying that the United States “terminate its membership in that organization.”¹³⁶ Democrat Clarence Manion of Indiana, former dean of law at Notre Dame University and chairman until 1954 of the US Commission on Inter-Governmental Relations, was no different; he advocated an American withdrawal from the world organization, which he described as “a vandalistic burglar, cleverly disguised as Santa Claus.”¹³⁷ Furthermore, anti-UN petitions were introduced during that same time by some citizens of San Diego, California, and also by the National Patrick Henry Organization of Columbus, Georgia, which depicted the United Nations as “a den of spies, an agency of destruction, and

our mortal enemy.”¹³⁸ Additionally, anti-UN leaflets had begun to circulate in the early 1950s: for instance, the Cinema Educational Guild, Inc., based in Hollywood, California, published in November 1952 a newsbulletin entitled “UN is US Cancer,” and The Defenders of the Christian Faith, from Wichita, Kansas, published the following year their booklet called “The United Nations: A Tower of Babel.”¹³⁹ This booklet, among other things, it asserted that the UN flag shows a shocking similarity to the Russian Arms Banner, the latter occupying the highest place in Soviet heraldry.¹⁴⁰ The year 1953 saw the founding, in San Francisco and as an auxiliary of the Christian Nationalist Crusade, of a Citizens Congressional Committee to Abolish the United Nations.¹⁴¹ Groups such as the American Flag Committee, the National Economic Council, the Constitutional Educational League, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars were also recorded during the same year as fiery opponents of the world organization.¹⁴²

Records also show that Usher Burdick was not the sole politician on Capitol Hill to denounce the United Nations during the postwar era: some members of Congress contributed as well. Among them, Representative John T. Wood, a Republican from Idaho, was certainly the most vociferous: he delivered many anti-UN speeches during this period, designating the world organization in one of them as an “international Frankenstein monster.”¹⁴³ Burdick’s colleague William Langer, who once contended that “isolationism is patriotism in action,”¹⁴⁴ also introduced a bill (H.R. 5080) to withdraw the United States from the United Nations at the end of the Truman years.¹⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, the North Dakota senator, portrayed by *Time* magazine as “a lone wolf . . . incapable of cooperation,”¹⁴⁶ maintained his stance concerning the world organization, saying in the early 1950s that “I am 100 percent against the United Nations.”¹⁴⁷ United Nations’ actions such as the Covenant of Human Rights were also not seen in an auspicious light during those years, as these words

of Ohioan John Bricker eloquently testified: “Approval of the draft Covenant [on Human Rights] would destroy the sovereignty of the United States. . . . The draft Covenant would transfer control over a wide range of domestic activities to a maze of international authorities. The United States would be represented on supra-national councils and commissions. The United States would retain a limited sovereignty comparable to that of the sovereign State of Rhode Island.”¹⁴⁸

Did these personalities, citizens, or various groups influence Burdick in his campaign against the United Nations? Did the North Dakota congressman, conversely, exert an influence on these individuals and organizations in their fight? It is difficult to provide a firm answer to these questions. Nevertheless, one thing is clear: Usher Burdick was definitely among the first notable persons in the United States, during the postwar years, to lambast so forcefully, so consistently, the international body. Another point seems beyond doubt: the North Dakota politician, depicted by a *Washington Star*’s journalist as a “rock-ribbed isolationist,”¹⁴⁹ did not escape notice on Capitol Hill during the 1950s. In the words of a colleague from the lower house, he even appeared as “one of the most colorful men ever to serve in the Congress of the United States.”¹⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Historian Charles Barber has recently written that North Dakota senator William Langer, “was no common politician.”¹⁵¹ Our portrait of Usher Burdick and his views of the United Nations Organization during the Truman-Eisenhower era demonstrates that such a characterization also fits perfectly the Republican representative from Williston. In fact, Burdick was definitely one of the earliest public critics of the United Nations. His denunciation really began in 1950, in the context of the waning bipartisan spirit and the outbreak of the Korean War. Objecting to the fact that the United States had to support most of the burden of the UN operations, undeniably a well-

founded criticism,¹⁵² the colorful congressman also thought that the world organization was saturated with communism. "This communistic-dominated United Nations" and "a Communist-dominated debating club,"¹⁵³ among others, were some of the phrases used by Burdick at the end of the Truman period to describe the organization. Above all, he believed in the early 1950s that the establishment of a world government, a primary goal of the United Nations in his view, constituted no less than an attempt to sap the sovereign power of the US government. For Burdick, UN "moves" such as the Covenant of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, or UNESCO, responding entirely to this "world government scheme," represented as many endeavors to undermine basic American values, deprive US citizens of their unalienable rights, and transform the nation into a vassal state.

These justifications, however, are not sufficient to explain Burdick's attitude concerning the world organization, which according to public opinion polls was endorsed by large segments of the American population during the postwar years. On the one hand, the Republican congressman, as we have seen, tended to be highly scrupulous with regard to the preservation of legislative powers, the same kind of powers susceptible of being encroached on by an eventual world government. On the other hand, the isolationist sentiment was far from extinct in North Dakota, as illustrated by various anti-internationalist letters Burdick and some of his colleagues on Capitol Hill received from constituents. Present in different parts of the state and apparently rallying a significant contingent of women, this sentiment was undoubtedly related, to a large extent, to the rural character of North Dakota. In this agricultural state, where most of the farmers grew wheat, the participation of young men in foreign ventures, which the United Nations inevitably risked stimulating, would indeed potentially threaten the economy. Needless to say, the fact that Burdick was spokesman for a state whose agriculture remained rela-

tively undiversified at that time also contributes to understanding his vehement opposition to GATT.

In the end, although his different bills regarding the United Nations were without effect,¹⁵⁴ we are inclined to believe that the North Dakotan, partly due to his notoriety, his integrity, his independent voting habits, his championship of downtrodden people, his fondness for culture and intellectual activities, as well as the longevity of his career on Capitol Hill, was a highly respected politician who certainly contributed to forge an anti-UN rhetoric in the United States. Burdick's rhetoric remained alive well after his death. For instance, Colorado congressman J. Edgar Chenoweth declared in 1963 that, "I do not believe [UNESCO] is doing the United States any good."¹⁵⁵ That same year Chenoweth's California colleague James Utt introduced a bill "to take the United States out of the United Nations."¹⁵⁶ More recently, in 1984 the American nation saw two fateful applications of this anti-UN rhetoric: another rejection of the Genocide Convention by the Senate and Washington's momentary withdrawal from UNESCO.¹⁵⁷ It would be easy to imagine Usher Burdick's reaction to such developments were he still alive.

NOTES

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1. Ted Galen Carpenter, "The Dissenters: American Isolationists and Foreign Policy, 1945-1954" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1980), p. 22. See also Samuel Lubell, *The Future of*

American Politics (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 146; Ralph H. Smuckler, "The Region of Isolationism," *American Political Science Review* 47, no. 2 (June 1953): 391, and Robert P. Wilkins and Wynona Huchette Wilkins, *North Dakota: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 153. For his part, historian Selig Adler has characterized North Dakota as "a living fossil surviving into the second half of the twentieth century with foreign policy attitudes . . . suitable to the early years of the century" (Robert P. Wilkins, "The Non-Ethnic Roots of North Dakota Isolationism," *Nebraska History* 44 [September 1963]: 221).

2. Eleanor W. Schoenebaum, ed., *Political Profiles: The Truman Years* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1978), 298, 623. See also Edward C. Blackorby, *Prairie Rebel: The Public Life of William Lemke* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 276.

3. Burdick, for instance, said in January 1957: "I am strongly opposed to our foreign aid program and the senseless squandering of our money all over the globe on projects which not only do not benefit us in any way, but build up resentment and hatred among the very people we are supposed to be trying to help." (Usher Burdick to James E. Brennan, 25 January 1957, Usher Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 16, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.Dak.)

4. "House Warns UN of Pocketbook Revenge," *New York Times*, 11 May 2001, p. A8. The words were from journalist Marc Lacey and came after the House of Representatives voted to bar UN dues payment, a few days after the ouster of the United States from the UN Human Rights Commission.

5. Gary B. Ostrower, *The United Nations and the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), p. 208; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "America and the World: Isolationism Resurgent?," *Ethics & International Affairs* 10 (1996): 157; Steven Kull and I. M. Destler, *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), p. 13.

6. Jesse Helms, "Saving the UN: A Challenge to the Next Secretary-General," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (September/October 1996): 2-3, 6-7; Patrick J. Buchanan, *A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1999), p. 387. See also Sidney Blumenthal, "The Return of the Repressed: Anti-Internationalism and the American Right," *World Policy Journal* 12, no. 3 (fall 1995): 3.

7. "Houses Warns UN" (note 4 above).

8. For some examples, see "America Will Be Occupied by UN Troops!" at <http://www.newswatchmagazine.org/nov99/index.shtml> and "Who Commands United Nations Military?" at <http://www.iahf.com/world/un-milit.html>.

9. *Congressional Record*, House, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., 20 May 1953, p. A2795. The eulogistic words came from Representative Edward Boland.

10. Usher Burdick, "Recollections and Reminiscences of Graham's Island," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains* 16, no. 1 (1949): 8.

11. Burdick's early boyhood among Indians left a deep impression on him, as he later confessed: "I saw my first Indian at our home in the winter of 1883-84. Two Indian women used to come frequently—Mary and Winoma. They were very fond of my sister, Kate, who was then a baby. These were Cut-head Sioux and always were friends of the family. We children liked to see them come and we always had something for them to eat" (Ibid., p. 24).

12. Usher Burdick, "Recollections and Reminiscences of Graham's Island," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains* 16, no. 3 (1949): 177.

13. Edward C. Blackorby, "Usher L. Burdick's Early Political Career in North Dakota and the Rise of the Nonpartisan League," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains* 67, no. 3 (2000): 4.

14. *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., 22 August 1960, p. 17030.

15. Larry Remele, "The North Dakota Farm Strike of 1932," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains* 41, no. 4 (1974): 10.

16. James W. Dodd, "Resolutions, Programs and Policies of the North Dakota Farmers' Holiday Association, 1932-1937," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains* 28, no. 2-3 (1961): 108.

17. Formed in 1915 by A. C. Townley, formerly associated with the Socialist Party in North Dakota, this farmers' organization, which opposed US entry in World War I, pledged to establish state industries (Robert P. Wilkins, "The Nonpartisan League and Upper Midwest Isolationism," *Agricultural History* 39, no. 2 (April 1965): 102-3; Elwyn B. Robinson, *History of North Dakota* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966], pp. 352-53). For Burdick's earlier and occasionally conflicting relationship with the Nonpartisan League, see Blackorby, "Burdick's Early Political Career" (note 13 above), p. 16-19.

18. "Sidelights of the Week," *New York Times*, 8 March 1936, sec. IV, p. 2.

19. David B. Danbom, "A Part of the Nation and Apart from the Nation: North Dakota Politics Since 1945," in *Politics in the Postwar American West*, ed. Richard Lowitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), p. 174.

20. Burdick, incidentally, was one of the first politicians on Capitol Hill to back actively Lemke's candidacy (Blackorby, *Prairie Rebel* [note 2 above] p. 225).

21. For instance, he introduced in January 1937 a bill to establish a "crop-insurance plan protecting farmers against loss from floods, drought and other hazards" [*New York Times*, 7 January 1937, p. 3].
22. "Attack on Murphy Makes House Stir," *New York Times*, 12 January 1939, p. 4.
23. *Congressional Record*, House, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., 20 May 1953, p. A2795.
24. Said Burdick: "Any law passed in a period of hysteria should be repealed, and the Taft-Hartley law is no exception" (*Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 27 April 1949, p. 5154).
25. *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 20 September 1950, p. 15304.
26. Mark W. T. Harvey, "North Dakota, the Northern Plains, and the Missouri Valley Authority," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains* 59, no. 3 (1992): 29, 33.
27. *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 20 July 1949, p. 9852.
28. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 24 July 1951, p. A4610.
29. "Usher L. Burdick, Ex-Lawmaker, 81," *New York Times*, 20 August 1960, p. 19.
30. *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 17 January 1949, pp. A205-A206; House, 83d Cong., 2nd sess., 18 January 1954, p. 406.
31. Most of the biographical information on Burdick comes from Garraty and Carnes, pp. 932-33; Anna Rothe and Evelyn Lohr, eds., "Usher Burdick," *Current Biography*, 1952 (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1953), pp. 75-77; and *Who's Who in America*, vol 29: 1956-1957 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1956), p. 363. See also "Usher Burdick" at <http://bioguide.congress.gov>. and Sandy Slater, "Usher Burdick's Legacy Comes Full Circle" at <http://www.und.edu/dept/library/Libpub/burdick.html>.
32. Historian Justus Doenecke states: "Defining isolationism has long been a problem. . . . Scholars of isolationism. . . . find it a loaded term and one possessing such emotional connotations that dispassionate analysis is indeed difficult." Justus D. Doenecke, *Not to the Swift: The Old Isolationists in the Cold War* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1979), pp. 11.
33. Carpenter, "Dissenters" (note 1 above) p. 1.
34. John Findling, *Dictionary of American Diplomatic History* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 265.
35. He supported the 1937 embargo on peace-time munitions exports and opposed military conscription in 1940 as well as lend-lease the following year (Garraty and Carnes, "Usher Burdick," *American National Biography*, vol. 3 [New York: Oxford University Press, 1999], p. 932); see also "'War Trend' is Hit at Peace Session," *New York Times*, 8 June 1940, 10].
36. Garraty and Carnes, "Usher Burdick" (note 35 above), p. 933.
37. Usher Burdick to Oluf Erickson, 14 July 1949, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 12.
38. Usher Burdick to S. A. Olsness, 21 May 1951, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 10.
39. Usher Burdick to Joe Wegley, 25 June 1951, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 14; Burdick to Herschel Lashkowitz, 27 April 1951, Burdick Papers, Box 17, Folder 22.
40. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 19 January 1951, p. 462; 24 January 1951, p. 615; 9 August 1951, p. 9727; 2d sess., 18 February 1952, p. A953; 6 May 1952, p. 4837; Usher Burdick to Mrs. L. G. Duncan, 30 January 1956, Burdick Papers, Box 29, Folder 4; *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 10 January 1957, p. 445.
41. *Congressional Record*, House, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 2 August 1951, p. 15304; 5 December 1950, p. 16139; *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 8 August 1951, p. 9574.
42. Usher Burdick to Frances Beier, 31 March 1952, Burdick Papers, Box 23, Folder 4.
43. Garraty and Carnes, "Usher Burdick" (note 35 above), p. 932. Burdick, in fact, voted in 1943 for the Fulbright resolution, which favored "the creation of appropriate international machinery, with power adequate to establish and to maintain a joint and lasting peace, among nations of the world" and US participation in such a world organization (Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* [New York: Atheneum, 1967], p. 142; Rothe and Lohr, "Usher Burdick" [note 31 above], p. 77).
44. Rothe and Lohr, *ibid.*, p. 77.
45. *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 17 September 1945, p. A3904.
46. Robert A. Divine, *Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Recent American History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 27. See also *Newsweek*, 29 August 1949, p. 13; 24 April 1950, p. 27.
47. *Congressional Record*, House, 77th Cong., 1st sess., 10 November 1941, pp. A5057-8.
48. We say "generally supportive stance" since some members of the Truman administration, such as George Kennan and Secretary of State Dean Acheson, privately disdained the world organization (Ostrower, *United Nations* [note 5 above], p. 61).
49. William Langer to Oliver Rosenberg, 15 May 1951, William Langer Papers, Box 477, Folder 16, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.Dak.
50. *Congressional Record*, House, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 28 March 1955, p. 3919.
51. Usher Burdick to Mrs. Otto Gajewski, 12 February 1951, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 10.

52. Usher Burdick, "Should the US Withdraw from the United Nations?" *Freedom and Union* 7, no. 9 (October 1952): 15, Burdick Papers, Box 29, Folder 3.

53. Norman A. Graebner, *The New Isolationism: A Study in Politics and Foreign Policy since 1950* (New York: Ronald Press, 1956), p. 94.

54. Burdick, "Should the US Withdraw?" (note 52 above).

55. Usher Burdick to Joseph A. Prachar, 25 February 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 13.

56. "Your Congressman Comments," 7 August 1952, Burdick Papers, Box 32, Folder 50.

57. "Your Congressman Comments," *ibid.*

58. Usher Burdick to Frances Beier, 31 March 1952, Burdick Papers, Box 23, Folder 4.

59. "Your Congressman Comments," 1 February 1951, Burdick Papers, Box 31, Folder 68.

60. Usher Burdick to James G. Patton, 6 July 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 8.

61. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 1st sess., 3 February 1953, p. 801.

62. Usher Burdick to Mrs. E. D. Michel, 24 February 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 13.

63. Usher Burdick to Halsey McGovern, 1 June 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 6; Usher Burdick to R. E. Swendseid, 5 May 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 11.

64. Usher Burdick to Reverend Francis A. Belote, 7 December 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 8.

65. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 28 April 1954, 5699.

66. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 12 April 1954, 5065.

67. For instance, Burdick said in early 1953: "Dulles was quite a liberal. He insisted on having [Alger] Hiss made Secretary General of the United Nations at San Francisco, and failing in that, Hiss was put on the committee to write the charter. This Hiss did, with Russian aid and the aid of some leftwingers—if not Communists—in this country, and produced this rare document. (*Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 1st sess., 25 March 1953, p. A1555).

68. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 28 April 1954, p. 5699.

69. *Congressional Record*, House, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 15 March 1955, p. 2985; Usher Burdick to Mary Mitchell, 17 March 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 2.

70. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 12 April 1954, p. 5065.

71. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 28 April 1954, p. 5699.

72. John T. Flynn, "Behind the Headlines," 13 March 1955, p. 1; 13 May 1956, p. 4; John T. Flynn Papers, Box 14, University of Oregon, Eugene, Ore.;

US News and World Report 29, no. 19 (4 November, 1955): 67.

73. *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Cong., 2d sess., 16 May 1944, p. 4558.

74. Edmund Jan Osmanczyk, *The Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Relations* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1990), p. 291.

75. John T. Flynn, Radio Speech, 31 October 1952, Flynn Papers, Box 15.

76. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 13 September 1951, p. A5552. On the UN role in the establishment of GATT, see Osmanczyk, *Encyclopedia of the UN* (note 74 above), p. 317.

77. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 13 September 1951, p. A5552.

78. Osmanczyk, *Encyclopedia of the UN* (note 74 above) p. 325; Thomas L. Purvis, *A Dictionary of American History* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 154.

79. *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Cong., 2d sess., 16 May 1944, p. 4561.

80. Agnes Geelan, *The Dakota Maverick: The Political Life of William Langer Also known as "Wild Bill Langer"* (Fargo: Kaye's Company, 1975), p. 118-19.

81. Usher Burdick to West Wuichet, 1 June 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 6.

82. Usher Burdick to Joseph A. Prachar, 25 February 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 13.

83. Usher Burdick to Howard Erickson, 3 March 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 6.

84. "Petition to Withdraw from the United Nations," 14 June 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 29, Folder 6.

85. *Congressional Record*, House, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 31 January 1955, p. 1005.

86. *Congressional Record*, House, 84th Cong., 1st sess., February 16, 1955, A952.

87. Usher Burdick to Martha Eklund Parker, 4 March 1955, Usher Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 2.

88. Thruston B. Morton to Usher Burdick, 19 May 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 30, Folder 2.

89. *Congressional Record*, House, 84th Cong., 2d sess., 11 April 1956, p. 6167.

90. Usher Burdick to James E. Brennan, 25 January 1957, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 16; "Your Congressman Comments," 13 June 1957, Burdick Papers, Box 33, Folder 5.

91. *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 2d sess., 16 January 1958, p. 649; 1st sess., 3 January 1957, p. 66.

92. *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 17 January 1957, pp. 795-96.

93. *Congressional Record*, House, 85th Cong., 2d sess., 15 August 1958, p. 17933.

94. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 2 February 1954, p. 1178; Usher Burdick to H. Lahroy Slusher, 8 February 1954, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 11.

95. However, in 1955, the North Dakota congressman gave his assent to the Formosa resolution—a resolution that gave the chief executive authority to use the US armed forces, if necessary, to defend Formosa, the Pescadores, and related positions against armed attack. Burdick's position, nevertheless, was essentially justified by moral considerations, as he confessed: "The only reason why I supported the President on his request for freedom of action in Formosa was to get a report on the 900 soldiers the Reds had, and to get as many as are living back to the United States. . . . This great country cannot afford to send boys to foreign lands, and if and when captured abandon them" (Usher Burdick to Frances Beier, 25 February 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 11).

96. Usher Burdick to Whitney H. Slocumb, 15 February 1954, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 11; *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 28 April 1954, p. 5699.

97. Wilkins, "Nonpartisan League," (note 17 above), p. 109; Robinson, *History of North Dakota* (note 17 above), pp. 353, 420, 423.

98. *Congressional Record*, House, 77th Cong., 1st sess., 20 March 1941, p. A1259. Added a staggered Burdick: "Only two States have been left out in the entire Union, North Dakota and Montana. Is there anything about North Dakota and her industries that can contribute to the national defense? Yes; the greatest industry of all. That industry without which no war can be won by any power on earth—food" (op. cit.).

99. Geelan, *Dakota Maverick* (note 80 above), p. 118. For the close relationship between Burdick and Langer, see for instance, pp. 63, 132.

100. The fact that voters ousted isolationist members of Congress such as Robert La Follette Jr. (Wisconsin), Henrik Shipstead (Minnesota), Burton Wheeler (Montana), and C. Wayland Brooks (Illinois) during the Truman years reflects this reality (Wayne S. Cole, "Isolationism," in *The Harry S. Truman Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard S. Kirkendall [Boston: G. K. Hall, 1989], p. 179). Also revelatory in that respect was the fact that a Gallup poll of 1954 showed that a meager 16 percent of Midwest interviewees answered "Isolationist" to the question "Would you say that you, yourself, are more of an isolationist, or more of an internationalist?" (George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971*, vol. 2: 1949-1958 [New York: Random House, 1972], p. 1262).

101. Milton Young to E. J. Pravda, 4 February 1946, Young Papers, Box 1, Folder 17.

102. Milton Young to Tom Hall, 13 August 1949, Young Papers, Box 23, Folder 1.

103. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman 1950*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 403-4.

104. Senate Resolution no. 1, 2 January 1951, Burdick Papers, Box 7, Folder 15.

105. R. R. Robinson to Milton Young, William Langer, Usher Burdick, and Fred Aandahl, 16 January 1951, Langer Papers, Box 477, Folder 19.

106. Wilkins, "Non-Ethnic Roots" (note 1 above), p. 218; Clarence Swanson to William Langer, 20 January 1957, Langer Papers, Box 388, Folder 12.

107. Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Wood to Usher Burdick, 9 March 1953, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 6.

108. John Williams to Usher Burdick, 23 February 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 6.

109. Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), p. 195.

110. As scholar Ted Carpenter has written, "The region's geographic insularity coupled with its relative lack of dependence on foreign commerce allegedly created intense support for a noninterventionist foreign policy. Other writers note the presence of large numbers of ethnic groups, especially Germans, who embraced isolationism in order to avoid situations that might provoke war between their adopted country and their former homeland. Another view sees the Midwestern preference for nonentanglement rooted in long-standing agrarian and populist hostility toward Eastern finance capitalists and their European allies. Still other scholars stressed that isolationism has been primarily Republican party dogma and is closely related to ruralism and domestic conservatism" (Carpenter, "Dissenters" [note 1 above], pp. 2-3). See also Leroy N. Rieselbach, "The Basis of Isolationist Behavior," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (winter 1960): 645-46.

111. Robinson, *History of North Dakota* (note 17 above), p. 472.

112. *Congressional Record*, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 25 June 1945, p. 6649. Between 1889 and 1960, for instance, members of the Grand Old Party held the governorship for fifty-eight of the seventy-two years. Furthermore, the North Dakota presidential vote during the postwar years reveals a strong preference for Republican candidates Thomas Dewey (1948), Dwight Eisenhower (1952, 1956) and Richard Nixon (1960) (Timothy L. Gall, ed., *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the States* [New York: Gale Research, 1995], p. 464).

113. Said historian Glenn Smith: "That North Dakota is remote from most of the United States requires only a cursory knowledge of American geography. Hundreds of miles separate the state from the chief centers of commerce, finance, industry, population, and culture. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that North Dakota is remote from the centers of political decision, not only in the United States, but in the entire western world" Glenn H. Smith, *Langer of North Dakota: A Study of Isolationism, 1940-1959* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), p. 212.

114. David B. Danbom, "North Dakota: The Most Midwestern State," in *Heartland: Comparative Histories of the Midwestern States*, ed. James H. Madison, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 119.
115. Wilkins and Wilkins, *North Dakota* (note 1 above), p. 153. Scholars Robert and Wynona Wilkins have essentially defined this theory as "the tendency to view with suspicion the East, bankers, and other businessmen who, over the years, had "exploited" the state" (op. cit.).
116. Danbom, "North Dakota" (note 114 above).
117. *Congressional Record*, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 23 July 1945, p. 7952. Interestingly enough, political scientist Eugene Wittkopf has revealed that the isolationist bent of American women was also conspicuous in recent years, notably during the 1980s (Eugene R. Wittkopf, *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990], p. 42).
118. Doenecke, *Old Isolationists* (note 32 above), p. 22.
119. "North and South Dakota suffered perhaps more seriously than any other states during the depression. A series of droughts in the middle 1930's compounded already severe economic hardship. In 1936, the two states had higher proportions of their population on relief than any other states in the Union," wrote scholar Michael Rogin (Michael Paul Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1971), p. 125). For historian David Danbom, these elements brought North Dakota "close to destruction as a viable entity" (Danbom, "North Dakota" [note 114 above], p. 115).
120. Smith, *Langer* (note 113 above), p. 180.
121. Mrs. Leslie J. Brooks to William Langer, 4 January 1951, Langer Papers, Box 477, Folder 16.
122. William Langer to Jack Ferderer, 23 August 1951, Langer Papers, Box 482, Folder 4.
123. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 2d sess., 18 February 1952, p. A953.
124. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 15 February 1951, p. A799.
125. "Public Opinion Poll—Results of Senator Langer's recent questionnaire [sic]," 1951-1952, Langer Papers, Box 477, Folder 20.
126. "More UN Mischief" (editorial), *Chicago Tribune*, 5 December 1950, p. 16; "UN Today" (editorial), *Chicago Tribune*, 21 December 1950, p. 16.
127. See for instance, *Chicago Tribune*, 23 December 1950, p. 1; 15 January 1951, p. 1; 4 April 1951, p. 1; 14 April 1951, p. 8; 30 April 1951, p. 1; 6 January 1955, p. 1; 21 January 1955, p. 1; 3 July 1955, p. 1.
128. Alexander Uhl, "The Assault on the UN," 1953, pp. 28-29, in Paul Hoffman Papers, Box 26, Folder "Economic Cooperation Administration—United Nations—1952-1957," Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo.
129. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. to the Undersecretary of State for Administration, 7 April 1953, US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, vol. 3: *United Nations Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 339.
130. For America, "Expel the Outlaw," no. 3 (March 1955): 2-3, in Herbert Hoover Papers, Post-Presidential Subject, Box 159, Herbert Hoover Library, West Branch, Iowa.
131. A Gallup poll from April 1948, for instance, revealed that the veto power was not very popular among the American people: to the question "Do you think the veto power should or should not be done away with?" 41 percent answered "Should be eliminated," compared to 24 percent who responded "Should not be" (*Gallup Poll*, vol. 1: 1935-1948 [note 100 above], p. 736).
132. "Your Congressman Comments," 25 August 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 33, Folder 4.
133. *Gallup Poll*, vol. 1: 1935-1948 (note 100 above), p. 672.
134. *Ibid.*, vol. 2: 1949-1958, p. 1518.
135. William A. Scott and Stephen B. Withey, *The United States and the United Nations: The Public View, 1945-1955* (New York: Manhattan Publishing Company, 1958), p. 1.
136. "Petition to Withdraw from the United Nations," 14 June 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 29, Folder 6; *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 1st sess., 12 February 1953, p. A623.
137. Clarence E. Manion, "For a Christian Peace We Must Quit the UN," 25 December 1955, Manion Papers, Box 81, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.
138. *Congressional Record*, House, 84th Cong., 2d sess., 9 May 1956, p. A3854; 1st sess., 26 April 1955, p. A2760.
139. Myron C. Fagan, "UN is US Cancer", no. 27, November 1952, Langer Papers, Box 519, Folder 5; Dr. Gerald B. Winrod, "The United Nations: A Tower of Babel," 1953, Langer Papers, Box 519, Folder 5.
140. Winrod, *ibid.*, p. 8.
141. Citizens Congressional Committee to Abolish the United Nations, "Abolish the United Nations," 1953, p. 8, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 7.
142. Uhl, "Assault on the UN," (note 128 above), pp. 4-5; Charles A. Raith, "The Anti-UN Coalition before the Senate Foreign Relations and the House Foreign Affairs Committees during the Years 1945-1955" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1962), 37.

143. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 15 October 1951, p. A6389.
144. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 2nd sess., 4 February 1952, p. A658.
145. Frank B. Ohlquist, "The United Nations Is Treason," March 1952, Burdick Papers, Box 28, Folder 7.
146. *Time*, 20 March 1950, p. 14.
147. William Langer to John E. Schrecker, 16 January 1953, Langer Papers, Box 519, Folder 4.
148. John W. Bricker, "UN Blueprint for Tyranny," December 1951, pp. 8-9, Bricker Papers, Box 90, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.
149. *Congressional Record*, House, 83d Cong., 1st sess., 20 May 1953, p. A2795.
150. *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 22 August 1960, p. 17031.
151. Charles M. Barber, "A Diamond in the Rough: William Langer Reexamined," *North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains*, 65, no. 4 (fall 1998): 3.
152. Ostrower, *United Nations* (note 5 above), p. 64.
153. *Congressional Record*, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 13 September 1951, pp. A5552-53.
154. For instance, several months after the introduction of his bill H.R. 3296 providing an American withdrawal from the United Nations an annoyed Burdick said: "H.R. 3296 was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs [sic], but no action has been taken and no hearings scheduled" (Usher Burdick to Martha S. Selkirk, 27 June 1955, Burdick Papers, Box 29, Folder 4).
155. J. Edgar Chenoweth to Shirley Jones, 22 July 1963, J. Edgar Chenoweth Papers, Box 57, Folder 8, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.
156. James B. Utt, "We Are Relinquishing Our Sovereignty to the United Nations," 20 October 1963, in Manion Papers, Box 83.
157. Osmanczyk, *Encyclopedia of the UN* (note 74 above), p. 328; Ostrower, *United Nations* (note 5 above), pp. 176-77; Jessica Gienow-Hecht, "Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War—A Critical Review," *Diplomatic History*, 24, no. 3 (summer 2000): 473. The upper house would not ratify the Genocide Convention until 1986 (Ostrower, *ibid.*, 71).