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Actes du 3eme Colloque Scientifique International des
Laboratoires LAReLSo et LaRMA - (FLSL- UYOB)

tenue les 30 et 31 Mars 2026 à Kabala



Thème : Résolution des crises en Afrique et reconstruction
nationale par les sciences et la recherche scientifique à l'ère
de l'Alliance des États du Sahel (AES)



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LAReLSo et LaRMA de l'Université Yambo Ouologuem de Bamako,
sise à Kabala sur le thème : " RESOLUTION DES CRISES EN
AFRIQUE ET RECONSTRUCTION NATIONALE PAR LES
SCIENCES ET LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE A L'ERE DE
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The African Journal Kurukan Fuga is an online scientific journal of the Department of Education and Research in English (DER English) of the University of Letters and Human Sciences of Bamako. It is a quarterly Journal which appears in March, June, September and December. The African Journal Kurukan Fuga was set up from the desire of the English Department professors to enrich their university landscape, which is quite poor in scientific journals (three journals for the whole university). Indeed, more and more young teacher-researchers arrive in our universities, and higher education institutions and institutes with very limited publication opportunities. The English Department is a case in point, with more than forty young doctors and doctoral students producing scientific articles which almost always have to be published elsewhere. The African Journal Kurukan Fuga intends to boost scientific research by offering larger publication spaces with its four annual publications. The creation of this journal is therefore intended as a response to the many requests made by many teacher-researchers in Mali and elsewhere who often do not have free access to quality online documentation for teaching and research. The journal favors texts in English; however, texts in other languages are also accepted.

The journal publishes only quality articles that have not been published or submitted for publication in any other journals. Each article is subjected to a double blind reading. The quality and originality of the articles are the only criteria for publication.

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*Actes du 3eme Colloque
Scientifique International des
Laboratoires LAReLSo et
LaRMA de l'Université des
Lettres et Sciences Humaines de
Bamako, sise à Kabala*

*Sur le thème : Résolution des
crises en Afrique et
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Argumentaire de l'appel à communication du 3eme Colloque Scientifique International des Laboratoires LAReLSo et LaRMA (UYOB-FLSL)

I-CONTEXTE ET JUSTIFICATION

L'Afrique, depuis son accession à la souveraineté politique dans les années soixante, demeure en proie à des crises multidimensionnelles, mêlant insécurité armée, fractures sociales, fragilité étatique, corruption, *Africaphobie*¹ et chocs économiques, qui compromettent durablement ses trajectoires de développement et entravent l'affirmation d'une véritable indépendance sur tous les plans. C'est dans ce contexte que des leaders patriotes et visionnaires, notamment au sein de l'Alliance des États du Sahel, s'attachent à rompre les chaînes de l'impérialisme, du néocolonialisme, du sous-développement et de la dépendance à l'Occident. Cependant, il convient de noter que les premiers leaders africains révolutionnaires tels que Modibo KEITA, Julius NYERERE, Kwame KRUMMAH, Thomas SANKARA, Mohammad GADAFI et d'autres ont vu leurs luttes avortées en mi-chemin car elles n'étaient pas assez adossées à la science et à la recherche scientifique. De même plusieurs crises assaillent l'Afrique de nos jours, surtout sur le plan sécuritaire, mais la réponse semble être toujours soit militaire, soit faire recours à des personnes non universitaires, voire des non experts dans le domaine de la recherche scientifique. Le Mali, le Burkina Faso et le Niger ne font malheureusement pas exception. Pour pallier cette situation, une place de choix devrait être accordée aux sciences et la recherche scientifique d'où l'impérieuse nécessité de l'implication du monde universitaire.

En effet, les sciences, qu'elles soient africaines ou importées, constituent sans nul doute le véritable creuset de connaissances, de savoir-faire et de technicité permettant de poser des diagnostics fins, des outils de prévention et des évaluations d'impact indispensables pour concevoir des politiques publiques ou stratégies adaptées aux spécificités locales sahéliennes et africaines. Les approches scientifiques permettent également de dépasser les réponses purement militaires en intégrant prévention, résilience sociale, relance économique et réconciliation, et en rendant les interventions plus légitimes et efficaces. Pour corroborer ce qui précède, Aristote dans le *Traité d'Organon* écrit : « La connaissance scientifique se définit comme la connaissance des causes, son approche formelle vise à distinguer le démontrable (théorèmes) et l'indémontrable (axiomes), ce qui relève de l'enchaînement causal et ce qui relève des principes premiers. » (Vrin, 1979, p.89). En termes explicites, la recherche scientifique favorise l'appréhension objective et la découverte réelle des causes d'un problème ou d'une problématique tout en évitant de s'agripper à des causes qui ne découlent pas d'une connaissance scientifique véritablement avérée. Il est également saillant de faire remarquer que la recherche est un effort pour trouver quelque chose ou un effort de l'esprit vers la connaissance (Le Grain, M., 1994, p. 945). De même, D. Bruno (1994, p. 85), soulignera que la recherche est un exercice systématique et méthodique portant sur l'étude d'un problème ou d'une question et mettant en cause des faits qui doivent être vérifiables en vue d'atteindre une fin : la résolution d'un problème ou la réponse à une question ou d'une hypothèse préalable, la recherche exige

¹ Terme utilisé par l'écrivain malien Aboubacar Sidiki COULIBALY (2024, p.95) dans son roman socio-historique, *Le monde Africain doit se réveiller*, Bamako : Alqalam, pour signifier le rejet et le dégoût pour tout ce qui est africain ou renvoie à l'Homme africain ou à l'Afrique

ipso facto un travail d'interprétation. La science, quant à elle, renvoie à l'ensemble des connaissances humaines acquises par la spécialisation (études) ou par l'expérience (pratiques). Son fondement est la raison et l'objectivité.

En sus, l'émergence de l'Alliance des États du Sahel (AES) crée un nouvel espoir pour toute l'Afrique et constitue un espace stratégique sous régional requérant des réponses harmonisées mais devraient être fondées sur des savoirs locaux et scientifiques pour ménager la sécurité, la gouvernance et la reconstruction nationale. C'est pour cette raison que COULIBALY (2024, p.94) écrit : « La seule science qui libère l'Homme véritablement quel que soit le degré de l'aliénation est la science de soi-même. » Nous comprenons ainsi la prééminence des connaissances, des valeurs et savoir-faire endogènes dans la résolution des conflits et la reconstruction nationale à l'ère de la reconfiguration de l'Afrique et de la multipolarisation du monde.

Ce troisième colloque international offrira une tribune idéale pour interroger, analyser et préconiser, dans toute leur étendue, les outils pertinents de décolonisation, les mécanismes de résolution des crises et les dynamiques de reconstruction des États africains par la science et la recherche scientifique, dans un contexte marqué par les enjeux du néocolonialisme et de la menace terroriste. Il convient d'ores et déjà d'affirmer que science et recherche scientifique sont indissociables et qu'elles doivent exercer pleinement leur vocation pour résoudre les grandes problématiques de la cité et favoriser son développement.

Comme Objectif, ce colloque scientifique international vise à créer un cadre de rencontres et d'échanges entre chercheurs nationaux et internationaux sur la problématique de la décolonisation véritable, la résolution des crises par la science et la recherche scientifique au Sahel et en Afrique de façon générale. Il ambitionne également de proposer, à partir des résultats scientifiques issus des travaux menés par les chercheurs et enseignants-chercheurs du Sahel, de l'Afrique et, plus largement, de la communauté scientifique internationale, des pistes de solutions endogènes aux défis sécuritaires et de développement qui fragilisent ces régions sur tous les plans. A cet effet, les axes suivants sont retenus pour les propositions de communication :

II-AXES DE COMMUNICATION

- **Axe 1 : Diagnostic scientifique des crises africaines et reconstruction nationale**

Mettre en lumière la capacité des disciplines scientifiques à analyser finement les causes multidimensionnelles des crises (insécurité armée, fragilité étatique, ruptures sociales, *Africaphobie*, chocs économiques), en mobilisant tant les méthodologies quantitatives que qualitatives pour établir un état des lieux rigoureux.

- **Axe 2 : Littérature, Langue et valorisation des valeurs et savoirs endogènes**

Promouvoir les recherches conduites en terre africaine et la redécouverte des savoir-faire traditionnels comme fondements d'une science authentiquement africaine, apte à proposer des solutions adaptées aux réalités culturelles, sociales et environnementales du Sahel et du continent.

- **Axe 3 : Gouvernance, sécurité et développement fondés sur la recherche**
Souligner l'importance d'intégrer systématiquement les résultats scientifiques dans l'élaboration et l'évaluation des politiques publiques, afin de dépasser les réponses purement militaires et d'instaurer des dispositifs de prévention, de résilience civile et de relance économique légitimes et durablement efficaces.
- **Axe 4 – Libre**
Cet axe est libre et prend en compte tous les autres volets connexes.

III-Calendrier

- Lancement de l'appel : **22 Novembre 2025**
- Date limite de soumissions **des abstracts/résumés : 10 Mars 2026**,
- Les Notifications d'acceptation : **15 mars 2025**
- Date de déroulement du 2^{ème} Colloque Scientifique International : **30 et 31 mars 2026 à l'Université Yambo OUOLOGUEM de Bamako-Kabala-Mali.**

IV-Informations générales sur le colloque

- Les propositions de communication (**New Times Roman, police 12,interligne simple**), assorties d'un résumé de **300 mots** et de **5 mots clés** maximum en **français ou en anglais ou en arabe** sont recevables aux adresses électroniques suivantes : Labolarelso010@gmail.com ou larmaulshbmali@gmail.com jusqu'au **10 Mars 2026**.
Date de notification des résumés acceptés : 15 Mars 2026.Le colloque se déroulera du **30 au 31 mars 2026** à la cité universitaire de Kabala – à l'Université Yambo OUOLOGUEM de Bamako.
- Les auteurs y indiqueront les noms et prénoms du ou des contributeurs, l'institution/laboratoire d'attache, le grade ou la qualité, l'axe d'étude choisi, l'adresse électronique et les mots-clés au-dessous du résumé. Les langues d'écriture des communications ou articles sont le français, l'anglais et l'arabe. **Les auteurs des propositions des résumés retenus seront invités à payer 25.000FCFA comme frais de participation par communicant.** Les meilleurs textes après évaluation seront publiés dans un numéro spécial de la *Revue Kuru kan Fuga* ou la *Revue LaRMA*.

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FIRST LADIES MARY LINCOLN, EDITH WILSON AND ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: WHEN POWER BECOMES A SHARED ENDEAVOR AND GOAL

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Abstract

The American Constitution has not provided guidance for the responsibilities of the American First Ladies and there is no document that explains the duties of the first ladies. Some of them are usually relegated to the background, behind the noble figure of their presidential husband. They are expected to be good wives, good mothers, exemplary women, playing the role of wise hostesses at the White House and embodying the nation with elegance. Instead, generations of First Ladies, from Martha Washington to Melania Trump, have shaped how the modern Office of the First Lady is formed and the roles of the president's spouse exercised. Some First Ladies have been criticized for doing too much and others for not doing enough. Some have been praised for their looks or fashion and others have been less kindly treated. Each First Lady has had to make her own rules and defines her own role without the guidance or limitations of the Constitution. The purpose of this article is to explore the ways various First Ladies, throughout history, used their position to make changes at the White House and across the country by laying the emphasis on Mary Lincoln, Edith Wilson and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Keywords: Edith Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary Lincoln, first lady, USA.

Résumé

La Constitution américaine reste muette sur les responsabilités des Premières Dames et aucun texte fondateur n'explique leurs devoirs. Certaines d'entre-elles sont généralement reléguées au second plan, derrière la figure emblématique de leurs époux présidents. On attend d'elles qu'elles soient de bonnes épouses, de bonnes mères, des femmes exemplaires, qu'elles incarnent avec sagesse et élégance les valeurs nationales américaines à la Maison Blanche. Pourtant, des générations de Premières Dames, de Martha Washington à Melania Trump, ont façonné la fonction moderne de la notion de Première Dame et l'exercice du rôle de l'épouse du président. Certaines ont été critiquées pour leur excès d'implication, d'autres pour leur inaction. Certaines ont été louées pour leur beauté ou

leur style, d'autres ont été moins bien accueillies. Chaque Première Dame a dû définir ses propres règles et son propre rôle, sans le cadre ni les limites de la Constitution. L'objectif de cet article est d'explorer comment différentes Premières Dames, à travers l'histoire, ont utilisé cette position pour impulser des changements à la Maison Blanche et dans tout le pays, en mettant l'accent sur Mary Lincoln, Edith Wilson et Eleanor Roosevelt.

Mots-clés : Edith Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary Lincoln, Première dame, États-Unis.

Introduction

When, two and a half centuries ago, Martha Washington, the first of the First Ladies, joined her husband George Washington in New York, the provisional capital of the young American federation, the United States was composed of only a handful of territories gathered along the East Coast. They had no history, no model, just a Constitution and great ambitions. The First Lady was naturally seen as the Founding Mother, a beacon for the unity of the nation, and a nurturing wife (Bacharan & Simonnet, 2020 : 13). The First Lady had to be charming without appearing narcissistic, elegant without seeming frivolous, a devoted spouse capable of campaigning and delivering speeches, but never for herself.

However, some of the First Ladies would not remain confined to symbolism. Throughout history, some of them have reinvented their roles, sometimes struggling like trapped animals, or boldly breaking the codes of the moment. Already, the second on the list, Abigail Adams, immediately took hold of the most strategic files, including the nominations of ministers and advisors, and engaged in discussions about the prospect of war. Those who would succeed her in the White House would not settle for simply choosing the color of curtains or the menu for receptions.

This article analyzes how certain First Ladies like Mary Lincoln, Edith Wilson, and Eleanor Roosevelt have stepped out of their framework, have taken a step onto the international stage, exerted much greater influence than had been thought, gradually assumed more and more responsibility to participate in power, shape it, sometimes secretly, and ultimately take it entirely.

I. Mary Lincoln, the First Lady in a Nation Broken by the Civil War

Mary was born into the best society. Her father, Robert, was a very wealthy notable, long elected to local parliament, a pillar of the old Whig party. He had fought in the War of 1812, earned

his law degrees, and ventured into business and commerce before choosing banking and politics. Her mother, Eliza, was a "Southern Belle," (Baker, 1987 :67) a well-bred and charming young woman destined for early marriage and, as was often the case at the time, to numerous births every fifteen months; Eliza Todd gave birth to a new child. Mary, in 1818, was the fourth. However, with the seventh child, her exhausted mother's body could not cope, and the young woman died at 32. Mary was only six years old, and she never recovered from this first abandonment. She had pursued much more extensive studies than most girls of her time. In terms of culture, elegance, and good manners, she could easily compete with the best society, and she intended to show it. Mary Lincoln was determined not to be confined to her rooms and to maintain her status. Receptions and ceremonies did not frighten her. She quickly became a celebrity, present at her husband's side in all public events.

Mary Lincoln was committed to American values and freedoms; she considered herself comparable to European queens and therefore charged, like them, with brilliantly embodying the grandeur and strength of power. According to Baker, she had lost all decency by organizing such a lavish evening while, for nine months, the civil war tore the country apart, with soldiers and families suffering each day, and the North, assailed by Southerners, facing defeat after defeat. This was her way of showing that the North feared nothing, that the government stood firm. And that nothing could shake the calm and determination of the president. Furthermore, the morale of the ministers, elected officials, and military personnel needed to be uplifted...

Moreover, Mary had already received proof that she was on the right track: for this exceptional evening, she sent out no fewer than five hundred invitations, and everyone responded eagerly, except for a few troublesome souls draped in virtuous disapproval, like Ohio Senator Benjamin Wade, who wrote sharply: *"Are the president and Mrs. Lincoln aware that there is a civil war? If not, Mr. and Mrs. Wade are, and for that reason, they refuse to come to feast and dance."* (Baker, 1987 :45)

In 1855, when Abraham Lincoln was running for Senate against Stephen Douglass, Mary was by his side. She widely opened the family home, sometimes receiving hundreds of visitors in a single day, ensuring that the table was always well stocked, and rewarding each with a few kind but convincing remarks about the political situation. She sent daily letters to her many acquaintances to explain Lincoln's positions, reviewing and correcting his speeches. With Abraham, she compiled a meticulous list of all the local elected officials in Illinois - at that time, they were the ones who elected the senators who represented the state in Washington - along with their party affiliation and their

stance on the Kansas-Nebraska Act. She saw herself as a true political partner of her husband; his successes were hers, and their ascent to power was theirs.

The day after the Lincoln family arrived at the White House, Mary toured the building room by room, astonished to discover so much broken furniture, discolored carpets, soiled curtains, torn wallpaper, mismatched dishes, and chipped glassware. She announced that she had found her first mission: to completely redecorate the presidential palace, to make it a home worthy of representing the nation and providing the president with all the comfort necessary to rest from his hard work.

Mary knew very well how deeply and wholly she had chosen the cause of the Union, even going so far as to forbid herself from mourning her three half-brothers who would be killed in the Confederate ranks. Mary was also at the bedside of the wounded from the Civil War. With the support of her courageous friend Elizabeth Keckley, who chaired the relief association and knocked on every door to collect funds, Mary Lincoln also worked hard to gather supplies. She committed herself, reaching out to all who could contribute to the relief efforts. To her husband the president, during one of his trips, she wrote... *“Lizzie Keckley tells me that multitudes of these unfortunate souls are suffering terribly, many don’t even have a blanket, and are trying to cover themselves with pieces of carpet. Many are dying of hunger... I’ve authorized her to spend 200 dollars on blankets. I’m sure you won’t oppose this expenditure. The cause of humanity demands it.”* (Packard, 1988 : 79)

Mary accompanied the president on visits to hospitals, and often went alone, astonished to face the sight of terrible wounds, the moans, and the nauseating smells without faltering. This was her personal battle. She brought flowers, fruits, and treats, sat patiently at the bedsides of the wounded, as she once did with Willie, writing for those who could not hold a pen: “I am sitting by your boy. He has been quite ill, but he is recovering. He asks me to tell you that he is doing well. With my respects to the mother of the young soldier, Mrs. Lincoln.” One of the president’s advisors was irritated that she did not invite the press during these visits. But for Mary, it was an intimate undertaking, an exchange of comfort between two pains. A Calvary for an impossible redemption.

II. Edith Wilson, the President of the USA

She experienced what was undoubtedly the greatest love story in the White House, in total harmony with her presidential husband, to the point that she eventually substituted for him and exercised a true shadow presidency. For the first time, a First Lady genuinely took power. *“You are*

the companion that a strong man needs,” (Kaspi, 1988 :105), he wrote to her in one of the 250 love letters they exchanged in the year 1915 alone.

During all the weeks of idyllic madness that unfolded in cars or in the private apartments of the White House, Edith became the hidden First Lady, the lover, and already the advisor. For the president did not simply take time to write long passionate letters in an adolescent style filled with innuendos. In the envelopes he sent to Edith, there were, of course, love notes written at different moments of the same day, but also official documents, notably notes concerning state affairs for which Woodrow sought her advice. He indeed completely trusted his lover and appreciated her worldview, so much so that he soon secretly intertwined her with his presidential work.

On May 7, 1915, German submarines torpedoed the British passenger liner Lusitania: 1,200 civilians were killed, including 128 Americans. Wilson had to and would react. “I need you...,” he wrote to Edith. “Do you think it’s a coincidence that we found each other just when I need you so much? Do you think it’s a coincidence that we recognized each other with such clarity and joy? I hope you will think of me tonight. I will be working on the writing of my speech and my response to Germany tomorrow evening. Each sentence of these two texts will carry even more weight and have even more meaning if I can feel that you are with me in heart and spirit,” he wrote to her on May 9. In the president’s mind, politics and love intertwined. Never before had love and politics been so mixed. Edith’s influence, even before she became First Lady, was already enormous. The president had known her for only a few weeks, but he confided everything to her, shared everything with her, and followed all her advice to the letter, or nearly so.

Edith frequently visited the White House, but that was not enough; Wilson and Edith wanted to be able to communicate at any time. To avoid going through the White House switchboard, the president had a direct phone line installed with Edith’s house at 1308 Twentieth Street in Washington, allowing him to communicate discreetly with her. The collaboration between the president and his lover became increasingly intense: Wilson even entrusted her with the secret codes to decipher messages from abroad. It was also Edith who, from then on, interpreted those messages and encoded the president’s responses. She loved sharing state secrets, and this role as a hidden advisor thrilled her. Americans did not know it, but a young woman, previously unknown to everyone, indeed held state secrets at a time when the world had entered an unprecedented war.

Officially becoming the First Lady, Edith did not take her role lightly. Unlike many of the First Ladies before her, Edith wanted to assert her presence in the White House. From the outset, she

demanding a private secretary. Woodrow and Edith shared everything. They never left each other's side. They had their meals together, slept together, played golf together, and governed together. Edith attended almost all Cabinet meetings and was involved in all decisions, whether in domestic or foreign policy. She gave her opinions more than ever on the notes and projects that came to the Oval Office, sidelining advisors who thus lost direct access to the president. The new First Lady, however, was far from being a feminist; she even opposed the suffrage movement, which she deemed unsympathetic and unhealthy, especially as it protested in front of the White House. There was no question of granting women the right to vote.

On April 2, 1917, Wilson and Edith went to the Capitol, escorted by cavalry: the president had convened an extraordinary session of Congress to announce that he was sending the United States into the conflict. The White House, too, had entered the war. Edith canceled all festivities, ceremonies, cocktails, receptions, dinners, and official visits. She imposed meatless Mondays and breadless Wednesdays, set up twenty sheep on the lawns, selling their wool at auction for charitable organizations. She published an open letter to European women, recommending that they avoid yielding American soldiers to the temptations inherent in garrison life. The First Lady was also tasked with finding names to christen warships. Edith realized that names of cities, rivers, or lakes were already in use. Remembering her distant connection to the legendary Pocahontas, she obtained an Indian dictionary for inspiration and would give some ships names of tribes.

During President Wilson's illness (Levin, 2001 ; 123), Edith took up residence at her husband's bedside and served as a barrier. Even couriers of top-secret messages had to go through her. The White House became a fortress, off-limits to visitors and especially journalists. The president's chamber was set apart from the world. Only Dr. Grayson and Tumulty, the faithful personal secretary, could join Edith. This reduced and secretive cabinet was referred to as the "government of the bedside." From then on, all state matters arrived on Edith's desk. Wilson had a few minutes of lucidity each day, and she took advantage of this time to have him sign the most urgent documents. She decided the priorities, organized the files, handled communications, and informed the relevant individuals... In short, she governed.

Certainly, Edith did not truly initiate actions; she contented herself with managing day-to-day affairs. But she sidelined all the close advisors who could have gotten in her way and established a whole mechanism to maintain secrecy. During these long and strange weeks, the White House was put into a kind of hibernation; it did not propose any laws and did not react to the steel workers' strikes

or the recurring protests in the country... Edith, who appreciated urgency and priorities, made use of subterfuges: all her messages were written on White House letterhead and began with the formidable phrase: "The president says..." Americans did not know it, but Edith Wilson had become the president of the United States.

By January 1920, Wilson still had no contact with the outside world. The situation became increasingly untenable. Martin Madden, a senator from Illinois, proposed voting on a law to replace the president in case of incapacity. Nothing worked; Edith maintained her firm control. She further reduced the staff surrounding the president and met with politicians to offer them positions in the cabinet. When Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane resigned, Edith offered his position to Judge John Barton Payne. Journalists stirred: "The most frightening revelation of the week is that President Wilson's wife has played the role of the President of the United States for the past months," the Daily Mail wrote, unaware that this situation was still ongoing.

On April 14, 1920, the first Cabinet meeting took place since the president's stroke. Wilson was there, ghostly. The names of the ministers had to be announced upon their entrance so he could recognize them. But Edith abruptly interrupted the meeting after an hour: the president was weak, she said, leading him back to his room. Woodrow Wilson then led a vegetative life; he spent his time in a wheelchair, in the garden, under the south portico, and occasionally watched movies.

III. Eleanor Roosevelt, the Eyes and the Ears of the President

Having served as First Lady for over twelve years, Eleanor Roosevelt held this position longer than anyone else and undoubtedly underwent the most transformation. Without her, Franklin D. Roosevelt would never have become President of the United States nor the powerful reformer and wartime leader that he was. A humanitarian, feminist, defender of Black people and the underprivileged, Eleanor Roosevelt established herself as one of the most significant women in American history. Everyone loved her; she was the most admired person in the party and in the country.

Born in 1884 with "a silver spoon in her mouth," Eleanor Roosevelt belonged to an old patrician family, one of the richest in New York, proud of its connection to the pioneers. Eleanor's ancestors signed the Declaration of Independence and witnessed George Washington's inauguration. It is important to note that in this starched Victorian era, high society established a system of castes,

hierarchies, and taboos that rivaled the court of England and was not particularly fulfilling for young girls. Everyone had to conform to outdated yet unavoidable rituals.

Eleanor was a First Lady who involved herself in everything. She liked to categorize women into two groups based on two biblical figures: the Marthas, dedicated, feminine, and domestic women, and the Marys, intellectuals and activists. There was no doubt that she was among the latter. She bombarded the president with memos and proposals. “You had to see her sit in front of her husband, fix him with her gaze, and say: Franklin, I think you should... or Franklin, you shouldn’t...,” said one of their acquaintances. The president listened to her because he always trusted her, and often he followed her suggestions.

The plight of the youth particularly concerned Eleanor: “I am terrified at the thought that we might lose this generation,” she once said, referring to the 30% youth unemployment and the poverty of women who could not afford a decent education for their children. One evening, just before Franklin went to bed, she entered his room and launched into a vigorous plea: a federal administration needed to be created, she explained to him, to help the youth. The president hesitated for a moment, then decided: “If it’s a good thing for the youth, then okay, let’s do it.” The National Youth Administration was born: it would provide scholarships to students, boys and girls, in exchange for part-time work in various sectors of the educational system, launching training programs. By 1937, 400,000 would benefit from it. Eleanor would also develop a model farming community for fifty self-sufficient families in West Virginia. Eleanor tackled the deepest and most insidious evil of America, its original sin: the condition of Black people. In 1934, she became involved with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which fought for the rights of Black people.

Eleanor instinctively understood the best of politics: to sincerely put herself in people's shoes, understand their difficulties, and then find concrete solutions. Through her multiple actions and determination, she wove a valuable connection with Americans, without worrying about protocol or security imperatives. One day, while driving between Washington and New York, she did not hesitate to pick up a hitchhiker. Another day, she decided to offer cigars to women after dinners at the White House, and she herself occasionally lit a cigarette, just to show that she intended to promote gender equality.

In 1939, while attending a conference in Alabama and discovering that the room was divided—Whites on one side, Blacks on the other—the First Lady moved her chair and ostentatiously sat in the central aisle. A few weeks later, when the "Daughters of the American Revolution" denied the famous Black singer Marian Anderson the opportunity to perform in the grand auditorium of Washington, she resigned from the association and arranged a concert for the singer on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Eleanor was obviously the target of racist insults from part of the population. Franklin, being cautious, did not speak out on these issues, but he allowed his wife to take the lead. African Americans did not hide their support for the Roosevelts and flocked in large numbers to the Democratic Party. Eleanor had managed to change the political landscape.

In 1940, as Europe sank into chaos, Roosevelt's second term was coming to an end. The Democrats wanted to break tradition and nominate him for a third term. Eleanor was eager to end this life of turmoil but resigned herself to the situation. It was she who would persuade the Democratic convention in Chicago... Franklin was re-elected for a third term. In the fall of 1941, Roosevelt established a new agency, the Office of Civilian Defense, aimed at coordinating security measures in the event of attacks, and he asked Eleanor to oversee its programs. This was the first time a First Lady held an official position. For Eleanor, the notion of "defense" should not be limited to the development of relief means and alert systems or the construction of bomb shelters; it should also extend to the social measures she cared about: housing, schools, childcare... Congressional Republicans and the press immediately cried foul, and Eleanor had to give up her position after five months.

In 1942, the First Lady, under the code name Rover, was in England visiting American troops, residing at Buckingham Palace amid bombardments. In 1943, she arrived in the South Pacific, toured the islands in a Red Cross uniform, visiting hospitals, camps, and cemeteries... "She walked for hours, leaning over horribly wounded soldiers... I was amazed by her courage and determination, both physical and mental... I will never forget it," said Admiral William F. Halsey, who eventually acquiesced to all of the First Lady's requests, even the riskiest ones: he took her to Guadalcanal, the island recaptured by Americans from the Japanese after a bloody battle. Her visits to the boys were triumphs and true comfort for the soldiers. Eleanor signed thousands of autographs and brought back mail for families... On her return, she had lost fifteen kilos.

In 1933, when William Dodd, the American ambassador in Berlin, alerted the State Department about the Nazi takeover of German society and the persecution of Jews, and when high officials in Washington, pro-Arab and often anti-Semitic, such as Undersecretary of State William

Phillips, did everything to deny or minimize the situation, it was Eleanor who openly clashed with Breckinridge Long, a notorious anti-Semite in charge of refugees at the State Department, who refused all aid. She wanted the United States to welcome Jewish children. "We have always been ready to receive the unfortunate from around the world, and they have enriched us a hundredfold," she declared indignantly.

The presidential couple, Roosevelt and Eleanor, was a solid alliance between a man and a woman who were not initially suited to each other (Kati, 2001:148). Roosevelt was the political bulldozer, and Eleanor was his moral conscience; Roosevelt was the pragmatic one, and Eleanor was the idealist. It was this complementarity that allowed them, in their handling of political power, to move mountains. Even after Roosevelt's death, Eleanor continued to advocate for great causes such as civil rights, gender equality, racial equality, the project for universal health care, housing assistance for the poor, and federal aid for education. She was appointed chair of the drafting committee for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, acted as an advisor for the Peace Corps, a civilian service created by John Kennedy, and worked for the United Jewish Appeal. Harry Truman would call her the First Lady of the World.

Conclusion:

During the nineteenth century, a Victorian era that was not favorable to women, some First Ladies withdrew a bit, stepping back. Some withdrew, were replaced, or languished within the walls of the presidential residence. It would be surprising to discover that for the most unfortunate, the White House was a prison, sometimes even a hell. Others, more rebellious, kicked against the establishment. One sees Mary Lincoln, the wife of the legendary Abraham: in the midst of the Civil War, she harassed the advisers, imagined herself as a sovereign, compared herself to Queen Victoria and Empress Eugenia, and demanded her share of authority. Edith Wilson outright took power in place of her ailing husband and exercised it in utmost secrecy. Eleanor Roosevelt represented the disabled president around the world, even in the Pacific wars, and established herself as an independent political figure, a human rights activist and, above all, a champion for women.

Since John Kennedy, American presidential campaigns have been conducted as family affairs, and today it must be acknowledged that power is a project and an ambition that comes together as a partnership. Some presidents, like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, would never have reached the White House if their wives had not worked alongside them, and sometimes for them. And some First Ladies have been so active that they could have been presidents in place of their husbands had the times been more favorable.

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