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Culture and Propaganda

The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936–1953

Sarah Ellen Graham



CULTURE AND PROPAGANDA

In memory of my grandparents, Christina and Carey Forge

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The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936–1953

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Introduction

This book examines the US government's adoption of diplomatic programs that were designed to persuade, inform, and attract global public opinion in the service of American national interests. These policies cultivating cultural and informational influence are today known as "public diplomacy" and they remain an important component of US foreign policy. In their founding phase, however, these policies were generally referred to by the more contentious term "propaganda." Propaganda was a practice that since the end of the First World War had been subject to a great deal of opprobrium by the American public, fuelled by revelations about the deceptions and distortions in British and American publicity in support of US intervention. An ongoing governmental effort to cultivate the hearts and minds of publics abroad nevertheless became an established part of the Department of State's operations over the course of a decade, beginning in 1936, the year during which the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration instigated Washington's first, modest exchanges of scholars between the United States and the Latin American republics.

The chapters to follow will examine the new ideas about foreign policy that led to the adoption of cultural diplomacy and other "propaganda" formats by the Roosevelt administration. It traces how a modest start in cultural and educational exchange led to a far larger cultural, informational and multilateral public diplomacy effort during the subsequent wartime and post-war years. Following the adoption and expansion of the cultural and educational activities overseen by the Department of State, the outbreak of the Second World War led to the founding and expansion of an international information program. In this enterprise Washington made particularly strong use of radio broadcasts, embarking on international broadcasting even while the United States was officially still a non-belligerent state. The Second World War also saw the Department of State embark on the planning and establishment of a multilateral educational, scientific and cultural organization, Unesco, which would ultimately be placed under the umbrella of the United Nations. What is interesting about these programs is how US officials represented their work—in a deeply ambivalent way and expressing a preoccupation with democratic values and public reason. The period of history analyzed in this book concludes in 1953, when the place of cultural and informational diplomacy in US foreign policy had become more stable. The period I consider here was one in which the nature and rationale for US cultural and informational diplomacy were

frequently debated, both by policy-makers in confidential policy settings, and by American journalists, scholars and commentators in the public sphere.

This founding phase in the development of US public diplomacy, and the ambivalence and debate that these policies generated, has been less frequently studied than the public diplomacy of the Cold War period.[1] Histories of Cold War American public diplomacy have asked a range of questions, including how US public diplomacy complemented US international economic policy;[2] how cultural and informational diplomacy supported US strategic interests;[3] and how intellectuals and educational institutions were involved in the era's ideological conflicts.[4] Studies of public diplomacy's role in the constitution of political identities have emphasized how America's Cold War public diplomacy established dominant representations of gender, the family and domestic life,[5]

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[1] The rise of cultural analysis within the field of diplomatic history, often referred to as the field's "cultural turn," was largely prompted by this work on public diplomacy in the Cold War. As a result of these catalytic early works, the international relations of culture, information and ideas are now seen as key frames through which we can investigate dynamics in the international political, strategic and economic areas. A clear example of the analytical claims of the cultural turn is: Nigel Gould Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 27 (no. 2, April, 2003). See also: Frank Ninkovich, "Where Have All the Realists Gone?" *Diplomatic History* 26 (no. 1, January, 2002); Thomas Allen Schwartz, "Explaining the Cultural Turn- or Detour?" *Diplomatic History* 31 (no. 1, January, 2007); Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher, *Culture and International History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

[2] On the connections between cultural forces and economy in US public diplomacy, and also one of the earliest examples of the cultural turn, see: Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion 1890–1945* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982); an excellent subsequent contribution is: Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through 20th Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[3] On public diplomacy and strategic dynamics, see: Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Kenneth A. Osgood, "Form Before Substance: Eisenhower's Commitment to Psychological Warfare and Negotiations with the Enemy," *Diplomatic History* 24 (no. 3, Summer, 2000); Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda and the Cold War, 1945–1955* (Westport: Praeger, 2002).

[4] The pioneering study here is: Hilton Kramer, *The Twilight of the Intellectuals: Culture and Politics in the Era of the Cold War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999); see also: Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy and Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

[5] Laura A. Belmonte, "A family affair? Gender, the U.S. Information Agency, and Cold War Ideology, 1945–1960, in Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher (eds)

but conversely failed to effectively address global critiques of racial segregation and discrimination in American society.[6] For the most part, though, these works begin in the mid-1950s, when the Cold War had already become the central preoccupation of US public diplomacy. These works also tell a different institutional story from the one herein, since in 1953 US public diplomacy was centralized under the United States Information Agency, an institution devoted to prosecuting Cold War objectives.

This book addresses the important, but less frequently examined, phase of US cultural and informational diplomacy spanning the years 1936 to 1953.[7] In addressing the fundamental tensions that were apparent in policy and public debates about the premises of US public diplomacy, the present work adds to a literature which includes Frank Ninkovich's pioneering study of the bureaucratic context of the US cultural diplomacy programs, Holly Cowan Shulman's history of the work of journalists at the Voice of America during the Second World War, as well as recent works by Darlene Sadlier on the cultural and information work of Nelson Rockefeller's Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), and by Justin Hart on the functions of cultural diplomacy and

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Culture and International History (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003); Helen Laville, "'Our Country Endangered by Underwear:' Fashion, Femininity, and the Seduction Narrative in *Ninotchka* and *Silk Stockings*," *Diplomatic History* 30 (no. 4, Summer, 2006); Emily S. Rosenberg, "Consuming Women: Images of Americanization in the 'American Century,'" in Michael J. Hogan, ed. *The Ambiguous Legacy: U.S. Foreign Relations in the 'American Century'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[6] Key studies associated with the Cold War civil rights thesis and images of race relations in US PD are: Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Richard Lentz and Karla K. Gower, *The Opinions of Mankind: Racial Issues, Press, and Propaganda in the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in a Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Michael L. Krenn, *Black Diplomacy: African Americans and the State Department, 1945–1969* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

[7] On the cultural ferment of the Second World War period and the necessity for cultural analysis of the history of the Second World War see: Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967); Akira Iriye, *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941–1945* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1981). Scholarship addressing the propaganda developed by other powers during the war include: Nicholas Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American 'Neutrality' in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Philo C. Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda: International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality* (Westport: Praeger, 1992); Barack Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005).

information in the context of America's post-war foreign relations.[8] Ninkovich, Shulman, and Hart, in particular, detect a fundamental ambivalence on the part of US officials as they engaged in the task of influencing and persuading audiences abroad. For Ninkovich and Shulman, this ambivalence stemmed from the fact that the diplomacy of culture and information were subject to mounting pressures to demonstrate a pragmatic contribution to US interests. For the cultural practitioners and journalists who had been instrumental to the establishment of American public diplomacy in the late 1930s and early 1940s, an overly pragmatic, one-sided approach represented dominance, manipulation and authoritarianism, the kinds of practices the democratic United States ought to avoid in order to be properly understood around the world.

According to Hart, Washington's interest in shaping America's global image was a natural corollary of its rise to global hegemony during the war. Cultivating a positive image of the United States enabled it to build and sustain a global structure of American dominance without territorial conquest. Tensions arose in this effort between the natural pluralism of American society—pluralism that was increasingly on display via the growing reach of American media—and the desire on Washington's part to present a coherent, pragmatic narrative about United States and what it stood for globally. In more recent work, Nicholas Cull has noted the continuing discussion about the assumptions and terminology of American public diplomacy. These debates reflect the tension between the competing imperatives of fostering democratic modes of engagement with foreign publics on one hand, and demonstrating the kinds of impacts that "one-way," propagandistic methods could deliver, and do so relatively quickly, on the other.[9] They reflected longstanding views in America about public opinion derived from "enlightened discussion" as an "essentially positive force," provided adequate education was available.[10] The difficulty of reconciling democracy and the imperatives of power is a key theme in the analysis undertaken here. The argument is developed via an analysis of the kinds

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[8] Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: US Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Holly Cowan Shulman, *The Voice of America: Propaganda and Democracy 1941–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Darlene Sadlier, *Americans All: Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War 2* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012); Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[9] Nicholas Cull, "Roof for a House Divided: How U.S. Propaganda Evolved into Public Diplomacy," in Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo (eds) *Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[10] J. Michael Sproule, "Progressive Propaganda Critics and the Magic Bullet Myth," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6:3 (1989), pp. 227–8.

of debates that emerged in the course of US policy-making. It asserts that the underlying ambivalence associated with US public diplomacy was a function of earlier political debates about the nature of communications, democracy and governmental power during the progressive era in American politics. As such this study explicitly seeks to bridge the interwar, wartime, and post-war periods, based on the public's response to the power of communications and the mass media.

The Founding of American Public Diplomacy

The FDR administration established the cultural diplomacy program as a corollary of its Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America. The expansion of the US cultural and informational diplomacy programs beyond Latin America was prompted by America's involvement in the Second World War and the post-war peace settlement, and in this phase the three most prominent formats of US public diplomacy in the twentieth century became permanent, ongoing features of US foreign relations. The cultural diplomacy program incorporated exchanges of persons in the cultural and educational arenas, including the Fulbright program, the circulation of cultural exhibits and publications, consular events, and the establishment of American libraries and cultural centers abroad. US informational diplomacy included the distribution of films and publications, the supply of material and training to foreign media outlets, and, most importantly, the US government's official shortwave radio station Voice of America (VOA). Washington also provided vital impetus for multilateral cultural and educational cooperation in this period, taking a prominent role in the founding and early activities of Unesco. Despite this proliferation of activities during the war and the degree to which US officials had carefully addressed the political and practical quandaries associated with cultural and informational diplomacy, substantial budget cuts imposed by Congress in 1946–47 curtailed the programs. They were then subsequently revived and extended to meet the emerging challenge of ideological and strategic competition with the Soviet Union and global Communism after 1948.

The adoption and acceptance of these new diplomatic practices by the US government in the years between 1936 and 1953 is indicative of a larger process in American diplomatic and political history. This process saw the scope of American national interests extending dramatically in the wartime and post-war periods. The cultural and informational programs were a touchstone for debate about this expanding global role. As such, this book's main interest is in the political, cultural and ideological meanings that American officials attached to the idea of public diplomacy, rather than offering a detailed account of the

reception of US public diplomacy by targeted publics.[11] The book concludes in 1953 when controversies about whether the United States should pursue cultural and informational diplomacy had largely been settled and the three major formats of US public diplomacy had been consolidated, with clear operating styles and assumptions. By 1953 the US government was committed to garnering American cultural and ideological influence abroad. The end of this attitudinal shift was also reflected in the establishment of a dedicated executive agency for cultural and informational diplomacy, the United States Information Agency (USIA), with President Dwight D. Eisenhower's strong support for its mission. Eisenhower's reforms have loomed large within the historical literature on US public diplomacy, however, and the present work restores balance to this literature by charting the complex and ambivalent foundations of Washington's Cold War mission in the Second World War period.

American culture, information and ideas were the currency that US public diplomats deployed to influence the foreign publics they targeted. But the strategies US officials adopted were also fundamentally influenced by how

[11] Numerous studies have addressed this question. See: Jessica C.E. Gienow Hecht, "Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War—A Critical Review," *Diplomatic History* 24:3 (Summer, 2000). See also: Sarah Ellen Graham, *Engaging India: Public Diplomacy and Indo-American Relations to 1957* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2012); Steven Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943–1991* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Rob Kroes (ed.), *Within the U.S. Orbit: Small National Cultures Vis-à-vis the United States* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1991); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); Richard Pells, *Modernist America: Art, Music, Movies, & the Globalization of American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); David Slater and Peter J. Taylor (eds), *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1999). On resistance of US cultural "imperialism" and resistance to US power, see: Richard H. Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion: A New View of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985); Rob Kroes, Robert Rydell, and Doeko F. J. Bosscher (eds), *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993); Herbert I. Schiller, *Mass Communications and American Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Reinhold Wagnleitner, "Propagating the American Dream: Cultural Policies as a Means of Integration," *American Studies International*, 24 (no.1, April, 1986); Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colanisation and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria After the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). Recent literature on anti-Americanism also highlights the complex and sometimes heated responses of publics that have been subject to US cultural dominance/cultural imperialism. See, e.g. Brendon O'Connor and Martin Griffiths (eds), *The Rise of Anti-Americanism (*London: Routledge, 2006); Alan McPherson, *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Americans had responded to propaganda, mass communications and media persuasion in the decades between the wars. Professionals from fields such as journalism, advertising, academia, and philanthropy staffed the US public diplomacy program in the founding phase, and they were decidedly reluctant to accept US propaganda uncritically, given their own longstanding critiques of propaganda as a tool of political power. Expressions of reluctance about the use of propaganda thus became a distinctive feature of US policy-making at the founding of the programs. But as the programs expanded, this sense of reluctance also became a vehicle for the expression of American exceptionalism—while the US programs might have resembled propaganda, they were not to be described in the same pejorative terms as the programs of other states. US officials and commentators thus established new and singular terms with which to describe US propaganda work and establish its global significance, focusing on the self-imposed restraints and democratic ethos of the US programs.[12]

The most interesting sources of opinion about the moral and political quandaries presented by propaganda are the writings and statements of US cultural and informational diplomacy officials themselves. These officials planned and administered Washington's public diplomacy programs from the late 1930s onward, and they were preoccupied by the concern that their work should not veer into coercive modes of argument, or into emotionalism and the blinding of public reason—the primary ills that they associated with propaganda. These reservations around the use of propaganda applied to the US public diplomacy programs toward the Latin American republics, where the first American efforts were directed, and to the subsequent State Department and Office of War Information efforts to engage European and Asian audiences during and after the war. The concerns of US public diplomats were rooted in the principles of

[12] The literature on American exceptionalism can be divided into works that follow Seymour Martin Lipset in asserting that US governmental practices are *substantively* different from all other political systems, and work that resonates with the argument presented in this book asserting that US exceptionalism is a discourse that has framed American politics and foreign policy. On the substantive side, see: Seymour Martin Lipset, *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963); Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996). Two critical examinations of the exceptionalism thesis are: Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History," *The American Historical Review* 96:4, (October 1996); and Michael Kammen, "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *American Quarterly* 45 (no. 1, March 1993). On the discursive approach to American exceptionalism see: Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Typology of America's Mission," *American Quarterly* 30:2 (Summer, 1978); Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

American progressivism, particularly the critique of mass communications that leading progressive journalists and academics articulated during the interwar period. This was a response to the specific excesses of the British government and the Woodrow Wilson administration in seeking to garner American public support for joining the First World War. It was also the result of progressivism's general concern with the advancement of individual freedom, a flourishing civic culture, democracy and anti-corruption.[13]

Propaganda could unleash irrational forces in public opinion, whereas progressivism—which in the 1920s is perhaps best understood as a cluster of related ideas about government, business, society and foreign policy rather than a strictly defined ideology—depended upon "scientific administration management, and organization" that was responsive to rational public interests.[14] It was on the basis of these concerns about public rationality that progressives rejected the extension of undue governmental and corporate influence through the manipulation of media, cultural instruments, and education, though they regarded private enterprise itself as vital to national flourishing and competent government and bureaucracy as indispensable to the impartial management of competing public interests.[15]

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[13] This broader point is developed in depth by J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); see also: Timothy Richard Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications Research During the American Cold War* (London: Routledge, 1999); Brett Gary, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War 1 to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

[14] Robert Neal Seidel, "Progressive Pan Americanism: Development and United States Policy Toward South America, 1906–1931," PhD Dissertation (Cornell University, 1973), p. 16. The degree to which progressivism itself constituted a coherent ideological movement in US politics has also at times been a contested issue among historians. For an overview of early debates on this question, see: Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10: 4 (December, 1982). A good summation of the phases of historical debate on progressivism is: John A. Thompson, *Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Wiebe offers a detailed account of the degree to which progressivism, as expressed in foreign policy, was a fitfully implemented and occasionally incoherent ideology, hampered in part by the rudimentary state of the foreign policy bureaucracy and thinking in the United States. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 227–8.

[15] As John Dewey asserted, progressives sought "an individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiatives to and for the ethical ideal." The progressives argued that political, economic and industrial life must be made conducive to "the realization of personality through the formation of a higher and more complete unity among men." Dewey, quoted in James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 351. Dewey's experiences visiting China during the interwar period saw him remain hopeful

At the same time, the application of progressive ideas to foreign policy called for an active but carefully circumscribed approach to foreign affairs. In the Western Hemisphere the United States was understood to be in a position of "benevolent superiority," a posture that it would consolidate via the strengthening of international law, economic interdependence and the promotion of US trade and investment, good governance and administrative reform. As Theodore Roosevelt had claimed in 1895, the United States sought to promote "efficiency and decency" in all forms of international intercourse, although, as a confident and young power, it could and should also act coercively against other nations in cases of "chronic wrongdoing" or "impotence," especially in the Western Hemisphere.[16] Whereas direct US intervention in other nations was permitted within this early rendition of foreign policy progressivism, by the 1920s it was understood that these goals required that a careful balance be struck between extending American leadership in the Western Hemisphere and avoiding the risk that "too strenuous or improper use of government in foreign affairs could actually lead to imperialism or war."[17] Business interests and philanthropies, on the other hand, continued to regard Latin America as "the most accessible proving ground for the exportation of capitalism and democracy" well into the 1930s, and advertising and public relations played a significant role in these efforts.[18] China was another focal point for the international projection of progressive ideals before and after World War One. Before Wilson took office, American businesses and philanthropy had taken the lead in efforts to cultivate the rational outlook and civic culture required to make China "peaceful, industrious," and a stable republic. But there had also been US governmental involvement in the improvement of Chinese education. In 1907 Theodore Roosevelt approved

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at the prospect of Chinese modernization through the benign influence of American progressivism and reformism. Jerry Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door: America and China, 1905–1921* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), p. 183.

[16] Theodore Roosevelt, quoted in Wiebe, *The Search for Order*, p. 245.

[17] Gail Hanson, "Sumner Welles and the American System: the United States in the Caribbean, 1920–1940," PhD Dissertation (State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1990), pp. 16–20; Seidel, "Progressive Pan Americanism," p. 5. Elihu Root, one of the leading American international relations thinkers of the early progressive era, frequently described America's responsibilities as a dominant power in relation to Latin America, in particular, as "tutelage." The precise nature of progressive attitudes towards imperialism in the two decades before 1920 has been a matter of some debate; William E. Leuchtenburg contends that the progressive embrace of formal imperialism lasted longer, well into the First World War, than historians usually suggest. William E. Leuchtenburg, "Progressivism and Imperialism: The Progressive Movement and American Foreign Policy, 1898–1916," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39:3 (December: 1952).

[18] Joan Hoff Wilson, *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920–1933* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1971), p. 169.

a settlement to return excess funds paid by China as an indemnity for the disruption of trade during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, during which the rebels targeted foreign trade interests. The funds were provided to China in the form of scholarships for Chinese graduate students to travel to the US and for the establishment of a university in China. Woodrow Wilson's enhancement of American diplomatic representation and foreign policy planning in relation to China and the Far East was similarly premised on the necessity of US leadership in extending "[r]eform and progress" to China. Official diplomacy would serve as "hinges to swing open the door to commerce and investment opportunities in China" and access to China's vast market for American business.[19] In 1924, the last tranche of indemnity payments was allocated by Calvin Coolidge to establish the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture, which would oversee the development of scientific and technical instruction as well as the construction of libraries and other permanent cultural institutions.

Much of progressivism's influence as a political and social reform movement, as well as a political force in Congress, had dissipated by 1918. But progressive ideas continued to exert a significant influence over American thinking about international relations, international economic policy and law,[20] as well as mass communications and propaganda. The irony in this was that many prominent progressives had initially supported Woodrow Wilson's initiatives to build public support for US participation in the First World War. By the end of the 1930s, amid gathering international insecurity, Washington turned again to an organized effort to shape global public opinion. But US officials also imposed restraints on how they might engage foreign audiences, cognizant that they faced "troubling conflicts between the values of democracy and the requirements

[19] Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*, pp. 16 and 124. Progressives did not always welcome it when corporate interests took the lead in US foreign policy. Taft's "dollar diplomacy" was criticized by many progressives for allowing official policy to be led by exploitative interests.

[20] The most well developed theme in studies of progressivism and US foreign policy is the connection between progressivism and US foreign economic policy. Michael Hogan's article provides both a detailed analysis of US policy and a review of the literature: Michael J. Hogan, "Revival and Reform: America's Twentieth Century Search for a New Economic Order Abroad," *Diplomatic History* 8:4 (October, 1984); William Appleman Williams' thesis on the economic drivers of US foreign policy develops out of his analysis of the progressive era: William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972). See also: Hoff Wilson, *American Business*; Jerry Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*; Burton I. Kaufman, "United States Trade and Latin America: The Wilson Years," *The Journal of American History* 58:2 (September, 1971); Thompson, *Reformers and War*; Robert F. Smith, *The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917–1960* (New Haven: College and University Press, 1960).

of war."[21] This enduring conflict, and its impact on how US cultural and informational diplomacy was practiced, constitutes one of the progressive era's most interesting and enduring legacies in US foreign relations.

The kinds of cultural and informational policies that the Department of State ultimately adopted, and in particular the way officials represented their work, were shaped by this controversial and difficult path toward the acceptance of American public diplomacy. US officials insisted that they were seeking a unique format for propaganda, one that would be democratic and reciprocal, honest rather than manipulative, and open to multiple points of view. New terms were needed to encompass what they regarded as their novel approach, and the US cultural and informational programs were ultimately discussed in terms of a uniquely American synthesis of power and restraint motivated by the ideals of progressivism and liberal democracy. The combining of logics of power and restraint was apparent, for example, in the rhetoric of William Benton, who served as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs just after the end of the Second World War. For Benton, America's policies were based "on principles international in their validity, free from narrow bias and from special pleading." Benton was attentive to the imperatives of power nonetheless, and insisted that the United States was the "only country which combines the qualities of moral leadership with the resources" required to undertake such a program. American "leadership" was therefore "vital" to counteract the "riot of propaganda" in post-war Europe.[22]

Secretary of State Dean Acheson echoed these representations. He claimed that US propaganda was a necessary function of its foreign policy commitments, but would serve only to highlight "the essential bond of common beliefs and common interests that underlie differences in national customs and circumstances."[23] State Department officials insisted that the American programs of cultural and informational diplomacy were, above all, not to be called propaganda. The term was infrequently used, even in confidential settings. Euphemisms such as "true propaganda," "white propaganda," "information exchange," "journalistic" information, or even "reciprocal cultural relations" were instead adopted both in public statements and internal documentation.

The developing rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union during the late 1940s strained the open, reciprocal, and pluralist aspirations of American cultural and informational diplomacy. US officials still represented America's programs as following an exceptional, democratic public diplomacy

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[21] Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 150.

[22] William Benton (1947), quoted in James R. Vaughn, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda*, pp. 238–9.

[23] Dean Acheson, "Support for an Expanded Information and Education Program," *Department of State Bulletin* 3913 (July 17, 1950), pp. 100–101.

format. But documents from the public diplomacy programs show that the US shifted toward a more self-assertive and selective approach in practical terms. The irony of this Cold War shift was something that theologian and foreign affairs writer Reinhold Niebuhr pointed out during the mid-1950s. Niebuhr frequently remarked on the inability of states to transcend the narrow imperatives of their national interest and act cooperatively in world politics, despite, at times, their ardent desire to do so. Nations were, Niebuhr argued, especially prone to the vices of misplaced idealism and the hypocrisy that follows, for his own nation most especially.[24] The story told in this book, of the questions asked and answered by US officials as they sought to reconcile their aspiration to establish a morally and politically exceptional form of propaganda with the hard-nosed imperatives of the national interest calls Niebuhr's sensibility to mind. Though they were modest in scale, the cultural diplomacy and international information programs were a touchstone for the fundamental tension between the moral foundations of American politics and the realities of power and interest in American foreign relations.

The structure of this book follows the divisions within the US public diplomacy program itself, with chapters separately addressing the development of the bilateral cultural and educational diplomacy programs, the information programs and VOA, and Washington's involvement in the multilateral cultural, educational and scientific activities of Unesco. The book analyzes the rhetorical practices that framed decision-making and policy implementation within the three program areas. It shows how the established conceptions of propaganda and public opinion within US political discourse established a distinctively American narrative about the nature and significance of cultural and informational diplomacy. The book is further divided to consider two chronological phases in the development of these programs. The first phase spans the years 1936 and 1945, a period dominated by the war, during which the key programs of US public diplomacy were established and American officials sought to reconcile their work with the progressive critique of propaganda. In the following phase, 1945–53, the cultural and informational programs were assured of a peacetime role in US foreign policy. While one major historical account has contended that the "public fear of the insidious lure of propaganda was ... laid to rest" after 1945, this book shows that anxiety and ambivalence around how the cultural and informational programs should embody American political traditions remained strong forces shaping US policy-making and implementation by government officials in this post-war period.[25] The late 1940s also saw the emergence of far harsher domestic scrutiny and partisan disagreement over what message the

[24] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

[25] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 149.

programs should convey and what format they should adopt in doing so, as well as the great challenge of ideological conflict and the global propaganda struggle with the Soviet Union.

Chapter 1 analyzes the development of American public debates and the progressive critique of propaganda in the aftermath of the First World War. American public sentiment throughout the interwar period held that official manipulation of feeling and opinion subverted democracy and the common good. But at the same time, international philanthropic initiatives funded by US corporations proliferated, and the philanthropic sector established an alternative discourse about the shaping of public opinion and the power of culture in international relations.[26] In the philanthropic case, the "manipulation" of opinion and culture was pursued in the interest of social reform and the enhancement of participatory democracy. The progressive critique of propaganda and the rise of philanthropic practices led to a vibrant debate on politics and the power of public opinion. But the legacy of this debate was that it created an ambiguous and at times highly contentious climate for the establishment of American cultural and informational diplomacy programs.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 consider how US policy-makers and diplomats approached the task of establishing the public diplomacy programs in 1936–1945 and how they reconciled this work with the progressive critique of propaganda. On the one hand, American public diplomacy officials sought to demonstrate that cultural diplomacy, international information and Unesco could make a substantive contribution to US national interests, but on the other they also sought to embody an element of reticence in line with the interwar critique of propaganda. Chapter 2 focuses on the cultural diplomacy program and begins in 1936, when the US proposed a series of inter-governmental treaties to facilitate cultural and educational exchanges with the Western Hemisphere. By 1945, the State Department's cultural and educational diplomacy program was well underway on several continents, having been bolstered by the demands of advocacy and propaganda in wartime. The chapter examines how US officials approached the task of cultural persuasion, and especially how they sought to justify cultural diplomacy to various audiences, including the American public, the Congress, and within the Department of State itself.

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[26] The cultural turn in diplomatic history also engaged strongly with philanthropic practices. See, e.g. Morag Bell, "American Philanthropy as Cultural Power," in David Slater and Peter J. Taylor (eds) *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Volker Berghahn, "Philanthropy and Diplomacy in the 'American Century,'" *Diplomatic History* 23: 3 (Summer 1999); Edward H. Berman, *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy; The Ideology of Philanthropy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963).

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Franklin Roosevelt authorized a global shortwave radio effort and a program of international print and film distribution to aid the war effort, supervised by the OWI. VOA became the cornerstone of this wartime informational diplomacy. The conceptual and practical dilemmas that were associated with the founding of the VOA and the information program are assessed in Chapter 3. For example, while it was barred from domestic broadcasting, the Voice's unidirectional format seemed to veer dangerously close to the outright propaganda techniques that were by then closely associated with the authoritarian regimes of Germany, Italy and Japan. VOA and OWI staffers felt that without effective journalistic safeguards, their work could easily resemble the manipulative practices that had been so sharply criticized by the progressive propaganda analysts. Drawing the line between the Voice's journalistic role and its more pragmatic, and thus potentially manipulative, diplomatic functions became an almost daily editorial challenge. But branding VOA as journalistic rather than essentially pragmatic or diplomatic was an important means for the station to both cultivate its global audience and maintain legitimacy with the American public. Internally, too, VOA and information staffers, many of whom were professional journalists, were anxious to harmonize their work with the progressive critique of propaganda. Hence, discourses about US international information policy reflected the lingering significance of progressive ideas and the controversial nature of propaganda in American politics.

The founding discussions for Unesco, which will be analyzed in Chapter 4, began in London in 1942 at the behest of the British government. Washington's vision for Unesco and its position during the talks was predicated, like its other cultural and informational programs, on the hope that the United States would not be seen as sponsoring its own aggrandizement or propaganda. In this context, Washington's Unesco-planning between 1942 and 1945 took on the anti-propaganda traditions of the US cultural and informational diplomacy policies of the period. But in the case of Unesco's founding conference, American representatives faced the added challenge of reconciling their own views about American values and power with the views of other national delegations. These delegations often disagreed with the view that American policies differed substantively from propaganda. Once again, though, progressive ideas were prominent in the framing of Washington's public diplomacy. In the case of Unesco, these ideas were deployed in the hope of fostering multilateral agreement and delivering for Washington a prominent administrative role within the organization.

Chapters5, 6 and 7 consider how the State Department's public diplomacy programs developed in the years between 1945 and 1953; a period in which US cultural and informational diplomacy finally became established as peacetime operations, but in which US officials faced strong incentives to embrace propagandistic, power-politics techniques. With the challenges of

post-war reconstruction and the emergence of the Cold War the concept of ideological warfare and not the principled, progressive cultivation of self-restraint came to shape US public diplomacy discourse. The Republican Party also gave increasing scrutiny to the programs, pushing US public diplomacy further toward pragmatic modes of operation. The planning of the bilateral US cultural diplomacy program, considered in Chapter 5, was thus shaped by the twin policy challenges of consolidating US power within the post-war global order and by defending American dominance from an increasingly combative Communist propaganda effort. One area where this was reflected was the growing concern with demonstrating American cultural prestige in Europe. While the progressive approach to cultural diplomacy that had developed after 1936 and stressed the reciprocal, restrained aspects of the program continued to animate policy discourse, in practical terms the program had substantially shifted away from this by 1953.

The staff of the informational diplomacy program also confronted new challenges to their established vision of international information as a process more akin to journalism than diplomacy, as Chapter 6 demonstrates. VOA and OWI staff during wartime sought to justify their work as an embodiment of openness and restraint. But the years after 1945 placed significant strains on this reciprocal, truthful approach to the diplomacy of information that had been established during the war. Here, the Voice of America's adoption of hallmark propaganda formats, such as repetition of a political message, refutation of an opponent's message, and the restriction of the kinds of information to be projected, reflect the Cold War's influence on US informational diplomacy. The course of the US diplomatic mission to Unesco after 1945, discussed in Chapter 7, provides a particularly clear illustration of the changing context of US public diplomacy in the post-war period. During the finalization of the organization's administrative structure and its first General Conferences, US diplomats sought dominance within the organization's administration. America's representatives cultivated this hegemonic position while simultaneously maintaining a rhetorical commitment to progressive principles such as multilateralism, cultural pluralism, and reciprocity. The increasingly fractured relationship between the United States delegation and the other national delegations within Unesco attests to the contradictions inherent to this American position. The formation of an anti-United States voting bloc within the 1948 Unesco General Conference, a clear forerunner to the Third World non-aligned movement, was indicative of the degree to which the element of restraint in American cultural diplomacy no longer showed in the actions of the US delegation. In all three cases, the challenge of post-war cultural and informational diplomacy was in living up to the idealistic terms that had but recently been articulated in the context of World War Two operations.

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Chapter 1

"Let's Not Be Suckers Again." Propaganda Analysis, Philanthropy, and American Foreign Relations between the World Wars

It is striking that a nation that had contributed more than any other to the rise of media industries such as advertising, public relations, public opinion research, radio and film should at the same time wage an intellectual struggle against the use of mass communications as an instrument of government. Yet in the years between the First World War and the Second, news of the rise of propaganda abroad and the American public's own brief but dramatic experience of it at home in 1917–19 led to an overwhelming condemnation of the manipulation of public opinion for political ends. This critique signified the re-emergence of a "rhetorical consciousness" in popular views of American democracy, and was steeped in the vocabulary of the progressive movement in American politics.[1] Progressivism had reached its zenith before the war but continued to serve as an ideological framework for American social and political debate during the 1920s. The propaganda critics of the interwar period took on progressivism's belief in the virtue of civil institutions, individualism and public reason. The manipulation of opinion via propaganda appeared to undermine all of these. To be sure, there was also a strong element of nativism present within American progressivism and in its proponents' anger at the underhanded influence of British propagandists during the war. It was evident that Americans, who so frequently encountered the fruits of the world's largest advertising and commercial news industries in their daily lives, were also coming to understand the power of the mass media to contemplate a political role for such instruments. The interwar progressives instead strove to "restore an idealized American past" where individuals could be free of domineering governmental or corporate forces of

[1] J. Michael Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science: The Rise and Fall of a Critical Paradigm," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73:1 (1987), p. 60.

persuasion.[2] The propaganda critics frequently had an intimate knowledge of the mass communications industries. Some were public figures that had worked for Woodrow Wilson's infamous Committee on Public Information (CPI) in various capacities. Yet when a vocal element within the US public began to favor US intervention in the war against Hitler after 1939, many of these same individuals joined that cause, calling for official American publicity in defense of democracy.

This trajectory—from the enthusiastic public acceptance of governmental propaganda in 1917–19, to a strong public and intellectual critique of the practice in the interwar decades, and back to a more reluctant and tempered acceptance of the need for propaganda on behalf of democracy in the late 1930s—had a far-reaching impact on the way that US policy-makers approached the task of shaping international public opinion and culture. Time and again, and even under the emergency conditions of wartime, American officials reiterated their belief that the official manipulation of opinion in domestic or international contexts contravened a basic tenet of American democracy. At the same time, the formidable power of propaganda and its potential *contribution* to the safeguarding of global democracy was undeniable. As US policy-makers attempted to define the priorities and rationale of cultural and informational programs after 1936, they wrote and spoke often of this basic quandary about the legitimacy of propaganda in the context of both American democracy and the democratic message America wished to convey to foreign audiences.

The case of Columbia University historian James T. Shotwell is illustrative of the circuitous nature of American views about the deployment of cultural forces and information in propaganda. Shotwell had initially supported the government's propaganda efforts, serving as head of the National Board for Historical Service during the First World War. An advisory body, the Board was composed of academics and teachers who had helped circulate reports of German belligerence in Europe to American schools. He also assisted the Committee on Public Information in preparing patriotic pamphlets for public distribution.[3] Columbia University had imposed some of the most stringent restrictions on political dissent during the war of any American university. Troubled by post-war revelations that the government's well-publicized accounts of German war atrocities contained numerous inaccuracies, Shotwell soon became a leading figure in the academic propaganda analysis movement of the 1920s and 1930s. During this period he wrote extensively on the rise of

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[2] Morton Keller, "The New Deal and Progressivism: A Fresh Look," in Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur (eds) *The New Deal and the Triumph of Liberalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), p. 316.

[3] J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 10.

propaganda, its formidable power in government hands, and the struggle for peace in the international system. But like many interwar propaganda analysts, Shotwell returned to government service at the end of the 1930s in order to advise the Roosevelt administration on cultivating American engagement with global audiences. To this end, he served as a founding member of the General Advisory Committee to the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations from 1938.[4]

The prominent Chicago University political scientist Harold Lasswell followed a similar path as an analyst of the mass media and propaganda in this period. In his highly successful 1927 book *Propaganda and the World War* Lasswell observed that the advent of "total war" in 1914–18 had heralded a profound change in the way that political power was being exercised within the technologically advanced democracies of Europe and North America. The widespread use of psychological warfare during the conflict signaled propaganda's emergence as one of the "most powerful instrumentalities of the modern world." It had "arisen to its present eminence in response to a complex of changed circumstances," namely the rise of mass communications technologies and the advertising and public relations professions, "which have altered the nature of society."[5] To him, Woodrow Wilson was the "generalissimo" of public persuasion whose propaganda "poison" had been the decisive factor in duping the American people into joining the war.[6] Though his academic writings often took a detached position on whether propaganda was politically appropriate in the United States, Lasswell's stress on the ubiquity of the practice in the contemporary world and its power in wartime were key themes in the founding of the propaganda analysis movement, which was highly critical of the practice.[7] By the 1930s, Lasswell had begun to link propaganda to anti-democratic forces in more explicit terms.[8] As a pioneer of quantitative methods in the study of public opinion and the psychology of political behavior, Lasswell's work later

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[4] Akira Iriye *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 65. Shotwell was the recipient of funding from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to study the impacts of the First World War, for which he produced a *152 volume* economic and social history of the war.

[5] Quote taken from the British edition under a different title: Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co, 1938), p. 220. On Lasswell see also: Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), p. 99.

[6] Lasswell quoted in Kenneth Cmiel, "On Cynicism, Evil, and the Discovery of Communication in the 1940s," *Journal of Communication* 46: 3 (Summer, 1996), p. 90.

[7] On Lasswell's ethical and political views, see: Harold D. Lasswell, "The Function of the Propagandist," *International Journal of Ethics* 38 (no. 3, April, 1928).

[8] Harold Lasswell, "The Person: Subject and Object of Propaganda," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 179 (May, 1935).

set the methodological agenda for the emerging academic disciplines of political science and communications studies during the interwar period and beyond.[9] As tensions in Europe deepened over Hitler's rearmament of Germany in 1938, however, Lasswell relocated from Chicago to Washington, initially in order to supervise a research program on propaganda and international communications commissioned by the Library of Congress. When the project collapsed, Lasswell joined the government as a consultant on global public opinion trends. He advised several Executive Departments on a possible plan of anti-Nazi propaganda before joining the OWI in 1942.

But while Shotwell, Lasswell and other prominent US intellectuals and journalists were critically assessing propaganda practices in the decades after the First World War, the range and scope of philanthropic institutions and professional associations within the United States blossomed. International activities were the focus on many of new initiatives by institutions such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the YMCA, and the American Library Association. In the process, the philanthropic sector crafted distinctive frameworks for the cultural and educational engagement of societies in Latin America and Asia that were later emulated or absorbed by the Department of State. These activities established an entirely different view about the practice of "manipulating" public opinion than that presented by the interwar propaganda analysis movement. In philanthropic hands, the spread of cultural practices and the deployment of information across national borders were seen to be instruments of progress, benevolent superiority, and the advancement of civic virtues, not domination. The philanthropic sector already regarded itself as the trustee of the good character of American civil society; a duty it fulfilled via tax-exempt projects in education, health, and culture at home. But the rationale for these institutions' activities abroad had the cadence of progressivism. They were intended to improve the spiritual and political character of "backward" societies through projects that showcased the hard-won virtues of US society, empowered the individual, and elevated the character of national politics. Intellectual justifications for these international activities as a new mode of global engagement sprang up as a counterweight to the pessimistic vision of mass communications and war that the propaganda analysis movement saw in international politics. This philanthropic alternative vision was sketched out in the publications of institutions such as the Institute for Pacific Relations, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a range of Pan American associations, all of which sought to foster

[9] See, e.g.: Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*; Harold D. Lasswell, "The Study and Practice of Propaganda," in Harold D. Lasswell, Ralph D. Casey and Bruce Lannes Smith (eds), *Propaganda and Promotional Activities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1935); Harold D. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

contact between citizens as the groundwork for peaceful collaboration at the diplomatic level.

Both the widespread and persuasive criticisms of the propaganda analysis movement and the softer formats of cultural exchange and educational assistance pioneered by American philanthropies shaped how the Department of State and, to a lesser extent, the OWI approached the task of influencing global public opinion after 1936. The supporters of a governmental public diplomacy program legitimated their work by combining a frank acknowledgement of the problems of mass manipulation in or by a democracy with a philanthropic belief in the possibility of international social progress through US assistance. For years afterward, these principles would frame how US policy-makers approached their task of devising propaganda strategies on behalf of a nation that rejected the idea of outright propaganda, but which nevertheless understood the importance of conveying its message abroad in a nuanced manner.

The Progressives Against Propaganda

The rise of an extensive public and intellectual debate within the US over the significance of mass communications and political processes was prompted by the dissolution of Woodrow Wilson's Committee for Public Information (CPI) in 1918. As the dust of war settled, many of the journalists, editors and scholars who had undertaken patriotic service on behalf of Wilson's propaganda effort became critical of their own part in stoking the American public's enthusiasm for war. These individuals had been cultivated to join the war propaganda effort by the Wilson administration precisely because of their position as public opinion leaders. When many of these same individuals subsequently rejected the official manipulation of public opinion, their views garnered a wide audience for precisely the same reason.

Wilson had, in fact, established the CPI before the US entry into the war as an institution to guard against the infiltration of pro-German sentiments into the United States media—to do censorship, in other words. With American public opinion still divided on the question of military involvement and enlistment rates slower than hoped for after the declaration of war in April 1917, Wilson broadened the Committee's role to the active promotion of the government's war aims. A high profile journalist and supporter of Wilson, George Creel, who had been a longstanding advocate for a "Bureau of Publicity" to make the case for intervention, was appointed to serve as the Committee's director. Creel's operation expanded rapidly, having been granted the considerable operating

budget of $10 million for 1917 alone.[10] Even before the revelations about distortions and lies perpetrated by the CPI, the simple existence of Creel's Bureau provoked concern among progressives, particularly those on the left. The *New Republic*'s Herbert Croly, lawyer and reforming activist Amos Pinchot, and journalist Paul Underwood Kellogg were among those who signed a petition to Wilson requesting that he ensure American civil liberties, including freedom of expression, would be respected by operations such as Creel's, even if it had been deemed necessary to undertake censorship and propaganda for the prosecution of the war.

Influential journals such as the *New Republic* also published strident editorials against the administration's curtailment of free speech, although other progressives, such as Creel, regarded the governmental efforts to stamp out destructive influences on public opinion and build morale were a vehicle for the expression of democratic sentiment, not the suppression of it.[11] For his part, Creel had a great aptitude for the task of propagandizing: "under Creel's ministration, Wilson's war pervasively enveloped American citizens at every venue in their personal lives." The visual impact of the Committee's posters in subway stations and public buildings, in particular, was long remembered. These visual items had been designed to achieve maximum emotional resonance, in "accordance with the belief of Division-chief Dana Gibson ... that wartime art needed to 'appeal to the heart.'"[12]

Print media was another focal point for the CPI's domestic propaganda campaign during 1917 and 1918, and Creel found that many major newspapers were eager to cooperate with the Committee's editorial recommendations. The CPI's Advertising Division, one of fifteen administrative sections devoted to shaping domestic public opinion, sought donations from media outlets to run patriotic advertisements free of charge. The Committee commandeered 650 shop windows for patriotic displays.[13] Hollywood was engaged by the Committee's motion picture division to make movies casting the war as a crusade for democracy that demanded America's whole-hearted effort. The CPI also sent the most stirring examples of these films to international distributors, provided that they would distribute no German films, thereby cornering the movie market for American products in Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands during 1917–18.[14] On the domestic side, the CPI also organized a group of

[10] Timothy Richard Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications Research During the American Cold War* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 5.

[11] Thompson, *Reformers and War*, pp. 223–7.

[12] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 10.

[13] Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 79.

[14] Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 7.

public speakers known as the Four Minute Men, who numbered an astonishing 75,000 by mid-1917. These volunteers attended movie screenings across the United States in order to make short patriotic speeches during intermission. They did so in a style "owing more to American 'boosterism' and its 'bandwagon syndrome' than to psychological enlightenment," but were highly effective in shaping the public mood of enthusiastic participation in the fight for democracy in Europe.[15]

The CPI's educational division sent information about the war to public schools and universities. Government publications such as the *National School Service Bulletin*, offering teaching strategies for instilling "patriotic citizenship" among children, included sample syllabi that detailed both the belligerent qualities of the German national character and the virtues of America's wartime objectives. It provided sample texts for patriotic speeches to be given at commencements and other school gatherings. Ultimately, more than 75 million CPI-authored teaching materials were distributed to American schools during the Committee's two-year domestic propaganda effort.[16] In universities, new courses surveying the causes of the war and the defects of German culture were offered while enrollments in the German language plummeted. Shotwell's work with the National Board for Historical Service helped to promote these rapid curriculum changes at all levels of the US education system.[17]

To foreign audiences, which included publics in Western Europe, Mexico, Russia, Japan and China, the CPI's activities encompassed the distribution of printed material and a wireless information service, overseen by its Wireless and Cable Division and Foreign Press Bureau. Woodrow Wilson's speeches and news items, as well as material reflecting the flavor of life in the US such as trade magazines and information on American corporations were the fodder for this information effort.[18] The Japanese press enthusiastically took up the CPI's news dispatches and produced their own translations for public consumption.[19] In China, Creel characterized the CPI's role in relation to the Chinese news media not so much as one of boosting the US war effort, but rather correcting the distorted images and general neglect of American news that had prevailed with Reuters and the Japanese press agency *Kokusai* serving the only regular

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[15] Alfred E. Cornebise, *War As Advertised: The Four Minute Men and America's Crusade, 1917–1918* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), pp. ix–x. See also, Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 11.

[16] Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications*, p. 8.

[17] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 10.

[18] J.R. Mock and C. Larson, *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information 1917–1919* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), pp. 301, 321.

[19] Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, p. 80.

sources of foreign news.[20] Like the OWI that would follow it, the CPI's China division in Shanghai brought in professionals from the fields of public relations and journalism. Merchandising agent Carl Crow headed the operation, with a staff that included the *China Weekly Review*'s John B. Powell and *New York Herald* correspondent Tom Millard. The US government also sought advice on enhancing the US trans-Pacific telegraph and cable infrastructure.[21] The US minister in China, Paul Reinsch, ensured that daily war news reports were distributed in Peking and produced his own translations of US information materials into Chinese, as well as assisting the CPI Shanghai office in a film screening and distribution project.[22] In Mexico, the CPI's work foreshadowed the State Department's cultural and educational activities during the Second World War, and included the establishment in Mexico City of the Benjamin Franklin Library of English language books, as well as sponsorship of free English language classes and a tour of the United States for a group of top Mexican journalists and editors.[23]

In addition to this general information program in support of US war aims, the CPI experimented with targeted communication strategies akin to psychological warfare, such as fostering disruptive separatist movements in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as agitation for Spain's entry into the conflict on the side of the Allies. Like the other combatants in the war, the CPI worked in conjunction with the US Army to prepare leaflet campaigns to undermine the morale of enemy troops. Aircraft and balloon drops were often used to send these directly onto the field of battle. As the end of the war drew near, Woodrow Wilson's plan for the post-war peace settlement increasingly became the focus of the CPI's international propaganda campaign. Having established a network of cultural and educational connections across the Continent, the CPI arranged lecture tours by well-known American scholars to explain the diplomatic principles upon which Wilson's plans rested.[24] Commentators after the Second World War thus looked back on this effort to cultivate American leadership in the peace negotiations as so successful that "by the time of the Armistice the name of Woodrow Wilson, and a general idea that

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[20] The CPI had bureaus in Shanghai and Vladivostok. See Jerry Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door: America and China, 1905–1921* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), p. 158.

[21] Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*, p. 159; Isao Chiba, "The Wilson Administration and the Mandate Question in the Pacific: Struggle Among the Powers over the Disposition of Former German Colonies," in Tosh Minohara, Tze-ki Hon, and Evan Dawley (eds), *The Decade of the Great War: Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 163.

[22] Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*, pp. 158–9.

[23] Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, pp. 79–80.

[24] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 8.

he was a friend of peace, liberty and democracy, were nearly as familiar in some of the remote places of the earth as they were in New York, St. Louis or San Francisco."[25] Its success came, in part, from its clear message: "the object [of the CPI's international campaign] was almost entirely political—to win the support, over the heads of the government if need be, for the Wilsonian program of peace and reconstruction."[26] The Committee's final report emphasized the power of this overarching message of peace, though it added by way of justification that publicity was needed not so much to secure Wilson's political advantage through public opinion, but rather to offset "Hollywood" images of American culture as a vacuous celebration of material abundance. Correcting this image, the report argued, was necessary because a stronger regard for the American character would prime Europeans to accept US leadership at the peace conference.[27]

Although the term "propaganda" was used freely in the Committee's internal correspondence, and its staffers applied the term to a range of activities, in public statements the CPI presented its goals in terms of euphemisms such as "patriotic service" and the provision of "informative" materials. Its international projects were represented as tools for the "pacification" or "reform" of European politics.[28] Summing up his Committee's efforts in the domestic sphere, Creel claimed in his final report that:

> We dealt in the positive, and our emphasis was ever on expression, not suppression ... We did not call it 'propaganda,' for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with lies and corruptions. Our work was educational and informative only, for we had such confidence in our case as to feel that only fair presentation of its facts was needed.[29]

The preparation of this report was, in effect, the last propaganda task of Creel's government service. With the armistice in Europe and Wilson's departure for Versailles, Creel worked strenuously to ensure that Americans remembered his work as a patriotic effort that had enabled the United States to come to Europe's aid. Several members of his staff, notably the Foreign Press Bureau head Ernest Pool, were also convinced that the Committee's functions, particularly in the international arena, should be maintained in order to consolidate American power and prestige in peacetime.[30] Without the pressures of war, however,

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[25] Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, pp. 235–7.

[26] Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, pp. 235–7.

[27] United States Committee on Public Information, *The Creel Report: Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information 1917: 1918: 1919* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), p. 170.

[28] Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, p. 286.

[29] Committee on Public Information, *The Creel Report*, p. 1.

[30] Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, p. 331.

Congress had no inclination to support an ongoing propaganda program, particularly given that many Republicans had come to regard the CPI as *de facto* press agents for the Democratic Party's electoral interests.[31] The Senate's rejection of the League of Nations treaty had also torpedoed the ultimate goal that the Committee had worked so strenuously to promote. This re-assertion of legislative power simultaneously ensured that the Committee would be quickly abolished.

A number of troubling revelations about both the nature of the CPI's work and the activities of covert British propaganda agents in the United States during the war came to light soon after the Committee's dissolution. Investigative journalists revealed that Britain had censored the European war news reaching America by severing all but its own transatlantic communication cables. They also criticized the CPI for apparently being fully appraised of this fact and failing to disclose it to the American public. More damagingly, these muckraking reports revealed that British diplomats had deliberately distributed false information in the United States detailing German war atrocities. A significant British publicity effort headed by Sir Gilbert Parker, a Canadian-British novelist with deep ties to the United States, had appealed to the American press and sought out America's most significant journalists and commentators from the pages of the *Who's Who* to receive British propaganda. The most prominent educational institutions and libraries in the United States also received printed materials from Parker's operation highlighting German responsibility for the conflict. American newspaper readers were particularly troubled by revelations that a widely discussed dossier of German military crimes during the invasion of Belgium, known as the Bryce Report after its author, the former British ambassador to the United States Lord James Bryce, was largely a fabrication. The Bryce Report purported to be based on interviews with more than a thousand Belgian refugees and it detailed numerous instances of the torture, rape and killing of unarmed civilians as the German army swept through the country in 1914. In a detailed analysis of the testimony, journalist and former CPI staffer Will Irwin demonstrated that most of the reported incidents consisted of either hearsay, unverified individual reports, or outright falsehood. Irwin, who had published an influential series of articles on corruption in American newspaper reporting in *Collier*'s in 1911,[32] captured the prevailing sentiment toward the British and their propaganda efforts by titling his exposé "Let's Not Be Suckers Again." In a subsequent piece, he set out to analyze the manipulation of public opinion and its impact on the war, adopting a similarly stirring title. This work concluded by heralding the rise of propaganda as a threatening new force in the conduct of world politics. Published in 1919, this article was titled "The Age of

[31] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 9.

[32] Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science," p. 61.

Lies."[33] A spate of subsequent reports by journalists and scholars outlining the British role in the duping of America followed.

These revelations about Britain's role in wartime disinformation and the American public's inchoate concerns that the CPI had overstepped its bounds hardened into a generalized critique of propaganda, framed in terms of the threat of propaganda to America's progressive and liberal democratic traditions. As H.L. Mencken quipped in 1920, Britain's extensive propaganda campaign and underhanded methods during the war had led the average American to wonder whether "he belongs to a free nation or a crown colony."[34] It was partly the Creel Committee's success that brought about its undoing and discredited the notion of governmental propaganda for the American public. For many Americans, the hysterical fear of all things German that the Committee had whipped up in its short lifetime came to seem, just as rapidly, like a hollow overreaction. Criticism of the CPI's censorship efforts, the strictures of the 1917 Espionage Act, and Wilson's conscription policy amplified the public's sense of betrayal over their involvement in the war.[35] Similarly, the CPI's near-constant reiteration of the noble goals of Wilson's peace settlement seemed to have conjured up nothing more than an unrealistic vision for a changed world when the US Senate rejected the League Charter. Even before the debate on the League in the United States, prominent progressive spokesmen, including Pinchot, Croly, Ray Baker, John Spargo and Walter Lippmann, had expressed alarm at the course of the Versailles treaty negotiations and the Allies' punitive plans for Germany. They quite correctly apprehended that the conditions imposed on the defeated Germans would sow the seeds of future disorder. These critics attributed the flaws in the settlement to Woodrow Wilson's personal inexperience and ineffectiveness, and to his fears of a Bolshevik revolution across Europe, which led Wilson to accede too readily to the vengeful demands of France and Britain.[36] Such frustrated

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[33] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 7–8 and 273. In the "Age of Lies" Irwin noted that while the CPI was more truthful in its propaganda than its counterparts, its work was nonetheless an affront to journalistic scruples: "we never told the whole truth – not by any manner of means. We told that part which served our national purpose." Will Irwin, cited in John Brown, "Anti-Propaganda Tradition in the United States," *Public Diplomacy Alumni Association*, http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/19.htm.

[34] H.L. Mencken, quoted in R.L. Calder, *Beware the British Serpent: The Role of Writers in British Propaganda in the United States, 1939–1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2004), p. 40.

[35] Brett Gary, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War 1 to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 21; Thompson, *Reformers and War*, pp. 220–21.

[36] Baker, like so many other progressive journalists, joined government service during the war, as Woodrow Wilson's press secretary during the Versailles conference. Thompson, *Reformers and War*, pp. 234–41.

hopes left Americans "with the sharp contrast between unfulfilled dreams and the realities of world politics," and the "Creel Committee was remembered in a bitter way." Creel's "propaganda itself was viewed as too boisterous, too exuberant for a world that had hardly been made safe for democracy."[37] Out of these disappointments, and building on the growth of interest in social influence mechanisms such as journalism, communications and rhetoric in American higher education,[38] came a varied and extensive debate on the nature of mass communications and political information.

Two of the most prominent founding contributions to the interwar debate on the nature of propaganda in the academic field were Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) and Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda and the World War* (1927). Both books pursued a structured analysis of the deleterious impacts of mass persuasion and censorship in democracies, emphasizing propaganda's use of symbols and emotion to subvert public reason.[39] In addition to their critical assessments of the manner in which foreign governments had used propaganda to distort public opinion before and during the war, both authors were expressly critical of Woodrow Wilson's domestic propaganda efforts as an unwarranted and disingenuous transgression of American democracy. Each also offered strategies for inoculating American public opinion against the kind of work that the Creel Committee had performed in the event of another international emergency. From 1919 Lippmann had begun to call for the establishment of civil institutions and a government bureau of expert policy-makers and social scientists to monitor the accuracy of the US news media.[40] He also reflected on ways of reorganizing the presentation of newspaper reports to make the sources of information used by reporters clearer to readers, and on the need for educational initiatives to cultivate a more discerning public.[41] *Public Opinion* elaborated on these points, positing that the determining factors in public behavior were the

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[37] My own emphasis. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942–1945*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 3.

[38] Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science," pp. 61–2.

[39] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 18–19.

[40] This proposal was in keeping with the "regulatory" spirit of American progressivism, which held that aggregations of power in government and the economy ought to be curbed by independent managing agencies to protect public interest. Lippmann wrote extensively on the subject of regulation and liberalism. See James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 361–2. Lippmann's insights were also affirmed by his three-year monitoring of American news coverage of the Bolshevik revolution, in which he found numerous inconsistencies and fabrications. Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, "A Test of the News," *New Republic* 23: 297 (1920).

[41] Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920).

inter-subjective contexts of belief (the "pseudo-environment") in which the public forms its opinions. Propaganda's power therefore rested with the capacity of elites to control how facts are introduced and interpreted in this environment, and with their ability to control the dominant stereotypes in public circulation.[42] Lippmann's recommendations were based on his intimate understanding of the power of propaganda, both as a founding editor of the *New Republic* and as a psychological warfare officer for the US Army during the First World War.

Lippmann did not endorse an unfettered marketplace of ideas, however. His work revised "traditional democratic theory ... by removing the idea of a competent public from its center," enabling Lippmann to make the somewhat paradoxical claim that the formation of a rational public opinion required centralized news monitoring and a public carefully instructed in critically engaging with the media.[43] He maintained this position throughout the 1920s and 1930s, issuing some of the earliest warnings to the American public about the danger in Hitler and Mussolini's use of propaganda and public spectacles such as book burning to solidify their power.[44]

After the state of Wisconsin passed legislation in 1923 that prohibited government censorship of school textbooks, the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* endorsed the principles behind Lippmann's proposal for the establishment of a government bureau to curb propagandistic influence in the American media. Its editors also suggested that all materials used in primary and secondary schooling be scrutinized carefully to ensure they represented recent history and contemporary politics with "the openness of mind that characterizes the American juror," with the ultimate aim of ensuring an end to war.[45] Educators pursued a range of similar initiatives on their own terms in schools elsewhere in the country, often claiming to speak for the cause of "progressive education." The movement had been inspired by philosopher John Dewey, who had advocated the strengthening of American democracy and civic virtue through new techniques in experiential, student-centered learning. Leading American publications such as the *Journal of Education* carried numerous articles on the infiltration of propaganda into schools and offered suggestions on how to counteract it throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s. Dewey's own views on the wartime explosion of propaganda, the consolidation of newspaper ownership, and the future of American democracy had been outlined in an article in the *New Republic* of December 1918. In it Dewey decried the "paternalism" inherent

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[42] See, e.g. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (1922). Full-text E-Book, University of Virginia American Studies Hypertexts, Chs. 1–2.

[43] Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 3.

[44] Walter Lippmann, *Interpretations: 1933–1935* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1936), pp. 327–8.

[45] Joseph Schafer, "Popular Censorship of History Texts," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 6:4 (June 1923), p. 460.

to government propaganda and censorship.[46] Throughout his philosophical writings Dewey had expressed his "permanent objection to the procedures of advocacy and oratorical persuasion" in politics, and his ideas were influential in post-war progressive critiques of the CPI.[47] Dewey emphasized the vital role of individual freedom and voluntary action for social progress—"[a] true social interest is that which wills for others freedom from dependence ... which wills to them the self-directed power of exercising, in and by themselves, their own functions"—and propaganda and censorship were inherently detrimental to this.[48] The revision of school texts and the expunging of elite-dominated forms of propaganda from state education systems was thus regarded by followers of Dewey as ripe for the revision of conventional understandings, geared toward engendering individual freedom and virtue and, ultimately, a peaceful foreign policy.

The interwar peace movement also built on these principles of individual reason, civic virtue and the power of voluntary associations in articulating their own objections to war propaganda during the 1920s and 1930s. Inspired partly by a number of works of popular literature describing the horrors of the trenches in gruesome detail, the American peace movement gathered millions of adherents from a wide range of religious and political traditions.[49] Once again, John Dewey's influence was pronounced. After he was challenged by anti-war activists in 1921 to justify his vocal support for American intervention in 1917, Dewey threw himself into the outlawry of war movement, often characterizing it as an authentic expression of American democracy. In 1933, 37 American organizations met for the first National Peace Conference, which encompassed groups on both the right and the left and claimed the support of somewhere between 45 and 60 million Americans.[50] In addition to expressing their opposition to war propaganda, many interwar peace organizations of the period

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[46] John Dewey, "The New Paternalism," in Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899–1924* vol. 2 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1982).

[47] Wayne A.R. Leys, "Dewey's Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy," in Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), *Guide to the Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), p. 145.

[48] John Dewey, "The Outlines of Ethics," in Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), *John Dewey: The Early Works, 1882–1898* vol. 1 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1976), pp. 318–19.

[49] On progressivism and the peace movement, see: Robert David Johnson, *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Lawrence S. Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933–1983* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); Harriet Hyman Alonso, *The Women's Peace Union and the Outlawry of War, 1921–1942* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[50] Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, p. 15.

also took on broader progressive issues in global politics, particularly the evils of colonialism, arguing that the forces leading to war could only be defeated with the expansion of freedom on a global scale.

Harold Lasswell's work provided scientific ballast to the political concerns articulated in the journalistic work of Lippmann, the educational writings of Dewey, and the activism of progressive educators and pacifists. One of his major contributions to the debate, for example, was his quantification of the "infiltration of self-serving ideology into news," a research program that helped convince many contemporary scholars of the "idea of propaganda as democracy's enemy." Written from an academic rather than a former practitioner's standpoint, Lasswell's research has since been characterized as providing the most coherent synthesis of the "societal, psychological, symbolic, and methodological" currents within the emerging field of propaganda analysis during the 1920s.[51] Lasswell defined propaganda as a form of public communication that depended upon "dispositional" logic, in contrast to the "deliberative" reasoning that is required to educate or edify an audience.[52] As a pioneer in the use of statistical techniques, content-analysis and interviewing in the study of politics and public policy, Lasswell's research also offered new and more precise ways of measuring how dispositional influences shape political behavior.

The impacts of mass media were also examined in the "social influence" research of Wesleyan University's Raymond Dodge, who described propaganda as a new but "permanent addition" to the "social and political liabilities" of American society.[53] The writings of the religious minister and education advocate Everett Dean Martin echoed public concerns that mass propaganda was poised to undermine rational deliberation and independent thought.[54] Both Dodge's and Martin's commentaries singled out the emotional basis of propaganda as the source of its corrosive influence on democratic procedures. So did psychologist W.M. Biddle, who emphasized the functions of political and commercial propaganda in "indirect emotional conditioning" on a mass scale.[55] Yale's Leonard Doob came to similar conclusions, and encouraged further research into practical measures to safeguard public attitudes against manipulation by perceived authoritative sources of information.[56] Doob's career, like Shotwell's,

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[51] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 48.

[52] Harold Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," *American Political Science Review* 21:3 (August 1927), p. 628.

[53] Raymond Dodge, "The Psychology of Propaganda," *Religious Education* 15 (October 1920), p. 241.

[54] Everett Dean Martin, *The Behavior of Crowds: A Psychological Study* (New York: Harper and Bros, 1920).

[55] W.M. Biddle, "A Psychological Definition of Propaganda," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 26: 3 (October 1931), p. 284.

[56] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 49.

became a testament to American intellectuals' ultimate ambivalence on the question of whether propaganda could be considered legitimate in times of national emergency. Doob's widely read critique, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Techniques*, was published in 1935. Yet less than a decade later he had become convinced that America had a duty to confront Nazism using propaganda instruments and joined the OWI as director of its Overseas Intelligence Bureau. Doob also published several articles on the National Socialist propaganda model.

Historians and even linguists also contributed to the interwar American critique of propaganda. Historical journals of the period published new research reassessing the history of war and conquest in light of the ways governments had used the instruments of propaganda and disinformation in war and conquest.[57] Linguists developed semantic theories that "explained how people can be swayed by emotional, as opposed to reportorial, language, a tendency that gives language its awful power provoke instinctive and violent responses."[58] Legal scholarship, meanwhile, criticized the expansion of government power by charting the censorship and abuses of civil rights that had resulted from the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917–18.[59] The weight of public opprobrium attached to Wilson's war propaganda even led to an investigation in 1934–35 by the US Congress headed by Republican Senator Gerald P. Nye, who set out to examine how the "merchants of death," American big businesses and bankers, had duped the American people into a patriotic war fever.

Another significant influence on the interwar debates evaluating the wartime experience of propaganda and its emergence as a routine instrument of domestic and foreign policy was the fact the American advertising and public relations industries had boomed during the war and the 1920s. What was distinctive about propaganda in the Great War, according to the interwar progressive propaganda critics, was the industrial scale and organizational skill that the combatants had mobilized in order to deceive their publics. Mass communications had become a pervasive force in American society.[60] Academic studies of propaganda paralleled the American public's growing awareness of the saturating and potentially damaging impacts of this mass media in daily life.

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[57] The piece that set the intellectual agenda was: F.H. Hodder, "Propaganda as a Source of American History," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 9: 1 (June 1922). Hodder presented a presidential address to the Mississippi Valley Historical Association on the same subject in 1921. See also Merle E. Curti, "Pacifist Propaganda and the Treaty of Guadaloupe Hidalgo," *American Historical Review* 33: 3 (April 1928); Oliver Wendell Elsbree, "The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in New England, 1790–1815," *The New England Quarterly* 1: 3 (July 1928).

[58] Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 40.

[59] A bestselling account was Harvard professor Zechariah Chafee's *Freedom of Speech* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921).

[60] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 110.

This sentiment was fed by popular works such as Upton Sinclair's stinging critique of the American media in 1919's *The Brass Check*.[61] Much of this critical commentary was framed not only by a rejection of propaganda but also by broader progressive arguments against industrialization and consumerism, seeking to counter the political influence of big business and revive American traditions of participatory democracy and civic engagement.[62] The progressive journalist Roscoe C.E. Brown, for example, titled a 1921 article "The Menace to Journalism" in reference to what he saw as the troubling trend of talented writers choosing to work in public relations or advertising instead of following the journalistic path of "service to society."[63]

The rapid growth of the commercial radio industry was a significant force in the growing role of the news, advertising and entertainment industries in the everyday lives of Americans. The number of radio receivers in use within the United States increased dramatically after the war, from 60,000 in 1920 to 3 million in 1924, ultimately reaching 51 million by 1940.[64] Movie attendance also rose substantially during the interwar years, and a number of propaganda analysts, such as Doob, also questioned the kinds of social attitudes that were engendered by exposure to the lax morals portrayed in movies, radio, and other forms of popular entertainment. Newspaper circulation boomed: an estimated 27 million people regularly read newspapers in 1920, and this figure rose to approximately 40 million in 1930. The print, film, and radio industries were also remarkably centralized and capable of molding popular tastes by maintaining editorial consistency across multiple outlets. What emerged was the feeling that a genuinely national audience for news now existed. At the same time, the potential for propaganda in the US news media was increasingly significant, given that the repetition of a message in multiple formats was seen as one of the prime functions of propaganda, as critics such as Dewey and Lippmann pointed out. An innovative new newspaper format known as the tabloid, which presented sensational stories about celebrities, scandals and shocking crimes, became wildly successful during the 1920s and accounted for a significant proportion of the expansion of the national news media. Few Americans lived

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[61] Upton Sinclair, *The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

[62] These economic doctrines are effectively encapsulated by American economist Richard T. Ely's *Socialism and Social Reform*, which advocated a leveling of economic privilege (though not full equality), the institution of wholesome working conditions, and the need for democracy and decentralization in American government. See: James T. Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[63] Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications*, p. 14.

[64] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 33; Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications*, p. 1.

beyond the reach of the mass media in the 1920s, and their increasing awareness of this fact brought the interwar propaganda analysts a large public audience.

Public relations industry leaders such as Ivy Lee and Edward L. Bernays, the latter yet another veteran of the CPI, weighed in against the propaganda critics by pointing out that the development of an informed public opinion depended upon the provision of information in a variety of settings, including lowbrow formats and advertising.[65] Bernays, in particular, drew on prevailing ideas about the inherent irrationality of the public to argue that mass democracy *actually required* a substantial mass media to steer public opinion away from divisive, wrongheaded, or subversive views. Bernays's position was shaped by his experiences as a press officer for the CPI at the Paris peace conference in 1919 and by his dismay at Wilson's failure to build sufficient public support to guarantee the ratification of the League treaty.[66] For Bernays, PR and advertising conducted on behalf of America's corporations were simply a useful resource for socially beneficial and important institutions, and there should be no impediment to their mobilization for important political causes. In 1923's *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, Bernays depicted the PR and advertising industries as virtuously promoting the alignment of production and consumer preferences.[67] His seminal work *Propaganda*, published in 1928, probed the positive implications of the rise of propaganda as a vehicle by which a benevolent, "invisible government" of opinion leaders worked to promote American prosperity and democracy.[68] In a refutation of the propaganda critics published in 1937, Bernays also pointed out the gross hypocrisy that had led influential media commentators to speak out against the media corporations and government that had helped them make their names.[69] His position made only limited headway against the tide of public criticism of propaganda, however, and it did little to dampen calls for unimpeded communications on behalf of democracy and the autonomy of the individual.

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[65] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 44 and 54–8.

[66] Larry Tye, *The Father of Spin: Edward L. Bernays and the Birth of Public Relations* (New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1998).

[67] Edward L. Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (New York: IG Publishing, 1923).

[68] Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: IG Publishing, 1928). Bernays confronted the threats of totalitarianism and international aggression in 1938 by charging that the American communications industries were providing a public education in the norms and values of democracy. Edward L. Bernays, "Public Education for Democracy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 198 (July 1938).

[69] Edward L. Bernays, "Recent Trends in Public Relations Activities," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 1: 1 (January 1937), pp. 148–9. Predictably enough, Bernays's ideas provoked strong reactions, with one reviewer branding Bernays's 1945 book on the role of citizens in the global order, *Take Your Place at the Peace Table* as a work expressing an "incipient cynical fascism." Pittman B. Potter, "Review: Take Your Place at the Peace Table by Edward Bernays," *The American Political Science Review* 39: 4 (August 1945), p. 818.

This public critique of propaganda was boosted with the founding of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis in 1937. The Institute was a private research organization with funds donated by the Boston philanthropist Edward L. Filene, who came up with the idea for an institution devoted to elevating the quality of media and public discourse in discussion with the prominent Harvard geologist and education advocate Kirtley Mather and Columbia University's Clyde R. Miller. Filene assembled a cadre of prominent scholars to join his Institute, including historian Charles A. Beard, James T. Shotwell, and sociologist Robert S. Lynd. Filene and Miller hoped that these members would refine and promote scholarly techniques for the evaluation of public opinion, while also debating various proposals for the safeguarding of US society from propaganda and exercising a productive influence on US policy. In a letter to Institute members, Miller called for written submissions to the Institute's publications on subjects such as: "tests and antidotes to propaganda;" the appraisal of "propaganda channels" in modern society; the historical and domestic political applications of propaganda; and the psychological and sociological background to contemporary issues.[70] The Institute's magazine, *Propaganda Analysis*, published material of this kind from a range of intellectual disciplines and was widely circulated; its first issue was sent to three thousand prominent individuals and was greeted with great enthusiasm.[71] A number of book-length studies were also published under the Institute's auspices during its four years of operation, and the National Council for Social Studies was inspired to pursue similar work during the late 1930s, focusing on anti-propaganda curricula and teaching materials.

The Institute's key weakness, however, was its inattention to the rise of propaganda on a global scale. The first 15 issues of *Propaganda Analysis* included only one devoted to international events, and while the Institute's members increasingly did turn to international issues as European affairs took a serious of ominous turns in 1938–39 it was clear that the "organization seemed to lack enthusiasm for the new enterprise" of propaganda studies in wartime.[72] The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 directly undermined the Institute's anti-propaganda message, with many of its followers now favoring US morale-boosting propaganda, not to mention actual military intervention, in support of Britain. Interventionist sentiments were fed, in turn, by news reports and official information emanating from Britain that vividly brought its valiant struggle against German aggression to life, particularly Edward R. Murrow's famous radio dispatches from London via the CBS network. Murrow's daring reports

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[70] Clyde R. Miller quoted in Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 132.

[71] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 134. The Bulletin's full title was: *Propaganda Analysis: A Bulletin to Help the Intelligent Citizen Detect and Analyze Propaganda*.

[72] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, p. 150.

on German bombing raids stirred American hearts; one typical 1940 dispatch relayed how "for more than eight hours, the guns have been flashing. The blue autumn sky has been pockmarked with the small red bursts of exploding anti-aircraft shells … tonight the sound of gunfire has been more constant than the bestial grunt of bombs."[73] The line between journalism and propaganda in these broadcasts was especially fine, but when confronted with a greater evil many influential American commentators now supported efforts to stir their nation toward involvement. The US entry into the war in 1941 sounded the death-knell for the Institute. Its leadership agreed that the seriousness of the crisis warranted the suspension of its critical activities, and the Institute for Propaganda Analysis folded in 1942. Initially, however, it announced that it would simply suspend its activities for the duration of the war, on the grounds that criticisms of past government policies might undermine American unity in a time of national emergency.

The more simplistic manifestations of the Institute's anti-propaganda thesis had come to appear anachronistic in light of the rise of international aggression in the late 1930s, and a spate of new psychological and sociological research projects now took up the defense of propaganda as a means for the protection of democracy itself. In one case, the Princeton political scientist Harwood L. Childs wrote approving of Woodrow Wilson and the CPI's decisive approach to managing public opinion early in the course of the conflict.[74] In the face of increasingly troubling accounts of German authoritarianism, the education researcher Edgar Dale argued that it was now necessary to examine the potentially positive contributions that government-sponsored mass persuasion could make in fostering public virtue and strengthening American democracy against external ideological threats.[75] Congress took up these concerns about foreign subversion in 1938 with the passage of the McCormack Act, which empowered the State Department to monitor and restrict the activities of foreigners undertaking propaganda within the United States. These efforts were supplemented in 1940 with the establishment of a Special Defense Unit of the Department of Justice to investigate subversive foreign influences.

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[73] Edward Murrow quoted in Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda During World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 37.

[74] Harwood L. Childs, "Public Opinion and Peace," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 192: 4 (July 1937).

[75] See: Clyde R. Miller, "For the Analysis of Propaganda," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2: 1 (January 1938). This shift was also symbolized by the publication of Sidney Rogerson's *Propaganda in the Next War*, which articulated a comprehensive propaganda strategy for Washington in the event that the US became embroiled in outright warfare with the European fascist powers. See Sidney Rogerson, *Propaganda in the Next War* (London: G. Bles, 1938).

In the late 1930s the prominent American poet and Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish also weighed in on the relationship between propaganda and democracy, training his scorn on those who still favored isolation and continued to stubbornly overlook "the reality of fascism and of Hitler's intentions because of their ... residual fear of propaganda."[76] In a move redolent of the public involvement of intellectuals in the CPI's work, a group of academics including Leonard Doob founded a Committee for National Morale in support of mass communications on behalf of democracy. The Committee set to work in July 1940 to consider how to sustain national mobilization through mass communications in the event that the United States entered the war as a full participant. Harold Lasswell took up funding from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1940 to establish an Experimental Division for the Study of Wartime Communications at the Library of Congress.[77] While the propaganda critics had dominated US interwar scholarly debates, by the late 1930s their criticisms had given way to a "wide-ranging, unsettled, and characteristically American colloquy on the [positive] meaning of propaganda for democracy."[78] As one contemporary account described it, the debate moved beyond the Institute's decidedly dim views of the public and its ability to be swayed by irrational positions, as well as the "cheap skepticism and pseudo-sophistication," of the propaganda analysis movement.[79] A number of semi-official committees and private groups sprang up to help boost American morale for the ideological defense of democracy. A few were even funded or provided other means of support by British government agents who had been dispatched to America in 1939 to agitate once again for the country's involvement in a European war. Even the Institute's Clyde Miller came to accept that propaganda would be used widely in the coming conflict, and reluctantly accepted that Washington needed to make its own views on Hitler and Mussolini clear. Miller hoped, however, that the nation's free media and the inherently skeptical instincts of Americans would serve the country well in safeguarding democracy from the extension of government power in wartime.[80]

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[76] Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 144.

[77] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 180–82, 193–4; see also: William Preston Jr. et. al., *Hope and Folly: The United States and Unesco 1945–1985* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989). The muckraking spirit of the anti-propaganda movement did not entirely disappear with the Second World War: the University of Chicago and *Life* editor Henry Luce jointly sponsored an investigation into freedom of the press, published in 1946, which argued that the press must avoid commercial subversion and remain subordinate to the interests of moral cohesion and communal interests.

[78] Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 52–3.

[79] William Garber, "Propaganda Analysis – To What Ends?" *American Journal of Sociology* 48: 2 (Sept. 1942), p. 241.

[80] Clyde R. Miller, "Radio and Propaganda," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 213 (January 1941), p. 74.

While the Institute of Propaganda Analysis had failed to appreciate the significance of propaganda as a force in global politics, American foreign policy scholars had taken note of the rise of aggressive propaganda in Europe and the failure of post-war international cultural, intellectual and educational institutions, several of them under the auspices of the League of Nations, that had been designed to bring peace to the Continent. The rise of Nazi Germany seemed to bear out the point that the mass media was inherently vulnerable to political manipulation, which stoked diplomatic antipathies and caused the breakdown of international order. Whereas Dewey, Irwin and others had regarded the public as a rational and virtuous political force provided that media and educational institutions could be kept free of manipulative influences, those who cast their gaze abroad drew much darker conclusions about the politics of mass culture, modern nationalism, and the media. The mass media, in particular, served "forces that were the precise opposite of … internationalism: exclusionary nationalism, racism, aggression."[81] By the 1930s it seemed clear that, insofar as international politics were concerned, "culture, instead of moderating national military power, was frequently combined with it, thereby losing its autonomy and its international character."[82]

The British academic E.H. Carr penned a bestselling account of the origins of the European crisis and the rise of public opinion as a powerful instrument of war. Oswald Spengler warned in his bestselling, two-volume *Decline of the West*, published between 1918 and 1922, that Europe was a civilization in decline and its attempts at producing political order through cultural and intellectual understanding were doomed to fail. These arguments had particularly strong resonance for US commentators, particularly those who advocated isolation from European conflicts.[83] In Britain there had also been a strong critical response to propaganda after the First World War. The pacifist Arthur Ponsonby, for example, examined the functions of emotional language and symbols in helping to generate "sham ideals" in patriotic propaganda, and he condemned the "cheap and vulgar sentimentality" that his government had used to mobilize

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[81] Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, p. 91.

[82] Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*, p. 91.

[83] See Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis 1919–1939*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1946). Carr also directly related these developments to propaganda in: Edward Hallett Carr, *Propaganda in International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939). Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles Francis Atkins (London: George, Allen & Unwin, 1926). These works were also, in part, a response to the idealism of the European League of Nations advocates such as Norman Angell, Leonard Woolf, and Alfred Zimmern. Norman Angell, *Foundations of International Polity* (London: Heinemann, 1914); Leonard Woolf, *International Government* (London: Gorge Allen & Unwin, 1916); Alfred Zimmern, *The Prospects of Democracy and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929).

for war.[84] Ponsonby's observations about the power of public opinion in the era of national aggression were read into the American *Congressional Record* in 1928, with the unanimous approval of the US Senate. The writings of Sir Phillip Gibbs were also widely read in the United States. Gibbs had briefly served as one of five official British reporters during the First World War, before being recalled from the Western front for refusing to abide by official censorship guidelines. His recollections of the war entitled *Realities of War* and *Now it Can Be Told*, both published in 1920, were damning critiques of the arrogance of British and American officialdom.

The purported connection between propaganda and war was central to the writings of the US journalist and academic O.W. Riegel, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, and Yale University's Nicholas J. Spykman. Riegel had argued in 1934's *Mobilizing for Chaos* that the rise of aggressive nationalism in Germany was not solely the consequence of the flawed peace of 1919, but also the result of novel propaganda techniques for mental "enslavement" and regimentation. Looking back to the First World War, Riegel noted that propaganda practiced by democratic powers such as Britain had been as damaging as that of imperial Germany, and he concluded with a warning: although "the United States has so far resisted the tendencies which have ... produced an intellectual medievalism in certain European countries," the survival of American democracy now depended on the safeguarding of freedom of opinion and rational public debate.[85] By 1937, Riegel had become convinced that an international treaty limiting the international propaganda broadcasting capabilities of the European states was necessary for the preservation of the peace.[86] Despite these stridently presented views on propaganda and foreign policy in the 1930s, however, and like so many other interwar propaganda critics, Riegel's position changed abruptly with American belligerency and he joined government service as a political analyst at the OWI.

Journalist Walter Millis's bestselling *Road to War*, published in 1935, took a similar view of the diplomatic implications of propaganda and its damaging effects on the European powers. Mills provided yet another exposé of British

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[84] Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time: Propaganda Lies of the First World War* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928).

[85] O.W. Riegel, *Mobilising for Chaos: The Story of the New Propaganda* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 17, 211–14. At the same time, Riegel was critical of Americans' rather hysterical tendency to see propaganda everywhere—"propaganditis," in Riegel's terms—and of the degree to which the mainstream propaganda analysis movement had branded American newspapers as propagandists. For Riegel, the propaganda analysts had overlooked the fact that the press was vital to the preservation of democracy. O.W. Riegel, "Propaganda and the Press," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 179 (May, 1935).

[86] O.W. Riegel, "New Frontiers in Radio," *Public Opinion Quartlery* 1: 1 (1937).

propaganda and its role in garnering United States intervention in the First World War, highlighting a litany of underhanded and manipulative tactics on the part of the British and a complicit President Wilson.[87] Two academic studies of British practices during 1914–17 further stoked the sense of alarm about Britain's likely intentions toward neutral America in relation to the new European crisis: James Squires's extensively researched *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917*, published in 1935, and pacifist H.C. Peterson's 1939 work *Propaganda for War: The Campaign against American Neutrality*.[88] American newspapers took up the call to insulate the country from British subversion, resulting in an atmosphere of Anglophobia and frequent rumors about the secret activities of British propaganda agents at the close of the 1930s.[89]

Another prominent contributor to the public debate on the implications of propaganda for international politics and the future of Europe was theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. In his 1932 book *Moral Man and International Society*, Niebuhr questioned the cultural internationalist sentiments that had motivated the European founders of the League of Nations International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation and other international cultural projects. He rejected their cosmopolitan logic, which held that peace could be achieved through the creation of an international public sphere rooted in substantial international understanding. In one of his most influential studies of global politics Niebuhr argued that the "rapid means of communication have increased the breadth of knowledge about world affairs among citizens of various nations, and the general advance of education has ostensibly provided the capacity to think rationally and justly upon the inevitable conflicts of interest between nations." Nevertheless, "a perceptible increase of international morality through the growth of intelligence and the perfection of the means of communication" was unlikely.[90] New technologies had only amplified the already belligerent tendencies of states, and culture and knowledge had little to do with the sources of war. Rather than serving to enhance the putative rationality of human affairs, mass communications had simply clouded it further and created more opportunity for conflict.

In a commentary on cultural diplomacy written a decade later, Niebuhr cited the longstanding historical animosity of France and Germany—neighboring

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87 Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 45–6, 50.

88 James Duane Squires, *British Propaganda at Home and in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935); Horace Cornelius Peterson, *Propaganda for War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914–1917* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939).

89 See Calder, *Beware the British Serpent*, p. 42.

90 Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1932), p. 85.

societies with extensive knowledge and cultural understandings of each other—as an illustration of the misguided logic of European cultural internationalism. Though he conceded in the late 1940s that international cultural relations might be a source of reduced diplomatic tensions in the long term, even then Niebuhr claimed that this would not occur without a range of other robust diplomatic measures in place. The "social tissue" required for the kind of world government needed to prevent war could only grow slowly and fitfully, no "immediate and direct relevance" for cultural diplomacy could be expected.[91] Cultural diplomacy would turn out to be an especially hollow gesture for peace-building and global reform, according to Niebuhr—and here he was plainly addressing American cultural diplomacy advocates who too exuberantly lauded America's preponderant power in the post-war period—when it was conducted on behalf of overbearing global powers.[92]

In a 1942 book entitled *America's Strategy in World Politics*, Yale's Nicholas John Spykman also criticized the humanistic vision of international cultural cooperation and international communication that had been put into practice by European intellectuals after 1919. Like Niebuhr, Spykman condemned the logic of cultural internationalism for its mistaken "assumption that people who are fundamentally different will necessarily begin to like each other as they become better acquainted." Such notions were a "fashion;" they were simply "erroneous" and "disproved in everyday life."[93] Military power was the only determinant of national success or failure, and as such, propaganda was relevant to foreign policy only as an instrument of warfare, and not as a basis for peace or global reform. Spykman charged that war "cannot be won except with the whole-hearted cooperation of both soldiers and civilians," hence "[t]he state has become vulnerable to new weapons. Psychological and ideological warfare have been added to the technique of economic strangulation, political maneuver, and military assault."[94]

Spykman offered some compelling anecdotal reasoning in support of this argument. As far as the achievements of US philanthropies and the State Department's early cultural diplomacy projects in Latin America during the 1930s were concerned, he contended that no substantive improvement in diplomatic relations could be detected as a result of these efforts. He acknowledged that Latin American "[f]ear and distrust of the United States have become considerably less in recent years." This was, however, "not due

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[91] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Theory and Practice of Unesco," *International Organization* 4: 1 (February, 1950), pp. 6–10.

[92] Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Illusion of World Government," *Foreign Affairs* 27: 1 (1948), p. 380.

[93] Nicholas John Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), p. 236.

[94] Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics*, p. 36.

to a better understanding of our culture but to the basic shift in our attitude toward Latin America symbolized by the Good Neighbor Policy."[95] Despite the swarms of American travelers who visited Europe throughout the 1920s, Spykman argued, the American public had supported an ongoing posture of isolationism in relation to Europe. Ironically, Americans seemed to be "much more favorably disposed toward the Chinese, whose country almost no one had visited and whose civilization practically nobody understood."[96] While the progressive American propaganda analysts had looked almost exclusively at the domestic political context and had debated ways to keep the public sphere free of manipulation, this emerging *realpolitik* vision of global politics rejected the notion that mass communications could have any positive impacts at the international level.

Philanthropy: An Alternative Route to International Persuasion.

While scholars, political commentators, communications practitioners and educators in the United States were debating the finer points of propaganda and evaluating various strategies for safeguarding American democracy against it during the interwar period, a wide range of institutions devoted to domestic and international philanthropy were flourishing. Many of these actively sponsored the research programs that sustained these debates.[97] Yet much of the work that these philanthropies also conducted in the period was of a directly educational, cultural, and informative nature. America's philanthropic foundations, in other words, undertook their own forms of "propaganda" by promoting mass communications and targeted messages in the service of their desired political or social objectives at home and abroad. The critical reflections of Spykman, Niebuhr and Riegel were directed as much at these philanthropic projects as they were at the wrongheaded premises about public opinion, communications and international understanding held by European governments. The international activities of US philanthropic and professional foundations had grown markedly in the interwar period, a function of the same progressive goals of social harmony, democratization and the collective good that had inspired the propaganda critics during the interwar period. International philanthropies pursued educational and cultural activities as well as radio and print media efforts that were intended to convey the benefits of modernity, rationality, and civic participation to

[95] Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics*, p. 236.

[96] Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics*, p.255.

[97] On the impact of progressive philanthropic ideals on American International Relations scholarship in the period see: William T.R. Fox, "Interwar International Relations Research: The American Experience," *World Politics* 2: 1 (1949).

so-called backward societies. While the philanthropic vision of American foreign policy shared the propaganda analysts' concern for democracy and individual empowerment, they regarded mass communications and persuasion as tools to facilitate rather than inhibit these values.

But this philanthropic vision of benevolent cultural and communication exchanges was at least as significant as the propaganda analysis movement in setting a precedent for the official American cultural and educational diplomacy policies that began in the Second World War period. In fact, one of the great ironies of the interwar period and Americans' response to propaganda was that it also nurtured a vibrant international philanthropic sector that itself became the basis for official programs. As the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations advisor Waldo Leland noted in 1943, the success of various philanthropic activities that promoted American culture and political traditions in Latin America during the 1920s and 1930s was crucial to the US public's eventual acceptance of official cultural diplomacy, given their residual reservations about more direct and obvious forms of official propaganda.[98] Leland himself had extensive experience of international philanthropy through his work as an archivist and historian at the Carnegie Institution, the International Congress of Historical Sciences, and as head of the American Council of Learned Societies. Leland had also served on the National Board for Historical Service for Woodrow Wilson. Like other members of that morale-boosting organization, Leland's views about governmental efforts to shape domestic and foreign public opinion typified the swing from support for morale-building during the First World War, to involvement in a revived private internationalist movement and the critique of propaganda between the wars, to involvement in the cultural diplomacy and international education work of the Department of State after 1941.[99] In 1942 Leland reflected in highly positive terms on the role of historians, teachers and archivists in the National Board for Historical Service in providing the American public with the requisite facts on which to form opinions on American involvement in the war and the peace settlement.[100]

Although US philanthropies expanded most rapidly during the interwar period, their origins stretched back into the nineteenth century. The Smithsonian

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[98] Waldo Leland, "International Cultural Relations: Historical Considerations and Present Problems." (Denver: The Social Science Foundation at the University of Denver, 1943), pp. 7–8; Box 2, File 28; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers), Special Collections Library; University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

[99] For Leland's views on the importance of private internationalism and its function in interwar European and transatlantic understanding, see: Waldo G. Leland, "The International Union of Academies and the American Council of Learned Societies," *Historical Research* 4:11 (November, 1926).

[100] Waldo G. Leland, "Historians and Archivists in the First World War," *The American Archivist* 5: 1 (January, 1942).

Institution began sponsoring international scientific collaboration in 1848. In 1890 the American Association of University Women awarded its first scholarship to send an American student overseas. The number of philanthropic institutions allocating funds for international activities then proliferated significantly in the first decades of the twentieth century. There were five grant-making foundations in the United States at the turn of the century, 30 by 1914, and nearly 200 in 1930.[101] Their main focus after the turn of the century was on Europe, Latin America and China, with emphasis shifting toward the latter two during the 1930s. These programs in the developing world were especially influential because they provided a testing ground for the kinds of discourses about America's global benevolence and modernity that would later inform the US government's official discourse about its cultural and educational diplomacy efforts in the developing world.

The US Institute of International Education (IIE), which later worked closely with the US government's educational exchange program, promoted educational relations with Latin America before 1938. In addition to establishing summer schools for American college students in Rio de Janeiro (1929) and Lima (1932), the IIE presided over an expanding range of exchanges that brought Latin Americans to the US. It initially offered 148 funded positions to Latin American scholars in 1926, which increased to 375 by 1938.[102] While the recipients of IIE fellowships made up a relatively small proportion of the American academic scene, their presence was nevertheless regarded as a significant foundation for international reform. The grantees "were expected to become leaders in their communities and to influence public opinion in favor of international understanding." Prospective candidates were even "instructed that fellowships were created as a valuable instrument for international understanding and only incidentally for the personal advantage of the fellows."[103] Similar principles shaped the international educational initiatives of the American Council of Learned Societies, founded in 1919, which dispensed grants to scholars from Europe and Latin America. The international Rotary Club also took important steps in the educational arena during the 1920s. Under its auspices the first center for inter-American cultural dialogue, which hosted English language instruction and cultural events, had been founded in Buenos Aires in 1928.[104] A similar center had been established under private initiative in Bangkok in 1925.

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[101] Morag Bell, "American Philanthropy as Cultural Power," in David Slater and Peter J. Taylor (eds), *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 284.

[102] Liping Bu, *Making the World Like Us: Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), p. 72.

[103] Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, pp. 73–4.

[104] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 10.

In addition to opening a rather specialized line of debate on the diplomatic significance of cultural and educational relations, these philanthropic efforts served as a template for official US policy initiatives after 1936. Exchanges of students and professors, the establishment of cultural centers and libraries in foreign cities, and the sponsorship of artistic exhibitions overseas were all aspects of interwar international philanthropy that the State Department took up after 1938 on behalf of US national interests. An American Belgian Educational Foundation, established by Herbert Hoover in 1920 to spend surplus foreign currency from US war relief efforts to fund the education of Belgian students in American universities, operated as a private forerunner to the Fulbright educational exchange program. Another notable educational project sponsored by US philanthropies in this period was the American Library Association's English-language libraries in Latin America. These, along with a small collection of US cultural centers established by American expatriates across the region, were directly absorbed into the official cultural relations program and counted as one of its most important successes during the Cold War.[105]

Large numbers of American tourists, as well as artists, writers, activists and scholars, also visited Europe in the wake of the First World War, taking advantage of more affordable international travel and favorable currency exchange rates.[106] The 1920s thus saw "a historical high in American private internationalism, despite the onrush of economic disaster and totalitarianism." Though the US Senate had rejected a formal framework for US involvement in European affairs when it rejected the League of Nations Charter, the "U.S. intellectual world struck out on its own. Cultural internationalism had come to life, even if the news had not reached America's legislators."[107] This *ad hoc* exchange of cultural elites deepened the cultural and intellectual ties between America and Europe, and provided a basis for many influential Americans to eventually accept the necessity of an official cultural diplomacy program as global diplomatic tensions escalated in the late 1930s.

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[105] As Gary Kraske notes, "success" would have to be judged from the point of view of national policy rather than from the ideals of the public library—since many of the ALA's members were dismayed by the government's selective approach to stocking the libraries. Gary E. Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book: The American Library Profession and the Origins of United States Cultural Diplomacy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 138.

[106] Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Domination: American Political, Economic and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 173. See also Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997) and Rob Kroes, "American Empire and Cultural Imperialism: A View from the Receiving End," *Diplomatic History* 23: 3 (Summer, 1999).

[107] Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 45.

The activities of the American philanthropic foundations in China constituted one of the most important developments in American philanthropy during the pre-1936 period because of how these US institutions addressed questions of cultural difference and underdevelopment in the context of their operations. The American Oriental Society was one organization that played a prominent role in the promotion of commercial and educational ties with Asia, while the Rockefeller Foundation's China programs supported medical, scientific and technical education in the interests of social and political modernization. The Foundation's reports on China from 1909 and 1914 characterized this work as "striking at the roots of superstition" to eliminate the "radically false views of life" that were obstructing China's material and political progress. Rockefeller's scientific education projects aimed to "develop the scientific spirit, high moral ideas" and "new conceptions of political and social organization" in China, while its Humanities Division, established in 1934, maintained "an explicit interest in promoting international understanding through cultural means."[108] Its directors were "convinced that the humanities, like the sciences, were internationalist in thrust and that they could advance the same progressive cultural mission."[109] The YMCA, which had several influential industrialists and businesspeople with interests in China on its International Committee, assisted Princeton and Yale Universities in establishing franchises in China—"Yale in China" and "Princeton in Peking"— during the First World War.[110] Sections of the Shanghai American expat community, which was predominantly associated with business interests, pursued commercial cooperation with the Chinese business elite by emphasizing how the "gospel of American ideas" could serve the advancement of the country.[111]

From 1936, the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division also funded research on public opinion and cultural diplomacy within the United States, and from 1939 it ran a Communications Seminar that produced a number of landmark publications. The series was greatly influenced by the participation of Harold Lasswell, and it took a more agnostic view of propaganda than the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, emphasizing the point that propaganda should be judged by the nature, not the fact, that political motivations were informing mass communication.[112] The Rockefeller Foundation's China projects and its principles of international education served as a vital testing ground for the application of progressive principles and cultural instrumentalities to

[108] Frank Ninkovich, "The Rockefeller Foundation, China, and Cultural Change," *The Journal of American History* 70: 4 (March 1984), pp. 801–2.

[109] Ninkovich, "The Rockefeller Foundation," p. 814.

[110] Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*, pp. 120–21.

[111] James L. Huskey, "The Cosmopolitan Connection: Americans and Chinese in Shanghai During the Interwar Years," *Diplomatic History* 11:3 (July, 1987), p. 232.

[112] Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, pp. 86–7.

US relations with China—a strategic focal point for American cultural and informational diplomacy during the war—and less developed societies in general. In addition to taking up the operational channels already established by philanthropic institutions in China and Latin America, US officials also took on key elements of philanthropic discourse. These held that progressive, liberal "purposes can be served in some detachment from national political purposes" via cultural and educational diplomacy, provided that strictures such as reciprocal participation, benevolence, and a spirit of humanism were followed carefully.[113]

The conceptions of propaganda, cultural philanthropy and international relations that shaped public debates in the United States during the interwar years encompassed a diverse collection of views about whether, and if so how, the American government should engage in the diplomacy of ideas. On the one hand, prominent American scholars and commentators provided a persuasive critique of the effects of propaganda on American democracy and derided the efforts of both foreign governments and American philanthropies to craft benign forms of propaganda in the interests of global peace. On the other, an emerging international philanthropic movement saw a substantial role for both American civil society and official foreign policy in deploying culture and ideas for the pacification of world politics and uplifting backward societies. The rise of fascism and the crumbling of the peace in Europe challenged both perspectives, but these developments were most damaging to the propaganda analysis movement and its efforts to insulate American society from government-directed communications. With the outbreak of war, the movement's somewhat abstract notions of defending American democracy against the taint of directed communications ran up against the increasingly real prospect that Americans would need to confront the aggressive regimes of Germany, Italy and Japan with all the military power it could muster. The Rockefeller Foundation's Communications Seminar, for example, abandoned its outright objections to propaganda by 1940, instead issuing reports on "the education of the public on matters of public policy" in a time of crisis.[114] A large number of the other progressive propaganda critics followed suit.

This colloquy of opinion about the meaning of propaganda and international cultural and educational relations had an important long-term effect on the official cultural diplomacy and international information programs established by the Roosevelt administration after 1936. Instead of overlooking or explicitly rejecting the interwar critique of propaganda, US officials often referred to

[113] Frances X. Sutton, *American Foundations and US Public Diplomacy* (New York: Ford Foundation Publishing, 1968), p. 3. See also: Edward H. Berman, *The Influence of Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy: the Ideology of Philanthropy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

[114] Rockefeller Foundation Communications Seminar quoted in Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 103.

these established appraisals of propaganda as an undemocratic practice in their writings and speeches about US policy. Many of them had been engaged in the interwar debates on propaganda in one way or another, and while they had come to accept the need for government publicity they remained ambivalent about the nature of their task in certain key respects. This sense of ambivalence ultimately became a source of strength rather than weakness for the US cultural and informational programs. It led US policy-makers to conceptualize and represent American public diplomacy as an exceptional and transformative practice, informed by an understanding of the special difficulties in resolving propaganda and democracy. This became a commonplace refrain in statements about the US cultural and informational diplomacy programs, both to audiences outside the American government and within it, in the context of domestic justifications and internal policy debates. The proponents of US cultural diplomacy and international information drew at the same time on the philanthropic discourses that saw American ideas as a basis for the spread of modernity and order. The extension of culture and information as instruments of US foreign policy could therefore be depicted as a singular practice that simultaneously rejected the worst elements of propaganda *but also extended them* as manifestations of American democracy and a means to bolster global progress. Instead of grasping the nettle of propaganda as a necessary and pragmatic addition to US foreign policy in insecure times, American policy-makers sought to represent their work as a practice that could be set apart from conventional notions of propaganda and its functions, carrying this through the Second World War and beyond.[115]

[115] On British propaganda, see: Ralph Block, "Propaganda and the Free Society," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 12: 4 (Winter, 1948), p. 677.

Chapter 2

"Enlightened and Far-Sighted Leadership." Cultural Diplomacy: Latin American Precedents and Wartime Expansion

The State Department's Division of Cultural Relations was established in 1938 and, with several name changes during bureaucratic reorganizations, it remained Washington's lead agency for cultural diplomacy throughout the Second World War and into the post-war period. In this capacity, the Division presided over programs for the exchange of persons, for cultural performances and exhibits abroad, and it administered a network of overseas American cultural centers, the earliest of which had been established between the wars by private initiative. These centers were incorporated into the Division's operations and became outposts of its United States Information Service (USIS), unintentionally taking the name of a small division within Roosevelt's White House that had produced the President's radio "fireside chats" after 1934. The USIS centers were placed with the OWI during the war, and played a critical role in its wartime international information projects, later to be returned to the State Department. The Division's wartime cultural activities also included sponsorship of collaborative intellectual research projects on the effects of cultural and educational exchange, practical aid to libraries and universities abroad, and the distribution of informative publications and films that conveyed positive messages about the United States and its foreign policy.

Legislative authorization for the Division's work initially rested with a set of inter-American treaties signed in 1936 that established bilateral educational exchanges across the Western Hemisphere. The US proposed the agreement and drafted the treaties, motivated largely by concerns about the prevalence of Axis propaganda and fifth column activities in the region. Initially, the Division of Cultural Relations was charged with administering these inter-American exchanges, although its work was soon to expand into a range of other areas. According to its first director Ben Cherrington, American cultural diplomacy had a deliberately limited rationale from the beginning. It was a response to "the misrepresentation of American life ... [that] was going on in South America." Under the general rubric of "Pan Americanism" and being a "Good Neighbor," the Division's work was intended to strengthen both the existing diplomatic channels and contacts between civil society and institutions across the region,

rather than promoting a specific set of political or ideological goals.[1] This limited and fundamentally defensive justification for the adoption of cultural diplomacy was frequently reiterated in the statements of US policy-makers and spokespeople in the years between 1936 and US entry into the war in late 1941. It was an appealing position, which maintained a clear link to philanthropic activities and suggested that the United States had entered the arena of cultural diplomacy only reluctantly, following the lead of private actors. But this limited rationale presaged a much more expansive rendition of the nature of American cultural influence in global politics. During the war there emerged a wide-ranging discourse about the democratic qualities of American culture and Washington's capacity to affect global political reform via the transmission of American culture. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, for example, who was a key sponsor of the inter-American educational exchange treaties, argued that the origins of US cultural diplomacy rested upon the realization that in a time of international emergency American foreign policy must be "bulwarked by an appreciation ... of the spiritual and intellectual values in this country, as well as by an understanding by the American people of the cultural achievements of their southern neighbors."[2] This position implied, somewhat paradoxically, that the same values that had made Americans naturally suspicious about propaganda were the precisely those that made America fit above all others to exercise global cultural influence.

With the US entry into the Second World War, the Division extended its activities beyond Latin America, first to the Near East, and soon after to China. By mid-1943, American cultural initiatives were underway in other parts of Asia and in Europe. This expansion was once again represented in reluctant terms, but with a strong a tinge of American exceptionalism as well. By 1944, the Division and its advisors had begun to contemplate the role of cultural diplomacy in consolidating the Allied victory and promoting US global influence in its aftermath. In carving out a role for cultural diplomacy in the post-war world order, US officials wrote in evocative terms about the nature of American culture as an inclusive and universalist civic tradition, one that had engendered a rational and democratic public sphere in the United States, and could serve as a basis for the durable peace settlement that the world so desperately required. Statements highlighting these potentially wide-ranging impacts were, to be sure, part of an effort to ensure the long-term survival of the Division, intended to

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[1] Ben Cherrington, quoted in Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: US Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 32. See also Ben Cherrington, quoted in J. Manuel Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of US Cultural Diplomacy 1936–1948* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 112–13.

[2] Cordell Hull, quoted in Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of US Cultural Diplomacy*, p. 111.

specify the practical relevance for the programs to Congressional Republicans who had openly declared their intention to cut foreign policy spending during the closing stages of the war. But the expansive and transformational role for cultural diplomacy that US officials articulated in the wake of the Second World War also went deeper than this, and represented an ongoing attempt to reconcile the interwar critique of propaganda with US cultural diplomats' firm conviction that American cultural diplomacy was a necessary and important practice in peacetime.

The Inter-American Beginnings of Cultural Diplomacy

The rise of Nazi Germany and Hitler's increasingly aggressive statements about the European order had elicited both internationalist and isolationist responses from American intellectuals, journalists and propaganda critics in the late 1930s. But for FDR, the most direct, and also most tractable, threat posed by the Axis in the late 1930s was to American economic and strategic interests closer to home, in Latin America. American leaders had traditionally considered the Western Hemisphere to be the United States' exclusive sphere of influence. This sphere of influence seemed increasingly under threat from German agents and Nazi-affiliated groups in the region, particularly those drawing members from the sizeable German immigrant populations of Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Starting in Paraguay in 1929, émigré Germans had founded National Socialist organizations in solidarity with the Nazis across the Southern Cone, with membership comprised mostly of recent immigrants who had fled the poverty of the Weimar era. Hitler's rise to power in 1933 strengthened these *Auslandsorganisationen* (foreign Nazi Party organizations), and later led to the establishment of societies of "friends" of Nazi Germany, the *Ausland Bund*, in several Latin American cities. The Roosevelt administration singled out the latter as a particular concern, and potentially associated with German invasion plans. Hitler had explicitly characterized South America as an area where "democracy is senseless and futile" and which would benefit if Germany "colonized" the region. This prompted a burst of concerned commentary in the United States, some of it consisting of appeals for US defense guarantees from left-wing Latin American intellectuals—strange advocates, indeed, for *yanqui* hegemony.[3]

[3] Hitler quoted in J.M. Batista I Roca, "Nazi Intrigues in Latin America," *Contemporary Review* 159: 1 (Jan., 1941), p. 308; see also Fernando de los Rios, "Nazi Infiltration in Ibero-America," *Social Research* 7: 1 (1940); David Efron, "Latin America and the Fascist 'Holy Alliance,'" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 204: 1 (1939); Carleton Beals, "Totalitarian Inroads in Latin America," *Foreign Affairs* 17: 1 (Oct., 1938).

US economic interests were also at stake, and the expansion of German trading interests in Brazil, in particular, was a significant concern for FDR. By the time the administration's planning for the Buenos Aires Conference was underway, US military and intelligence agencies had also begun to take seriously the assumption that Germany might use Nazi support in South America to one day stage a military attack on the region and the US.[4] These concerns intensified after a military coup in support of a Nationalist government in Brazil in 1937, and then again with the news, ultimately unfounded, of impending Fascist-orchestrated overthrows of the governments of Argentina and Uruguay in 1940. Since 1936 the FBI had been closely scrutinizing the South American propaganda activities of German and Nazi organizations, as well as the far smaller Western Hemisphere operations of Italy and Japan. A key problem for Washington was the degree to which the German government, helped along by the *Auslandsorganisationen*, was able to draw on longstanding criticisms of *yanqui* arrogance and economic exploitation, sentiments that were particularly strong in Paraguay and Argentina. The threat posed by German influence in the Western Hemisphere was transformative for US foreign policy, as David Haglund has argued, and signaled the beginning of the end of isolationism as a viable foreign policy doctrine. The independence of the Western Hemisphere from external influence was a basic premise of isolationism as well as the focal point for FDR's internationalism before the war, and both doctrines depended upon Washington's ability to dictate the political conditions in South America in a manner amenable to US interests. This meant keeping the region free from external, and particularly Old World, political influences.[5] The Buenos Aires Conference therefore had an "earnest" and significant purpose in the context of US foreign policy,[6] one belied by the seemingly broad and symbolic agreements

[4] Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 4. On public fears around the German threat—a poll in August 1941 showed that 72 percent of Americans believed Hitler would one day seek direct conquests in South America—and the administration's view of the German threat, see: David G. Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. 3 and 9–17.

[5] David Haglund develops this point, and the intriguing thesis that FDR's push for intervention in the Second World War before Pearl Harbor stemmed in part from his administration's inability to secure the Western Hemisphere from the influence of hostile, external powers. German influence in the Western Hemisphere also sounded the death knell of isolationism. In this context, the Buenos Aires Conference and the fact that it presented an opportunity for the US to engage with Argentina, which was the most pro-German of the Latin American republics and delighted in playing the "Pan American enfant terrible" where the US was concerned. Haglund, *Latin America*, Ch. 1 and pp. 42.

[6] Haglund, *Latin America*, p. 43.

signed by the parties in attendance. Against the specter of German political and economic influence and the increasingly anti-American sentiments of the publics of the Southern Cone, the neutrality and disarmament agreements that FDR had proposed were intended to reinstate a bedrock principle of US security: the exclusion of European influence from the Western Hemisphere.

The Division of Cultural Relations' first mandate to supervise educational exchanges with the Western Hemisphere thus emerged out of the Roosevelt administration's hope to be seen to be mounting a constructive response to Germany's effort to turn South America into a "Trojan horse."[7] Through a well-publicized effort to offer scholarships and academic professional opportunities to Latin Americans under the rubric of Pan Americanism, Cordell Hull and the State Department had hoped to improve America's standing among the region's elite. Deepening cultural, social and intellectual ties between North and South America afforded by more rapid communications and cheaper travel, alongside the substantial precedents set by American philanthropy, had prepared the ground for governmental sponsorship of educational exchanges. American groups such as the IIE had been vocal Pan Americanists, and had steadily built cultural and intellectual contacts across Latin America as a basis for more peaceful and commercially beneficial ties throughout the 1920s.[8] Pan American conferences on a range of subjects including transportation, agriculture, law and the rights of women proliferated markedly after 1919, under the auspices of both governmental and non-governmental agencies.[9] FDR had bolstered this process at a political level in declaring his intention to be a "Good Neighbor" to the republics of the Western Hemisphere in his first inaugural address. He later fleshed out this doctrine as a commitment to diplomatic equality and free trade in a speech on the first Pan American Day on April 12, 1933. In 1936 US officials were struck by the apparently rapid results of these policies. Contrary to FBI and US military reports of rampant anti-Americanism in South America, the warmth of the meeting was "striking," in contrast to the critical attitudes

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[7] Melvin Hall and Walter Peck, "Wings for the Trojan Horse," *Foreign Affairs* 19: 2 (Jan., 1941).

[8] Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 47. See also: Waldo Leland, "International Cultural Relations: Historical Considerations and Present Problems," University of Denver Social Science Foundation Papers, 1943; Box 2, File 28; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville. Leland notes the increasing involvement of the US public and intellectuals in international cultural and intellectual relations.

[9] See Edward Trueblood, "Recent Developments in the Field of Inter-American Cultural Relations: Cooperation Between Government and Private Interests," *Foreign Service Journal* 18: 1 (January, 1941), p. 6. Women's rights were discussed in Havana in 1930 at the first meeting of the Inter-American Commission of Women, an inter-governmental organization established in 1928 at the Havana Inter-American Conference.

American officials had generally encountered during meetings with their Latin American counterparts in the 1920s.[10]

Four significant gestures by the Roosevelt administration toward closer US–Latin American relations had followed the announcement of the Good Neighbor Policy: the proposal of a multilateral military non-intervention pact for the region at the 1933 Pan American Conference; more extensive Presidential consultations with Latin American ambassadors on regional problems; the abrogation in 1934 of the US-authored (and much maligned) Platt Amendment to Cuba's constitution, which had kept US troops in that country since the war of 1898; and the establishment by Nelson Rockefeller of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs to promote business ties and distribute information south of the border. Despite these positive gestures, 1933 also saw the awkward spectacle of 30 US warships dispatched to Havana Harbor after the overthrow of President Gerardo Machado, a move that was partly motivated by US fears of Communist influence on the Cuban left.[11] Given the mixed picture of US intentions that these sorts of actions presented, the question of whether there were any palpable long-term and lasting impacts from the Good Neighbor Policy has been a subject of historical debate. Much of the goodwill that was built in 1936 would be undermined for many Latin Americans by Washington's heavy-handed tactics against suspected Axis agents within the Western Hemisphere during the war. These included surveillance, detention and assassinations, as well as the internment in the US of significant numbers of German, Italian and Japanese nationals from Latin American countries.[12] But it is clear that between 1933 and 1938 the Good Neighbor Policy helped to solidify Pan American relations and fostered a new awareness for the American public of their nation's role as the benignly dominant power within the Western Hemisphere. The entwining of the Good Neighbor ideal and the administration's effort to exclude the Axis from influence in the Western Hemisphere created both the pretext and context for the beginning of official US educational and cultural diplomacy with the Latin American republics.

Among the eleven conventions for peace, diplomatic solidarity, disarmament and free trade that US diplomats brought with them to the Pan American Conference in Buenos Aires in 1936, there were five pertaining to cultural and educational exchange. The cultural and educational exchange treaty provisions

[10] Haglund, *Latin America*, p. 45.

[11] On the views of the US's "gunboat" diplomacy" among the Latin American states, as well as the debates within the US administration about the handling of Cuban political instability that year, see: E. David Cronon, "Interpreting the New Good Neighbor Policy: The Cuban Crisis of 1933," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 39:4, (November, 1959).

[12] Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors.*

were modest in themselves: only two students and one professor per year would travel to the US under the Convention's auspices. However, the treaty's language was evocative and far-reaching, establishing a wider, generalized spirit of reciprocity, openness and civic engagement.[13] The preamble to the agreements stated that:

> the purpose for which the Conference was called would be advanced by greater mutual knowledge and understanding of the people and institutions of the countries represented and a more consistent educational solidarity on the American continent, and ... such results would be appreciably promoted by an exchange of professors, teachers and students among the American countries, as well as by the encouragement of a closer relationship between unofficial organizations which exert an influence on the formation of public opinion.[14]

US initiatives in the cultural and educational fields would thus provide the "common denominator of public opinion" and give "form to a unified public opinion" within the Hemisphere.[15]

The Under Secretary of State and Latin American policy specialist Sumner Welles echoed the idealistic sentiments surrounding the Pan American educational agreement. He emphasized in numerous public addresses and writings in the year to follow that US leadership in Latin American affairs would be "conducive to a healthy international trade" in the "culture and civilization of other people."[16] Welles had initially proposed the idea of the Pan American Conference, and he heralded the cultural and educational agreements as a "new epoch" in foreign policy. Cultural diplomacy was to be the basis of an "unprejudiced and friendly understanding which is one of the surest foundations

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[13] Miguel Espinosa's official memoir of the cultural program makes this point, noting the inter-American agreements of 1936 were deliberately expansive in their language, explicitly intended as a rhetorical basis that "made possible a broad interpretation of future inter-American people-to-people exchange and communication." Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 1.

[14] "Draft Inter-American Convention for the Promotion of Cultural Relations," (1936); Reel 33; Microfilm Personal Papers of Cordell Hull, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

[15] Adolf Berle, "Speech of A.A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State. Foreign Policy Association- Boston, Massachusetts, January 21, 1939," p. 8; Speeches, Box 142; Papers of Adolf Berle; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park, NY.

[16] Sumner Welles, quoted in Mark T. Berger, *Under Northern Eyes: Latin American Studies and US Hegemony in the Americas, 1898–1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 51.

for the maintenance of peace."[17] These sentiments stemmed from Welles's strong belief in the US obligation to exercise moral leadership in the Western Hemisphere, which evoked progressive-era notions of American "tutelage" over the region but refashioned the concept into a doctrine of diplomatic engagement rather than neo-imperialism.[18] Welles, along with his protégée Laurence Duggan, who had succeeded Welles as head of the State Department's Division of the American Republics, was instrumental in ensuring that the agreement was implemented by a new administrative division dedicated to cultural diplomacy.[19] Welles would serve as one of FDR's closest foreign policy advisors before his abrupt departure from government service in 1943, and during the early stages of the war he showed strong commitment to global public opinion as a critical asset for the Allied war effort, helping to draft the Atlantic Charter and playing a significant role in the early planning for the post-war political settlement and economic order.[20] Duggan, for his part, was highly attentive to the problem of anti-Americanism in South America since his lengthy travels there in the 1920s and, especially, while attending the inter-American Conference in Havana in 1928.[21] He had also been instrumental in convincing Welles that cultural and educational diplomacy could make a palpable contribution to US foreign policy in the first place.[22]

Cordell Hull, who, like Welles strongly endorsed free trade and reciprocal diplomatic agreements as the basis for a more peaceful regional order, situated the Buenos Aires proposals as a part of a larger process of economic, political and diplomatic reform within Latin America. The educational exchange agreements posed a "political and moral doctrine for the nascent [inter-] American democracy," given that "the basis of peace lies in the development of a

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[17] Sumner Welles, "Results of the South American Conference," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 17: 3 (May, 1937), pp. 25 and 32. In an address to the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia that year Welles situated cultural and educational exchange in the context of a wider shift in international relations towards more robust international law, disarmament, free trade and multilateralism. Sumner Welles, "Present Aspects of World Peace," *World Affairs* 100: 3 (September, 1937), pp. 166–7; see also: Sumner Welles, "The New Era in Pan American Relations," *Foreign Affairs* 15: 3 (April, 1937).

[18] Hanson, "Sumner Welles and the American System."

[19] On the significance of Welles and Duggan, see Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, pp. 21–3.

[20] See Christopher D. O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937–1943*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), and Sumner Welles's own views on the importance of world organization and American leadership over the process of decolonization were set out in Sumner Welles, *The Time For Decision* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1944).

[21] Haglund, *Latin America*, pp. 45–6.

[22] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 23.

public opinion–for which freedom is indispensable–that will totally repudiate the acts and utterances of statesmen propagating doctrines of militarism."[23] These sentiments opposing militarism were underscored by a coincidental event: Germany and Japan had signed their Anti-Comintern Pact while the US President was en route to Argentina, making war in Europe seem likelier.[24] Reflecting several years later on the tone of US cultural policy in the Western Hemisphere, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Adolf Berle asserted that the United States' vision of regional order:

> Differ[ed] materially from many theories of international organization ... it takes for granted that the bonds of understanding shall be so strong that on tasks of great common interest the group will act together. So ... the Western world would achieve peace, a steady settlement of international problems by reason and justice instead of by force, and a continuous cooperation for defense against any powers outside the hemisphere.[25]

In this context, the exchanges proposed at Buenos Aires accompanied a broader re-conceptualization of America's role in the world, a role that now required reforming the conduct of diplomacy and the use of force in international relations.

Berle's own career and thinking on international affairs reflected the connections between interwar progressivism and FDR's reformist foreign policy agenda. Having served in the US military during the First World War, in the 1920s Berle had embarked on a career in corporate law while living among, and working with charitable organizations to uplift, New York City's immigrant poor.[26] Berle served as an economic advisor and one of FDR's "brains trust" during his 1932 presidential campaign, helping to draft the declaration of the Good Neighbor Policy, before serving as a non-governmental delegate to the Buenos Aires Conference in 1936, where he made his disapproval of both American and European formal imperialism well known. The First World War made a profound impression on Berle, and he frequently maligned the fact that American involvement in the conflict had been the product of British and French manipulation.[27] When Berle joined the Department of State in 1937,

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[23] "Highly Important Speech of Mr Cordell Hull," *Noticias Graficas* (Buenos Aires), 24 December, 1936; Reel 33, Papers of Cordell Hull; Library of Congress Manuscripts Division. The conference, and FDR's visit in particular, was also discussed in favorable terms in other Argentinian publications. See: Haglund, *Latin America*, p. 44.

[24] Jordan A. Schwarz, *Liberal: Adolf A. Berle and the Vision of an American Era* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), p. 122.

[25] Berle, "Speech of A. A. Berle Jr.," pp. 2–3.

[26] Jordan A. Schwarz, *Liberal: Adolf A. Berle and the Vision of an American Era* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), pp. 36–9.

[27] Schwarz, *Liberal: Adolf A. Berle*, p. 121.

he understood the US role in promoting good governance and cooperation in Latin America in terms that were redolent of his "liberal aristocratic" approach to fostering the "self determination" and strengthening the "self esteem" of the impoverished immigrants he had lived among in the 1920s. While the treaties signed at Buenos Aires covered a range of issues including disarmament, collective security, and trade, the cultural and educational exchange agreements were held up by Berle, Welles, Hull and others as a symbol of the broadest and most progressive possibilities associated with the extension of American power.[28]

It was not until mid-1938 that the Department of State finalized its administrative arrangements to implement the Buenos Aires agreements. On July 27, the Division of Cultural Relations was established via State Department Order. It was provided with sums of $27,920 for its first year of operation and $75,000 for 1939–40, sourced from executive appropriations. The Division was headed by Ben Cherrington, former director of the Foundation for the Advancement of Social Science and the Department of International Relations at the University of Denver. Cherrington's research in the 1920s had investigated the determinants of national foreign policies in the broadest of terms, including economic, religious, cultural and educational processes—Hull could hardly have found anybody more fundamentally sympathetic to the purposes of the cultural and educational diplomacy program. In his letter inviting Cherrington to fill the post, Hull located the Division's connection to US foreign policy in terms of "the importance of an understanding of the habits of thought and mode of life of other countries," which could facilitate "cordial and fruitful international relations."[29] Hull also wished to distance the new Division from the aspersions associated with propaganda as traditionally understood, asserting that "cultural diplomacy" was the appropriate term for the arrangements in place under the Pan American agreement. He was therefore anxious that Cherrington should be "clear about one matter: we do not wish to follow the examples of the totalitarian States. Whatever we do must conform to the procedures and standards long established in our American democracy."[30]

Cherrington subsequently reiterated that the administration had only contemplated establishing an official program of cultural diplomacy reluctantly; "when Hitler and Mussolini's exploitation of education and culture as an instrument of national power policies was at its height." He was, consequently, determined to see the Division become "an organization that would be a

[28] Ninkovich notes the significance of reciprocity as one of the key approaches in the cultural diplomacy program during this early phase, see Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, Ch. 1.

[29] Cordell Hull, quoted in Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 329.

[30] Hull, quoted in Arndt, *First Resort of Kings*, p. 67.

true representation of our American tradition of intellectual freedom and educational integrity."[31] He frequently described the Division as a "clearing house" for established cultural and intellectual ties, rather than the instigator of new initiatives in cultural propaganda. Waldo Leland, who was also acutely aware of the damage that naked propaganda could do to the administration's domestic and international image, similarly advised that the program's objectives should be the "advancement of the cultural (and intellectual) life of the participating peoples by the sharing of knowledge and experience." American national interests would be thus served by "the promotion of understanding and spiritual solidarity among peoples and the improvement of the conditions of life" through a vibrant cultural diplomacy program.[32] The point was reiterated by George Messersmith, former ambassador to Mexico, Argentina and Austria who served on the board of the recently opened Benjamin Franklin Library in Mexico City. Messersmith affirmed the distinction between the cultural program and propaganda, observing that: "we are not trying to make ... counter-propaganda. We are interested in the broad basic problem of developing the really friendly relations between this country and our neighbors."[33] It was clear that the concerns of the interwar propaganda critics had not been forgotten when the Division's mandate was initially conceived.

The imposition of clear requirements for reciprocity within the cultural programs was not simply a publicity gesture intended to convince the American public of the State Department's benign intentions and disinclination to pursue military entanglements in relation to the brewing storm in Europe. Nor were these strictures solely about reassuring Latin American audiences that the Pan American cultural ideal was not a pretext for political and military interventionism in their national affairs. Disavowals of propaganda and an emphasis on a progressive ethos that prized individual rationality and public deliberation within the American cultural diplomacy programs were prevalent in correspondence between policy-makers within the Division, and between Division staff and other US political officials. The interwar progressive critique of propaganda had made a deep impression within the circles of the American policy-makers and the academics and educators who joined the Division. These

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[31] Ben Cherrington "Cultural Relations in the Department of State," Attachment to letter from Jesse MacKnight to Howland Sargeant and William T. Stone (January 19, 1948), p. 1; Records Relating to the International Information Activities, 1938–1953 (IIA. 1938–53); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

[32] Waldo Leland, "International Cultural Relations: Historical Considerations and Present Problems," University of Denver Social Science Foundation Papers, 1943, p. 23; Box 2, File 28; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville; Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 49.

[33] Messersmith, quoted in Arndt, *First Resort of Kings*, p. 60.

political concerns about propaganda were particularly clear in the statements of Stanford historian Harley Notter, for example, who was soon to join the Department of State in its post-war policy planning section, the Division of Special Research. Notter characterized Washington's sponsorship of political and cultural cooperation in the Western Hemisphere after 1938 as: "part of the epic of greater America which we share with the other nations of this hemisphere." In such circumstances, the "present-day life of our country is also only to be understood, not by an examination of it alone, but by an examination of all the great movements and progress among the American republics ... The trend is in the direction of a cultural amalgam." Notter would remain a prominent advocate for cultural diplomacy as a vital contribution to US foreign policy, expressing the hope that cultural understanding would generate bonds that could complete the global "liberal revolution" that had begun in the nineteenth century, democratizing the global public sphere. This trajectory of world history made it incumbent upon "the United States ... to become the mainstay of a new order that merged the political, economic, and cultural aspects of life into a comprehensive unity."[34] A robust government program of cultural diplomacy could serve as an important instrument for fostering this unity.

In its first months of operation, the Division of Cultural Relations held a series of meetings in Washington that convened prominent educators, artists, philanthropists and policy-makers to articulate general priorities for US-Latin American cultural relations. These talks also considered candidates to serve on the Division's General Advisory Committee, which would provide an ongoing policy discussion forum for the Division.[35] The individuals that the Secretary of State eventually appointed to the Committee were leaders in the fields of international education and communications, including Leland, Shotwell and the Reverend Edmund A. Walsh. Walsh was then serving as the founding regent of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service—the first American university department specializing in the theory and practice of diplomacy to operate for any significant length of time—which had been established in 1919, even before the US Foreign Service itself was founded. Though Walsh had never held a diplomatic post, he had been inspired to establish the School during his work

[34] Harley Notter, "Cultural Relations with the Other American Republics," p. 5; Subj 1939–50; HN; RG 59; NARA; Frank Ninkovich, "The Currents of Cultural Diplomacy: Art and the State Department 1938–1947," *Diplomatic History* 1:3 (Summer, 1977), p. 220. Notter was, interestingly, a scholar of Woodrow Wilson's internationalism. See, e.g.: Harley Notter, *The Origins of the Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1937).

[35] A reflection of the modesty of the Division's first program is that participants from across the country who attended the advisory conferences held in 1938 were not recompensed for their travel or accommodation to Washington.

with the War Department training college student recruits during the First World War. As Walsh frequently recollected, the First World War caused him to reflect on the deepening of global interdependence and the increasingly broad demands that were being placed on US diplomatic personnel and institutions as a result. Walsh was convinced, above all, that the United States had an obligation to spread its ideals.[36]

The Departmental Order founding the Division of Cultural Relations had defined its role simply as "encouraging and strengthening cultural relations and intellectual cooperation between the United States and other countries."[37] This left much to still be resolved by the delegates at the first meeting of the General Advisory Committee. One major dilemma was how the Division could prosecute US foreign policy objectives and maintain a format consistent with progressive ideals.[38] Between 1937 and 1939 seven new American cultural centers had been established in Latin American cities by US expatriate groups and philanthropies, and the Division's work in its first months involved a survey of their activities so that the Division could extend government funding to

[36] Walsh's conception of the function of the School of Foreign Service was both to equip future US diplomats with an understanding of languages, politics and economics abroad, but also to impress upon them the value of spreading US ideals as an instrument of global harmony and interdependence. This would later lead Walsh toward strongly anti-Communist political views, and he favored counter-measures against global Soviet propaganda long before the Second World War. The School of Foreign Service at Georgetown that now bears Walsh's name is broadly understood to be the United States' first university program on diplomacy but in fact a short-lived program was founded at George Washington University in the first decade of the twentieth century. See: Patrick J. McNamara, *Catholic Cold War: Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 3–4; Rev. Edmund A. Walsh, S. J., "Some Observations of the Soviet Problem," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 132 (July, 1927).

[37] Division of Cultural Relations, "Progress Report of the Division of Cultural Relations," 1940, p. 3; Box 2, File 5; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville.

[38] The search for a policy role was left open also because Congress did not play a role in determining the Division of Cultural Relations' mandate during this period. Although it hadn't formally mandated the US cultural diplomacy program, Congress expressed support for the Division in 1939 in the form of House Resolution 5835. US House of Representatives, *House Resolution HR 5835 Authorising President to render closer and more effective relationship between American Republics*, April 26, 1939; (Y4 F76/1:In2/5); Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1939, p. 307. On funding, see also: *Chronological Outline of the Organization and Ranking Officers of CU 1938–1945* (no author, undated) p. 39; Box 2, File 2; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville.

existing institutions and then establish new ones where needed.[39] The cultural center format was particularly appealing because it had a reciprocal quality and seemed to promise the enhancement of the public sphere in their host nations, as the progressives had advocated. By 1946 the Division had founded and taken 47 USIS outposts across the globe. The Division's early work also included radio broadcasts delivering educational, sporting, entertainment and news items to Latin America, transmitted via several short wave transmitters that had been set up by the US Navy during the 1930s. This initial foray into informational work was later downplayed by Division spokespeople, however, when they sought to distance their own reciprocal, apolitical work from the OWI's wartime information initiatives such as the Voice of America.[40]

The US cultural diplomacy program had been in operation less than a year before it confronted a profound challenge to the idea that the Division could operate at a clear remove from "propaganda." The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 compelled US cultural diplomats to think about their work in pragmatic as well as idealistic terms, as they discussed whether open-ended cultural interactions could be expected to deliver useful outcomes when the enemies of democracy were acting unscrupulously with their own propaganda. Although the US was non-belligerent in 1939, the international emergency itself and the ideological threat posed by Axis military expansion seemed to warrant a more explicit assertion of American cultural and educational achievements. The dilemma here was how to extend US cultural diplomacy in support of "national security [which] made it imperative that the United States counter the aggressive propaganda activities of Germany with a more vigorous program of its own."[41] Berle considered this question in some detail. In January 1939 Berle recommended that the cultural diplomacy program be extended to project an image of American power and military vitality, while reinforcing the point that its democratic traditions made the United States implacably opposed to fascism. The cultural program should thus establish a "materially different ... moral conception" of world order in line with US interests.[42] These recommendations took note of the practical contributions to be made by the cultural and educational diplomacy programs as the administration sought to offer the maximum possible moral support to the Allied cause.

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[39] Trueblood (First name unrecorded, probably Edward), "Recommendations for Strengthening United States Cultural Institutes in South America 1940," Attachment to Letter from Charles A. Thomson to Ben M. Cherrington, November 30, 1940, p. 1; Box 5 ff 40; Personal Papers of Ben M. Cherrington; Special Collections Division, Penrose Library; University of Denver.

[40] On the schisms between the cultural diplomacy and information programs, see: Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, pp. 120–22.

[41] Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 139.

[42] Berle, "Speech of A. A. Berle Jr.," pp. 1, 8.

Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish, a Pulitzer Prize winning poet and internationalist, who was soon to join the State Department as director of the Office of Facts and Figures and then Assistant Secretary of State, came forward that year to recommend an explicit counter-propaganda role for the Division in response to Axis aggression. MacLeish had abandoned a career in the law during the 1920s and had turned to writing poetry while he was in Paris befriending the American literary set there; his writings in the late 1930s had been intended as "public speech" on anti-fascist themes. During the war MacLeish involved the Library in numerous publicity, intelligence and research activities on behalf of the Allied war effort.[43] MacLeish believed the United States could not stand aside from the ideological clash between democracy and totalitarianism, and in this cause "cultural relations are not irrelevancies. They are everything." For the democracies a "cultural defeat is a defeat on the one front on which defeat cannot be accepted."[44] He also emphasized America's obligation in the artistic and literary spheres to sustain the cultural lifeblood of nations that had been overrun by the Nazis, particularly through the support of émigré artists.[45] To this end, MacLeish arranged a series of anti-fascist symposia at the Library of Congress, which brought American and émigré European intellectuals together to assess the cultural implications of the war. Harold Lasswell's research was also one of several ongoing projects that the Library sponsored before the war in order to codify the psychological mechanics of propaganda. MacLeish subsequently appointed the celebrated German novelist Thomas Mann to the Library's staff as a consultant on international cultural relations and the war.[46]

MacLeish's own publications of the time included a polemical essay from 1939 criticizing the "irresponsibles" who had supported isolation before the war, and two books of prose entitled *A Time to Speak* (1940) and *A Time to Act* (1943), which were intended to convince American intellectuals to lend support to the war effort.[47] MacLeish left the Library of Congress to serve as the first director of the Office of Facts and Figures in October 1941, and it was while there that he coined the phrase "strategy of truth" to define Washington's approach to cultural diplomacy. The Office was established by the President

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[43] Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, pp. 137–8. On MacLeish's biography see Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 74.

[44] Archibald MacLeish quoted in Arndt, *First Resort of Kings*, p. 98.

[45] Michael Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 13.

[46] Mann wrote several pieces in 1940 on the connection between culture and politics from a humanist perspective. Wolf Lepeneis, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 60.

[47] Archibald MacLeish, *A Time to Speak: The Selected Prose of Archibald MacLeish* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940); Archibald MacLeish, *A Time to Act* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943).

to investigate propaganda techniques, develop policy proposals and distribute information on the international emergency, functions that MacLeish regarded as based "upon the assumption that the people of a self-governing country are entitled to the fullest possible statement of the facts and figures bearing upon the conditions with which their government is faced." Inverting the arguments of the interwar progressive propaganda critics, MacLeish defined the Office's functions as a reflection of the "essential difference between a democracy and a despotic government," which was that "a democracy is based upon a complete trust in the people and a democratic service of information must necessarily reflect that trust."[48] In MacLeish's view, the administration was therefore *obliged* to inform the public about the course of the war and to actively boost their morale in the context of the complex, vibrant media environment of the United States.[49] It also had an obligation to communicate its ideas to international audiences, as a beacon to the world of freedom and democracy. This governmental obligation mirrored MacLeish's arguments that America's cultural leaders and intellectuals had a moral obligation to contribute to the struggle against Nazi Germany, and MacLeish did much to enhance the credibility of the OFF, as well as the Division of Cultural Relations and its work, during the early stages of the war.

The United States joined the Allied war effort after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Wartime priorities delivered substantially more funding for the Division as a result of across-the-board increases to US foreign policy agencies requested by FDR for the President's Emergency Fund. This enabled the Division to send America's first official cultural attachés to several Latin American embassies. Entry into the war also prompted FDR to create the OWI, which supplanted the Office of Facts and Figures and several other small offices, to coordinate the government's domestic and international propaganda projects. While the Division of Cultural Relations remained outside the OWI—and it carefully guarded this independence lest its activities be perceived as aggressive or propagandistic—the Division nonetheless took policy guidance from the Office and its Committee on War Information Policy, which was composed of representatives from the Departments of State, War, and the Navy, as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Office of Censorship and the Bureau of Economic Warfare. Under advice from the OWI, the Division of Cultural Relations rapidly expanded its film distribution and screening program in 1942 so that by the end of that year a total of 550 motion pictures had been shown in Latin America at US consular events.

The rapid expansion of the Division's work into motion picture screenings generated debate over whether government projects ought to show potentially

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[48] MacLeish quoted in Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 152.

[49] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 75.

controversial films to represent the norms of free speech, or whether they should instead cultivate a more selective image of life in America. Embassy screenings in 1940 of a film production of John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, for instance, had caused an internal debate about the film's honest depiction of America during the Depression era.[50] In response to the State Department's queries about the film's suitability for official purposes, the US embassy in Chile defended their decision to screen the film despite having received prior instructions from the State Department that anything "marred by the inclusion of objectionable details" should be excluded from official events.[51] The Embassy reported that the film's frank depiction of American poverty actually gave Chilean audiences a basis for identifying with American experiences. *The Grapes of Wrath* was nevertheless soon banned from official US cultural diplomacy events.

By 1942, the OWI had a more proactive approach to the problem, and it sent advisors from its newly established Motion Picture Division with the freshly written *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry* to the major Hollywood studios. These representatives of the OWI joined several from Nelson Rockefeller's Latin American operation who had already been working to advise film producers on avoiding the presentation of crude stereotypes of Latinos and to ensure that films with themes suited to official purposes could be produced and distributed by the film industry, just as the CPI had done in 1917. There was clearly a need to rein in the prevailing depictions of Latinos: 1931's *Cuban Love Song* and 1932's *Girl of the Rio* had each prompted governments of Cuba and Mexico, respectively, to officially request that the studios block their distribution.[52] Sanitizing Hollywood's depiction of Latinos was an economic imperative as well. Lost revenues for Hollywood from other international markets and the CIAA's efforts to secure a ban on all Axis films across all of Latin America created a demand for new films for that market—so-called "Good Neighbor Features."[53] The collaboration between the OWI, the CIAA and Hollywood was one of the greatest US publicity successes during the war, given that Hollywood by and large already endorsed US intervention and was

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[50] John M. Begg, "Oral History Interview," July 11, 1975; Harry S. Truman Library Oral History Project; Library of Congress Manuscripts Division. See also "Memorandum," Herbert Edwards to Lloyd A. Lehrbas (June 28, 1948); Records Relating to the International Information Activities, 1938–1953; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD.

[51] See Begg, "Oral History Interview." See also: Division of Cultural Relations, "Progress Report of the Division of Cultural Relations," 1940, p. 73; Box 2, File 5; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville.

[52] Sadlier, *Americans All*, pp. 37–40.

[53] Sadlier, *Americans All*, pp. 37–40.

eager to tell America's story to the world.[54] The productions that Hollywood and the OWI collaborated on generally presented "a superficial and sentimental perspective of life in America with an emphasis on small-town values, religiosity, and social harmony."[55]

Other CIAA-OWI films such as the Disney production *Saludos Amigos*, featuring Goofy, Donald Duck and their new Brazilian friend, a parrot called José Carioca, focused on the harmonious aspirations of the Good Neighbor Policy. Documentaries and travelogues about the US and Latin America were produced as shorts and features—*Saludos Amigos* had been made as four animated shorts about travelling through Latin America that were later placed together—and included a series on Mexico. From 1942, the CIAA covertly extended technical aid and financing for the production of films and radio in Mexico, through a front organization called Prencinradio.[56] While these productions generally failed to reach great artistic heights, the screening of these new "Mexican" pro-American films was thought to have been immediately successful. A 1943 piece in *Harper's Magazine* examining the Latin American response to US public diplomacy noted that a steady output of government-sponsored films had helped correct a number of destructive misconceptions about the United States.[57] It was also clear, though, that films such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, or *Winterset*, a crime thriller that opened with the execution of a Latino immigrant activist for a crime he did not commit, had the potential to garner more genuine respect among Latin American audiences by providing an honest and open account of America's faults.[58] The OWI tended to resolve this dilemma by erring on the side of its own productions and its more selective presentation of the life and policies of the United States, but the instinct of the staff of the Division such as Cherrington was toward an honest account of America at all costs.

The distinction that the Division's founders had articulated between apolitical cultural diplomacy and propaganda became increasingly difficult to sustain amid these new programming and policy demands. Cherrington fought to maintain the Division's apolitical mandate, disputing MacLeish's assertion that

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[54] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 84.

[55] Cora Sol Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye: American Visual Propaganda in Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 46.

[56] Sadlier, *Americans All*, p. 44.

[57] Manuel Seoane, "If I were Nelson Rockefeller," *Harper's Magazine* 186 (February 1943), p. 317. The film in question is referred to in Seoane's article as *Buenos Amigos*, but it is likely that the author was in fact referring to the well-known Disney production *Saludos Amigos*.

[58] Having been controversial in 1940, *The Grapes of Wrath* would again cause consternation during the late 1940s when the Department learned that the USSR had purchased several prints of the film, presumably for the purposes of discrediting American images of prosperity under capitalism.

in a time of emergency all of America's cultural resources must more explicitly take up the cause of an ideological defense of democracy. Having insisted that wartime cultural activities should still be "definitely educational in character" and should incorporate critical responses to the United States, Cherrington argued that the Division must avoid being seen to function in any identifiable way as a "diplomatic arm or a propaganda agency." If a more selective approach was ultimately deemed necessary to convey America's support for the Allies during the war, Cherrington advised that this should be clearly acknowledged to the Division's audiences as an expedient that was only temporary in nature, a suggestion which rather missed the point of shifting toward a more explicitly persuasive approach in the first place.[59] But Cherrington's capacity to set the tone of US cultural and educational diplomacy had waned after Pearl Harbor. He was replaced in 1942 by Charles Thomson, a former Latin America scholar at the Foreign Policy Association with considerable expertise in Mexican politics. Thomson soon put his stamp on the Division, questioning Cherrington's emphasis on an apolitical long-term cultural mission and methods that avoided counter-propaganda and persuasion. Instead, Thomson deemed that selective, "propaganda" formats could be "instructive" or "destructive" depending on the intent of its author, and irrespective of whether its message was delivered in a strident, selective or propagandistic tone. By approaching its targeted audience as equals rather than inferiors, in ways designed to make them "simply ... think as [America] thinks," Thomson believed it was America's goals in the war, not the means it might use to achieve them, that should be subject to moral evaluation. To him, America's democratic credentials could not be faulted, even if its actions resembled the propaganda techniques that American progressives had so eloquently repudiated in previous decades.[60] Part and parcel of this more persuasive approach was Thomson's view that the Division should no longer focus exclusively on intellectuals and cultural elites, but rather should develop techniques tied to the promotion of health, education and productive agriculture for the impoverished masses of the world.[61]

Key members of the Division's General Advisory Committee such as Waldo Leland and the head of the Division's research section, Ralph Turner, soon embraced Thomson's position that propaganda was a judgment about motives, not the action itself. Writing in 1943, Leland determined that "propaganda" could be an acceptable description for the kinds of programs that the Division was running during the war, though he held to Thomson's qualification that such policies must be evaluated in light of the superior ends that were guiding US military strategy and foreign policy. Leland explained how:

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[59] Cherrington, quoted in Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 31.

[60] Thomson, quoted in Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, pp. 40 and 60.

[61] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 48.

> [t]he war effort calls for active propaganda at the intellectual level, the development of moral solidarity among the United Nations, and the assurance of good will towards the United States. Hence much that is done in the name of cultural relations has objectives that are not primarily cultural. This situation is likely to be prolonged well into the post-war period when activities aimed at restoring areas that have been devastated by war and at relieving their peoples will have almost as large a place in the attention of the national Government as the activities of the war have at present ... It is important to try to distinguish between activities that have purely cultural and intellectual objectives and those that, though cultural in form, are designed to influence the course of the war and to assist the work of post-war restoration. [62]

Turner supported this view when he recommended that the cultural diplomacy program should "support concretely the foreign policy of the United States" over the course of the war. Turner described the goals of US cultural diplomacy in 1942 as "an international situation under which American democracy can be secure and develop."[63] It was clear that wartime had presented a complicated challenge to the young cultural diplomacy program and the assumptions upon which it was founded.

Building a Worldwide Program

Debate over how to best to engage propaganda formats for the prosecution of American interests was not solely a consequence of Charles Thomson's leadership, however. It was also a function of the Division's expansion into new theaters of operation. Programs in China and the Near East had been added to the Division's operations before Pearl Harbor, in early 1941, but these had been small and were expanded significantly after America's entry into the war. The Division's staff in Washington increased from 8 in late 1939 to 76 by 1943. Pearl Harbor also prompted the Division to consider a possible program of cultural diplomacy in Europe. The State Department's Division of European Affairs advised against this in 1942, however, on the grounds that a sufficiently extensive set of private cultural and intellectual ties already spanned the Atlantic.

The establishment of a US cultural diplomacy program in the Near East followed numerous requests from Arab leaders for informational and

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[62] Waldo Leland, "International Cultural Relations: Historical Considerations and Present Problems," University of Denver Social Science Foundation Papers, 1943, pp. 26–7; Box 2, File 28; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville.

[63] Ralph Turner, cited in Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 67.

educational assistance from the United States during the 1930s. The Division had considerable early success in the region, especially through its work providing assistance to several established schools and universities. The Division hoped, by extending this support, to meet the needs that Arab leaders had articulated years before. Educational assistance also provided a way to demonstrate America's anti-colonialist credentials, its educational and technical sophistication, and its agenda for global reform and improved living standards through an altruistic program of empowering less developed nations. US educational assistance was a vehicle for the expression of "idealism and anti-imperialism," and it accordingly raised concerns among the colonial powers of the region. "By drawing an explicit contrast between European imperialism and disinterested American policy, the United States was priming itself, if not for a political competition, then for a cultural contest on informal terms" with European interests.[64] The point is illustrated by remarks made in 1944 by the American diplomat Donald Webster, an academic and former Office of Strategic Services agent serving as the first US cultural attaché in Turkey. Webster characterized Washington's cultural task to the Middle East as a "secular-missionary" effort. Its aim was "to have this small but strategically located country not only friendly to us but also able to think things through in patterns similar to our own in politics, economics, social welfare, and the many other phases of our culture."[65]

Webster's comments reflected the principles of social and economic modernization that were coming to be associated with the cultural diplomacy program. The rather aloof notions of elite cultural and educational exchange that Cherrington had articulated at its founding were gradually being supplanted by an ethos of cultural modernization tied explicitly to Allied strategic interests. This was particularly clear in China, where the Division had begun to canvas opportunities for cultural projects in June 1941 following the provision of lend-lease economic aid to the Chinese government. This assistance was hailed as an important step for the United States by China experts such as the author Pearl Buck and former Consul General of Nanking Willys R. Peck, both of whom had been trying for some time to convince Roosevelt that considerable American assistance would be required to keep China in the fight against Japan.[66] Japanese aggression, twinned with a paternalistic view of Chinese vulnerability, were by that time old tropes in the prevailing representations of US interests in East

[64] Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, pp. 53–5. See also: Division of Cultural Relations, "Memorandum Respecting Inter-American Cultural Relations," (undated), p. 10; Box 5, ff 43; Personal Papers of Ben M. Cherrington; Special Collections Division, Penrose Library; University of Denver.

[65] Donald E. Webster, quoted in Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 53.

[66] Peck's views are particularly significant because he succeeded Stuart Grummon as the second head of the Division of Cultural Relation's China section. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 10.

Asia. Japan's defeat of Russia in 1905 had been widely regarded in the United States as a threat to American economic interests in China, and the ensuing decade saw frequent expressions of anti-Japanese sentiment by US officials. Several prominent advocates of US intervention in the First World War had even favored the opening of an East Asian front, warning that the "Prussia-like" Japan must be contained to prevent a similar conflagration in East Asia.[67] After 1941, the Nationalist Chinese government and its spokespeople drew on these paternalistic notions, stressing their own valiant efforts to preserve the heritage and traditions of Chinese culture, which were under threat both from Japanese aggression and, increasingly, from the destructive principles of Communism.[68] For cultural diplomacy, the war effort was uppermost in the Division's policy planning from the outset. As the US military advisor Owen Lattimore noted, America could not win the war in Asia without offering a political framework for the post-war regional order, and the Division's work should be centrally about building Chinese understandings of the principles upon which this order should rest.[69]

The head of the Division's China program, Stuart E. Grummon, articulated priorities for China that were primarily strategic in nature. He contended that the Division should not shy away from producing explicitly politicized activities that veered close to propaganda, including information work. Because it had been "deemed important before the outbreak of hostilities with Japan to develop a radio program directed to the Chinese people," Grummon maintained that broadcasting and information work should be the Division's main priority—a significant departure from the elitist, reciprocal notions of educational and cultural exchange that had characterized the Latin American program. By stepping into informational work, Grummon hoped that the Division could use more persuasive techniques to "encourage [the Chinese] in their resistance against Japan and to emphasize certain phases of American life which might contribute to strengthening their morale." With direct US involvement in the Pacific War "the need is now clearly greater" to ensure Allied war aims were transmitted as persuasively as possible.[70] To this end, the Division's key area of focus after 1941 was the distribution of OWI films and information. The OWI's own director of Pacific operations, scholar George E. Taylor, also took an explicitly strategic role: America's role in Asia was to "westernize" the

[67] In order to consolidate China's commitment to a progressive developmental trajectory, US diplomats successfully convinced the Chinese military government to declare war on Germany in August 1917. Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*, pp. 127–32 and 147–56.

[68] Yutang Lin, *The Vigil of a Nation* (New York: The John Day Company, 1945), p. 57.

[69] Owen Lattimore, "The Fight for Democracy in Asia," *Foreign Affairs* 20: 4 (Jul., 1942).

[70] Grummon, quoted in Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 14.

region as a basis for US regional hegemony.[71] The Division also prepared a smaller-scale program of cultural assistance that was more akin to the pre-war understandings of American cultural diplomacy, involving the protection of cultural artifacts and libraries and the provision of academic publications to Chinese educational institutions.

In addition to keeping China in the fight against Japan, the Division expounded a conception of democracy promotion in China through economic modernization. Harley Notter summed up this ethos in 1942, remarking how:

> The items of the program approved are almost exclusively designed to convey as early as possible to wide sections of the Chinese public, including Government and university circles, the merchant class, and the people of village and country, the real interest taken by the United States in China's present plight; its desire to be of every possible assistance; its own parallel defense program and war effort; and some idea of those American institutions and emergency undertakings which might be of assistance to the Chinese in stimulating their own progress along democratic lines.[72]

Some observers, notably a Division officer, Wilma Fairbank, worried that the legitimacy these cultural and informational ties conferred on the Nationalist government would have the opposite effect to that which Notter had anticipated, and would be understood by the Chinese public as a sign of the American government's willingness to tolerate the Kuomintang's increasingly authoritarian tendencies. Though the Kuomintang was the internationally recognized government of China, American diplomats on the ground also repeatedly made clear that the regime had heavy-handed tendencies when it came to domestic opposition and its grip on power was tenuous. The Division of Cultural Relations saw more of a challenge in this than did the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs. The latter expressed wholehearted support for the Nationalists, questioning the value of the Division's efforts to explain the workings of democracy to the Chinese people. It cautioned the Division to bear in mind "Chinese sensibilities"—by which it meant the authoritarian sensibilities of the Nationalist regime—and to avoid distributing material for at least the duration of the war with overtly "democratic" messages that might be interpreted as tacit critique of the Kuomintang.[73]

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[71] George E. Taylor, *America in the New Pacific* (New York: Macmillan, 1942).

[72] Harley Notter, "The Program of the Department of State in Cultural Relations: A Report to The Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Second Session, January 1942," p. 14; Subj. 1939–50; HN; RG 59; NARA.

[73] Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, pp. 56–7.

In response to the criticisms of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, the Division's programs increasingly discussed democracy in terms of cultural modernization, sometimes referred to as "cultural lend-lease." A shared commitment to democratic freedoms was thus situated as the expected outcome of, but not the precondition for or current preoccupation of, the extension of US cultural diplomacy activities. American culture would be presented to Chinese audiences in a manner that showcased American prosperity, modernity and technical sophistication, with the values of democracy and freedom posed in a more subtle fashion. It was these that the Chinese people could expect to ultimately enjoy after supporting the Allies and building a close post-war economic relationship with the US cultural lend-lease—cultural diplomacy conceived in pragmatic terms, as a down-payment on democratic transformation—thus "became the program's dominant policy concept" in China. Democratic themes were considerably "muted" under this new rationale, since the Division hoped that modernizing or technocratic influences would be "of the most immediate benefit" to Chinese society.[74] The policy of cultural lend-lease differed in a subtle but significant way from the ways in which inter-American cultural and educational diplomacy had been represented. Under the Pan American ideal, American cultural diplomacy had depended on a pre-existing, shared "democratic sensibility," on the ongoing and robust trading relationships within the region, on the shared wish to remain free of European antagonisms, and on the shared republican political traditions of the Western Hemisphere.[75] As a transformational doctrine, cultural modernization moved away from the concept of cultural diplomacy as a form of exchange that would reinforce existing tendencies, to a concept of cultural persuasion that was closely aligned to specific strategic and ideological objectives.

Wilma Fairbank was an art historian and also the wife of the leading US China scholar and diplomat John King Fairbank. She later wrote a detailed account of the political compromises the Division's work in China entailed. She had been the first employee of the Division's China program in Washington, then served as the cultural officer at the US embassy at the Chinese wartime

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[74] Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 56. See also: Harley Notter, "Program of the Department of State in Cultural Relations A Report to The Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Second Session, January 1942," p. 14; Subj. 1939–50; HN; RG 59; NARA.

[75] On China as a topic of debate in the General Advisory Committee after 1941, see "Compilation of Policy Statements on the Cultural Relations Program, Approved by the General Advisory Committee," (June 15, 1944); Box 5 ff 38; Personal Papers of Ben M. Cherrington; Special Collections Division, Penrose Library; University of Denver. See also Cherrington's statements in: Division of Cultural Relations, "Memorandum Respecting Inter-American Cultural Relations," (undated), p. 10; Box 5, ff 43; Personal Papers of Ben M. Cherrington; Special Collections Division, Penrose Library; University of Denver.

capital Chungking during the closing stages of the war. Her memoir emphasized the logistical troubles, local corruption and factional disputes that threatened the integrity of the Division's cultural operations on the ground, compromising even its limited notion of democracy promotion. Fairbank detected a "gap between the strenuous efforts and good intentions of the China program administrators in Washington and the circumstances, material, psychological and, above all, political, of the recipients in Free China."[76] One of her colleagues from US military intelligence warned Wilma Fairbank that "any American working ... [in cultural relations] is to some degree a press agent for the Kuomintang ... No matter how careful he may be, and I have tried to be careful, he is part of a fabric of deceit."[77] What was problematic for the Division in this was not just the tacit legitimacy conferred on the Chinese government by America's cultural program, but the fact that despite these difficulties US cultural diplomats and other personnel were obliged to remain optimistic about China's democratic transformation in order to maintain funds and support for their efforts in Washington. They thereby stoked the increasingly high hopes in Washington and among the American public about China's post-war role, hopes that were dashed dramatically by the Chinese revolution in 1949.

Wilma Fairbank catalogued numerous exchanges with diplomats and cultural attachés from her time in China who indicated that they were unable to effectively report back on the Chinese political situation to Washington. The writer Floyd Taylor remarked that in supervising joint projects with the Kuomintang, he was constantly aware that there were:

> Certain facts about China ... he must not write ... Any American working [on cultural projects with the Chinese government] is part of an organization which would not permit anyone to send to America a sanely written and wholly accurate article about the Fascist tendencies of the Chinese government, which are little known in America, the country from which China is so anxious to obtain help.[78]

John King Fairbank, then working in intelligence for the US Office of Strategic Services, echoed the concern that the Division's cultural programs in China had drifted far from American political ideals, to the ultimate detriment of both America's credibility and China's political development. He observed that while technical education by US philanthropy had brought great benefits to China during the interwar period, it was now necessary to recognize that "ideas are as important as techniques. American technical assistance may hasten the

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[76] Wilma Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China, 1942–1949* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. vii, 24.

[77] Floyd Taylor, quoted in Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China*, p. 70.

[78] Floyd Taylor, quoted in Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China*, p. 70.

industrialization of China, as it did of Japan, without necessarily bringing China and the United States closer in thought and feeling." Compellingly, Fairbank warned the OWI and the Division of Cultural Diplomacy at the end of 1942 that it was "worth remembering that the last generation in the West was highly gratified at the 'westernization' of Japan, although to us it is now clear that this 'westernization' was but a means serving Japanese ends." In contrast to the upbeat dispatches sent by other US personnel in China and the opinion of figures of no less repute than Pearl Buck herself, Fairbank counseled Washington against the delusion of "assuming that railroads and factories will make China into a second United States. International understanding is not to be achieved by the export of goods and services alone."[79] Buck had argued assiduously throughout her early career that Americans needed to understand China, and during the war she gave her support to the cause of American military and humanitarian aid to China in order to bring China into the US sphere.[80] But Fairbank challenged the narrative implied in the cultural lend-lease idea and aid to the Nationalist regime, arguing that an uncompromising focus on democracy ought to be at the forefront of all American cultural diplomacy projects. In this context, he warned: "China is in the American world and if the United States is to play its part properly in this new world it must understand the other actors."[81] In 1942, Fairbank reiterated this dilemma in a letter to Special Assistant on Far Eastern Affairs Alger Hiss, which expressed his fear that "[t]his period of our policy in Asia will be remembered ... for its failure to grasp and deal with the essentials of the situation," and in particular for America's fatal willingness to compromise its democratic principles for strategic purposes.[82] His concerns were a clear reflection of the kinds of objections that progressives had voiced about propaganda's capacity to erode democracy.

Fairbank's warnings went unheeded, and they jarred with the wildly idealistic views of China that prevailed in Washington during 1942–43. A widely published 1942 public address by Foreign Service officer Joseph W. Ballantine sidestepped the failure of the US programs to effectively promote democracy, and instead

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[79] Pearl S. Buck, "Understanding the Chinese," *The Rotarian* 64: 1 (January, 1944); John K. Fairbank and T. L. Yuan, "Sino-American Intellectual Relations," (December 31, 1942), p. 1; Records Relating to the China, Burma, and India Theatres, 1942–5 (CBT 1942–5); Records of the Office of War Information, Record Group 208 (RG 208); National Archives and Records Administration of the USA, College Park, MD (NARA).

[80] On Buck's career see Michael H. Hunt, "Pearl Buck—Popular Expert on China, 1931–1949," *Modern China* 3:1 (January, 1977).

[81] John K. Fairbank and T. L. Yuan, "Sino-American Intellectual Relations," (December 31, 1942), p. 1; Records Relating to the China, Burma, and India Theatres, 1942–5; CBT 1942–5; RG 208; NARA, p. 1.

[82] John K. Fairbank, *Chinabound: A Fifty Year Memoir* (New York: Harper Collins, 1983), p. 196.

lauded cultural relations with China, as Washington's "greatest hope of rebuilding a new world on progressive lines out of the sorry plight in which we now find ourselves is enlightened and far-sighted leadership." Such leadership "can only be provided by men of broad and liberal culture," and through them America's "contributions can be large along spiritual and intellectual lines—especially in the field of political ideologies."[83] The expectation that China would pursue a democratic course in peacetime depended on the premise that there was a fundamental cultural harmony between the US and China, a point that astute observers like the Fairbanks had repeatedly questioned. In Ballantine's account, China's "ancient" culture stood in direct contrast to the "warlike" traditions of the Japanese. Its peaceful culture entitled China to a leading role in the post-war East Asian order, which would be built on liberal principles and supported by the overarching leadership of the United States. Ballantine noted that Washington could depend on the "essentially democratic character of Chinese national institutions and the historically peaceful character of Chinese national policies" to serve its interests in the region.[84] The head of the State Department's Far Eastern Division, Stanley Hornbeck, was another influential proponent of this view, almost to the point where China's democratic rise could be considered a *fait accompli*.[85] The political scientist Hornbeck's early experiences in China, where he worked as a college instructor and had worked closely with Woodrow Wilson's minister Paul Reinsch, had set his thinking firmly in the progressive mold. After imposing its Open Door policy on China during the early part of the twentieth century, Hornbeck believed that the United States had acquired an historic responsibility for guiding China's political and economic progress after the war.[86] A similar argument could be found in a 1944 policy paper for the Division written by Haldore Hanson, who had extensive experience in China after working there as a journalist during the 1930s. Hanson articulated an inevitable convergence between the interests of the US and China, arguing that "China has become our neighbor and every further advance in science will draw her still closer."[87]

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[83] Joseph Ballantine, "Cultural Factors in the Far Eastern Situation," *Department of State Bulletin* 1740 (May 9, 1942), pp. 397, 402. See also: Bruno Lasker, "Cultural Contacts Across the Pacific," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 215 (May, 1941).

[84] Joseph Ballantine, "Cultural Factors in the Far Eastern Situation" *Foreign Service Journal* 19: 7 (July, 1942), pp. 364–7.

[85] For a summary of his views see: Stanley Hornbeck *The United States and the Far East: Certain Fundamentals of Policy* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1942).

[86] Israel, *Progressivism and the Open Door*, p. 126.

[87] Haldore Hanson, "America's Need for Understanding China." *Department of State Bulletin* 2220 (November 26, 1944), p. 626.

The disjunction between the skeptical tone of American reports from the field and the optimistic projections voiced in Washington was partially a function of the operational challenges associated with running cultural diplomacy programs of any kind in a politically unstable and war-ravaged country. US philanthropic projects in China had all but ceased during the 1930s, leaving the Division with few existing conduits through which to initiate, plan and evaluate its cultural and educational work. With such inauspicious beginnings, the Division was compelled to present its most meager successes in highly optimistic terms in order to ensure funds and political support for their work in future. But as both John and Wilma Fairbank's dispatches indicate, in the rush to utilize cultural instruments in the service of American war aims, the contribution that cultural officers might have played in giving nuanced feedback on US strategic policy had been overlooked. Instead, the Division of Cultural Relations, to say nothing of the Far Eastern Division at the State Department, too readily believed in its own propaganda and in the feasibility of the ideological compromises this propaganda entailed.

In addition to overseeing the extension of US cultural projects in China, Charles Thomson issued a global rationale for the cultural diplomacy program into peacetime in 1942. He envisaged a worldwide program that would, first of all, "provide our own people with a realistic appreciation and comprehension of other peoples, and in consequence provide ... a more solid democratic basis for our international policy." A worldwide cultural effort would, secondly, "develop in the minds of other peoples not necessarily a more friendly, but beyond question a more fair and accurate idea of us." The diplomatic significance of such efforts would be to create from the ground up "more mutually helpful relations with other countries by developing the habit of planning and working together."[88] By this time, the General Advisory Committee had begun to use the term "instructive propaganda" rather than reciprocal exchange as a short-hand for the Division's philosophy, a term that was in keeping with the pragmatic direction of the Division's China program. That year, the Committee also began to characterize cultural diplomacy as an "instrumentality" in the context of the Allied struggle against Nazism. James T. Shotwell, in particular, used the term frequently in his recommendations, apparently oblivious to the irony that Harold Lasswell had used the term "instrumentality'" in a highly pejorative manner in his interwar studies of propaganda.[89]

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[88] Charles Thomson, "Address Delivered by Mr Charles A. Thomson, Chief Division of Cultural Relations, Department of State, at the Pan American Day Exercises of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas, on April 14, 1942," p. 7; Subj. 1939–50; HN; RG 59; NARA.

[89] The program was described as "one of the basic instrumentalities for modifying international relations and attitudes, and for maintaining a better stabilized world order ... Our leadership in international action in the cultural field will be as decisively necessary as in the political and economic fields." Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, pp. 194–5.

In his capacity as an ongoing member of the General Advisory Committee, Ben Cherrington vocally opposed this turn toward pragmatism, propaganda and "instrumentalism" in cultural diplomacy planning. He insisted that, at the very least, the question of whether US cultural diplomacy should be "national" and self-interested in character, or "international" and apolitical, needed further debate.[90] Cherrington was not the only critic of the transformation of cultural diplomacy from a mechanism of exchange to an instrument of persuasion or transformation. Laurence Duggan argued that in adopting more strident tactics, there was an "implication of a tie-in between cultural interchange and foreign policy," which would likely "invalidate the effect of the cultural activities."[91] On one hand, the war had brought new resources and the expansion of the Division's programs. The notion that cultural diplomacy was instrumental to the war effort had generated awareness in Washington and among the American public of the significance of international cultural relations. It also brought about a deeper appreciation of the power of foreign technical assistance and development aid in advancing US interests in less developed areas such as China and the Near East. But on the other hand, the circumstances of the war itself had presented fundamental difficulties for the Division in sustaining the principle of reciprocity, openness and political debate. Above all, it demanded that Washington avoid foregrounding democratic norms as a simple expedient, raising troubling questions for the advocates of apolitical, reciprocal cultural exchange.

Harley Notter took up the quandary of how to reconcile the rising public profile of cultural diplomacy as an "instrumentality" in the war effort and the longstanding American suspicion of propaganda techniques in his correspondence during early 1943. Notter was asked: "why is it so important to avoid causing resentment on matters of education and culture ... should policies on these matters differ essentially from those on economic and political matters, which in some cases will be enforced whether they cause resentment or not?"[92] In answer, Notter affirmed Washington's commitment to maintaining the distinction between the apolitical, reciprocal, and long-term purposes of cultural diplomacy and the short-term functions of war propaganda, but with the caveat that both still had an important place in US foreign policy. Notter recommended that the Division continue to carefully identify its aims in the context of long-term, civilian objectives in its publicity and programming decisions. Hence it must "avoid the natural tendency during war to expand disproportionately

[90] Cherrington remained on the General Advisory Committee after he left the post of Director of the Division of Cultural Relations. Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 196.

[91] Lawrence Duggan quoted in Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 197.

[92] B. Fosdick (reviser, author unrecorded), "Statement of Policy on Participation in Educational and Cultural Reconstruction by the Department of State," (January 25, 1944); Subj. 1939–50; HN; RG 59; NARA.

a program of cultural relations. This inevitably would create an abnormal situation that would lead to an undesirable reaction at the termination of the war." He suggested that the cultural programs should remain "divorced from such propaganda activities as the government might find necessary during the war ... long range objectives [must remain] ... the preoccupation of the Division." It was less evident in Notter's recommendations *how* the audiences of American cultural diplomacy might effectively be informed about the difference between messages intended to foster Allied war aims and those that embodied the more carefully circumscribed, reciprocal purposes of America's long-range cultural diplomacy.[93]

The General Advisory Committee's Waldo Leland was less certain than career diplomats such as Notter and Sumner Welles that the cultural diplomacy program was being effectively demarcated from Washington's short-term, strategically oriented wartime persuasion efforts, overseen both by the Division and by the OWI. He argued that cultural policy in areas directly affected by the war needed clearer demarcation from war information and psychological warfare initiatives, so that the cultural programs could remain a symbol of America's wider commitment to democracy and openness. "There is grave risk of doing violence," Leland warned, "if a government decides what is good for the people of another country and then proceeds to dish it out to them in the name of a program of cultural relations. Suspicion and misunderstanding are sure to result." To guard against such an outcome, the cultural diplomacy program should stick to the principle of "mutual acceptability," which "implies that a government does not use a program of cultural relations as a tool to further or to implement its political social or economic policies."[94] Whereas no agreement was reached in these debates over the ethos of US cultural diplomacy during 1942–43, it had become clear to all concerned that the program should remain a global one into the post-war period. Ben Cherrington summed up the connection between US national interests and cultural diplomacy: "[i]n our integrated world, it would be futile to attempt permanently to maintain cultural enlightenment in the western hemisphere while the rest of the world was in the grip of cultural decadence," Cherrington argued, "evidence is lacking that the *men*

[93] Division of Cultural Relations, "Progress Report of the Division of Cultural Relations, Department of State," 1940, p. 14; Box 2; File 5; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville.

[94] Waldo Leland, "International Cultural Relations: Historical Considerations and Present Problems," University of Denver Social Science Foundation Papers, 1943, pp. 27–8; Box 2, File 28; Records of the Division of Cultural Relations (CU Papers); Special Collections & Manuscripts Library; University Arkansas at Fayetteville.

of science, letters and the arts in the Americas would consider such a policy."[95] At the same time, Cherrington's comments foreshadowed the continued difficulty that the Division would face well into the post-war period in reconciling these two domestic constituencies for cultural diplomacy—policy-makers and internationalist cultural, intellectual and philanthropic elites—and the interests they represented.

[95] Division of Cultural Relations, "Memorandum Concerning a Long Range Program of Cultural Relations for the United States, September 15, 1941," p. 1; Box 5 ff 43–2; Personal Papers of Ben M. Cherrington; Special Collections Division, Penrose Library; University of Denver.

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Chapter 3

Journalist or Diplomat? Wartime Broadcasting at the Voice of America

The Voice of America made its first international radio broadcast—a news bulletin in German—on February 24, 1942. The feature was produced in studios located in New York City that had been hastily assembled in the 79 days since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. VOA had three general objectives: to garner public support for the war effort among neutral and Allied populations; to broadcast psychological warfare to Axis and occupied areas; and to present factual news and features about the US to both. VOA's initial instructions had specified that policy would be directed by the Department of State, and in June 1942 the Executive Order establishing the OWI placed VOA under the authority of that agency. In practice, however, the Voice's staff in New York had significant discretion in shaping its editorial and programming style during the war, and they defended this vigorously according to the principle of journalistic freedom. The "liberal propagandists" of the VOA, as the first major academic work on the OWI put it, took a firm view on what their work should represent.[1] Editorial judgments made in New York determined precisely what kind of impression VOA programs would create for their audience—whether or not the station would persuade through emotive appeals and dramatic flourishes, and whether or not it would persuade with a selective presentation of facts.

Whereas the war provided the catalyst for the establishment of VOA, from the beginning its staff regarded American international broadcasting as more than just a response to the military exigencies of the Second World War, and decidedly not as a propaganda operation. Voice officials represented their work as setting the foundations of an open global information order to facilitate the global spread of democracy. They regarded the United States as singularly equipped to shepherd global public opinion toward the cultivation of democracy, cultural understanding, and the promotion of an open and truthful global media. This expansive role for American broadcasting took on the essence of the progressive critique of propaganda, rather than rejecting or supplanting it. Rather than deploying propaganda as traditionally conceived, VOA officials

[1] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 73.

saw their work as a new and exceptional kind of practice. VOA officials could effectively justify their work to each other, and to the American public, in these exceptional terms. But in practical terms it was never clear exactly how VOA could achieve this independence and perform the duties for which it had been established.

The directors and senior editors at VOA thus struggled in their day-to-day programming with the station's conflicting obligations as a journalistic institution and as a diplomatic instrument. The OWI, which was also a wartime creation and was in theory responsible for directing policy at the Voice, had a similar inbuilt tension between its informative and persuasive functions, between journalism and "morale formation."[2] Archibald MacLeish remarked on this in 1942, highlighting that the confusion was over whether the OWI should act simply as an "issuing mechanism" for government policy or as a vehicle to support the war effort by any means available.[3] The OWI and VOA frequently came out on different sides of this debate, and VOA was reluctant to fall into line with the OWI's instructions on programming directives. Opposition from the Republican side of politics also beleaguered both the OWI and VOA, which were both derided as mouthpieces for the New Deal Democrats. The OWI's difficulty in setting informational goals around the progressive, anti-propaganda discourse was further compounded by the reluctance of the State and War Departments to help coordinate the OWI's objectives and offer it operational support.

Many cultural diplomacy advocates rejected the idea of radio broadcasting entirely, given the differences between the reciprocal format of cultural and educational exchange and the one-way format of radio broadcasting. Hence, supporters of the Voice also had to clarify the nature of their contribution to the prosecution of US national interests to this culturalist constituency. The term "propaganda" was frequently used by VOA staff in internal policy statements, but in a qualified sense: phrases such as "true propaganda," "white propaganda" and even "utilitarian propaganda" were thought to capture the VOA's role as a diplomatic institution with strong journalistic values.[4] In this context, Assistant Secretary of State Edward Barrett characterized the Voice as transcending the traditional notion of radio propaganda. The Voice would undertake advocacy on behalf of the general global interest, but "the old concocted type of horror stories were out of bounds."[5] In this the Voice took some inspiration from the

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[2] Michael Darrock, "Davis and Goliath," *Harper's Magazine* 186 (Feb., 1943), p. 230.

[3] Archibald MacLeish, quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 42.

[4] John Perry coined the latter term in 1942: John Perry, "War Propaganda for Democracy," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 6: 3 (Fall, 1942), p. 438.

[5] Edward W. Barrett, "Oral History Interview July 9, 1974," Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Oral History Project, Library of Congress Manuscripts Division, p. 5.

British Broadcasting Corporation and its success in establishing good journalistic credentials for its international Empire Service.[6]

American policy planners had begun to contemplate VOA's place in peacetime US foreign policy in 1944. In assessing these options, Voice officials noted the fundamental changes to the global order ushered in by the war, particularly the enhanced role of public opinion and the rise of global communications. The supporters of VOA argued that it was incumbent on the US to exercise international leadership in the field of global communications in the interests of a lasting peace. One discussion paper in a 1945 *Department of State Bulletin* argued that an ongoing international information program was necessary because "one can no longer rely simply on the understanding and knowledge of the politician and of the statesman for the formation of our foreign policy. In the modern world the peoples as well as the governments participate in the formation and development of foreign policies."[7] This did not, however, solve the persistent problem of how the Voice should straddle its dual wartime roles of journalist and diplomat. The station's Congressional detractors were also skeptical about the necessity of US broadcasting in the years immediately after the war. Though it continued to broadcast in its key European and Asian languages after 1945, the Voice languished in uncertainty for two years after the war before it was reinstated in 1947–48 as a key instrument in the struggle against global Communism.

Joining the Allied Cause on the Airwaves

Despite the fact that the United States had the most extensive domestic radio networks in the world by the 1930s, its capacity to reach international audiences over long distances via short- and medium-wave transmitters remained comparatively underdeveloped. NBC and CBS had explored the profitability of international shortwave services in 1929 and each owned dedicated frequencies, but advertising revenues proved too low to sustain these services. American philanthropies had also taken some interest in shortwave broadcasting, but on a small scale compared to their international educational, developmental and cultural activities. Only seven international shortwave broadcasters were in operation under philanthropic auspices at the time of VOA's establishment, all of which were requisitioned by the US government in 1942 along with the four dedicated international shortwave frequencies owned by NBC and CBS

[6] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 14.

[7] Dorothy Fosdick, "International Understanding: A Foundation for Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2346 (February 25, 1945), p. 296.

and several owned by the US Navy.[8] The VOA's earliest European broadcasts had to be sent to England via radiotelephone, for re-broadcast over the British Broadcasting Corporation's medium-wave European network.[9] Therefore a great deal of the OWI's initial work involved establishing a global shortwave transmission infrastructure.[10] There had also been tentative Congressional support for government-sponsored international broadcasting during the 1930s. Three bills to establish a government shortwave broadcasting program had been presented to the House by Congressman Emmanuel Celler from 1937, all of which failed. Most notable was a 1938 bill authorizing the Navy Department to found a Pan American Broadcasting Station, whose broadcasts would counteract the effects of Axis broadcasting in Latin America. This unsuccessful proposal earned Celler the opprobrium of private broadcasting companies, which feared such a move as the first step toward government competition in the domestic broadcasting sphere.[11]

The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs began to fund and advise US philanthropies in shortwave broadcasting to Latin America in mid-1941. In the interim between the beginning of the CIAA's work and the establishment of VOA, Rockefeller's operation brought in a range of talent from leading advertising and broadcasting firms, and established offices to produce its own programs in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington.[12] The CIAA also engaged NBC, CBS and other US broadcasters to produce features in Spanish and Portuguese containing a mixture of advertising, language-instruction and entertainment to promote US interests abroad, with output peaking in 1942 at 8 hours per day. The CIAA was assisted in this work by coordination committees made up of influential expatriates in various Latin American capitals, and it established training programs for Latin American radio producers in the United States.[13] News and counter-propaganda were also priorities, since the Axis had effectively mobilized

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[8] William R. Tyler, "Oral History Interview December 1, 1987," Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection. Georgetown University: Lauinger Library Special Collections, pp. 5–9.

[9] Walter Roberts, "The Voice of America: Origins and Recollections," www.americandiplomacy.org.

[10] It was on the basis of this prior neglect of international broadcasting operations that the prominent US information advocate Robert Sherwood had urged that government broadcasting be undertaken by a new and wholly government-run radio operation rather than by the corporations that had previously been engaged by the government to undertake this work. Robert E. Sherwood, letter to William J. Donovan (July 12, 1941), p. 2; hMS Am 1947 (1101) Robert E. Sherwood Personal Papers by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[11] "Radio: QRX," *Time Magazine*, May 16, 1938.

[12] Sadlier, *Americans All*, pp. 84–5.

[13] Sadlier, *Americans All*, p. 86.

resentments about US imperialism, interventionism, and the exploitative role of American corporations in the region in their own broadcasts. An undated memorandum from the Office characterized the CIAA broadcasts as a tool for the recognition of culture and achievements of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. They sought:

> to encourage the fair presentation of news which will indicate to Latin Americans that there are many things in their life and culture which we respect and admire. It does this in the belief that the irritation in these countries towards us has grown out of a lack of appreciation on our part of their achievements and culture, and that admiration thereof will stimulate greater good will.[14]

The Rockefeller Committee's work also included the production and distribution of a news and entertainment magazine modeled on *Life* called *En Guardia*, and it assisted in the distribution of Hollywood films with pro-US themes. The Committee worked with New York's Museum of Modern Art to establish a global film library that made prints of important Spanish and Portuguese language movies for circulation in Latin America. Museum staff also conducted a Nazi propaganda film content study to assist the government in its counter-propaganda efforts. Ten Latin American countries were selected to be destinations for a traveling exhibit of MoMA artworks.[15] In Washington, and under the auspices of the Library of Congress, Harold Lasswell conducted a Nazi radio content analysis project similar to that of the MoMA/Rockefeller Film Library project. In it, he sought to establish the most resonant themes to provide for America's defense.[16]

The Department of State had conducted a review of all international broadcasting operations in the US in 1936, with a view to assessing how these might be better structured to support US foreign policy.[17] FDR made no equivocal statements at this time about whether he supported an official international broadcasting operation. Nor did he in 1940 when he appointed a special committee to study Allied war propaganda and determine the role of

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[14] Nelson Rockefeller, *Program of the Communications Division*, undated; Box 5; President's Official Files 1933–1945; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park NY, p. 2.

[15] See: Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, pp. 12–13. See Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, pp. 115–16.

[16] See Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 116.

[17] Claude G. Bower, "Rebel press Attack on the United States at Lima: Confidential Report for Secretary and Under-Secretary, December 7, 1938;" Box 76; President's Secretary's File 1933–1945; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park, NY.

propaganda in the Axis' military victories in Europe.[18] But the idea of founding a dedicated agency for US propaganda did have the support of some key members of Roosevelt's administration, such as Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Vice President Henry Wallace and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, in the years before US entry into the war.

Roosevelt also sent William Donovan, a New York lawyer and lifelong Republican, to the UK in 1940 to study the British government's fifth-column and psychological warfare work. Roosevelt's goal was to survey possible models for an American psychological warfare/international information program in the event that it joined the war.[19] Following his return from Britain in early 1941 Donovan was instructed to establish and direct a new Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) within the Department of State. The Office was initially established for the purposes of propaganda monitoring and the coordination of intelligence gathering, rather than the production of propaganda *per se*. But Donovan immediately broadened this mission into the investigation of possible avenues for US propaganda abroad. He made no secret of endorsing the use of covert and psychological warfare activities, and of seeing no threat in this to American democratic principles. Donovan was also instrumental in bringing a number of America's finest scholars, including China specialists John King Fairbank and Joseph Ralston Hayden, into government service for the first time, in order to provide analysis on culture, public opinion, and international information. Meanwhile FDR installed the noted playwright Robert Sherwood as the head of the COI's international division, called the Foreign Information Service (FIS), in the middle of that year. Like MacLeish, Sherwood had been an ardent interventionist who had used his public platform to garner public support for stronger action against Axis aggression. Sherwood was also firm in his belief that all US cultural and informational activities should proceed in a truthful manner in order to showcase the strength of American democracy.

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[18] Although Wallace Carroll reports that Roosevelt shared the public's concerns that propaganda was an "un-American" practice, this overlooks three well-known aspects of Roosevelt's political views. Firstly, Franklin Roosevelt did not seem overly troubled with the consolidation of government power, nor expansion of the powers of the Executive office. Secondly, Roosevelt was a skilled politician who shared his "real" views with very few people, and it is difficult to say with any certainty what he thought of an American propaganda policy. Finally, Roosevelt was an interventionist and in this period sought to assist the Allies in any way possible. It thus seems unlikely that he would have had any scruples concerning the use of international information in this context. See: Wallace Carroll, *Persuade or Perish* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), p. 23.

[19] Donovan also forged connections with British intelligence officials during his visit, paving the way for extensive cooperation between the Allies in the areas of covert operations and psychological warfare as well as propaganda during the war. Shulman, *Voice of America*, p. 14.

The plot of his 1940 play, *There Shall be No Night*, sought to show that America already led the world by example in the struggle against totalitarianism, but that it was obliged to do much more to defend democracy in practical terms. The play's closing monologue referred to Pericles, Jesus Christ and Abraham Lincoln as global opinion leaders who had sacrificed themselves for the greater good and for the principles of a global democratic commonwealth, just as the victims of the Nazi onslaught in Europe had done in the first months of the war.[20]

Sherwood's appointment coincided with the COI's first forays beyond its limited mandate into information broadcasting, with the establishment of a shortwave radio operation located in San Francisco for audiences in East Asia. Although the COI's daily broadcasting hours were few and the station was given only minimal direction in terms of the specific foreign policy goals it should seek to support, its work set an important precedent for the VOA operation in New York. While the top officials at COI quarreled incessantly about how close to "propaganda" US government broadcasting should go—Donovan was a pragmatist who believed the US should embrace propaganda; Sherwood rejected it—both Donovan and Sherwood were on friendly terms with Roosevelt and both became eloquent advocates for the expansion of US information activities to support the Allies. Roosevelt set one of his closest advisors, Harry Hopkins, the task of defining the most appropriate content for morale-boosting information for broadcast to the people of Britain. In one of his memoranda on the question, Hopkins reflected on the ideological implications of Europe's catastrophe and the obligations of the United States to provide it with morale-boosting support:

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[20] Whereas Sherwood's previous plays had been explicitly anti-Fascist, *There Shall Be No Night* tells the story of the Finnish resistance against the Soviet invasion in 1939–40, and develops the theme of equivalence between Communist and Fascist authoritarianism. The play's closing scenes underscore the role of America as a beacon of democracy to occupied lands. A character in the closing scenes of the play declaims: "I have often read the words which Pericles spoke over the bodies of the dead, in the dark hour when the light of Athenian democracy was being extinguished by the Spartans. He told the mourning people that he could not give them any of the old words which tell how fair and noble it is to die in battle. These empty words were old, even then, twenty-four centuries ago. But he urged them to find revival in the memory of the commonwealth which they together had achieved; and *he promised them that the story of their commonwealth would never die, but would live on, far away, woven into the fabric of other men's lives*. I believe that these words can be said now of our own dead, and our own commonwealth. I have always believed in the mystic truth of the resurrection. The great leaders of the mind and the spirit—Socrates, Christ, Lincoln—were all done to death that the full measure of their contribution to human experience might never be lost." My emphasis added, Robert E. Sherwood, *There Shall Be No Night* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 175–6.

> We must immediately set about the business of developing and educating an American leadership which will grip the imagination of mankind ... [This is a] *whole new phase* in which the struggle for democracy–a positive phase, from which will emerge the concept of a new *industrial democracy* upon which the American people can found their faith. The President, who represents democracy to all the world ... is the man to launch this new future.[21]

What is striking about this statement is the vision of *Pax Americana* it presented, articulated at a time when the Axis had the upper hand in Europe and Asia, and the US remained officially neutral.

Sherwood echoed these notions of US moral leadership, stating that the "Nazis have established the world's most thorough despotism, trampling over the decayed body of liberty to achieve authority." America must therefore act as a global beacon of ideas and culture because it "still strive[s] to perfect the world's finest democracy."[22] As the director of the Voice, Sherwood continued to define America's international publicity efforts in similar terms, as a function of the inherently democratic sentiments of the American people rather than the narrow interests of the American government. The staff that Sherwood recruited for the VOA was drawn from the East Coast journalistic community who, like Sherwood, had been "liberal and articulate interventionists" before the US joined the war. They shared a clear and extensive "vision of their nation's responsibility" to resist Fascism in all spheres. As such, these interventionists had "determined the basic [ideological] directions the information program would take" well before Pearl Harbor, having departed from the anti-propaganda sentiments that prevailed in the 1930s.[23] The question that remained was what kinds of broadcasting techniques would serve this ideological purpose. Although Sherwood was convinced that the United States had an exceptional message to convey, he believed that the State Department should nonetheless adopt some techniques traditionally associated with propaganda, including repetition, simplification and the use of dramatic formats. Sherwood saw nothing untoward about programming designed to repeat its message in a "thousand different forms of expression," and which engaged in negative messages via the refutation of Axis claims and policies.[24] He also recommended that any future government

[21] Russell W. Davenport to Harry Hopkins (June 16, 1941), Attachment: "Memorandum" (by Hopkins), p. 3; Box 324; Papers of Harry L. Hopkins; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park, NY.

[22] Robert Sherwood (1939–40), quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 16–17.

[23] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 8.

[24] Robert E. Sherwood, letter to William J. Donovan (July 12, 1941); bMS Am 1947 (1101) Robert E. Sherwood Personal Papers by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, p. 2.

radio operation invest heavily in recruiting hosts and researchers "who are good linguists and are able to follow all foreign broadcasts in all languages," as well as a fully fledged staff of "news men, psychologists, first-rate writers, artists, actors, musicians, [who must] carry on a twenty-four hour a day program."[25]

Unlike the cultural diplomacy advocates, who were able to draw on established philanthropic practices when they first initiated international cultural exchanges in Latin America, the early supporters of US government radio broadcasting struggled without clear precedents beyond the recently established COI operation for designing a radio propaganda program that embodied the special characteristics of American democracy. As Justin Hart observes, the CPI's efforts to publicize American war aims and sell Wilson's peace plan after the First World War were almost totally overlooked in discussions of US information strategies for the Second World War.[26] The prominent CBS political commentator and future head of the OWI Elmer Davis ruminated on the uniqueness of US informational diplomacy in a public address in Chicago in 1940. He noted that many Americans might worry that proposals for a government information program in support of the Allies "must be propaganda in intention, otherwise why should the State Department conduct it?" But the official programs were simply about ensuring "that foreign countries get a complete picture of what is going on in America ... I believe that in the long run that the total picture will create a good impression of the United States however bad things may look momentarily."[27] Davis made a similar argument to Congress years later in defense of the OWI's work. The organization could not simply supply war news; it must also illustrate the lifestyle, culture and politics of the United States. Foreign audiences required context, explanation and examples to fully appreciate the workings of democracy.

Franklin D. Roosevelt used his wartime legislative powers to extend the existing *ad hoc* information operations of the COI into a worldwide information program in support of American war aims. Roosevelt immediately extended the geographical reach of the COI and FIS into distributing war information to Europe, and instructed Sherwood to find staff and establish production studios for an official, multi-lingual shortwave radio operation as quickly as possible. The station was to be based in New York City so that it might draw on the expertise of the major US media and advertising corporations located in the city. The location also enabled Sherwood and the Voice's head of radio production John Houseman to receive advice from the British Special Operations Executive and

[25] Robert E. Sherwood, letter to William J. Donovan (July 12, 1941); bMS Am 1947 (1101) Robert E. Sherwood Personal Papers by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, p. 2.

[26] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 76.

[27] Elmer Davis, "Address of Elmer Davis to the Chicago Rotary Club, 26 February, 1940," p. 9; Box 4; Papers of Elmer Davis; Library of Congress Manuscripts Division. p. 9.

the offices of its Political Warfare Executive located there. Both official agencies had been engaged in propaganda on behalf of the Allied cause on American soil since the late 1930s.

In what has since been regarded as the founding statement of the Voice's journalistic ideals, the Voice of America's first broadcast in German in February 1942 opened with an assurance that "[t]he news may be good for us. The news may be bad. But we shall tell you the truth."[28] Radio producer John Houseman oversaw this first broadcast, and he brought to the Voice his considerable expertise, garnered over the course of a distinguished career in the production of radio drama. Houseman had famously collaborated with Orson Welles on the Broadway production of *Julius Caesar* and 1938's *War of the Worlds* radio serials, which consisted of a set of fictional news broadcasts about an alien invasion of Britain that generated a public panic when many listeners became convinced they were hearing about real events. Houseman's renown as a radio drama producer and his reputation as a supporter of both the New Deal and intervention in the war in Europe made him a perfect candidate to take up a top position at the Voice. As chief of the VOA Radio Program Bureau, Houseman favored a truthful and non-selective approach to the preparation of news broadcasts. He later noted that in early 1942 "we had little choice;" the news for the Allies was "almost all bad" and VOA had no real basis for "weaseling" to its audience. But by reporting this bad news faithfully the Voice also established strong journalistic credentials, an asset both with respect to its foreign audiences and to the policy-makers, journalists and commentators in the US who also had a strong interest in the kinds of information VOA was propagating on America's behalf.

The Voice therefore quickly gained what Houseman described as a "reputation for honesty that we hoped would pay off on that distant but inevitable day when we would start reporting our own invasions and victories." Elsewhere, Houseman characterized the Voice as having "absolutely no direction from anyone as to what we should broadcast other than the truth."[29] The time pressures of news production, translation and broadcast meant that scripts were often broadcast without being sent to Washington for approval. Houseman also took the lead in bringing the techniques of radio drama to the station, and this set the Voice on a different course to its journalistic British counterpart during the war. Houseman later reflected that "[f]or them [the BBC] ... the news was an essential and inviolable thing ... [but] to me it was the raw material from which it was my job to fashion shows."[30] A typical, catchy opening to a VOA

[28] Voice of America opening broadcast, quoted by David Ensor, http://www.insidevoa.com/content/popup/1753369.html (accessed May 10, 2015).

[29] John Houseman, quoted in Alan L. Heil Jr., *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 35–7.

[30] Houseman quoted in Shulman, *Voice of Victory*, p. 301.

broadcast in 1942 utilized multiple voices to announce: "This is New York ... calling the people of Europe," followed by: "Every morning at this time, you hear our voices of America," with a third voice announcing that the program would tell its listeners "what this country is doing and thinking towards winning the war."[31] Programs such as *America Calling Europe* recreated dialogues, blurring the distinction between news and entertainment. One British observer quipped that this dramatic style was "hammy;" the station sounded as if it was "selling ... toothpaste, urgently."[32] the BBC nevertheless actively assisted the VOA's operations by sending advisors to New York and by relaying the VOA signal to the European Continent via its own transmitters. The question of whether the Voice's adoption of dramatic techniques should be thought of as propaganda—whether it was appropriate to enhance the emotional impact of US broadcasts through dramatic techniques—was not a major point of debate among Voice officials, despite their wish to avoid "manipulative" practices. Like Houseman, Sherwood was convinced that the Voice's wartime role always affirmed the spirit of American democracy and honesty, despite dramatic enhancements of its style.

Soon after the Voice's first broadcasts in the spring of 1942, Sherwood, MacLeish and Donovan convinced FDR that the Office of the Coordinator of Information was simply too narrow to oversee a worldwide operation geared toward winning the war. Tensions between Sherwood and Donovan, the latter favoring a stronger psychological warfare role for the Voice, had also made policy coordination between Washington and New York difficult. Donovan had disagreed with MacLeish over the same issue.[33] The COI was disbanded in the middle of 1942 and the Office of War Information was established in its place to oversee all the so-called "civilian" information programs for the duration of the war. Donovan was put in charge of a separate psychological warfare agency, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), reporting to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The OWI's work included domestic censorship and the production of information for domestic audiences as well as foreigners. Its domestic work would be guided by the "strategy of truth" in the interests of preserving American democracy and which comprised the lion's share of the OWI's work. This work in censorship and information for the American public remained controversial, however.

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[31] VOA radio script (1942) quoted in Shulman, *Voice of Victory*, p. 54.

[32] Shulman, *Voice of Victory*, p. 336. Other official British views of the Voice's function were more positive, however, with one official from the Ministry of Information reflecting that the exuberant and dramatic qualities of the VOA's broadcasting was important for "keeping alive and stimulating the democratic view of life and of stating as powerfully as possible the achievements and purposes of democratic nations." Unnamed official quoted in Shulman, *Voice of America*, p. 43. VOA officials, on the other hand, often charged the BBC with being too heavily censored.

[33] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 80.

The OWI's work was conducted in the context of an "uneasy truce" between the administration and a public that had "not forgotten past lessons" about the nature of propaganda.[34]

Sherwood's Foreign Information Service became the OWI's international branch, and its work included information for audiences in Hawaii and Alaska. Elmer Davis's role as director of the OWI involved not just establishing a large new bureaucracy but also harmonizing policy across the censorship, international and domestic information branches of the OWI. The OWI's work included film production, managed by the OWI Bureau of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, book and magazine production, the management of United States Information Service centers overseas (which it took over from the Department of State), and even an exchange program for foreign journalists, like the Latin American exchanges overseen by the CIAA.[35] Despite this demarcation of roles, policy disagreements and the duplication of responsibilities between Sherwood, Donovan, and Davis were a significant, ongoing problem.[36] Compounding the administrative problems for the OWI as the war went on was the fact that the Department of State cooperated with it only reluctantly, and Congressional Republicans increasingly feared that the Office was distributing propaganda in the service of Roosevelt's presidency rather than the war effort itself. Senator Robert Taft, for example, criticized the aggrandizing New Dealers of the OWI and their apparent determination to "make the country over under the cover of war."[37] Southern Democrats joined the Republicans in anger over the OWI's apparent endorsement of racial desegregation in OWI material depicting the contribution of African Americans to the war effort that had been tailored to appeal to audiences in Africa, the Near East, Asia and the Caribbean. Urged on by disparaging comments about the politicization of the OWI from news outlets such as the *New York Times*, Congress slashed the OWI's budget for domestic operations in 1943.

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[34] Horten, *Radio Goes to War*, p. 43.

[35] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 16.

[36] Davis tended to concentrate his efforts on the domestic functions of the Office of War Information, but nonetheless did not have a good working relationship with Sherwood. The hostility between Donovan and Sherwood, both of whom had strong views on how the international information programs should be operated, became particularly problematic during the 1940s. Donovan, as an advocate of psychological warfare without scruples, was one of the key figures involved in the information policy debates in Washington. His approach particularly rankled with Sherwood, who wished to preserve the journalistic integrity of the Voice as an embodiment of American democracy. See, e.g.: Holly Cowan Shulman, *The Voice of Victory: The Development of American Propaganda and the Voice of America, 1920–1942*. PhD Dissertation (University of Maryland, 1984), Ch. 8.

[37] Robert Taft quoted in Horten, *Radio Goes to War*, p. 43.

Editorial Questions in Wartime

Despite the challenge of navigating partisan issues and bureaucratic politics in Washington, the Voice steadily expanded its operations in 1942 and 1943. Its broadcasting services initially focused on Europe and East Asia, which required assembling a team of translators and journalists. A number of VOA's foreign language presenters had been recruited from local radio stations across the country, but many were recently arrived émigré European journalists. Their strenuous objections to the Nazi occupations of their homelands relished the opportunity to hit back at National Socialism, particularly the broadcasters at the French desk. Joining this influx of émigrés at the Voice and the OWI were social scientists such as Lasswell and Doob, whose government service involved public opinion research and information planning. As Doob later noted, the adoption of quantitative data analysis techniques was particularly crucial for OWI policy evaluations because it was impossible to do lengthy, impressionistic reports on enemy opinion and morale under wartime conditions.[38] Even outside the formal agencies of government, American scholars generated a substantial output of new research on propaganda and communications that supported Washington's efforts. Many prominent US universities and cultural institutions had appointed distinguished scholars, writers and artists who had fled the disorder in Europe. They enhanced this propaganda analysis and communications research, as well as issuing public writings that helped to sustain the public's morale in the fight against Germany. Lasswell and Doob's new agenda reflected a shift in US communications scholarship away from the reductive theoretical assumptions of the propaganda analysis movement as well as its normative position on opinion manipulation. The stimulus-response, or "magic bullet," theory of propaganda's influence as had prevailed in some interwar accounts was supplanted by the more nuanced, "limited effects" models of the early 1940s, based on observations of large scale propaganda in practice. Whereas more nuanced perspective such as Doob's and Dewey's had proposed more sophisticated influence models based on the role of authoritative institutions in generating acceptance of propaganda messages, these theoretical concerns were also dropped in favor of the analysis of message reception.[39] In 1940 the University of Louisville's Francis O. Wilcox produced a painstaking fact-check of the new bout of atrocity stories being put about by Germany and Italy, noting the close association between propaganda and international aggression, and providing a platform for the US government

[38] Leonard W. Doob, "The Utilization of Social Scientists in the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information,' *The American Political Science Review* 41: 4 (August, 1947), pp. 651–3.

[39] Sproule, "Progressive Propaganda Critics," pp. 225–7.

to refute the stories.[40] New York City's New School for Social Research, which was known during the war as the "University in Exile" after its numerous émigré recruits, employed the noted German political scientist Hans Speier, who established a Totalitarian Communications Project to advise the Voice and the BBC on counter-propaganda strategy. The legendary German Marxist Theodor Adorno contributed to a Rockefeller Foundation project at Princeton University on the "physiognomy" of radio broadcasting's influence. Princeton's Listening Center monitored the manipulation techniques used in Allied and Axis radio broadcasting in Europe, as well as checking the accuracy of their facts. A similar project for monitoring Japanese propaganda in Asia, funded by the OWI and the Federal Communications Commission, was founded at Stanford University in 1942. Stanford also oversaw other radio evaluation projects with support from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1940–41—work it would continue to do for the United States Information Agency during the mid-1950s.[41]

During the first years of the war American scholars also sought to establish a more nuanced view of how the American public might cope with the saturating influence of propaganda. Accepting propaganda's pervasiveness and reflecting critically on its message was now seen by some commentators as preferable to swimming against the tide of the expanding corporate media and governmental propaganda.[42] The limited effects propaganda model had emphasized the active role of the audience in how propaganda achieves influence, shifting the terms of the debate away from "propaganda analysis" toward a more neutral framing of the field as "communications research."[43] The work of communications pioneer Paul Lazarsfeld on US elections was influential in this reframing. Lazarsfeld had compellingly pointed out that propaganda that was wildly at odds with the current beliefs of a public was rarely effective. He also showed that personal interactions were more important than media and propaganda in how US voters

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[40] Francis O. Wilcox, "The Use of Atrocity Stories in War," *The American Political Science Review* 34: 6 (December, 1940). In yet another example of the familiar pattern, shortly after writing this piece Wilcox suspended his work at the University of Louisville and joined the staff of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, later publicizing its work in the pages of the *American Political Science Review.* Frances O. Wilcox, "Government Pamphlets on the War," *The American Political Science Review* 38: 1 (February, 1944).

[41] Gary, *The Nervous Liberals*, p. 118–22; see also David Jenemann, *Adorno in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. xviii. Adorno's intellectual work examining the culture industry reflected some of the same anxieties shared by the progressive propaganda critics about the elite control of public perceptions. Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry Revisited," in Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas MacKay Kellna (eds), *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

[42] Paul T. Cherrington, "Our Freedoms and Our Opinions," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 6: 4 (Winter, 1942).

[43] Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science," p. 68.

picked a president.[44] These findings offered some reassurance that Americans for the most part still possessed the critical faculties necessary to approach Axis and Allied propaganda discerningly. The results were also more scientifically framed than the often explicitly political work of the propaganda critics, which proved far more appealing to grant-giving bodies such as the Rockefeller Foundation.[45] Lazarsfeld's approach also indicated that the VOA's truthful, enlightening approach that engaged listeners' own interests and inclinations would resonate far more effectively with audiences abroad.

In addition to news roundups and commentary, the Voice broadcast documentaries and dramatizations illustrating the daily life and cultural traditions in the United States. This features component was adopted in part on the recommendation of BBC advisors in New York, who suggested that an understanding of American culture and lifestyle might well turn out to be VOA's most important contribution on the international stage. This work "added considerable value to the VOA's output, as the time problems in broadcasting from the United States ensured that the news component was frequently stale by the time that the broadcasts aired in Europe."[46] Feature segments were also seen as a means to ensure the Voice maintained a soft image and provided the democratic context of US war aims as well as a distinctive format from Axis radio. Many of these feature programs were tailored to specific audiences. During 1942, for example, francophone American women recorded messages of support for French audiences, emphasizing the value of family and sacrifice, as well as discussions of their own lifestyles and values. One spokeswoman urged French women to resist the Nazi occupation, assuring them that their own husbands and sons were "out there fighting for freedom, same as your boys" and that "the American people are putting their whole soul into the job of winning the battle for freedom."[47] Similarly, American labor leaders informed the left-leaning workers of Europe that the Allies stood together in their commitment to freedom from want. As a result of the New Deal American society was undergoing a "process of leveling, a gradual evaporation of privilege, an extension of social and economic security, and an advancement of democracy," and was thus worthy of their support.[48]

Another theme developed in feature broadcasts to European audiences was the scale and might of American industrial production. Taking care to avoid an "ivory tower"-style discussion about American innovation and industrial

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[44] Cmiel, "On Cynicism, Evil, and the Discovery of Communication," p. 93.

[45] Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science," p. 70.

[46] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 15

[47] Voice of America, "French Women;" Recording; Sonic Catalogue Reference: LWO 5554 GR 13 8A4; Library of Congress Recorded Sound Archive.

[48] Voice of America, "Labor Voices from America;" Recording, Sonic Catalogue Reference: LWO 5833 GR 34 13B3; Library of Congress Recorded Sound Archive.

advancement, the VOA sought to present concrete demonstrations of US productivity, and to show how this made an Allied military victory inevitable.[49] Dramatizations of key episodes in Latin American history were acted out in a radio serial for the Western Hemisphere, which used the catchphrase a "new world of peace" for the republics of the Americas. *This New World of Peace* characterized the Good Neighbor Policy as the template for Washington's objectives in the post-war global order.[50] Its presentation of "radio plays about … heroes like San Martín and Bolívar" for Latin American audiences were generally well received, but struck some members of its audience as slightly absurd. One response to the series appearing in an American national magazine derided it as akin to a radio station from Rio de Janeiro presenting dramatizations of the life of Benjamin Franklin to audiences in Philadelphia.[51]

The OWI's print material adopted a similar, multi-lingual approach that targeted segments of its audience, and also sought to give context on US culture and lifestyles. An English language magazine called *Victory*, again in the mold of *Life*, and the movie-focused *Magazine of the Screen* were prepared for Allied areas, particularly the British Empire. A Russian language equivalent, called *Amerika*, was first distributed in the USSR in 1944 and remained extremely popular with readers during the early Cold War. A comic-strip version of the life of Franklin Roosevelt was translated into most of the OWI's target languages. OWI even prepared items such as sewing kits, matchbooks, soap flakes, jigsaw puzzles, and seed packets printed with messages of freedom for distribution to civilians in Axis occupied areas, especially in South East Asia.

The OWI's print information efforts centered on the distribution of pamphlets, including one on life in the heartland entitled *Small Town USA* and another on the production of the familiar US army vehicle entitled *Autobiography of a Jeep*. Its outreach to foreign journalists and editors included a professional exchange program.[52] Much of the OWI's print material had themes of "American power and productivity" in order to create the impression that "the United States was creating the greatest fighting machine ever known."[53] Although OWI was officially tasked with informational diplomacy in a civilian context, some of its work was directed toward psychological warfare, in particular the production of OWI leaflets for tactical purposes that would be dropped from airplanes in conjunction with military operations. A set of 56 strategic leaflets in use during 1944 covered topics such as how to surrender to the Allies, the humane treatment

[49] Shulman, *Voice of Victory*, p. 71.

[50] Voice of America, "This New World of Peace," vols. 1 and 2; Recording, Sonic Catalogue Reference: LWO 5554 GR18 17A2-A3; Library of Congress Recorded Sound Archive.

[51] Seoane, "If I were Nelson Rockefeller," p. 316.

[52] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 16.

[53] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 154–5.

of POWs by the Allies, and the inevitable defeat of the Axis. By the end of 1944 a staggering 800 million psychological warfare leaflets had been dropped over Western Europe.[54] During the Allied invasion of French-occupied North Africa, leaflets with titles such as *You are Surrounded* and *Drowning Is a Nasty Death* were believed to have caused an increase in the number of surrendering soldiers.[55] The Office also placed advertisements in local newspapers in various cities in the European and Pacific theaters, which publicized US war aims with rousing slogans and images and encouraging audiences to collect copies of the OWI's publications from the United States Information Service outposts. India's *Hindustan Times*, for example, published one advertisement with an image of a lamp of liberty lighting Asia and another with an image of FDR, both accompanied by statements about the Atlantic Charter, the spirit of 1776, and the independence of the Philippines. In the Indian case, at least, this publicity effort provoked a mixed response, with a number of independence leaders criticizing the apparent hypocrisy of such advertisements when the US President had failed to back the movement's calls for immediate self-determination from the British Empire.

Archibald MacLeish had been a key figure in helping to establish cultural diplomacy as an important instrument of US foreign policy, and he also commented frequently on the question of resolving democracy, openness and self-interest within the US information program. During a speech in 1942 MacLeish reflected that despite the challenge of doing propaganda in a new and progressive way, the Voice had managed to effectively convey the spirit of American democracy. He noted that "[t]he government of a democracy, by virtue of its existence as a democratic government, has a very different function in relation to the making of opinion." Thus, it was not propaganda so much as the American government's democratic "function to see to it that the people have the facts before them—the facts on which opinions can be formed."[56] The VOA's Chief of Policy Planning, who managed the communication between the studios in New York and the OWI in Washington, was James Warburg, a former banker and advisor on finance within the Roosevelt administration. Warburg echoed MacLeish's characterization of the station's purpose, situating VOA's message of truth as part of an epic ideological struggle between "those who want freedom for mankind and those who want freedom for themselves at the expense of others." For Warburg, who had been born in Hamburg and was deeply committed to defeating Hitler's regime, the Voice's truthful approach

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[54] Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), pp. 221–2.

[55] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 117.

[56] Archibald MacLeish public address (1942), quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 13–14.

was testament to America's ability to shape the world order in such a way that it would be "so permeated by justice that the majority of men will not be moved by violence."[57] To him, it was clear that the deployment of information in defense of democracy could easily be done in a way that avoided manipulative propaganda. Other supporters of the Voice and the OWI also made the crucial distinction between the Axis' negative, provocative approach to shaping opinion and VOA's approach, which showed how radio "can be used to provoke and stimulate ... discussion" and encourage "free access to information and ideas from all sources."[58]

Warburg, Sherwood and Houseman worked together effectively to put the Voice on air and establish a coherent tone for the station in a short space of time. The trio was effective because they seemed to have "no doubt about what they wanted to avoid. Fighting against fascism, they were insistent that their efforts bear as little resemblance as possible to those of the fascists." They shared the view that "the United States, even in the context of a total war, could not afford ... deception, which would only lend credence to the Axis charge that American ideals were hypocritical and hollow."[59] They were adamant that VOA should avoid the sensationalist atrocity stories that had so tarnished Britain and the CPI's reputation in the aftermath of the First World War, and they were effective in recruiting production and journalistic talent as well as qualified native speakers for foreign broadcasts who understood the VOA's strident but truthful approach.[60] By injecting the Voice with the spirit of a global crusade to defend democracy, and by endorsing the use of certain propaganda techniques such as repetition or dramatization, the triumvirate managed to refashion the progressive critique of propaganda into an argument in favor of the Voice's style of international broadcasting.

Davis was ultimately responsible for policy direction at the Voice, however, and it quickly became clear that Davis and his staff had a decidedly more strategic, or "diplomatic," interpretation of the Voice's role than Sherwood, Warburg and Houseman. The OWI's founding directive, Executive Order 9182, had specified that government broadcasting should have an informative function, but only

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[57] Warburg (1941), quoted in Shulman, *Voice of America*, p. 22. Warburg had been a prominent New York banker during the 1930s, an outspoken interventionist after 1939 (he was a member of both the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies and Fight for Freedom) and had joined Donovan's OIC shortly before the Pearl Harbor attack. For a statement of his interventionist views see: James P. Warburg, *Peace In Our Time?* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), p. 48. In 1944's *Foreign Policy Begins at Home* Warburg urged that that US people think carefully about the opportunity for global reform that the war presented, so that effective institutions for global peace could be put in place. James P. Warburg, *Foreign Policy Begins at Home* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1944).

[58] Perry, "War Propaganda for Democracy," p. 443.

[59] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 19, 76.

[60] Shulman, *Voice of Victory*, p. 351.

as a corollary to its primary function in performing advocacy on behalf of US foreign policy and the war effort. It specified that the Office would "formulate and carry out, through the use of press, radio, motion picture, and other facilities, information programs designed to facilitate the development of an informed and intelligent understanding" of the United States, alongside its overarching mission to present the "status and progress of the war effort and of the *war policies, activities, and aims of the [US] Government*."[61]

The Voice functioned at a certain remove from the foreign policy establishment in Washington, with its directors insisting that the OWI's editorial direction often came too slowly for the rapid-fire demands of radio programming. OWI head Elmer Davis kept carefully to the terms of this official mandate when he reported on the Voice's progress to his superiors, and he stressed the VOA's diplomatic responsibilities frequently to the station's planners. Davis's pragmatic approach was clear when he assured the White House that "OWI told foreign peoples the truth, but it did not tell them the truth for their entertainment or edification, it told them the truth to advance the interests of the United States." Consequently, "the selection of and emphasis of news sent to a particular country at a particular time" was being "determined by the need to support specific military or political objectives," not newsworthiness *per se*.[62] Political controversy over the VOA's commentary during the Allied invasions of North Africa and Italy would shortly contradict Davis's assurances about VOA's commitment to US war aims, however. The incidents led to a damaging phase of antagonism between the New York operation and Washington. At issue was the Voice leadership's determination to showcase their journalistic credentials even when these contradicted US government and military policy.

Another question that was significant in the context of these differing views about the VOA's functions between the staff in New York and their superiors in Washington was to what degree, and how, the Voice's presenters should interpret the news it transmitted. VOA's New York directors largely agreed that a strong dose of "commentary" alongside the news would enhance the station's impact. At the same time they acknowledged that journalistic guidelines would need to apply to such segments to ensure fact and comment were clearly distinguished. The view from Washington, however, was that the station should blend fact and interpretation in a seamless fashion, seeking maximum persuasive impact in line with military objectives. A 1942 memorandum from the OSS to the president defined "interpretative news stories" as the station's proper function,

[61] My emphasis added. "The Office of War Information;" Executive Order #9182 (June 13, 1942); Records Relating to the International Information Activities, 1938–1953 (IIA. 1938–53); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

[62] "OWI Report to the President 1942–5," p. 92; Box 4; Papers of Elmer Davis; Library of Congress Manuscripts Division.

noting that VOA's editorial policy should be selective about the kinds of facts and news stories for broadcast.[63] One US diplomat stationed in Britain wrote to Sherwood near the end of that year arguing that "interpretation" should be the basic function of US informational diplomacy. There was an "intense curiosity about America" in Britain that could either be "fed creatively or wisely by us, resulting in an understanding of the real America, or ... will be fed haphazardly, resulting in misunderstanding and frustration." The view from Britain was that political debate about what was, or was not, appropriate for morale-boosting broadcasting were unhelpful: "the job of giving information cannot be distinguished from interpretation, and thus from propaganda."[64] Secretary of State Cordell Hull also believed there was an "intimate relationship between the means of communication and the execution of American foreign policies," and hoped to see Washington maintain a "world-wide communication [policy] under such degree of Government control as to ensure that it will be operated in the national interest" well into the post-war period.[65] Echoing this, the VOA News Branch's stylebook instructed staff that they were "not in the business to amuse, entertain or simply inform our listeners. Nor are we in business because news is an end in itself." Instead, the station's role was to contribute directly to the worldwide struggle in which the United States was engaged.[66]

Despite the ongoing ambiguities associated with defining VOA's mission vis-à-vis traditional conceptions of propaganda, and the challenges of policy coordination between Washington and New York, the Voice steadily expanded its operations during 1942. French, Italian, and English language desks had been added in the days shortly after the Voice's first German broadcast in February. These new language desks began by producing 15-minute news segments in the two cramped production studios that served VOA's needs for its first three months. By April, VOA was broadcasting 24 hours per day to Europe, had a strong signal in Asia, and was planning to expand its staff on the West Coast from 96 to 150.[67] By June, the Voice had 23 short- and medium wave radio

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[63] Unattributed, "An American Press Service Jan 11, 1942," attachment to letter from George Fielding Elliot to William Donovan (February 2, 1942), p. 5; Box 128; President's Secretary's File, 1933–1945; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park, NY.

[64] Herbert Agar to Robert Sherwood (November 30, 1942), p. 1; Outpost Records 1942–6; Records of the Historian; Records of the Office of War Information, Record Group 208; National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

[65] Cordell Hull, to the President, "Memorandum," (June 29, 1942), p. 1; Box 71; President's Secretary's File; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park, NY.

[66] *This Is Your Job* VOA News Branch stylebook quoted in Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 32.

[67] Halifax, "From Washington to Foreign Office," (April 17, 1942); FO 317/31779; Public Record Office of the United Kingdom, Kew. An analysis of how ineffective (from the US perspective) American propaganda was in Asia, due to the compromises made with British hegemony, can be found in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 82–3.

transmitters of its own, 18 production studios in New York, and was broadcasting in 27 languages. As Foreign Service officer W.R. Tyler reflected some years later, during these first months programmers at the Voice had maintained a positive message of "morale building ... making the people over there feel that victory would come in the end, that the United States was on the side of victory, as we had always been."[68] Tensions between the expectations of foreign policy and military agencies in Washington about what VOA should accomplish on behalf of US war objectives came to a head at the end of 1942, however, and once again in 1943.

VOA Journalism: Courting Controversy.

At the beginning of November 1942, the VOA was directed to undertake tactical broadcasting as part of a broader psychological warfare campaign accompanying the Allied invasion of North Africa. From the beginning, psychological warfare had been envisaged as a key part of the campaign. The operation's commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower, remarked that though he didn't know much about propaganda, he would "give it every chance" to make a contribution.[69] Even FDR had taken note of the potential significance of psychological warfare to the campaign. He anticipated that United States soldiers would be regarded by the Vichy French occupation force as far "friendlier" than British or free French units, and would thus meet with minimal armed resistance.[70] VOA broadcasts and other OWI activities would therefore play a crucial role in communicating to the enemy that the invading forces were primarily composed of Americans who would treat surrendering troops well. In support of the campaign, codenamed Operation Torch, William Donovan advised the VOA's French desk on broadcasts to convince the occupying French forces to cooperate with the Allies. Donovan recommended a format that interspersed news, stories on Hollywood celebrities, and popular music segments with statements about America's ultimate victory. This would have maximum persuasive effect on French troops, but also give them an excuse—they were simply enjoying light entertainment and music—if they were caught listening to US broadcasts by their commanding officers.[71] This format differed from the Voice's usual programming style, with its discrete segments that clearly distinguished between straight news,

[68] Tyler, "Oral History," pp. 15–16.

[69] Dwight D. Eisenhower, quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 114.

[70] Robert Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 363.

[71] "Memorandum: Operation Torch," William Donovan to Franklin D. Roosevelt (January 24, 1942); Box 128; President's Secretary's File 1933–1945; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; Hyde Park, NY.

editorial comment, features, and entertainment. A rift soon opened between the VOA and the OSS when the OSS conveyed the Army Command's intention to cultivate the Vichy French commander François Darlan to join the Allies. Several hundred thousand leaflets that the OWI had already prepared criticizing Darlan and the Vichy leadership had to be destroyed, and the VOA would be required to cease its criticisms of the Vichy government. OWI officials, both in Washington and working directly with the US Army in the European theater, expressed their discontent with the deal.

The Voice duly transmitted its broadcasts to French troops and local civilians in North Africa, and the military operation had rapid success. Despite some initially fierce French military resistance on land and sea in Morocco, Darlan soon joined the Allies and was rewarded with an appointment as Allied High Commissioner of North Africa.[72] But the part that VOA had been asked to play in exhorting Vichy forces to defect to the Allies was fraught with difficulty, since many of the station's French staff had fled the Vichy regime and considered Darlan a traitor to their nation. The American public also judged the Army's collaboration with Vichy forces harshly. Sherwood later wrote that in his opinion most Americans regarded the deal as "base and squalid," and "a sordid nullification of principles for which the United Nations were supposed to be fighting."[73] The French desk vented its frustration with Donovan's orders by running angry editorials during its broadcasts to France itself, overtly criticizing Darlan and condemning the Vichy government. These commentaries branded the US Army's strategy in Africa "unsettling" and morally "ambiguous."[74] The reaction of military and civilian officials in Washington to this open criticism of American policy, at a time when the tides of the military campaign in Europe had finally turned, was a quick and furious rebuke to the station's directors.

A more serious controversy sparked by VOA's determination to maintain its journalistic independence from Washington occurred in July 1943. During the Allied invasion of Italy that month VOA had broadcast an opinion segment in English calling Italy's King Emmanuel III, who had been installed by US forces as the interim head of state, a "moronic little king." The editorial, commissioned by Warburg and written under a pseudonym by the *New York Post*'s Samuel Grafton, dismissed the Allied occupation of Italy as "a political minuet and not

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[72] David Stafford, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Men of Secrets* (London: Abacus, 1999), pp. 192–4.

[73] Robert Sherwood, quoted in Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt*, p. 364.

[74] Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 88. On the internal controversies associated with the US's ongoing recognition of Vichy France see also Wallace Carroll, *Persuade or Perish*, p. 13. Shulman's book on the French Desk at VOA has a detailed discussion of Operation Torch and VOA perspectives on Darlan and Vichy France. Shulman, *Voice of America*.

the revolution we have been waiting for."[75] Although similar sentiments were being aired by many in the US media, a number of influential commentators, led by columnist Arthur Krock, seized on the story and condemned the Voice for attempting to seize the reins of US foreign policy.[76] Republican Senator Robert Taft rejected the entire premise of the OWI's work—why should the FDR administration devote any resources to meaningless "talk" and away from the military effort to ensure swift victory, so that the nation could return to peace and, presumably, isolation?[77] FDR held a press conference to express his and the State Department's disapproval of the broadcast, laying the blame on bad apples at VOA but continuing to back the OWI and its international operations. The OWI had not brought VOA editorial policy into line after the Darlan incident, and this time Elmer Davis fired James Warburg, control desk chief Edd Johnson, and the head of the radio news and features division Joseph Barnes. John Houseman resigned of his own accord and went to work in Hollywood, while Robert Sherwood was demoted and sent to London as an OWI liaison officer. While there he would supervise the establishment of a new US broadcasting station to support the D-Day invasion.[78] Several years later Davis reflected that decisions his government made in the cases of Darlan and King Emmanuel had been damaging to American credibility, and the Voice's criticisms of the soundness of US policy were essentially correct. In his assessment the VOA had in fact considered the situation in light of the long-term political objectives of the war, the long-term credibility of US global leadership, and not simply the military expedient.[79]

The former associate editor of *Newsweek* Edward Barrett succeeded Sherwood as director of the OWI Overseas Operations Bureau. He imposed more prudent editorial guidelines on the Voice. Barrett was "an enthusiast of the strategic value of propaganda" and he worked effectively with Davis. Public relations and broadcasting expert Lou Cowan was appointed to run the station's daily broadcasting, and also worked to better integrate the Voice's work with the OWI and the government's war aims.[80] The conception of VOA as a fiercely independent institution that Sherwood, Barnes, Houseman and Warburg had established proved costly to the Voice's reputation in this instance, yet many of the staff who remained with the New York operation continued to believe that US information abroad must uphold standards of journalistic integrity if it wished to promote US interests in the broadest sense. Their task for the coming

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[75] Voice broadcast quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, pp. 94–5.

[76] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 18; Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 100.

[77] Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 102.

[78] Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 44.

[79] Elmer Davis, "What are Wars For?" *Harper's Magazine* 198 (January, 1949), p. 24.

[80] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 18.

year, particularly to Europe, was to report on Allied military advances and express an increasing confidence in the ultimate victory in Europe. Beginning with a series of special broadcasts on New Year's Day in 1944, the OWI and the Voice inaugurated 1944 as Nazi Germany's "year of doom."

The VOA's involvement in the European theater of military operations raised significant questions about how to reconcile the journalistic aspirations of the VOA with the exigencies of wartime diplomacy and psychological warfare. But the Voice and the other US information activities also struggled with this dilemma in developing material for Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In the Middle East, for example, the VOA and OWI print materials stuck to a dispassionate tone and attempted to deliver factual news, information and features; the latter included stories on US visits by dignitaries from the Middle East and pieces emphasizing America's anti-colonial and democratic credentials. But a scholarly study in 1948 came to the rather troubling conclusion that, with their "highly colored, emotional programs, making the most of the common tastes and beliefs of the masses," German and Italian propaganda had probably been more effective in the region than the OWI and BBC.[81]

Toward the end of 1944, the Voice had invested in improvements in signal strength to East Asia, and apparently had an immediate impact based on the "prompt reaction of the Japanese propaganda office, first in attempting to jam the broadcasts and then in repeatedly warning the population not to listen to them."[82] But the upheavals of war and the Japanese effort to link its own conquest of Asia with the expulsion of Western colonialism had made setting an editorial policy for Asia difficult. The OWI's work on behalf of an Allied victory seemed to many Asian audiences as simply presaging a victory for the exploitative British and French Empires and for a racially segregated United States.[83] The Voice stuck to its portrayal of the United States as a liberal great power by citing the legacy of Woodrow Wilson and FDR's anti-colonial credentials in granting independence to the Philippines. In cases like India, VOA and the OWI simply avoided noting the specific implications of America's anti-colonial message to the Indian situation in order to accommodate the interests of Britain's ardently pro-colonial Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Instead, American war publicity materials dealt with the question of colonial self-determination in a vague fashion, by praising Washington's anti-colonial commitments in general while avoiding stating any outright moral support for the cause of Indian self-determination. The United States information effort in India, which included

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[81] Seth Arsenian, "Wartime Propaganda in the Middle East," *Middle East Journal* 2: 4 (October, 1948), pp. 423 and 428.

[82] Elmer Davis quoted in Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 44.

[83] See, e.g. Thomas Borstelmann, "Jim Crow's Coming Out: Race Relations and American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29: 3 (1999).

VOA segments re-broadcast over the BBC's All India Radio network and a network of four USIS posts, thus did little to cultivate the Indian people and its nationalist leaders as supporters of Washington's efforts to liberate Asia.[84]

VOA broadcasts to China also had to reconcile the democratic aspirations that the United States endorsed for occupied nations with their government's policy of backing the increasingly unpopular and ineffective Nationalist regime. OWI policy guidelines from 1944 emphasized that information policy should take the "broadest possible"—by which it apparently meant the vaguest possible—perspective on American national interests in China. The VOA's work in China was conceived of as setting in motion a "long term process of bringing the Chinese people into the world community, so that they will be capable of keeping their own house in order and of making their independent contribution to the life of other nations."[85] America's own success as a former colony that had become a global power was offered as testament to the possibility that China could accomplish a similar feat. As with the cultural diplomacy program's concept of cultural lend-lease, in OWI-authored information and broadcasts America's material prosperity and military power was presented as a basis for its tutelage of China's rise and democratization. OWI guidelines from 1943 had stated that the Chinese should be shown how "our military success derives from a productive potential which is based on our political and social institutions."[86] The following year it reiterated that:

> we must first of all try to convey to the Chinese a realization of all the advantages to be derived from, and the techniques to be used for, the political organization of a country on a truly democratic basis. For this purpose we must present a picture of the workings of a genuine democracy elsewhere. We should also make plain the hope of the American people that China will develop toward real democracy in the political sense without interruption ... we must also show that a nation's prestige and influence in the international sphere are closely dependent upon the degree to which it has succeeded, internally, in creating a healthy national

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[84] Sarah Ellen Graham, "American Propaganda, the Anglo-American Alliance, and the 'Delicate Question' of Indian Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History* 33: 2 (April, 2009).

[85] Overseas Operations Branch, Office of War Information, "Guidance for OWI Informational Work in Unoccupied China, Oct 24, 1944," p. 2; Chronological File, 1944–45 (CF. 1944–5); Records of Archibald MacLeish, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Cultural Relations, 1944–1945 (MacLeish 1944–5); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA).

[86] "Memorandum," George Taylor to Laughlin Currie (May 7, 1943), p.3; Records Relating to the China, Burma and India Theatre, 1942–5; Records of the Historian; Records of the Office of the War Information, Record Group 208; NARA, College Park, MD.

> economy and a governmental administration that enjoys the respect and confidence of its citizens.[87]

These directives played up America's distinction from imperialistic Europe in its dealings with the developing world, based on the conviction that downtrodden peoples would necessarily look to the United States as the model of freedom and democracy.[88] The OWI's directives on information policy to the European colonies also emphasized that while the United States had a legitimate interest in opening free trade with colonized nations and should publicize this, it should not be seen as seeking commercial advantage or pseudo-imperialism. Instead, the OWI's print and radio projects would highlight the promise of technological advancement and material prosperity through trade as further testament to America's beneficial influence in world politics.[89] In India, once again, the OWI's effort to cultivate a democratic and prosperous image of America failed dismally. The independence leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru regularly dismissed US publicity articulating the promise of liberty, democracy, and a more open global trading order as cynical cover for "yet another imperialism in the making."[90]

The Voice reached its wartime staffing peak of 3,000 in 1944. Between 1944 and 1945 the OWI, as well as the State Department's strategic planners and advisors, began to consider some of the possible roles for radio broadcasting after victory. Its function in the immediate tasks of post-war occupations, ideological re-orientation and reconstruction was a particular point of focus. The Overseas Operations Branch noted in guidelines from May 1945 that it was not possible to say whether post-war "operations in Europe are to be exclusively either 'information' or 'propaganda.'" Rather, the OWI's "primary task is to present the United States itself and the United States Government's war and peace policies as convincingly as possible in order to win respect for this country and support

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[87] Overseas Operations Branch, Office of War Information, "Guidance for OWI Informational Work in Unoccupied China, Oct 24, 1944," pp. 2- 3; CF. 1944–5; MacLeish 1944–5; RG 59; NARA.

[88] This was often emphasized in US dealings with Britain in relation to the post-war order in Asia. Stanley Hornbeck, "Report of Mr Hornbeck on His Recent Trip to London on Postwar Problems in the Far East," (October 28, 1943), pp. 3, 6; 791–13, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A. Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987).

[89] Information Policy Committee, "US Information Policy in French Morocco," (February 10, 1944), p. 1; 1379–29, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A. Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987).

[90] Gandhi quoted in Graham, "American Propaganda," p. 243.

for its policies and aims."[91] In this context, its tone would remain sober: "[i]n our radio, news and other media, we should not resort to evangelical persuasion. As before, we report, we quote, and we comment in a dignified, objective way. In general, we depend upon selection and emphasis for our propaganda effect in these media."[92] A set of long-range media guidelines for Europe issued just after the Normandy landings had similarly reiterated the importance of factual reporting to create a friendly and favorable, as opposed to agitated or emotional, impression of the US. At the same time, Barrett and the new leadership at the Voice accepted Washington's stricter editorial control and made freer use of the term propaganda in their policy documentation. Some journalists criticized the Voice and the OWI for being too timid in its global "publicity" on US plans for the post-war order. *New York Times* correspondent R. Hart Phillips wrote in 1945 that the OWI's efforts to boost US influence in Latin America had suffered because of the OWI's shallow, short-term approach. Phillips claimed the OWI took a limited and short-term view of its work, whereas the kind of comprehensive and long-term planning normally associated with a propaganda strategy would have served Washington better. Most worrying for Phillips was the degree to which the Soviet Union appeared to have out-classed the US in engaging hearts and minds, mobilizing local organizations, and in presenting engaging and relevant material to its audiences, particularly to Cuba.[93] The solution she suggested was comprehensive planning, an explicit focus on persuasion, and, importantly, adequate funding into the post-war period.

Here Phillips had hit on the major challenge for the Voice in the post-war era: preserving its work from budget cuts imposed by a Congress that had come to regard the OWI, and the Voice in particular, as unnecessary and even counter-productive for US national interests. Congressional Republicans had objected to what they saw as the OWI's covert quest to act as publicity agents for the Roosevelt administration at home, Southern Democrats had objected to what they regarded as the OWI's anti-segregation message in its international publications, and both groups had criticized the station's apparent willingness to contradict its own government on foreign policy issues.[94] America's major media corporations remained critical of what they regarded as government-funded competition. Some journalists nevertheless took to the pages of *Harper's* and

[91] R. Edgar Moore (probable author), Overseas Operations Branch of the Office of War Information, "Memorandum on Post-VE Propaganda," (May 14, 1945), p. 3; CF. 1944–5; MacLeish 1944–5; RG 59; NARA.

[92] R. Edgar Moore (probable author), Overseas Operations Branch of the Office of War Information, "Memorandum on Post-VE Propaganda," (May 14, 1945), p. 3; CF. 1944–5; MacLeish 1944–5; RG 59; NARA.

[93] R. Hart Phillips, "The Future of American Propaganda in Latin America," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 9: 3 (Autumn, 1945).

[94] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, pp. 17–18.

other publications to argue that the OWI's work ought to be preserved in order to defend America's freedoms and maintain the "good name of our country" and its "service to the truth" for global audiences.[95] A commission of citizens convened in July 1945 under Columbia University's Arthur McMahon recommended that the OWI's work be continued into peacetime. Archibald MacLeish had urged the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 1944 to preserve funding for international persuasion efforts and to consider the vital role of public opinion in establishing a stable post-war settlement. He noted the "basic change in the relation of peoples to each other which the modern development of the art and technique of communications had brought about." In this context, "the instruments of public international communication" would be as important to statecraft in the post-war world as "diplomatic representatives and missions."[96] Nonetheless, Congress sharply curtailed the international information budget, the OWI was folded in September, 1945, and VOA was threatened with closure. In this beleaguered atmosphere, Elmer Davis's final report had a defensive tone and seemed intended to ensure that the Office would not be remembered solely as the cause of administrative turf wars and disputes with Congress.[97] Although both the Voice and a range of other components of the international information program survived the budget cuts, 1945–46 brought great uncertainty.

The US information programs had enjoyed many successes during the war, and with its 40 broadcast languages and a solid reputation for accuracy by 1945, the Voice of America could certainly be counted among them.[98] Secretary of State James Byrnes, who had not been a supporter of the OWI's work, nonetheless reported proudly to the president at the end of that year that "[t]here never was a time, even in the midst of war, when it was necessary to replace prejudice with truth, distortion with balance, and suspicion with understanding."[99] But this statement overlooked the Voice's great difficulties in navigating the contradiction between its diplomatic and journalistic roles to establish a stable sense of purpose during the war. Under Sherwood, the Voice's production and editorial staff in New York had worked to transcend the strict imperatives of

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[95] Frederick Lewis Allen, "Must We Tell the World?" *Harper's Magazine* 191 (December, 1945), p. 559; Carleton Beals, "The Soviet Wooing of Latin America," *Harper's Magazine* 189 (August 1944).

[96] Archibald MacLeish, "Statement of Archibald MacLeish on his Appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," (December 12, 1944); CF. 1944–5; MacLeish 1944–5; RG 59; NARA.

[97] Elmer Davis, "Report to the President: The Office of War Information 13 June 1942–15 September 1945," undated; President's Official File; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

[98] See Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, pp. 20–21.

[99] James Byrnes, to Harry S. Truman, December 31, 1945, p. 1. President's Official File; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

the military interests and to operate in an independent, journalistic fashion. The OWI, and Davis in particular, had been repeatedly frustrated by the VOA leadership's unwillingness to support the government's diplomatic imperatives. In the midst of this confusion of purpose and the broader uncertainties of wartime, the VOA found itself at the close of the war without a clear mandate for peacetime operations.

These difficulties were partly the result of the contradictory legacy of the interwar American debate on propaganda and democracy. The Voice had cultivated its editorial independence from Washington in order to hold with public attitudes about information and communications that had arisen via progressives' critiques of propaganda after the First World War. But the need to circumscribe these principles in line with Allied war aims, as reflected in the Darlan and Italy episodes, was a stark reminder of the essential difficulty of presenting international information on behalf of their government. Two tasks remained for the Voice and the other US information programs at the end of 1945. The first was to ensure the survival of the information programs in the face of Congress's determination to cut funding. The second was to establish how international information programs might be used to support US foreign policy into peacetime, and to determine how these programs could uphold American scruples with respect to propaganda and manipulation.

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Chapter 4
"A Forum is also a Battleground:" The Founding of Unesco

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Unesco) was established after a series of discussions on post-war European cultural and educational reconstruction that began in London in 1942. The talks had initially been convened by exiled European politicians, exiled cultural and educational leaders, and British education advocates to discuss the war's impact on educational and cultural institutions in occupied areas. The participants initially hoped to make recommendations to the Allies on providing educational assistance to war-torn areas, especially those that had been occupied by the Nazis. An American delegation selected by the Division of Cultural Relations joined the meetings in 1943, after the British Board of Education announced its official sponsorship of the meetings under the rubric of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME). The Conference welcomed US involvement because it would bring political and, vitally, financial support for the proposals, so that the delegates could consider their work as the basis for a formal and possibly permanent post-war cultural and educational institution, rather than a temporary framework for post-war educational and cultural rehabilitation projects.

The Department of State's initial response to the London proposals was shaped by the wartime success of its own cultural diplomacy and international information programs. American officials regarded the London discussions as a useful avenue through which to promote US interests in the war's aftermath in conjunction with its own programs. The proposed institution should do so, in the words of American delegate to CAME Waldo Leland, by fostering a global "state of mind conducive to establishing and maintaining and enduring peace."[1] The United States supported the placement of the planned cultural and educational institution within the proposals for the United Nations Organization. But the precise nature of Unesco's work remained unclear into the final stages of planning. The London delegates faced a persistent difficulty in defining precisely what the organization should seek to achieve and how it should go about providing assistance to the various educational institutions

[1] Waldo Leland, *Unesco and the Defenses of Peace* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1945), pp. 1–2.

and systems of Europe. Cultural diplomacy, the reconstruction of cultural institutions and scientific cooperation had also been established as important functions of the proposed institution by 1944, but it was still unclear exactly what sorts of initiatives this work would encompass.

At the founding conference of Unesco the US delegation was firm on the point that Unesco must operate beyond Europe. It had also been instructed to ensure that the organization should be "designed to fulfill a conscious political purpose." Unesco should "not work just to promote education, science and culture in themselves," but rather pursue the "avowed ... aim of building and strengthening peace ... throughout the world"—a peace conducive to US interests.[2] In the early phase of the State Department's own cultural diplomacy program, cultural and educational relations had been defined as a long-term, reciprocal and largely apolitical mechanism to build mutual understanding. However the Unesco proposals brought the question of securing American political influence in this context to the forefront of the discussion. The American tradition in education had also long been a decentralized, localist one—tendencies that had been strengthened by the progressive education movement of the interwar period.[3] While civil reform through education was a notion that was firmly within the progressive tradition, the use of education as a diplomatic instrument of the US government was not, and once again the precise relationship between education, global democracy and US national interests needed to be clarified. The US delegates therefore sought not only to secure their own agenda in relation to the other national delegations present, but also to bring about a shift toward more pragmatic understandings within the cultural diplomacy and education policy constituency in the US itself. They also had to manage their own government's contradictory imperatives in supporting a multilateral framework for cultural and educational diplomacy. As was the case for the other institutions proposed for the post-war settlement, US policy-makers faced a tension between the notion that Unesco's multilateralism would be cooperative and internationalist, and the pursuit of institutional dominance and exemptions to the norm of multilateralism where necessary, to ensure US interests would prevail. As Charles Dorn notes, Unesco provoked the same ambivalence for the American government as the other multilateral institutions of the post-1945 settlement. It fell to the US delegation to navigate the challenge of establishing a US position on Unesco within the Unesco

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[2] Gian Franco Pompei, "History of the Organisation," in *In the Minds of Men: Unesco 1946 to 1971* (Paris: Unesco, 1972), p. 16.

[3] Charles Dorn, "'The World's Schoolmaster': Educational Reconstruction, Grayson Kefauver, and the Founding of Unesco, 1942–46," *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 35:3 (2006), p. 300.

meetings, with respect to public opinion in the United States, and within the State Department itself.[4]

Having recently been appointed as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, William Benton offered one of the most eloquent discussions of the tension between cultural internationalism and hegemony in 1946. The president had established the Assistant Secretary's position at the closing stages of the war to oversee the cultural and informational programs within the Department of State after the dissolution of the OWI. Benton insisted that preserving an open cultural and educational order in the post-war world was impossible without the assertion of American power. Unesco was therefore an instrument for constructing a "firm peace built on genuine understanding among the peoples of the world," with US leadership at its center.[5] The head of the US delegation to London, the Dean of Stanford University's School of Education Grayson Kefauver, presented a softer account of US interests in the institution in his public statements. He defined Unesco as an "international clearing-house for the exchange of ideas and information not merely between governments but especially between peoples everywhere."[6] But these carefully worded statements about openness and reciprocity did not obviate the requirement for American leadership in post-war cultural and educational relations, and Kefauver and his delegates worked doggedly to ensure that the US would dominate the administration and policy positions of Unesco.

Designing American Hegemony: London's Conference of Allied Ministers of Education

The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education emerged out of a set of regular meetings held during 1942. Convened by Richard Butler, president of the British Board of Education, the meetings were composed of exiled educators, intellectuals, artists and diplomats. Several were members of the official European governments in exile that had assembled in London. The participants were acutely aware that the manipulation of information and education, as well as the appropriation of art, sports and culture, had been instrumental to Hitler's rise to power and the ideology of Nazism. In light of this, the London meetings sought to determine how education, culture, and the mass media could be fashioned into instruments of peace and reconstruction after the Allied victory.

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[4] Dorn, "'The World's Schoolmaster'", pp. 299–300.

[5] William Benton, "First General Conference of Unesco," *Department of State Bulletin* 2701 (December 1, 1946), p. 996.

[6] Grayson N. Kefauver, "Proposed Educational and Cultural Organisation: Interview with Grayson N. Kefauver," *Department of State Bulletin* 2386 (September 16, 1945), p. 407.

They were especially interested in determining how international education programs—often termed international*ist* education, to capture the political ideals they endorsed—could engender a spirit of global citizenship that would prevent a repeat spiral into the aggressive nationalism of the 1930s. Europe's interwar efforts at multilateral cultural and educational cooperation under the auspices of the League of Nations Committee and the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation were the subject of many of the initial London discussions. The participants criticized both institutions for their preoccupation with high culture, their disinterest in education at levels lower than the university, and their failure to respond to the major political issues of their day.[7] Despite their idealistic, cosmopolitan aims, the rarified way in which both the League Committee and the Institute for Intellectual Cooperation had defined culture itself left both incapable of engaging with the arenas of mass education and mass politics, the very tools that the Nazis and other fascist regimes had exploited so effectively. The interwar American progressive education advocates had regarded history teaching as particularly important for inculcating future citizens with desirable political virtues, and the ministers in London likewise situated history, geography, and instruction in critical thought as important areas of focus for post-war European educational reform.[8]

From these early discussions between the exiled Europeans and their British supporters there emerged a basic rationale for post-war cultural and educational diplomacy—one that placed mass culture, school education and post-war political reconstruction at the center of the organization's work. CAME drew on this rationale as the basis for its first formal meeting in November, 1942. While this popular, democratic rationale was a necessary and welcome departure from the established, elitist principles of cultural cooperation in a European context, representatives of the United States would also find this turn toward popular culture and educational engagement to be an excellent pretext for claiming a leading role for the US in the proposed organization. The Division of Cultural Relations had, after all, habitually sought to assert that America's special role in international cultural relations derived from its democratic ethos and the popular appeal of its culture. The American cultural diplomacy program in China, Europe and Latin America had demonstrated the connection between America's mass culture and its civic traditions and economic prosperity. The inclusiveness of American culture was a point the US information program had also emphasized throughout 1942, especially in a radio series that had cast the recent American past as the story of immigrants from many nations

[7] See Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism*.

[8] John White, "'The peaceful and constructive Battle': Unesco and education for international understanding in history and geography, 1947–1967," *International Journal of Educational Reform* 20:4 (Fall, 2011).

coming together to become "regular American folks."[9] From 1943 onward, the State Department's representatives in London thus spoke in increasingly expansive terms about the CAME proposals and their ability to foster global civility along the same lines as US efforts. The objective of the organization in their view was "education for democracy throughout the world."[10] At the same time, the US delegation also sought to utilize the talks to promote US interests more narrowly. As Harley Notter observed when the London meetings were first contemplated, by joining the talks the United States would be in a position to co-opt "the smaller states with which the relationships are to be established;" states that might "feel or be made to feel themselves associated as responsible participants in activities of *mutual* benefit," but which also supported United States' interests.[11]

The inclusion of the US as one of eight provisional CAME members in mid-1943 had extended the purview of the discussions beyond Europe. This expansion also prompted a shift in emphasis away from post-war cultural and educational reconstruction and toward consideration of a permanent multilateral cultural and educational diplomacy framework. In preparation for planning meetings that were to be held in London that October, the Secretary of State instructed the Division of Cultural Relations to evaluate the proposals and appoint a delegation. It brought the well-connected Grayson Kefauver to Washington to work full-time on developing an American position. Kefauver had been an influential spokesman for educational modernization and reform during the 1930s, and he had worked with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace during the war to examine the development of international solidarity through educational initiatives. Kefauver's proposals greatly impressed British MP Sir Ernest Simon, who met Kefauver during the war and was a great supporter of his educational ideas.[12] Kefauver became an influential spokesman for the idea that the post-war settlement should include reforms to the educational systems of Axis and occupied areas, and he ensured that the proposal and the Unesco meetings themselves were given favorable coverage in magazines such as *Time* and *American Magazine*.[13]

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[9] Shulman, *Voice of Victory*, p. 73.

[10] John Studebaker, quoted in Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 77. For a brief account of the projects set up by Unesco to further the study of international relations see Richard McKeon, "The Pursuit of Peace Through Understanding," *The Yale Review* 38: 2 (December 1948), pp. 263–4.

[11] Harley Notter, Letter to Charles P. Thomson (March 24, 1943), p. 1; Subj. 1939–50; HN; RG 59; NARA.

[12] See, e.g. Grayson Kefauver, "The Challenge to Educational Leadership," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 17:6 (April, 1935); Dorn, "'The World's Schoolmaster,'" p. 300.

[13] Dorn, "'The World's Schoolmaster,'" p. 298.

Kefauver also led meetings of the US International Educational Assembly (IEA) in 1943 in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and a conference of educators at Hoods College in New York City in 1944. For Harpers Ferry, the IEA brought exiled educators from Europe to recount the corruption of education under the Axis. Both meetings issued reports endorsing the CAME proposals drawing on the latest findings in international and American educational research—research which, during the war, had continued to emphasize the progressive goals of individual empowerment, civic engagement and inter-cultural and racial harmony through education.[14] Their findings were then evaluated by the State Department's Subcommittee on Post-War International Organization and the Division's General Advisory Committee, both of which prepared formal advice ahead of planning meetings to be held in London in October.[15] Under Kefauver's leadership, these preparatory meetings strengthened the case for US participation in post-war educational and cultural diplomacy by noting how a number of crucial post-war political objectives would be served via the proposed educational component, in particular.[16]

The year 1944 saw the United States delegation adopt a more prominent role in London. Outgoing Assistant Secretary of State G. Howland Shaw argued in May that America's security now depended upon its ability to maintain a global "consensus" about the "ideas and values" that could drive post-war peace and

[14] See, e.g. Stewart G. Cole, "Intercultural Education," *Religious Education* 36 (1941); Committee of the American Political Science Association on War-Time Changes in the Political Science Curriculum, "Instruction and Research: The Political Science Curriculum in War-Time: Report of the Committee of the American Political Science Association on War-Time," *The American Political Science Review* 36 (no. 6, December, 1942); Alvin Johnson, "Post-War Prospect for Liberal Education," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 2: 4 (1943); I.L. Kandel, "Education in the Post-War World: A Symposium," *Religious Education* 38 (1943); J.A. Lynch, "The Role of Propaganda in a Liberal Democracy," *Peabody Journal of Education* 17: 6 (May, 1940).

[15] I.L. Kandel, "Memorandum on the Organization of Intellectual Cooperation," 1943, pp. 1–2; Box 6 ff 5; Personal Papers of Ben M. Cherrington; Special Collections Division, Penrose Library; University of Denver.

[16] The Harper's Ferry meeting was the more influential of the two, and incorporated international members. The discussions, recalled Waldo Leland, "brought together thirty-one educators of the United States and twenty-four from foreign countries. No one in the Assembly possessed representative authority, but all were amply qualified to express the views of colleagues and to speak on the basis of firsthand knowledge." Leland, *Unesco and the Defenses of Peace,* p. 7. On the variety of US organizations and views concerning international educational cooperation see: "Enclosure No. 3 to despatch No. 1476 of 27//3/44 from the Embassy at London, England: Plans for the Creation of an Inter-Allied Bureau for Education," (March 27, 1944); 860-PIO-329, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987).

prosperity, and that the institution being planned in London would be in a strong position to promote US interests.[17] Archibald MacLeish also endorsed US participation in the talks and set out to garner public support for the proposals. He presented Unesco as a reflection of the progress of history toward global acceptance of liberalism and democracy, as well as a vital instrument for strengthening Washington's rightful position of global leadership in the context of this process. The war had shown that rapid communications, cultural symbols, aesthetics and education could, in the wrong hands, lead to authoritarianism and violence. Consequently, an institution capable of instilling globalist values on a mass scale, especially in the defeated nations, would be the best guarantee of a durable peace.

MacLeish's 1945 pamphlet *Popular Relations and the Peace* showed how these principles had been made central to the Unesco plans during the previous years of discussion. He argued that Unesco would serve as a bulwark against propaganda. It would be particularly useful in guarding against propaganda inimical to US national interests: "[w]hat is essential ... is not to correct each mischievous inaccuracy, each intended falsehood, each outburst of divisive propaganda. What is essential is to see to it that the peoples of the world know each other as peoples, that they understand each other as peoples."[18] It was for this reason, he wrote elsewhere, that the founding discussions for Unesco "broke new ground" in international relations. "The stated objectives of the new organization are objectives which have been regarded, hitherto, as idealistic rather than practical." But realizing them was now essential in a world where the capacity for war was in large measure determined by a government's capacity to mobilize public support.[19]

Planning meetings held in London during October 1944 led to the establishment of an Executive Bureau, comprised of diplomatic representatives, to work full-time on refining the CAME proposals into a draft constitution for debate and ratification by participating governments the following year. One month before, the Chinese delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference had successfully requested that the CAME proposals be considered as the basis for a United Nations Special Agency under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[20] Cordell Hull reiterated his government's support for the plan in a press statement about the United

[17] Assistant Secretary of State Shaw, "Cultural Cooperation Program of the Department of State," *Department of State Bulletin* 2125 (May 13, 1944).

[18] Archibald MacLeish (1945) quoted in Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation (The League Experience and the Beginnings of Unesco)* (Warsaw: Zaklad Narodwy Im. Ossolinkich, 1962), p. 148.

[19] MacLeish, quoted in Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 140.

[20] The November Conference was the first founding conference for a UN agency to be held outside the US.

Nations, in which he noted how "teachers, students and scientists have been singled out for special persecution [by the Axis]. Many have been imprisoned, deported or killed, particularly those refusing to collaborate with the enemy. In fact, the enemy is deliberately depriving the victims of those tools of intellectual life without which their recovery is impossible."[21] By January the following year, other spokespeople for the State Department and Foreign Service had lent their support to the Unesco proposals. In a public address, the head of the State Department's Division of African Affairs argued that the Unesco proposals were vital because:

> [w]ithout the intellectual tools to which our civilization has become accustomed, economic and social disorganization is intensified and moral despair easily sets in ... this Government should participate in an international program to help the war-torn countries ... in repairing the moral, spiritual and physical damage.[22]

In the months before the founding conference of Unesco, which was to be held in London in November 1945, the State Department worked to ensure that Unesco would have the support of the American public and that the final form of its constitution would be in line with American interests. Without a strong Allied commitment to reconstruction in the educational and cultural fields, the US delegation was told, the war-devastated nations of Europe would "tend toward internal disorder and external difficulties and may create new threats to the economic stability and political security of the world, upon which in fact depend the well-being and peace of the American people." Hence, "the rebuilding of essential educational and cultural facilities of the war-torn countries in the period immediately following hostilities is an important service in the ... interest of international security."[23]

Another prominent theme in the State Department's planning in the lead-up to the founding conference for Unesco, which had come to be known as the November Conference, was Unesco's contribution to post-war economic reconstruction in Europe. FDR had included "freedom from want" as one of the Four Freedoms for which America was fighting in the war, and by 1945 improvements in global living standards was a key issue for US foreign policy

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[21] Cordell Hull quoted in Gail Archibald, "How the S Came to be in Unesco," in Petitjean, P. et al., *Sixty Years of Science at Unesco 1945–2005* (Paris: Unesco, 2006), p. 37.

[22] Henry S. Villard, "The Positive Approach to an Enduring Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2256 (January 28, 1945), p. 140.

[23] Department of State, "Letter to the Delegation of the United States of America to the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Allied Governments, March 29, 1944," p. 2; Miscellaneous Subject Files 1939–50 (Subj. 1939–50); Records of Harley Notter (HN); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives, College Park, MD (NARA).

planning and a priority for the new United Nations Organization. One report from that year, which assessed Unesco's possible reconstruction role in Europe, noted that an integrated approach to economic development and cultural/educational reconstruction should be uppermost within the organization's program. Therefore, the US government's interest in Unesco was "deepened by the fact that the early achievement of decent living conditions and a normal social life in the liberated and enemy countries will increase the likelihood of general international security and enhance the possibility of mutually beneficial exchanges of goods and services."[24] But by the same token, the US delegation also began to publicly question whether the countries of Eastern Europe, then occupied by the Red Army and claimed by Stalin as part of the Soviet sphere of influence, could effectively collaborate with the West on cultural, scientific and educational matters.[25] By October, after the divisions that had emerged between the Allied governments at the Potsdam Conference, American officials appeared to be anticipating Soviet obstructionism in the spheres of post-war cultural and educational cooperation, as was increasingly the case for other elements of post-war planning.

It was over the course of 1945 that scientific cooperation was formally incorporated into the London talks. Several prominent scientists of the period, most notably the Cambridge University biochemist Joseph Needham, had been calling for the establishment of a post-war multilateral scientific organization to sponsor international technological progress and the modernization of backward nations, and promote transnational amity through research cooperation. Needham, who would become Unesco's first director of national sciences, had wide-ranging intellectual interests. He had spent 1943 in Western China advising the British government on assisting displaced Chinese intellectuals. In 1954, Needham published the first volume of a landmark study of the history of science and technology in China, credited with establishing the notion in the West that Chinese science had been greatly more advanced than European science in the ancient period. Needham had initially proposed a World Science Cooperation Service to be devoted exclusively to scientific and technological cooperation. In support of this objective, Needham had traveled almost continually in 1944 to meet with members of scientific associations in a number of countries. The CAME meetings had initially considered some

[24] B. Fosdick (reviser, no author), "Statement of Policy on Participation in Educational and Cultural Reconstruction by the Department of State," p. 1; Subj. 1939–50; HN; RG RG 59; NARA.

[25] This is reflected in the transcript of a press conference given by the United States delegation. Luther H. Evans, *The United States & Unesco: A Summary of the United States Delegation Meetings to the Constituent Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in Washington and London, October-November, 1945* (Dobbs Ferry NY: Oceania Publications, 1971), pp. 10–11.

aspects of scientific reconstruction, for example resupplying laboratory facilities at universities in Nazi-occupied nations. But the integration of science into the Unesco proposals as a focus for exchange and research programs only occurred after the US delegation evaluated Needham's detailed proposals in February 1945. They agreed that "science" legitimately fell under the "cultural" element of the program. At the San Francisco Conference in April, the US delegation persuaded the other CAME members that science warranted a mention in the proposed organization's title. Needham was somewhat more difficult to convince, however, and he only abandoned the goal of an independent international scientific congress on the eve of the November Conference in 1945. After Washington used its atomic weapons against Japan in August, scientific cooperation had achieved newfound importance on the global stage. The British Minister of Education made the apt point that Unesco's scientific work could usefully encourage international cooperation in setting standards for scientific ethics and exploring the links between science and the humanities.[26]

Scientific cooperation played only a small role in Unesco's activities during its first decade,[27] however, and the US delegation placed a much greater emphasis on culture and education as vehicles for the consolidation of US hegemony in the post-war world order. Few purely scientific projects and meetings would be conducted under Unesco's auspices before 1950. Instead, Unesco's scientific work was tied to its educational work, and generally involved the production of informative films and publications, as well as science education and scientific librarianship projects.[28] Education had been the prime focus of the Unesco discussions in 1944–45, and it was the source of much of the friction between the national delegations in this period. By the end of 1944 the Soviet delegation had expressed increasingly strong concerns about the possibility of infringements of its "educational sovereignty" by the proposed institution, presumably fearing the promotion of subversive capitalist principles by Unesco-authored educational materials or representatives. It withdrew from the meetings in 1944, and despite several requests from the Executive Bureau to return for the founding conference, the Soviet Union stayed out of Unesco until 1954.[29]

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[26] Patrick Petitjean, "Introduction: Visions and Revisions. Defining UNESCO's Scientific Culture, 1945–1965" in Patrick Petitjean et al. (eds), *Sixty Years of Science at UNESCO 1945–2005* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2006), p. 39.

[27] A clear and concise history of how science became incorporated into Unesco is James P. Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics: Engaging in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 48–52.

[28] Patrick Petitjean, "Introduction: Visions and Revisions."

[29] On Soviet education concerns see Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, pp. 61–2. On the attempts to persuade the USSR to rejoin the discussions at the founding conference see John A. Armstrong, "The Soviet Attitude Toward Unesco," *International Organization* 8: 2 (May, 1954), pp. 217–18.

The November Conference and the Unesco Constitution

The new US senator for Arkansas, J. William Fulbright, headed the American delegation to the founding conference of Unesco in London in November 1945. The delegation also included officials from the Division of Cultural Relations and the State Department, including Archibald MacLeish and Grayson Kefauver, and the Dean of Vassar College C. Mildred Thompson. They brought with them a State Department-authored draft constitution for Unesco, which drew on the American cultural diplomacy program's notion of reciprocity. The State Department proposals also highlighted the role of civic, as opposed to ethnic, culture as the basis for exchanges that would bring peace to global politics. The American draft constitution also affirmed the significance of mass participation and mass education as instruments of peace within the post-war world order. The constitution specified that projects in these areas should be guided by a new and nebulous concept, "cultural humanism."[30] As the preface of the US draft emphasized, Unesco should above all be an expression of the post-war peace settlement:

> The cold-blooded and considered destruction by the enemy countries of the cultural resources of great parts of the continents of Europe and Asia ... have created conditions dangerous to civilization, and, therefore, to peace, not only in the countries and continents ravaged by the enemy powers, but throughout the entire world. To deprive any part of the inter-dependent modern world of the cultural resources, human and material, through which its children are trained and its people informed, is to destroy to that extent the common knowledge and the mutual understanding upon which the peace of the world and its security must rest. [31]

Archibald MacLeish had commented that in preparing the constitutional draft the State Department had wished to convey America's desire "to repair, in so far as is possible, the injury done to the common cultural inheritance of the world by the Fascist powers."[32] It was a familiar refrain for MacLeish, who

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[30] These humanist ideas saw culture as a mechanism for reconciliation and bonding between societies, as opposed to the anthropological view that was shortly to become dominant in US Cold War thinking that cast culture as a source of irreconcilable divisions between nations. On the expression of humanist principles in Unesco's founding. See, e.g.: Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*. On the distinction between cultural and anthropological theories of culture in this period see: Julie Reeves, *Culture and International Relations: Narratives, Natives and Tourists* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

[31] Evans, *The United States & Unesco*, p. 150–51.

[32] Archibald MacLeish, 'Preamble of 1944 Draft Constitution,' quoted in Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 131. On the destruction and restoration of cultural artifacts see also: Harley A. Notter and Charles A. Thomson, "Joint Memorandum from the Division of Cultural Relations and the Division of Political Studies: The Restoration

had emphasized since early in the war that the defense of democracy and liberty demanded a substantial commitment from the American government.

The question of whether Unesco should be composed of diplomatic delegations or whether it should be a purely non-governmental institution as the League Committee had been—and thus funded by governments but composed of intellectuals and other cultural figures acting independently—was expected to be a significant point of debate at Unesco's founding conference. At issue here was whether Unesco would work with national governments and reflect their foreign policy objectives. The French and British delegations supported constituting the proposed institution as a non-governmental institution in the manner of the League Committee. Both delegations felt that a genuinely free cultural exchange—one unhindered by diplomatic delicacies, untroubled by political interests, and therefore responsive to the reconstruction needs of war-torn areas as defined by the education and cultural personnel involved—would best serve the interests of a lasting peace. Washington took the opposing position, citing the non-governmental character of the League Committee as the reason for its failure to take on projects that might have prevented the spiral into war in 1939. That it did so represented something of a departure from the ideas of reciprocity and the emphasis on the civil sphere that the Division of Cultural Relations had constantly emphasized in relation to America's own bilateral programs. The hosting British delegation's support for non-governmental representation posed a potentially significant obstacle to the United States plans, however. The British had persuasively argued that Unesco would lack credibility if it did not remain aloof from the narrow demands of foreign policy, and there was considerable support for this position among the other European delegations.[33]

International freedom of information was another theme that the US delegation emphasized during the November Conference. American officials had asserted throughout 1945 that Unesco should facilitate the unobstructed exchange of media and publications across national borders, in the interests of global democratic debate and to safeguard the world from propaganda. This position resonated with the concerns of the interwar American debate on propaganda, and in the process helped situate the proposed institution in

of Cultural Objects," (Jan. 21, 1943); 506–2, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987). On intellectual rehabilitation see: Abbot, Buck, and Archibald MacLeish (first names unrecorded), to the President (January 22, 1944); 1375–3, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987).

[33] Despite the fact that the British stood to benefit from governmental representation (particularly if proportional to financial contributions), their delegation was in favor of Unesco being composed of individuals. On US debates about the merits of national representation see: Evans, *The United States & Unesco,* pp. 27–33.

relation to the political concerns of the American public. As early as 1944, Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle had claimed that the "emblematically" American values of unfettered political debate and free communications ought to be a key principle of the post-war global order. He supported this principle even while he acknowledged that information hostile to the United States might be circulated more freely as a consequence.[34] Building on the assumption that US political culture had superior qualities as a basis for the post-war world order, MacLeish also observed that "freedom of communication, freedom of exchange of ideas, is basic to our whole political doctrine ... The only possible protection against misuse of international communication, or misinterpretation of international communication, is not less communication but more."[35]

Another November Conference delegate was Esther Brunauer, a State Department post-war planning official and former international affairs officer with the American Association of University Women. Brunauer saw the Unesco plans as a reflection of "the determination of peoples throughout the world to establish *truth* as a guide to public action ... the peoples of the world don't always know the truth, but the common search for it ... will save the world."[36] Speaking on the Economic and Social Council, the branch of the U.N. under which Unesco would be constituted, State Department spokesman Henry S. Villard informed the American public that one of the most significant benefits of Unesco would be its ability to propagate liberal democracy through free information.

> The constant goal of the American people has been the attainment of a society marked by greater individual liberty granted to all men ... The Bill of Rights in the American Constitution is a great landmark on the road to human liberty. It has been an inspiration to many freedom-loving men of many nations. While the attainment of civil liberty in each country is a struggle which the citizens of each

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[34] Adolf A. Berle Jr (probable author); "Agreement on the Principle of Freedom of Information," (September 6, 1944), p. 2; 1375–6, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987). Another US memorandum on the US information programs notes the way in which the USSR implicitly contested US ideology by propounding the notion of freedom of thought and information, which "clearly ... could not be meant in the sense in which it is understood in the United States." Arthur W. McMahon, "Memorandum on the Postwar International Information Program of the United States," (July 5, 1945), p. 12; 860-PIO-507, *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning: State Department Records of Harley A Notter* (Washington DC: Congressional Information Service, 1987).

[35] Archibald MacLeish, "Popular Relations and the Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2247 (January 14, 1945), p. 50.

[36] Esther Buranuer, quoted in Sewell, *Unesco in World Politics*, p. 97. Emphasis in original.

> country must wage for themselves, nevertheless we believe that it is possible and right for freedom-loving peoples to give help to those who aspire to freedom.[37]

During the Congressional elections of 1944 both political parties had cited global freedom of information as a principle that should have a key place in post-war American foreign policy. A Congressional resolution to "internationalize" the First Amendment was passed in the same year.[38] The frequent reference to freedom information in this domestic US publicity about Unesco and the post-war settlement between 1944 and 1945 had been a vital factor in the growing American public support for the organization ahead of the November Conference. An influential segment of the US media also favored an international legal framework based on the First Amendment to establish global press freedoms, and the Department of State sponsored an international tour for a small group of members of the American Society of Newspapers to assess journalistic freedoms across the world as a basis for drafting a treaty. There emerged, however, some significant differences between what historian Margaret Blanchard regards as the naïve notion of press freedom favored by American journalists, and the State Department's pragmatic concept of international freedom of information. Foreign press coverage of the proposal took note of the distinction, and criticized the US government's freedom of information principle as cover to promote the American media corporations' "financial advantage."[39] As an operating doctrine for Unesco, however, international freedom of information received only lukewarm support from the other national delegations attending the November Conference. Whereas the American delegation had presented international freedom of information as a pluralist and democratic principle, a number of other national delegations feared that America's great wealth, its technological sophistication in the areas of shortwave broadcasting, and its diplomatic dominance in the post-war order would see the US benefit most from the opening of the international airwaves and other media channels.

The November Conference opened with an address by the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, which he had co-authored with Archibald MacLeish. Attlee declared that Unesco's mandate was nothing less than to lay the foundations for a lasting global peace. Unesco was necessary because "wars begin in the minds of men." It was thus only in the realm of ideas that substantive

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[37] Henry S. Villard, "The Positive Approach to an Enduring Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2256 (January 28, 1945), pp. 136–7.

[38] Villard, "Positive Approach," p. 136–7.

[39] *The Economist* quoted in Margaret A. Blanchard, *Exporting the First Amendment: The Press-Government Crusade of 1945–1952* (White Plains: Longman, 1986), pp. 21–4.

"defenses of peace" could be erected.[40] Although 44 national delegations were attending the Conference, it quickly became clear that the negotiations would be dominated by the larger European and US delegations and by the cleavages that had already emerged between them over Unesco's basic purpose and philosophy.[41] The French delegation regarded itself as automatically entitled to a position of leadership within the post-war regime of international cultural diplomacy, given their government's status as the main governmental supporter of multilateral cultural cooperation prior to 1945. This was a view the United States and Britain—the latter claiming a right to influence the decision-making as the key sponsor and host of the CAME meetings—vigorously opposed. Cultural diplomacy was an arena of world politics in which France saw an opportunity to recover its lost prestige after the Vichy period. The French delegation missed few opportunities at the November Conference to assert their nation's claim to historical leadership in the fields of culture and education.[42]

The jostling for influence between France and Britain at the Conference gave the US delegation an opportunity to promote Washington's own proposals for the structure and purpose of the organization. Wherever possible it presented the US draft constitution and the principles it articulated, such as cultural humanism and international freedom of information, as compromise positions.[43] The State Department had instructed its delegation to approach the meetings as if it was the lead delegation, in view of America's decisive role in the Allied

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[40] Unesco, Constitution. http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

[41] As Sagarika Dutt notes, this was the source of the politicization of Unesco in the early years: "since it was created by western states, in the initial years, the western states, especially the US, felt justified in using Unesco to further their political interests and purposes, which in the 1940s and 1950s was mainly the containment of communism." Sagarika Dutt, *The Politicization of the United Nations Specialized Agencies: A Case Study of Unesco* (Lewiston: Mellon University Press, 1995), p. 44.

[42] On the general objectives of post-war French diplomacy see William I. Hitchcock, *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944–1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). For a good account of how the State Department viewed French behavior, see: Charles Ascher, "Forces in the Development of the Work-Plan of Unesco," (January 13, 1950); Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb; RG 84; NARA. Jan Kolasa's account provides a particularly good overview of these tensions and the heritage of the League Committee within the proposals the delegation from France had brought to London. See: Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation.* On the European tendency to respond to post-war US military and economic domination of the continent, and particularly the complex and contradictory factors that came with post-war German cultural self-assertion (beyond Unesco), see: Rebecca Boehling, "The Role of Culture in American Relations with Europe: The Case of the United States's Occupation of Germany," *Diplomatic History* 23: 1 (Winter, 1999).

[43] Evans, *The United States & Unesco*, pp. 27, 34.

victor, its status as the world's most powerful democracy and because the US would be providing the largest share of the Organization's funding, at least in the foreseeable future. The American delegation prevailed on the question of whether Unesco should be composed of national delegations or individuals acting independently. Washington favored diplomatic membership, and it successfully proposed a compromise structure in which the Secretariat and Executive Board would be composed of both individuals acting in their personal capacities and diplomatic representatives. The proposal also stated that the General Conference would be made up of national diplomatic delegations only, while the individual Unesco National Commissions charged with implementing Unesco programs in their home countries would incorporate private institutions and individuals. In practice, however, Unesco essentially functioned as a conduit for inter-governmental cooperation, with most key decisions made by the diplomats within the Secretariat, Executive Board and General Conference. Aside from the Director General, the delegates acting as individuals ultimately had little sway over the organization's policy agenda. Non-governmental agencies and individuals were instead involved in the implementation of policy and fundraising via the National Commissions. Another significant achievement for the US delegation was ensuring that educational reconstruction in Germany would not come under Unesco's purview apart from certain limited initiatives. It instead sought to ensure that such a key element of occupation policy would be the responsibility of the occupying powers.

The November Conference did not, however, deliver all that the American delegation had hoped for. The post of interim Director General was given to the British educator Julian Huxley over the American candidate, political scientist Walter Laves. Laves was instead appointed interim Deputy Director General. Media comment in Britain warned that the provision of almost half of all funding for Unesco by the US—under the same proportional scale as funding for the other United Nations bodies—might compromise the Organization's universalist goals. London's *The Times* editorialized that this funding arrangement would place the "proposed organization in a vulnerable position" because from the start it could fall "victim to national economics in the international field ... it does nothing to provide safeguards against the domination or limitation of its purposes and functions by the richer and presumably more powerful nations."[44] Huxley's appointment was thus a deliberate step to counter American influence, but there were numerous other avenues for the United States to influence the organization's agenda. A number of key administrative positions remained unfilled by the end of the Conference, and the organization's chain of command was still unclear. There was little clarity about which of Unesco's organs should

[44] "Mutual Aid in Education: Issues of Relief and Reconstruction: The London Conference," *The Times*, October 27, 1945.

set policy, causing confusion in the following years and leading to constant lobbying of the Executive Board in between Conferences.[45] The United States delegation was invariably in the best position to exercise this informal influence. But despite these shortcomings and ongoing concerns, the November Conference was a success inasmuch as the Unesco constitution was finalized and went to member states for ratification. Unesco's interim headquarters would be located in Paris.

Comment within the United States on the successful conclusion of the conference was broadly favorable. Statements in Congress were approving, with Representative Chester E. Merrow of New Hampshire, who had spoken at the London Conference, reporting to the House Committee on Foreign Relations that Unesco would serve as "one of the great foundation stones in the United Nations' structure." Polls cited on the floor of the House in 1945 placed American public support for Unesco's role in deepening "world understanding" at 85 percent.[46] The Senate subsequently ratified the Unesco treaty without controversy or delay.[47] Ben Cherrington celebrated Unesco as "potentially the most powerful instrument for eradicating war ever conceived." The New York Commissioner of Education George D. Stoddard expressed the hope that "[e]ducation, science and culture" would be "bound together for a major demonstration of their power to reduce aggression and strengthen the peace-loving habits of men and nations."[48] Archibald MacLeish's address to Congress during the ratification process had laid out Unesco's practical contribution to international peace and security. He defined both US national interests and the natural inclinations of American citizens in strikingly similar terms:

> A very large number of the delegates at the London conference were men and women who had played a leading part in the resistance movements of their countries under the Nazi occupation ... They were determined that an attack should be made upon the problem of war and peace at the one level where success

[45] Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, p. 75. Unesco's administrative ambiguities exacerbated its proneness to assertions of political influence by key powers. Political tensions looked set to continue, for although Paris had been designated as the seat of Unesco as a concession to France, the US and Britain had managed to position their nationals in the majority of administrative positions.

[46] Statement of Benton to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives reprinted as: William Benton, "The Role of Unesco in Our Foreign Policy," *Department of State Bulletin* 2508 (April 14, 1946), p. 629.

[47] Congressional Record quoted in Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 140.

[48] Ben Cherrington, "'All Things Are Ready If Our Minds Be So,'" *The Rotarian* 69: 4 (October, 1946), p. 15; George D. Stoddard, "Unesco," *New Republic* 114: 1 (January 7, 1946), p. 18.

> is possible–the level of human beings themselves ... [Their view] is shared ... by enormous numbers of men and women in the United States who believe, and believe with conviction, that the hope of the world lies where the hope of America has always lain–in the things of the mind and of the spirit–in the education of children, and the full and just information of the citizens, and the fullest possible development of science and scholarship and the fine arts.[49]

The US delegation would return again and again to these kinds of themes around America's special obligation to lead Unesco during subsequent years. To the American public, the Department of State emphasized that Unesco would embody the American liberal tradition in its approach to information and communications, thereby capitalizing on the:

> very great significance ... [of] the long-range furtherance of educational and cultural relations among nations. The Department wishes increasingly to encourage democratic international cooperation in developing reciprocal and desirable educational and cultural relations among the nations and peoples of the world, especially looking toward the promotion of free and friendly intellectual intercourse among them in the interest of international peace and security.[50]

An inevitable collision course between the US delegation and the other members of Unesco was in the making, however, with Washington's insistence that it had a special interest in, and entitlement to, taking a leading role within Unesco.

The inaugural General Conference of Unesco was to be held in Paris exactly one year after the November Conference. Much had been left unexplained in terms of the administrative and decision-making functions of Unesco, and the international media expressed ongoing concerns that the wealthier member states like the United States would unduly dominate the organization, given that some members could not afford to permanently station diplomatic representations to the Paris Secretariat.[51] The fact that more than two-thirds of

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[49] Statement of Archibald MacLeish to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, reprinted as Archibald MacLeish, "The Role of Unesco in Our Foreign Policy," *Department of State Bulletin* 2508 (April 14, 1946), p. 629.

[50] Department of State, "Participation of the United States in Emergency Educational and Cultural Rebuilding of the War-Torn United Nations," *Department of State Bulletin* 2094 (April 1, 1944), pp. 299–300.

[51] As Sewell observes, this kind of lobbying had been going on in the Preparatory Commission that had been constituted in London after the November Conference to examine ongoing administrative issues in the lead up to the first General Conference. "The interval between the London conference and the first General Conference was further to reveal participants' inclinations and shape the character of their nascent organization.

the Secretariat staff hailed from Britain, France or the US seemed to be a strong portent that the Organization would have a distinctly pro-Western character.[52] As the US delegation prepared to travel to Paris for the first General Conference, Washington's position on the political functions of the institution had already been made clear. The State Department's instructions to the American diplomatic staff were that the organization's goals should be framed in ways that accorded with American definitions of culture, freedom and modernity. But the organization would rapidly become a lightning rod for tensions about the dominant role of the United States in the post-war reconstruction of Europe and in the post-war global order. Though the US delegation continued to advance the case for American leadership in the cultural, educational and scientific spheres, it remained largely unprepared for the extent to which other national delegations perceived Unesco as a form for the expression of their own—sometimes dissenting—cultural and ideological priorities.

Provisional work by a Preparatory Commission staff was left to the responsibility of signatory states whose governments were willing to post interim delegates in London." Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, pp. 83–4. On the work of this commission, and the role of UK scholar and delegate Alfred Zimmern at the Preparatory Commission see: C.H. Dobinson, "Unesco – The Greatest Hope of the Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Education* (January 9, 1946).

[52] Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 144.

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Chapter 5

The Limits of Reciprocity: Cultural Diplomacy in the Post-War World Order

As the Allied military effort in Europe turned from halting successes in 1942–43 toward a full-scale rollback of Axis forces in 1944, State Department officials began to discuss which elements of the wartime cultural diplomacy program should be continued into peacetime. There was a fairly broad agreement in Washington that the key elements of the cultural diplomacy program, as distinct from wartime informational activities, should continue in order to ensure that the post-war settlement would find global public acceptance. Cultural diplomacy advocates expected that their work would play a significant role in the occupations of formerly belligerent states, and in this planning context the Division of Cultural Relations retained its pragmatic, wartime approach to cultural diplomacy as a vehicle for effective political change. Its post-war planning outlined the value of cultural exhibits, exchanges and colloquia as ways to tell the story of America's achievement of liberal democracy at home and its successful defense of them abroad. Planning also stressed how the cultural programs should present America's civic cultural traditions and market economy as a template available for a peaceful post-war world order and, as colonized nations sought their independence, as a template for post-colonial reconstruction and development. In this context, the assumptions around the Division's wartime work in China continued to bring US cultural diplomacy to the developing world after 1945. The Division's representatives still frequently spoke of a return to the philosophy of apolitical, open-ended exchanges now that that the pressures of military engagement had ended. But to play a proactive role in the post-war order and to provide maximum support to US interests, the Division's personnel also understood that they needed to endorse specific political and economic principles. In adopting a more instrumental approach, US officials were also mindful of the recent tensions between Congress and the OWI and the crippling funding cuts that Congress had imposed as a result. The Division's post-war planning was therefore guided by a determination to shape the cultural context of the post-war world order in a decisive and practical way in order to ensure the Division's ongoing operation.

From his position on the Division's General Advisory Committee, Ben Cherrington was wary of this political turn. He insisted that the post-war cultural diplomacy program must return to its pre-war ethos and operate in a spirit of detachment from the narrower imperatives of US grand strategy. In 1944 Cherrington urged the General Advisory Committee to consider that the "political and economic arrangements of international life must be undergirded by a world public opinion friendly to their successful operation and cultural relations may be the means of attaining such public opinion." He expressed concern that a wholesale turn to politicized activities would undermine this objective, proposing three operational guidelines to keep the Division free of the taint of propaganda. Its peacetime programs should: (a) be reciprocal and without the "slightest suggestion of imposing one people's culture upon another;" (b) never be "exploited as an instrument of national policy 'designed to serve some irrelevant purpose of state;'" and (c) "wherever possible the exchange of cultural interests should involve the direct participation of the people and institutions concerned with those interests in their respective countries–the program should stem from the authentic centers of culture."[1] This final point, emphasizing the value of "authentic" sources of cultural self-representation, reflects the concern on the part of cultural diplomacy traditionalists like Cherrington that the American programs might be jeopardized by the sudden interest of the Departments of State and Defense in utilizing cultural diplomacy to shore up US hegemony in the post-war world order.

Cherrington's views, which he also publicized in an academic publication in 1944,[2] held little sway within the Division's policy planning. To many of its personnel, especially those stationed on the ground in occupied Europe, delivering a more selective message was an acceptable compromise for the sake of delivering practical results. The rapidly escalating tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union made Cherrington's scruples seem even more outmoded in 1946–48. Within a year of the European armistice, Soviet moves to install a buffer zone of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe stoked fears that America risked "another Munich" if it left those states to be forcibly incorporated into a Soviet sphere of influence.[3] In Western Europe, the rise of social democratic and Communist parties soon became a major concern for the United States. Whereas Washington ultimately conceded Eastern Europe to

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[1] Howland Sargeant, to Barrows and Charles Thomson, "Notes on 'America's Future Cultural Relations' by Ben Mark Cherrington from the 'Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1944,'" Enclosure in Howland Sargeant to Barrows and Charles Thomson (January 29, 1948), p. 1; IIA 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[2] Ben Mark Cherrington, "America's Future Cultural Relations," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 235 (Septermber, 1944).

[3] Stanley Hoffmann, *Gulliver's Troubles: or the Setting of American Foreign Policy* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), pp. 5–6.

the Soviet sphere of influence, it used its cultural diplomacy and international information programs extensively to combat left-wing movements and Cold War neutrality in Western Europe. Maintaining a sense of forward momentum in this task further limited the degree of open debate about political and cultural principles that the Division could tolerate within the intellectual, artistic and cultural activities it funded.

Though traditionalists like Cherrington disapproved of the transformation of American cultural diplomacy into an instrument of ideological warfare, the Cold War brought the Division more funding, more stringent policy oversight and evaluation and an ongoing sense of urgency. The escalating ideological clash between the US and the USSR in the late 1940s enabled the Division to implement a wider range of cultural diplomacy activities in a larger number of countries than ever before. The Congress, White House and Departments of State and Defense now expected cultural diplomacy activities to be directly engaged in refuting Communist ideology. Progressive principles remained a feature of public statements about, and even in internal justifications of, of the American cultural diplomacy program after 1947. The spirit of reciprocity, individual empowerment, civic engagement and democracy continued to inform how policymakers and the public thought about the cultural diplomacy programs. But in operational terms, the Cold War led to the imposition of increasingly clear limits on the sorts of open, democratic debate that could occur in the context of the US programs.

Cultural Diplomacy in a Post-War World

As the Second World War drew to a close during 1945, State Department spokespeople increasingly emphasized the importance of cultural and educational relations as the basis for a lasting peace. "The United States is in 'for keeps' this time," Secretary of State Edward Stettinius asserted in 1945, "our interests are deeply involved in the peace and well-being of Europe, as they are in the peace and well-being of Asia and we shall support our interests ... not in any sense for domination or advantage but in the spirit of ... peace and security."[4] In an address delivered shortly after assuming office on April 12, 1945, President Harry Truman echoed these points, elaborating on America's commitment to international understanding as the basis for a lasting peace:

[4] Edward Settinius. "Mobilisation for Peace and Reconstruction through the United Nations Organisation: London, October 19, 1945" *Department of State Bulletin* 2399 (October 14, 1945), p. 560.

> Ignorance and its handmaidens, prejudice, intolerance, suspicion of our fellow men, breed dictators. And they breed wars. Civilization cannot survive an atomic war ... And so we must look to education in the long run to wipe out that ignorance which threatens catastrophe. Intelligent men do not hate other men just because their religion may be different, because their habits and language may be different, or because their national origin or color may be different. It is up to education to bring about that deeper international understanding which is so vital to world peace.[5]

Despite the enthusiastic recommendations from these quarters, however, Congress slashed the State Department's cultural diplomacy funding for 1945–46 and a series of disruptive bureaucratic reorganizations followed, which had been intended to streamline the State Department's information and cultural responsibilities.[6] In 1944 the functions of the Division of Cultural Cooperation, as it had been renamed during the war, were transferred to a Science, Education, and Art Division under the newly created State Department Office of Public Information.[7] In early 1945 the new post of Assistant Secretary of State to oversee international information and cultural diplomacy was established. Archibald MacLeish was appointed to fill the position, and did so for a brief time before being succeeded by the OWI's Ed Barrett, who was then quickly replaced by the dynamic William Benton. In 1946 the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC) was established to house the cultural diplomacy program, replacing the Science, Education and Art Division. The OIC had only 3,000 staff, down from the OWI's wartime high of 11,000, to oversee both the cultural diplomacy program and information activities.[8] The OIC's cultural program was smaller in scale than the wartime program, but its work was more varied. It now included the maintenance of 76 cultural centers across the globe, supervising the work of dedicated information and culture officers at many US embassies and consulates, and the newly established educational exchange program sponsored

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[5] Harry Truman, "Fordham Address," *New York Herald Tribune* May 12, 1946.

[6] On these disruptions see, e.g.: Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, Ch. 5.

[7] Later that year the Science, Education, and Art Division was subdivided into internal geographical divisions, and its name was changed to the Division of Cultural Cooperation.

[8] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 28. The departure of this large number of OWI staff was matched by an exodus of senior Roosevelt administration officials after the war. Many of these had been architects or key proponents of the liberal internationalist doctrines associated with the Roosevelt administration. Consequently, in addition to the changing style and approach of American cultural and informational diplomacy, the idealistic, progressive principles that the New Dealers had celebrated were muted simply because of this turnover of personnel. See Alonzo L. Hamby, "The Liberals, Truman and FDR as Symbol and Myth," *The Journal of American History* 56: 4 (March, 1970).

by J. William Fulbright. Fulbright's proposal for bilateral exchanges between professors and students at the university level took up the format of President Herbert Hoover's Belgian American Educational Foundation established in the interwar period. The cost of the Fulbright program was therefore initially offset by the US' surplus foreign currency holdings and by funds it earned by the sale of war material. The Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs proved to be another short-lived administrative division, and was renamed the Office of Information and Educational Exchange in late 1947. Alongside this bureaucratic reshuffling, the legislative basis for the State Department's cultural diplomacy program remained uncertain until 1948. Since 1939 a small group of Congressmen had unsuccessfully introduced several bills to authorize a permanent cultural diplomacy program beyond the provisions of the 1936 Pan American treaties.[9] But aside from Fulbright's legislation to fund educational exchanges in 1946, these efforts to provide the other aspects of the cultural diplomacy program with Congressional authorization were unsuccessful. Most of the funding for cultural diplomacy in formerly belligerent nations came from the Army's occupation funds, and aside from these the Division remained dependent on Presidential allocations.

Cultural Diplomacy and Post-War American Supremacy

In articulating a place for cultural diplomacy within post-war US foreign policy, American officials repeatedly emphasized that the only stable foundation for American supremacy in the integrated post-war world order would be a favorable climate of global public opinion. A July 1946 memorandum entitled *Objectives and Principles of the International Information and Cultural Program* typified these sentiments: "in the interdependent world of today the activities of every nation vitally affect the peoples of other nations. It is recognized that other peoples are concerned mainly with the impact of the United States on their particular interests and territories." The memorandum recommended that the cultural programs publicize American objectives in such a way as to illustrate "the contribution of the United States to the maintenance of peace; ... the impact of American foreign policy and of non-Governmental United States activities on their areas;.[and] the ways in which American practices, beliefs, and activities are relevant to the needs of their areas."[10] In setting out the premises of the China program in 1944, the Division's Haldore Hanson had also drawn on this theme of global interdependence and the management of global cultural

[9] See Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, pp. 226–7.

[10] "Objectives and Principles of the International Information and Cultural Program," (no author) (July 11, 1946), p. 1; IIA 1938–1953; RG 59; NARA.

forces as the key to exercising power in this new context. His analysis of the China program contended that the most important historical process signaled by the Second World War itself was the "shrinking" of geographical distance through technology and the rise of new global political ideologies. The war itself was emblematic of a "change [in] the nature of international relations of our generation more completely than any other generation." With the advent of rapid communications, air travel, and the demonstrably great influence of propaganda in mass politics, Americans were becoming ever more "informed about our neighbors," and "they in turn will be in a position to learn about us." The basic point here was that the "attitudes of the people of one nation toward the people of another are likely to exert an ever-increasing influence upon foreign policy."[11]

Given this new understanding of the foundations of world politics, the Division's staff took note of the Soviet Union's global ideological appeal and its growing political ambitions in Europe as early as November 1945, noting that its rising prominence brought with it the potential for conflict with US foreign policy objectives in this interdependent global context. A public memorandum by Charles J. Child noted that there was a clear potential for misunderstanding between the US and the USSR, though he was optimistic that a robust program of cultural exchanges could effectively insure against this outcome. Observing that "people can speak more directly to each other through the medium of the arts," Child charged that a strong program of Soviet-American artistic exchanges could "gradually build a trade in ideas which will leave lend-lease far behind in value given and received."[12] While Child's prediction that cultural and intellectual activities would become an area of tension between the superpowers proved accurate, his recommendation that Washington initiate a larger program of cultural exchange aimed at preventing conflict between the two failed to attract additional funding and support.

In these closing stages of the war, American cultural diplomacy advocates contended that the forces of global integration needed to be accompanied by a rise in internationalist sentiments and cultural understanding. One proposal received by the president from female members of the Democratic National Committee was to involve more women in US cultural diplomacy and information programs so as to showcase the United States' recognition of the "contribution women can make in the international field."[13] There is no evidence that this suggestion was taken up in a formal way. The connection

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[11] Haldore Hanson, "America's Need for Understanding in China," pp. 624–5.

[12] Charles J. Child, "Cultural Cooperation with the Soviet Union," *Department of State Bulletin* 2430 (November 18, 1945), pp. 815–16.

[13] Gladys A. Tillett, to Harry S. Truman, 15 January, 1946, p. 1. President's Official File; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

between Washington's strong position at the end of the war and the need to foster internationalist sentiments at home and abroad was spelled out in a Divisional memorandum that examined the US Foreign Service's contribution to cultural affairs, which was prepared for the incoming Assistant Secretary of State Edward Barrett in January 1945. Barrett was advised that the "role of the information officer particularly must be reciprocal. He will have far more effect if he constantly stresses that he is interested in the *exchange* of information between the United States and other nations." A new, but important, role for diplomatic officers in the post-war global order would be to act in part as public figures in the nations they were posted to. This new profile and attitude within the Foreign Service was to convey the American government and the American people's receptivity to the culture and experiences of others. "I think the people of any nation are probably less interested in the United States than they are interested in what the United States thinks of them," Barrett was advised. While the Division was "not primarily concerned with feeding this latter interest, our outposts have demonstrated again and again that it can be used most effectively in the placing of our particular message."[14] At the same time, this focus on message placement was something of a departure from the reciprocal, open-ended and apolitical cultural interactions envisaged by the Division's staff and supporters before 1941.

In addition to these foundational discussions about how the practices of diplomacy and foreign policy had changed as a consequence of the war, a key topic of debate during 1945–46 concerned the role of cultural diplomacy as an instrument within the military occupations and ideological reorientations of Germany, Austria and Japan. That such discussions were held at all was a telling development, since not all of the Division's staff and advisors were gratified to see the Division playing a key part in the occupation of formerly belligerent areas. The propagandistic connotations of processes like "de-Nazification" and "re-education" were a clear departure from the Division's foundational operating principle of reciprocity. But in contemplating this novel task of remaking foreign cultures in order to purge them of belligerent tendencies, US cultural diplomacy planners could also draw on a spate of new academic studies published during the war examining the export and consolidation of democracy in post-conflict settings and which drew on new innovations in politics and communications studies that embraced communication as a legitimate instrument of democratic governance. Taking note of the failure of the Versailles settlement to make the

[14] Emphasis in original. H.H. Arnason to Edward W. Barrett (January 29, 1945), p. 3; Chronological File 1944–45; Records of Archibald MacLeish, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Cultural Relations, 1944–1945; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

world safe for democracy, this emerging democratization literature considered the significance of civil, cultural and informational factors, as well as military, economic, and administrative reform, in the stabilization of democratic states.[15] In this context, cultural diplomacy had a rising profile as an instrument of political change and the promotion of US strategic interests.

The Roosevelt administration's earliest plans for post-war Germany had been spelled out in Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau's eponymous plan of August 1944. Morgenthau sketched out a highly punitive settlement in which Germany would be stripped of its heavy industries and broken up into small states, leaving it incapable of waging war in the future. By the end of 1945, however, there were calls from both inside and outside the administration, notably from Senator James C. Eastland, not to mete out excessive punishment but rather to consider Germany's future from the perspective of "decency ... civilization, ... [and ultimately] our own future welfare." For Eastland, America's interests lay not in the crippling—or "castration," as one letter outlining the administration's planning instructions for Germany policy had put it—of a potential future adversary. Rather, American national interests and its global reputation required it to uphold the values of "civilized, Christian people" in relation to Germany. Doing so would thus ensure that "oriental, atheistic philosophies," in particular Communism, would not prevail "in the heart of Europe."[16] Beneath the hyperbole, Eastland's statements reflected a wider shift in thinking both within the government and among the American public in general, which equated winning the peace with bringing Western Europe and the United States into harmony under shared ideological principles and the achievement of material prosperity. It was clear once this objective gained acceptance that the State Department's cultural, educational and informational instruments would play a decisive role in promoting the ideational basis for this political change and in reassuring European audiences about Washington's benign intentions.

The cultural and ideological reorientation of Germany was also challenging because it would involve a much larger, more politicized, and more rapid cultural diplomacy effort than anything that had previously been contemplated by US policymakers. Their planning work proved controversial, with many media commentators advocating greatly more punitive policies to ensure that a peaceful Europe could be absolutely guaranteed.[17] The military took the lead in planning and implementing the reconstruction efforts, and the Division's

[15] For a review of nine key works in this field see: Joseph S. Roucek, "Aspirations for a Greater Democracy," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 2: 4 (July, 1943).

[16] James C. Eastland, quoted in Patrick Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 133.

[17] See, e.g. Alfred Kantorowicz, "The OWI in Germany," *New Republic* 112: 20 (May 14, 1945).

role in this was primarily to brief key military officials and offer planning advice based on its operational experience during the war. Its advisory work began when it was asked to assess reports by American psychological warfare officers accompanying the US Army's first assaults on German territory in October 1944. These reports identified the pockets of anti-Nazi resistance remaining in Germany and provided a general survey of the condition of the German media and educational institutions. On this basis the Division offered advice on how to utilize these frameworks for a post-war cultural program.

By June 1945, the US Army had installed District Information Services across the various regions in its occupied zone to oversee the establishment of democratic press and radio services and the establishment of American cultural centers and libraries. By 1951 the latter were lending out 260,000 books per year. The German and Austrian *Amerika Häuser* were in fact some of the most successful components of the cultural diplomacy and de-Nazification efforts, and by the end of 1948 more than 2.7 million Germans regularly visited the centers.[18] Their popularity endured well into the Cold War: during a three month period in 1953 one in seven Austrians had visited an *Amerika Haus*.[19] An Educational and Religious Affairs Section of the US occupation authority had the vital task of re-establishing and staffing Germany's schools.[20] The occupation's film program would quickly become one of the Army's most popular initiatives: by 1952, 17 million German filmgoers per month were viewing the US government's newsreel *Welt im Film*.[21] Washington had also insisted that, as part of its reconstruction lending in Germany and everywhere else in Europe, the European nations could not impose import quotas on Hollywood films, leading to a massive influx of American movies. Yet with this proliferation of cultural activities, the US cultural, educational and informational divisions working in occupied Germany also suffered from a lack of effective coordination by the US occupation administration, called the Office of Military Government-US Zone, or OMGUS, and first run by US General Lucius Clay. The educational and high cultural initiatives that OMGUS undertook, in particular, got off to a slow and chaotic start.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff defined the long-term goals of the occupation policies in Germany and Austria as ensuring "the development of educational methods, institutions, programs and materials designed to further the creation of democratic attitudes and practices through education."[22] The occupation's

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[18] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 27.

[19] Juan Cameron, "'We are Now Fighting on Two Fronts:' In Vienna McCarthy and the Russians Attack our Information Service," *New Republic* 128: 18 (May 4, 1953), p. 15.

[20] See Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 26.

[21] Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe.*

[22] Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum #1779, quoted in Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, p. 21.

cultural policies also sought to displace Nazi stereotypes of American superficiality and crudeness, while much of its visual propaganda sought to impress upon the German public their collective guilt over Nazi atrocities. As with World War II film distribution, several popular American films were deemed unsuitable for German audiences under occupation and were banned from export. These included *Gone with the Wind* because it showed slavery, *The Grapes of Wrath* for its depiction of poverty, and *The Maltese Falcon*, because despite being a comedy it might be construed as glorifying gangsterism and a life of crime. Several of the OWI's most popular wartime documentary productions were translated into German and shown in the occupied zone, including *The Tennessee Valley Authority*, *Democracy in Action*, and the still-relevant *Autobiography of a Jeep.* US officials regarded documentaries as an especially important and engaging feature of the cultural reorientation of Germany, since they could reveal "the construction and accomplishments of democratic governance and their peoples." Some US commentators disagreed that the film program was effectively engaging German hearts and minds, however; a *New York Times* correspondent charged that compared to the US films for Germany, the worst of Hollywood's "bathing-beauty-and-dogshow nonsense look like Academy winners."[23]

While the Division agreed with the ultimate objective of re-education, its hallmark principles of reciprocity and openness had to be discarded to fit in with the Army's highly pragmatic approach to German reconstruction. The occupation's take-over of the German media was a case in point. The German journalists and intellectuals who had been invited by the Army to write for American-sponsored publications such as the national newspaper *Die Neue Zeitung*, Frankfurt's *Frankfurter Rundschau* and the monthly cultural journal *Der Monat* were told that they should not see themselves as engaged in propaganda, and could thus uphold strict journalistic standards. They were informed, in fact, that the revival of journalistic norms after the propaganda saturation of the Nazi era was a key function of these publications and their work. The high cultural and intellectual content of *Der Monat* and *Die Neue Zeitung* also sought to impress upon German elites that the United States both valued, and had much to contribute to, global artistic production. The editors of these publications, also German, and many of them returning émigrés, were responsible for verifying the factual content and tone of all submissions. But the objectivity of this American-sponsored media was questionable according to many of their readers, particularly in the later years of the occupation. One prominent writer criticized the absence of media coverage of mass starvation in Germany's Eastern zone and the heavy-handed, pro-American tone of editorial

[23] Henry P. Pilgert and Gladwin Hall, quoted by Goldstein, *Capturing the German Eye*, pp. 49–50.

comment as evidence that the Army's stated intention to facilitate a truly "democratic" German transition was far from the reality.[24]

American diplomat Henry Kellerman's memoir of service in the post-war reconstruction of Germany reflected the tension between reciprocity and ideological reorientation in the cultural diplomacy program. The State Department had instructed the Division to view its role in Germany and Austria as "fundamentally humanitarian and avowedly 'nonpolitical.'" The educational reconstruction and cultural relations programs there had been "established because international communication and understanding through cooperative person-to-person relations were considered to be a necessary aspect of foreign relations." But for Kellerman it was clear that cultural diplomacy "was from the beginning a part of the international political scene" in relation to the extension of American post-war hegemony. "[P]olitical considerations" were uppermost in the planning and implementation of cultural and educational initiatives under US occupation forces. The Division's involvement in the occupations ensured that "the conflict between [cultural diplomacy] purists and pragmatists" like Cherrington and Thomson "was never fully resolved" in the first years after the war.[25] Shepard Stone, a former journalist who had been among the vanguard of US psychological warfare officers entering Germany and was subsequently involved with the reconstruction of the German print media, attested to this in remarks he made after resigning from the US Army in 1945. Stone despaired that the de-Nazification program was overly punitive, warning that America was thus destined to fail in its task of imparting a democratic character to German civil society.[26]

In addition to promoting democratic principles, the US educational and cultural projects in occupied Germany and Austria were intended to promote free trade and private enterprise as an antidote both to National Socialist economic doctrines and the growing appeal of Communism on the continent.[27] US planners believed that rising prosperity in the occupied states would help prevent a return to aggressive policies. As historian Reinhold Wagnleitner reflects, they were "thoroughly convinced that the 'liberal' capitalistic system of the United States could, as it were, be equated with the culmination of all previous human forms of organization, superseding all other social systems not only materially but morally." But like the other aspects of the ideological reorientation process,

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[24] Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, p. 36. See also Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, "Art is Democracy and Democracy is Art: Culture, Propaganda and the *Neue Zeitung* in Germany, 1944–1947," *Diplomatic History* 23: 1 (1999).

[25] Kellerman, *Cultural Relations*, Department of State Publication #8931, pp. 8–9.

[26] Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, p. 43.

[27] On the pragmatic aspects of US cultural diplomacy and the promotion of free market, capitalist ideas, see: Rebecca Boehling, "The Role of Culture in American Relations with Europe."

this approach represented something of a departure from the Division's ideal of reciprocal exchange and open debate on economic governance, and also even constituted a departure from Cherrington's hope that an emphasis on promotion of "authentic" forms of high culture could ensure that the post-war cultural diplomacy program would remain humanistic and apolitical. By tying cultural diplomacy to America's economic interests, the Division seemed to have adopted the notion that "conquered people [were expected to] ... *change their culture* ... based upon the unshakable, optimistic faith in progress, assuming that long-range political reforms and the establishment of Western democracy can be achieved only by an open, pluralistic, liberal education."[28] The widening demands on US cultural diplomacy in the post-war period had thus challenged the open, individualist, apolitical ideal of the pre-war, progressive American cultural diplomacy system.

The Cultural Cold War

The rise of Cold War antagonisms between the United States and the Soviet Union had far-reaching consequences for the rationale and conduct of US cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy's profile was boosted by the emergence of competition with the USSR, to the extent that the extension of American culture became a mechanism with which to promote the security of the US and its allies. The language of psychological warfare and propaganda increasingly entered the State Department's cultural diplomacy discourse during the late 1940s, and the focus of US cultural diplomacy outside occupied areas also shifted away from the reciprocal exchange of political views and toward the promotion of a particularist Cold War narrative. As early as 1945, American intelligence officials had criticized the Division's assertion that its cultural activities could be a vehicle to enhance cooperation and defuse tension between America and the Soviet Union in a post-war context. Instead, the military view was that the Soviet cultural program was nothing more than a cover for subversive activities and hostile propaganda, and could never serve as a pathway for genuine, two-way engagement.[29] That same year the Office of Strategic Services first proposed the US adopt covert cultural operations, with the aim of undercutting Soviet influence and the prestige of Communism in Europe. The OSS anticipated that

[28] My emphasis added. Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colanisation*, p. 67.

[29] The Soviet cultural diplomacy program had been restarted in the post-war period as a consequence of the increasingly fractured relationship between the Allies over the future of Europe. Historian Walter Hixson also suggests that the USSR extended its cultural programs as a tit for tat against the expectation that America and Britain's cultural overtures were a pretext for them to infiltrate the USSR through their technical assistance and cultural diplomacy programs. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, p. 7.

American interests would be challenged by hostile Soviet propaganda well into the post-war era. With new means of reaching and influencing foreign publics at their disposal, America's "enemies will be even freer ... to propagandize, subvert, sabotage and exert ... pressures upon us, and we ourselves shall be more willing to bear these affronts and ourselves to indulge in such methods–in our eagerness to avoid at all costs the tragedy of open war."[30] Having been commissioned by the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs to report on Soviet subversion in Eastern Europe that fall, Harold Lasswell predicted a "cultural armaments race" between Russia and the United States. This would involve "scientific, artistic and educational expenditure" and programs on a global scale.[31] Other communications scholars, including the Czech-born former OWI staffer H.M. Spitzer, also warned that the United States' "material victory might remain unaccompanied by the spiritual victory so ardently desired."[32] The American propaganda critics of the interwar period had detected in America's fundamental political ideals, particularly its self-organizing, egalitarian and democratic spirit, the grounds on which to justify their rejection of propaganda. But the advocates of a strenuous cultural and psychological effort against Communism like Spitzer now cited political commitments like the Declaration of Independence to insist that the Truman administration now had an obligation to spread American ideals.

George Kennan's "Long Telegram" from Moscow issued the following February warned of the depth of Soviet antipathy toward the United States and of the likelihood that the post-war tension between the two over the fate of Eastern Europe could lead to more far-reaching tensions. With respect to cultural diplomacy and propaganda, Kennan predicted that "lip service will ... be rendered to desirability of deepening cultural contacts between peoples" by the USSR, "but this will not in practice be interpreted in any way which could weaken the security position of Soviet peoples."[33] From a Cold War perspective, in other words, upholding the principle of reciprocity in the context of cultural diplomacy would be naïve. The United States' adversaries had no such scruples about maintaining an honest, open ideological debate. The president's "Truman Doctrine" speech in March 1947 announcing economic aid to Greece and Turkey was another watershed in the development of Washington's Cold War grand strategy and the new role of cultural diplomacy instruments within it. Truman's move had been intended to serve as a signal of the US government's commitment to forestalling Soviet advances beyond Eastern Europe through

[30] Gregory Bateson (1945), quoted in Stonor Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, p. 17.

[31] Harold Lasswell (1945), quoted in Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 30.

[32] H.M. Spitzer, "Presenting America in American Propaganda," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 11: 2 (Summer, 1947), p. 214.

[33] Kennan quoted in Gould Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," p. 198.

direct support for the local regimes,[34] and the package of American aid to Greece and Turkey also incorporated funding for cultural and educational projects endorsing the principles of free speech, free markets, and democratic institutions.[35] The Office of Information and Cultural Affairs' William T. Stone added another element to the Cold War cultural diplomacy format the following September. He proposed that the State Department should make a show of increasing funding and opportunities for US-Soviet cultural exchanges. In doing so "the United States has an opportunity to demonstrate to the Soviet Union its earnest desire for friendship in a way not otherwise possible and in a manner which will not interfere with our diplomatic position." But in the event of a Soviet snub, the proposals would still be valuable to the US image because global audiences could be made aware "that we had done our best to be friendly and was [*sic.*] spurned." Stone's proposal defined cultural and educational exchanges as a relatively low stakes forum for tit-for-tat competition, noting: "the Department cannot lose by making such an offer."[36] The Department of State capitalized in this way in 1949, when it released a pamphlet for public distribution entitled "Cultural Relations Between the United States and the Soviet Union: Efforts to Establish Cultural-Scientific Exchange Blocked by USSR."[37]

Stone's pragmatic approach had become the dominant one within US cultural diplomacy planning by the end of 1947, and this shift in emphasis coincided with the first increases to the cultural diplomacy budget since 1944. Funds for US cultural activities in 1947 in Germany alone, which were sourced from State Department, emergency and Army appropriations, reached their peak figure of $6,040,064. But according to British government figures, total US spending on cultural and informational diplomacy was still comparatively low, at a sum of $30,123,086, far short of the United Kingdom's budget of $42,588,452.[38]

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[34] Harry Truman, "Truman Doctrine" in Barton J. Bernstein and Allen J. Matusow (eds), *The Truman Administration: A Documentary History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 251–6.

[35] Mary Sperling McAuliffe, *Crisis on the Left: Cold War Politics and American Liberals, 1947–1954* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), p. 22; Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 134.

[36] Fred Warner Neal, to William T. Stone, "Exchange of Persons with Russia," (September 26, 1946), p. 1; IIA 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[37] Department of State, "Cultural Relations Between the United States and the Soviet Union: Efforts to Establish Cultural-Scientific Exchange Blocked by USSR," April, 1949; Papers of Bryn J. Hovde; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

[38] On US spending to Germany, see: Kellerman, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy*, p. 9. On comparative figures see: Foreign Office of the United Kingdom, to William Benton, "Comparative Expenditures and Personnel by Country- Europe," Appendix A (November 7, 1946); IIA, 1938–53; RG 59; NARA. See also: Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 132.

Throughout that year, US officers in the field warned that the United States was being subject to increasingly strident attacks by Soviet propagandists and sympathizers in all manner of European cultural and intellectual forums. Their dispatches frequently noted that the United States now lagged behind the Soviet Union, often working through local Communist parties, in the struggle to influence Europe's post-war political debates. A report from the American embassy in Moscow in July warned that American intellectual and political influence in Europe was in decline. It remarked that while the Soviet Union's own reports of its successes were exaggerated, there was an undeniable sense of vigor, camaraderie and creativity in the Soviet cultural programs. The report warned:

> unbelievable as it may seem, the Soviets appear to be steadily convincing the mass of the people of many lands that in the USSR lies the great white hope of the future, while the U.S. constitutes the dark terror ... It is unfortunate that almost at the inception of an international cultural program by the US government developments should take place which make it necessary to consider introducing into that program an element of contest. Yet the developments are taking place and we have a responsibility of squarely facing up to the issue, something which it seems we have not yet done.[39]

In response, the State Department's geographical bureaus, especially its Western and Eastern Europe Divisions, and the Department of Defense, began to take a much greater interest in cultural diplomacy. Their preoccupation throughout 1947 was how cultural diplomacy could be measured and enhanced to deliver desired strategic outcomes.

As a consequence of the rising profile of cultural and informational instruments, as well as the dogged efforts of Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton, public diplomacy finally gained a legislative basis with the passage of the Information and Educational Exchange Act in 1948. The Act was better known for its Congressional sponsors Representative Karl Mundt and Senator Alexander Smith, both Republicans, who had travelled to Europe the year before to investigate the post-war cultural, intellectual and ideological conditions. Mundt, in particular, was an ardent anti-Communist who had become convinced that US national security demanded a strong ideological offensive against the Soviets. The Act proposed to "promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, in full recognition of the fact that a free interchange of information and of persons and of skills would contribute immeasurably toward the promotion of world peace." It would also, crucially, "correct misunderstandings

[39] Mose Harvey, Moscow Embassy, to William T. Stone and staff (July 3, 1947), p. 1; IIA 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

and misinformation about the United States" in recognition of the fact that "[i]n all parts of the world, the United States is subject to a continuous propaganda campaign ... undermining ... the United States in its contacts with foreign peoples."[40] He worked closely with Benton to build Congressional support and the Smith–Mundt Act passed into law in January.[41] The Act was endorsed by a range of philanthropic institutions that had undertaken cultural diplomacy before the war, notably the Institute for International Education and the American Library Association. The legislation also ensured that no US government materials or broadcasts could be distributed within the United States, which helped to assure wary Congressmen and the American public that the floodgates to domestic propaganda would not be open. The inclusion of this provision also reflected the interests of the major American media corporations and their unwillingness to face domestic competition from the government.

The wording of the Smith–Mundt Act in relation to cultural diplomacy solidified the Division's departure from its ethos of reciprocity and openness. The Smith–Mundt Act was pragmatic and ideological, rather than internationalist and reciprocal, in how it defined the purpose and approach of American cultural diplomacy.[42] References to the "emergency importance" and "tremendous utility" of government-sponsored cultural diplomacy and educational exchange as a means to confront threats to US interests were commonplace during the Congressional debates on the Smith–Mundt Act. Still committed to his definition of cultural relations as distinct from the narrowly self-interested modalities of propaganda, Cherrington came out publicly against the legislation, warning during the Senate's debates that it was not "in line with American traditions" and would open the floodgates to an excessively pragmatic approach to cultural and educational exchange.[43]

The Smith–Mundt Act formalized a definition of American cultural diplomacy as "positive action" on behalf of US interests, against the backdrop of an international "contest" of wills between America's democratic global leadership and the aggressive, totalitarian Soviet Union. As one advisory report on the Smith–Mundt Act had warned, with the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe tightening: "more and more people are barred from understanding America's intentions and experiencing our freedoms. We can no longer afford to observe passively the rapidly shrinking area of freedom throughout the world."[44] Yet traditionalists within the Division, particularly Cherrington

[40] US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1947,* 80th Congress, 1st Sess., 1947, pp. 3–4.

[41] See: Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, p. 131.

[42] Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, p. 131.

[43] Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, pp. 129–33.

[44] William C. Johnstone, "Cooperative Exchange Programs Under the Smith-Mundt Act," *Department of State Bulletin* 3365 (December 12, 1948), p. 739.

and his fellow members of the General Advisory Committee, fought against this Cold War rationale for cultural diplomacy. The Committee's September 1948 report reminded the Office of Information and Cultural Affairs that "it is a basic fact that such a program of [cultural and educational] exchange is the natural expression of the democratic principles on which and for which we stand." Consequently the program must embody these principles with an open, reciprocal format open to multiple perspectives and even political dissent. Emphasizing the basis of America's cultural diplomacy program in the pre-war period, the report noted how all the "achievements of the civilized world have been brought about by ... cooperation" and the aspiration to mutual understanding rather than competition. The Committee advised the State Department to "continue, in cooperation with other peoples, to build the good life which flows across national boundary lines." But to achieve this—and implicitly here the Committee was criticizing the framing of the Smith–Mundt Act— the Committee insisted that cultural diplomacy must focus on fostering "cultural exchange–not cultural penetration" in targeted areas.[45]

The new urgency and pragmatism embodied by the Smith–Mundt Act also helped to alter the *kinds* of cultural ideas and artifacts that the US programs mobilized on behalf of democracy and free enterprise. The Division had, at its founding, drawn on philanthropic ideals that defined cultural and educational exchange as a humanistic process that was open-ended and evolving. As one of multiple participants, the United States had an opportunity to contribute to dialogues about governance and politics in a reciprocal way. But this dialogical approach was largely supplanted during the early stages of the Cold War by the notion of cultural projection. Cultural diplomacy was now intended to showcase American cultural achievements, particularly in the realm of high culture, as a means of competition. The visual arts and intellectual congresses were a focal point within this new approach, since the Soviet Union had successfully exploited these formats in its own post-war cultural diplomacy. At the front lines of the Cold War, especially in Europe, high culture and intellectual work would serve as the index of national prestige in the contest between the superpowers.

This new focus on the promotion of American high culture led the State Department to seek out left-wing intellectuals after 1946, both within the United States and especially in Europe, in the hope that they would speak and write on behalf of capitalism and democracy. Intellectuals had gained a newfound political status as key protagonists in the ideological struggle against the Soviet Union in Europe, and the Office of Information and Culture, as well as the newly established US Central Intelligence Agency, began a concerted effort to engage them. American intellectual publications like *Der Monat* in

[45] Report of the chair of the Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange (1948), quoted in Kellerman, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy*, p. 7.

Germany were central to this effort to establish America's cultural credentials. The State Department also famously dispatched 79 abstract paintings it had purchased in 1946 in two roving exhibits entitled Advancing American Art. After the US National Gallery of Art had dispatched a notoriously lackluster exhibit purporting to showcase the American aesthetic to London's Tate Gallery in 1945, the State Department purchased a collection of paintings by the most prominent young abstract expressionists in the United States, which it showed as Advancing American Art. After an opening exhibition in the United States, the collection was split and two shows embarked for France and the Caribbean in October 1946. While the artworks famously earned high praise from the audiences that viewed it both in Europe and elsewhere in the world, and much of the work had been inspired in the ferment of American art after hundreds of artists had fled Germany and Italy for the US, the conservative media within the United States, Congressional Republicans, and even President Truman himself raised an outcry over what they regarded as the dubious aesthetic and moral values embodied in the collection's abstract style. The *New York Sun* and other newspapers had detected a Communist undertone in abstract painting when the collection had been shown in New York before being sent abroad.[46] Bowing to pressure, William Benton cancelled the exhibition in 1947, and Congress would soon thereafter axe the Department's art program altogether.[47] Interestingly, the controversy echoed a public debate that had occurred in the pages of *Harper's* in 1943 over whether abstract expressionism, which some regarded as having an authentically American spirit of freedom and modernity, ought to be promoted to the American public as a way of inoculating their tastes against Fascist aesthetics.[48] In the decades to follow, abstract impressionism would be situated as an antidote to the strictures of the heavy-handed Soviet "socialist realist" style, although the notion that abstract art embodied American diversity, individualism and freedom would remain controversial for decades to come.[49]

Despite this setback within the visual arts program, the Office forged ahead with other cultural initiatives designed to dispel the "presupposition of American cultural retardation" that was apparently shared by most European intellectuals

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[46] Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit*, p. 32.

[47] In this context several scholars have noted the promotion of *avant-garde* painting and music, some of it quite controversial. See, e.g.: Frank Ninkovich, "The Currents of Cultural Diplomacy: Art and the State Department 1938–1947," *Diplomatic History* 1: 3 (Summer, 1977). On the promotion of *avant-garde* and classical music by the US, see also Stonor Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*; Cull, *The United States Information Agency and the Cold War*, p. 33.

[48] See, e.g. Stuart Davis, "What About Modern Art and Democracy?" *Harper's Magazine* 118 (December, 1943).

[49] On the ongoing debate, and on the fact that the debate over Advancing American Art actually echoed earlier controversies over the art projects in the New Deal Works Progress Administration's Federal Arts Project, see: Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit*.

at the time.[50] US cultural diplomacy directives took note of the way that intellectuals enjoyed "unusual respect and influence in Europe,"[51] and warned that Marxism's intellectual prestige and the USSR's stature as a sponsor of elite academic achievement was one of its most potent tools for undercutting America's international image. The Soviet propaganda agencies had focused on cultivating intellectuals throughout Western Europe after 1945. But by ascribing any and all criticisms of American culture to a Europe-wide subversive Soviet propaganda campaign, the State Department's push to garner intellectual prestige in this period often failed to present a coherent intellectual and philosophical alternative to the intellectual appeal of Marxist ideology. Many of the intellectual defenses of the American system produced in the late 1940s were instead arrogantly expressed and insufficiently open to the cultural contributions of others. More broadly, US intelligence agencies failed to grasp the extent to which both Communist intellectual movements and the local Communist organizations across Europe actually "drew inspiration from local cultures, from traditions of community solidarity," enjoying a real local legitimacy as a consequence.[52] In failing to appreciate the authenticity of the cultural expressions of the post-war left-wing movements in Europe, US officials were not equipped to establish meaningful intellectual and political dialogues with the European left. This exacerbated the polarization of post-war cultural and intellectual life on the continent.

Cultivating intellectuals remained a vexing issue well into 1949, with one State Department program assessment warning that for the Soviets, "intellectuals are mobilized in part to sustain the myth that all intellectuals worthy of the name acknowledge the superiority of Marxist logic and view with sympathy the elaboration of the 'Great Socialist Experiment.'" Beyond this, "outstanding leaders in the realm of the arts and sciences" with more inchoate sympathies had been "also exploited" by the Communists under the guise of international cultural diplomacy.[53] It noted that the United States lagged significantly behind the Soviet Union in terms of its appeal among European intellectuals. Edward Barrett offered

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[50] W.G. Headrick (OMGUS Information Control Division, 1946), quoted in Stonor Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, p. 20.

[51] Public Information Committee, "The Soviet 'Peace' Offensive," (December 1, 1949), p. 6; Policy Papers and Meetings, 1947–50 (PPM. 1947–50); General Subject Files 1947–50 (Subj. 1947–50); Records of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, 1947–1950 (ASPA 1947–50); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

[52] Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow*, p. 35.

[53] Public Information Committee, "The Soviet 'Peace' Offensive," (December 1, 1949), p. 6; Policy Papers and Meetings, 1947–50 (PPM. 1947–50); General Subject Files 1947–50 (Subj. 1947–50); Records of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, 1947–1950 (ASPA 1947–50); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

a pointed warning about the intellectual challenge posed by the USSR. Americans were "stunned to find ourselves ... persistently criticized by the intellectual elite of other nations" because the US had failed to offer a coherent intellectual position on the Cold War. Such European critiques of US cultural diplomacy also stoked public support for neutrality as a foreign policy position in Europe. Barrett reflected that there was an American sense of bafflement "when we find affluent, well-educated non-Communists in France or Sweden ... groping publicly for a middle course."[54] And in Asia and Africa, too, Soviet cultural and intellectual diplomacy had great appeal for modernizing elites, while its numerous projects that were "close to the soil" could effectively engage peasants and laborers.[55]

While European intellectuals and artists remained a focal point for the American cultural diplomacy programs in Europe, Benton's replacement as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, George V. Allen, emphasized engagement with the European working class. Allen, a former journalist and former ambassador to Iran, succeeded Benton in 1948. Allen immediately directed that the cultural diplomacy program—which had been separated from the information functions in another administrative reorganizations that year—should showcase American society's singular ability to facilitate upward social mobility to working-class European audiences. Allen characterized America's core message as one of social equality and mobility, which gave it a stronger platform to compete with the Soviet Union for the hearts and minds of Europe's workers and left-leaning intellectuals. For him, the United States' comparative advantage in the global cultural contest was that Americans were "not obliged to present ourselves to the world as models of perfection," but rather as a society that afforded each individual, regardless of status or income, an outlet for civic and political engagement. The staunchly anti-Communist ex-ambassador noted: "the primary advantage we have over the propaganda efforts of totalitarian states today is the fact that ... the United States has so many virtues to overcome the shortcomings." America should "not fear the effect of our being thoroughly known abroad ... We have the enormous advantage ... that we are willing to admit our imperfections."[56] State Department Public Information Committee guidelines issued in 1949 recommended the European working classes be provided with more illustrations of "the vertical mobility which characterizes the fluid social structure of the U.S. It is useful in

[54] Barrett, quoted in Pells, *Not Like Us*, p. 68.

[55] Fleur Cowles, "Our Propaganda in Asia," *Atlantic* 191: 2 (February, 1953), p. 62.

[56] George V. Allen, quoted in Lloyd Leheras, "Information Please, International," *The American Foreign Service Journal* 25 (no. 9, 1948), p. 10. On the transference of term "totalitarian" from its prior use in relation to Nazi Germany to a description of the USSR, see: Les. K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *American Historical Review* 75: 4 (1970).

this connection to point to the proportion of worker-farmer children enrolled in American universities today."[57] The American cultural centers program was also instrumental in targeting this sector of America's audience through the provision of free public library services and free cultural events.

In 1948 the newly christened State Department Office of Educational Exchange conducted a review of the US libraries program, which now had more than 70 locations across the globe. Its findings cast some doubt on Allen's statements about America's innate openness to different opinions. The libraries program had come under fire in 1947 when Congress investigated the kinds of books being sent to US outposts abroad and found that quite a number of works in their collections were politically objectionable.[58] The State Department's own review in 1948 found that the American libraries abroad had inadequate stocks of anti-Communist literature, given their purpose. It recommended the commissioning of texts for the explicit purpose of anti-Communist instruction, and as a complement to key anti-Communist titles already within the collections, such as George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. It also listed a number of fiction and non-fiction titles that should be removed from the collection on account of their authors' apparently pro-Communist sympathies. A number of the diplomatic staff at these libraries wrote to express objections to what they regarded as the censorship of their collections, but without result. The US libraries abroad were overhauled in order to become instruments of ideological warfare. An embarrassing episode followed: after being unsure of how to dispose of literature that was no longer allowed in its US Information Service library, staff burned the purged titles in a bonfire outside the US embassy. The incident provoked a furor domestically, with liberal critics charging that the Department of State was pursuing Hitler-esque censorship, while commentators on the right asked why pro-Communist books had apparently been in the collections up until then.

Allen's insistence that the State Department was taking a progressive, open approach to cultural diplomacy became even more questionable in 1950, when Congress passed the first of two McCarran Acts restricting the number of Soviet-bloc visitors allowed into the United States for official or civilian purposes.[59] The State Department's exchange program had expanded beyond

[57] Public Information Committee, "The Soviet 'Peace' Offensive," (December 1, 1949); PPM 1947–50; Subj. 1947–50; ASPA 1947–50; RG 59; NARA.

[58] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 35.

[59] On the State Department's condemnation of Soviet travel restrictions see: Department of State Press Release, "Efforts to Establish Cultural-Scientific Exchange Blocked by the USSR," *Department of State Bulletin* 3479 (April 3, 1949), p. 403. The McCarran Act (1950) is formally known as the Internal Security Act, and sometimes as the Subversive Activities Control Act. On US Libraries see Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, pp. 38–9.

students and professors into exchanges of professionals and short-term visitors, and had added new countries to its programs, in the three years before 1950. But with the passage of this legislation the program was restricted to allies and supporters of the United States. The USIS libraries came under fire once again from Republicans in 1953 for including literary works by purported Communist sympathizers like the novelist Howard Fast and playwright Clifford Odets. This time the State Department prevailed and was allowed to instruct its staff that they could include "questionable" material only at the discretion of senior embassy officers.[60]

The Department of State's follow-up review of the library and book exchange program in 1953 noted, rather contrarily, that despite the pressures of Soviet propaganda, despite the restrictions of the McCarran Acts, and the limitations that the State Department had placed on the US libraries' holdings, the promotion of liberalism and free speech remained the philosophical cornerstones of the program.[61] The American libraries, limited as they were, thus remained a "vital responsibility" because "leadership cannot assert itself through power alone. American leadership is meaningless if it isn't built upon respect for our moral purposes in the world." In specifying exactly what this moral and political purpose was, the review narrated the progressive foundations of the American republic. The United States' obligation to defend liberal values and promote the vital role of informed public opinion in national governance had been:

> recognized by the American people from our earliest beginnings as an independent nation. Our Declaration of Independence speaks of a 'decent respect' for the 'opinions of mankind.' Everything of a major nature we have done in our history has taken into account such a 'decent respect' for the opinions of others. We are concerned about the opinions of others because a free nation has the obligation in the conduct of its foreign affairs to justify its actions before the world community.[62]

The notion that America's founding principles embodied liberal cultural norms had also been cited in an editorial in the *Foreign Service Journal* in 1951, which noted how "periodically, for ourselves, we need a rediscovery of America, a new turning to the political foundations of our country, its religious forces, its literature, art and educational institutions." The extension of American power in the interests of global peace and prosperity into the post-

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[60] Cameron, "We are Now Fighting," p. 15.

[61] Department of State, *Report on the Book and Library Program, July 1953*, Unpublished Report. Lauinger Library: Georgetown University.

[62] Department of State, *Report on the Book and Library Program*, p. 64.

war era was evidently one of these historical turning points. This narrative of America's "rediscovery" of its fundamental values through the global struggle against totalitarianism stressed how "the world is hungrier for ideals than for gadgets. Let us therefore, in the midst of our planning ... for the free world, reserve a special place for ideals. These we need and these the world needs."[63] Complimenting this discussion of America's exceptional qualities that year was a burst of journalistic coverage of the American Cold War cultural program. US journalists continued to emphasize the nation's reluctance to engage in propaganda and relative inexperience with the practice, although *The Nation*'s editors also questioned whether US propaganda could be successful when issues such as racial segregation, McCarthy's hearings and US financial aid to Franco's Spain still stood.[64] Some journalists in fact went so far as to suggest that racial segregation was America's principal difficulty in the global war of ideas.[65]

But the American cultural diplomacy program had undeniably taken on a narrow and instrumental tone during the fiercely competitive early Cold War years. While the cultural and educational exchange format remained a part of the cultural program, the ethos of exchange was increasingly marginal to the manner in which US officials characterized the process and ultimate objectives of their work. Instead of an open-ended process of engagement that could incorporate multiple perspectives, the cultural program increasingly sought to demonstrate American prestige in a zero-sum contest of high cultural and intellectual achievement. This combative stance had brought the cultural diplomacy and the international information programs greater funding from Congress as post-war tensions with the Soviet Union descended into a global ideological struggle. But with this higher funding and greater prominence as a foreign policy instrument came the decline of the progressive ideals that were at the heart of the early program. By the early 1950s, progressivism retained its purchase in the rhetorical presentation of American cultural diplomacy, but the programming and objectives of American cultural diplomacy had moved substantially closer to the kinds of propaganda that had been so maligned by Americans during the 1920s and 1930s.

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[63] "Aims and Ideals: Editorial," *The American Foreign Service Journal* 28 (no. 8, 1951), p. 26.

[64] Freda Kirchwey, "The Chief Ingredients of the Cold War," *The Nation* 172: 3 (January, 1951), p. 51.

[65] Vera Micheles Dean, "A Strategy for a War of Ideas," *The Nation* 171: 9 (August 26, 1950), p. 187; William A. Rutherford, "Jim Crow: A Problem in Diplomacy," *The Nation* 175: 19 (November 8, 1952). The results of this soul-searching during the 1950s and 1960s are covered expertly in Krenn, *Black Diplomacy*.

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Chapter 6
"Threats to Our Virtue:" Propaganda, Information and the Cold War

During their wartime broadcasts, the staff at the Voice of America had worked diligently to distinguish their own journalistic approach to international information from the manipulative propaganda routinely used by other governments. In representing the Voice as a distinctive kind of diplomatic activity, US officials drew on ideas put forward during the interwar period that had criticized propaganda and had cast the United States as an exceptional nation because of its progressive views on the manipulation of information. Americans' emphatic rejection of propaganda was a theme US information officials frequently returned to as they discussed wartime broadcasting. Hence, if America's wartime information work could even be called propaganda, it was only "in the best sense of the word,"[1] because "the truth, coming from America, with unmistakable American sincerity, is by far the best form of propaganda."[2] The journalists and producers who had joined the VOA's wartime information effort had intended to "make plain the essential bond of common beliefs, and common interests that underlie differences in national customs and circumstances," and wished to avoid distortion or manipulation.[3]

In the spring of 1945, post-war information priorities outlined the prime functions of the Voice as to "impart, explain, and illustrate the working of the inherently democratic temper of the American people as it simultaneously expresses itself and reinforces its strength in the many-sided activities of free American citizens," while emphasizing the objectives and principle of US foreign policy.[4] But this agreement between Washington and New York on the purposes and strategies to be pursued by VOA—agreement that had only recently been achieved after the Darlan and King Emmanuel controversies—would be

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[1] Edward W. Barrett, "Mobilization of American Strength for World Security," *Department of State Bulletin* 4012 (November 6, 1950), p. 735.

[2] Robert Sherwood, quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 76.

[3] Dean Acheson, "Support for an Expanded Information and Education Program," *Department of State Bulletin* 3913 (July 17, 1950), pp. 100–101.

[4] Management Planning Office, Office of War Information, "Program Guide for France," (April 1, 1945), pp. 1.2.2–1.2.3; CF. 1944–5; MacLeish 1944–45; RG 59; NARA.

challenged again by the demands of combating European and global Communism after 1947. As VOA officials confronted the twin dilemmas of European reconstruction and America's deepening antagonisms with the Soviet Union, it once again became difficult to reconcile the station's journalistic and diplomatic functions. Confronting ideological conflict with the Soviet Union, officials at the Voice once again faced pressure from Washington to present information selectively and adopt techniques for maximum emotional impact. But the VOA retained its attachment to the progressive ideals that had shaped its founding. Its staff continued to recall the principles that had animated Sherwood, Warburg, Houseman, Barnes and others at the founding of the station. These served as an effective justification for continuing the US broadcasting program despite the opposition of Congress and the major US media corporations. The Voice and the US information programs also continued to publicize their ethos of journalistic integrity, honesty and open debate as a means to solidify Washington's liberal hegemony to global audiences.

Broadcasting the Post-War Order

By the end of the Second World War, the OWI had sent 11,000 information personnel abroad,[5] and had produced and distributed many thousands of films, photographs, publications and radio broadcast hours which shared with the world everyday Americans' "idealistic aspiration," their "shrewd, hard, horse sense," and their persistence.[6] But funding cuts had begun to hit the US information program hard, especially its domestic operations, despite warnings from US information advisors such as Harold Lasswell who feared that the post-war order would be fraught with "friction and anxiety." According to Lasswell the United States could not lay down the tools of foreign persuasion, but instead must steel itself for even more difficult tasks.[7] Funds for international information were nonetheless downscaled with the abolition of the OWI in August 1945—even before Japan had surrendered—from $54 million for 1945 to $40 million for 1946. This funding was cut further for 1947. The VOA's broadcasting had already been slashed from 168 daily global programming hours at the height of the war, to only 64 by the end of 1945. The OWI's Russian-language magazine *Amerika*, modeled on *Life*, continued on, though, and with a circulation of 10,000 per month it played an important part in conveying America's message

[5] William Benton, Letter to Cordell Hull (November 5, 1948). Benton, William. Papers [Box # 273, Folder # 3], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[6] OWI directive quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 154.

[7] Harold Lasswell quoted in Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 29.

to the Soviet people when other parts of the OWI operation were discontinued. Unlike much else in the information program *Amerika* had support within the foreign policy bureaucracy. George Kennan offered a glowing assessment of the magazine's truthful picture of the United States in contrast to Soviet criticisms, in particular America's high standard of living and cultural achievements.[8]

Several of the Voice's foreign language services had to be discontinued completely in 1946, and its broadcasts to Germany, Austria and Japan were taken over and expanded by the US military.[9] Private corporations were contracted to produce 40 percent of VOA's remaining programs from 1946. The OWI's functions, along with those of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the information side of the Office of Strategic Services, were transferred to a much more modest Interim International Information Service within the Department of State.[10] This service was placed under the Office of Information and Cultural Affairs, which included the cultural diplomacy program and was structured in the same way as the geographical bureaus within the Department of State, to be headed by William T. Stone. One exception to the cutbacks to the Voice was the announcement in the fall of 1946 that the Voice would add a Russian-language service to its operations. But the venerable and better-funded British Broadcasting Corporation's world service had already taken the lead here, adding a Russian-language service the previous February.

Congress's deep budget cuts had been motivated in part by a desire to rein in government spending at the war's end, but also by Republican concerns that the VOA and ex-OWI information staffers had a Democratic and New Deal bias and would be in a position to unduly influence American public opinion. Others, such as the Democratic Congressman from Georgia Eugene E. Cox and Ohio Republican Clarence J. Brown, hit out at the perceived incompetence and wastefulness of the cultural and informational program, seeking a return to the much more limited scale of US foreign policy before the war.[11] Many longstanding officials within the State Department supported these objections, still smarting over the VOA's apparent willingness to criticize US military strategy in North Africa and Italy. The Associated Press stoked the American public's fears that maintaining vestiges of the OWI program would open the floodgates to mass domestic and global propaganda in January 1946 when it announced it would no longer supply news services to VOA. Its spokesman explained the

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[8] Kennan, quoted in Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: US Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 11.

[9] See, e.g.: Henry Kellerman, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of US Foreign Policy: The Educational Exchange Program Between the United States and Germany 1945–1954* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1978).

[10] Edward W. Barrett, *Truth is Our Weapon* (New York: Funk and Wagnels, 1953), p. 51.

[11] Clarence J. Brown, quoted in Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, p. 14.

decision on the grounds that a government "cannot engage in newscasting without creating the fear of propaganda, which necessarily would reflect upon the objectivity of the news services from which such newscasts are prepared."[12] The Voice was beleaguered on all sides. Theodore Streibert, who would later direct the USIA, offered a crisp assessment of why the Congress and US media so resented VOA and the information programs. International information had simply not yet been "accepted as a useful and necessary instrument of national policy. We don't like it. It is repugnant to us. It is not in the American tradition. Propaganda methods are associated with dictatorships." This view was shared by many influential figures outside the government, including former Secretary of State and of War Henry L. Stimson. Stimson maintained at this time that one might be forced to accept propaganda as a necessary evil in war, but the manipulation of public opinion through government-run news—which was precisely what VOA and publications like *Amerika* intended to do—was always illegitimate in peacetime.[13]

The shifting of information functions into the State Department after the closure of the OWI forced many of the Voice's staff back to private careers in journalism and radio production. Those who stayed, however, continued to justify their work as an expression of journalistic principles. Unlike Stimson, many VOA staff and supporters saw their style of informational diplomacy as more suited to peacetime than war. Harold Lasswell advised that all foreign information agencies should now consistently identify the source of all items and broadcasts transmitted to foreign publics as official information, something that the interwar progressives had regarded as vital for the development of a sophisticated public understanding of the power of the mass media. But Lasswell now regarded this kind of protection to be crucial to the US government's approach to engaging foreign publics as well.[14] Political commentary in the *New Republic* suggested that the overseas information program needed to be governed by a "broadly based policy" and have more input from non-governmental representatives to maintain its legitimacy.[15] The State Department's Joseph Grew argued that with the expansion of global communications technologies during the war, in the post-war phase "it will be our responsibility as a people to see that this expansion will be a force for good and not a force for unmitigated

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[12] "News or Propaganda?" *Time Magazine* 47 (Jan 28, 1946).

[13] Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), p. 16.

[14] Harold Lasswell, "The Basic Information Policies of the Depattment of State," 1945. Benton, William, Papers, [Box # 376, Folder # 3], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[15] Bruce Bliven et al., "Our Overseas Information," *New Republic* 113 (November 5, 1945), p. 590.

evil as it would have been in the hands of our Nazi or Japanese enemies."[16] This positive framing of US information abroad resonated with the new approach taken within post-war communication studies in the United States, typified by the work of Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Robert K. Merton and Carl Hovland. These scholars had abandoned the "cynicism" of the 1930s in favor of a public and scholarly debate about how mass communications and media could be used to build loyalty to the United States and global stability through the promotion of liberal democracy and free markets.[17]

After assuming the role of Assistant Secretary of State in 1945, William Benton had made the case for an ongoing US informational diplomacy program as a force to promote a global framework for "freedom of information." Grew, Lasswell, Benton, and other spokespeople emphasized that the information programs could also work more "positively" with US foreign policy for the promotion of American national interests.[18] To Congress, Benton argued that the United States' preponderance of military, economic, and diplomatic power in the post-war world order would breed fear and distrust without being softened by the information programs' full and fair picture of America's aims. He also made the point that informational and cultural diplomacy was a relatively inexpensive form of insurance against the friction caused by diplomatic misapprehension or misunderstanding, a point that would often be repeated by directors and supporters of the US public diplomacy in subsequent years. Benton sought out a number of prominent businesspeople to solicit their support for preserving America's capacity to inform the global public on matters of political, cultural, and, particularly, economic significance. In Congressional testimony in 1945, Benton also took the occasion to assure the private sector that the State Department would "not attempt to undertake what private press, radio, and motion picture organizations do better."[19]

Having been one of the earliest progressive writers to endorse informational diplomacy as a means to preserve American liberties, Archibald MacLeish emphasized the Department of State's vital responsibility to promote freedom of information on a global scale during 1945. Ever attentive to the need to give the pragmatic case for maintaining the international information program, MacLeish mapped out what the Voice's journalistic work and the other elements of an open and truthful information program would imply for American diplomacy in practice:

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[16] Joseph Grew, "Freedom of Information," *Department of State Bulletin* 2346 (June 17), p. 1098.

[17] Cmiel, "On Cynicism, Evil, and the Discovery of Communication," pp. 94–5.

[18] The notion of a 'positive' phase is drawn from the following article in the *Department of State Bulletin:* Henry Villard, "The Positive Approach to an Enduring Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2256 (January 28, 1945).

[19] Benton, quoted in Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, pp. 10–11.

> [w]e believe in the greatest possible freedom of ... [international] communication. Freedom of communication, freedom of exchange of ideas, is basic to our whole political doctrine. But at the same time we cannot help but realize that complete freedom of international communication, particularly when that communication is instantaneous and has all the emotional urgency of immediate and first-known things, can be dangerous also. We have seen skillful and dishonest demagogues pervert the instrument of international communication to their own purposes without the knowledge of their victims ... We should be less than intelligent and certainly less than realistic if we did not take account of these things in deciding how we propose to live in the world we shall have to live in.[20]

While free and truthful information should thus be promoted, the functions of the Voice and other official information outlets should also be to provide context and interpretation. The interpretive role of US information policy was also noted by the State Department Policy Planning Staff's Dorothy Fosdick in the *Department of State Bulletin*, who noted that while the international order was becoming a democratic one, Washington's role in the *regulation* of international information into post-war order should be an active one. "If ill-tempered and irresponsible talk prevails, constructive efforts are imperiled. If men doubt each other's purposes and misunderstand each other's intentions, the hands of their governments in trying to organize the world for peace are seriously weakened."[21] What was ambiguous here was just how far, on what criteria, and by whom, such "irresponsible talk" should be censored or regulated by the US.

While debate continued about what the ultimate rationale for peacetime international information and broadcasting should be, post-war programming directives instructed the Voice to continue its news, entertainment and features programming to the greatest extent it could afford. Its features work would remain crucial, according to post VE day guidelines, "because we are convinced that America stands up well under examination and that knowledge of this nation fosters respect for it and confidence in it." The aims of the post-war information program were to provide "a really balanced picture of America" now that the war was over. The Voice, in particular, would "present the case for democracy not by argument but by example," because the "U.S. believes that democracy is the best form of government yet devised and that the country which adopts a democratic form of government is far less likely than any other to plunge the world into war." The information programs would be instructive as much as they would be persuasive: "we do not help the cause of democracy by bluntly telling non-democratic countries that their forms of government are

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[20] Archibald MacLeish, "Popular Relations and the Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2247 (January 14, 1945), p. 50.

[21] Fosdick, "International Understanding," p. 296.

inferior. We should illustrate how democracy works here and let our audiences reach their own conclusions."[22] But without recognition of this role in Congress, the survival of the information programs seemed unlikely.

The two most significant factors in the recovery of VOA's reputation in Washington after the 1945–46 funding cuts were the energetic advocacy for informational diplomacy undertaken by Assistant Secretary of State William Benton, and Congress's belated recognition of the value of information and cultural diplomacy with the passage of the Smith–Mundt Act in 1948. Both were facilitated by the government's increasing sense of unease over Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe and the Truman administration's move to extend aid to the friendly regimes in Greece and Turkey. In presenting the case for an ongoing peacetime information program, Benton and the Congressional sponsors of the Smith–Mundt Act adopted the rhetoric of global ideological struggle and highlighted America's obligation—though it embraced it still reluctantly—to defend the cause of democracy and individual liberty across the globe. Benton made an argument similar to the one that had been mobilized by his predecessors. To remaining objections that the United States should not engage in the distasteful practice of manipulating global public opinion, Benton made the case that once again the US had been thrust unwittingly into a conflict that demanded an informational response. But despite this reluctance, the argument went on, America had special virtues that related to the kinds of information and political principles it would convey. As such, the American people and their political traditions were still singular, in that they rejected the manipulation of public opinion for political ends.

Benton was a highly effective and energetic advocate for the information programs. A former advertising executive, former businessman who had headed the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and Muzak companies, and former vice-president of the University of Chicago, Benton joined the Department of State in late 1945. It was Benton's vision of an ongoing American peacetime information operation and a global freedom of information regime, which he diligently presented in terms of its motivational distinction from propaganda, which helped to prevent the total dissolution of the Voice. To a Congressional appropriations hearing in May, 1946, Benton situated the functions of America's international information program in terms of international security and national survival: "the course ahead for the United States in coming years will be at best a difficult one. We are determined not only to avert another war, but to build a living, abundant peace for ourselves and our wives and children." As Congress attempted to draft a budget for information functions in 1946–47 he urged

[22] R. Edgar Moore (probable author), Overseas Operations Branch of the Office of War Information, "Memorandum on Post-VE Propaganda," (May 14, 1945), p. 2; CF. 1944–5; MacLeish 1944–45; RG 59; NARA.

them not to "neglect any essential part of the structure we are erecting. The State Department information ... program is an essential part of the structure."[23] Benton also quickly grasped the significance of Lasswell's warnings about the USSR. He constantly reiterated that global Communism was increasingly using informational and cultural tools to undermine the United States. Throughout 1946 Benton frequently warned that to justify its hegemony over Eastern Europe, the USSR was putting together the most sophisticated, extensive and well-resourced publicity onslaught in history. The Soviet Union had, according to Benton, been greatly encouraged in its belligerent course by America's apparent willingness to downscale its information efforts now that the war was over.

Against this unprecedented challenge to US foreign policy and its cherished ideals, Benton argued that the VOA needed support to extend its broadcasting hours and increase its broadcast languages, so that it could effectively explain Washington's "actions and attitude," especially to European audiences, and "not only in terms of current decisions but in terms of the reasons for them, the goals we are trying to achieve, and their background in our history and development." Given America's leading role among the Allies as the champion of democracy, liberty and prosperity, "the eyes of the people of the world are upon our internal as well as our international activities. The starving millions of the world wonder about the United States—how we live, what we do, where we are going."[24] In this and his other statements relating to the Voice and the informational programs, Benton insisted that while the people of America should continue to rightly regard propaganda as a suspect and dangerous practice, US political culture provided a check on the manipulative excesses shown by other governments.

The revival of the Voice of America was aided by the rise of ideological antagonisms in Europe during 1947. That year the Truman administration's key foreign policy spokesmen, Secretary of State George Marshall and Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, both made a number of influential public statements that highlighted the ideological aspect of the emerging bipolar struggle in Europe. Both spokesmen increasingly attributed the problems of post-war governance in Europe to the "irreconcilable ideologies" of the Soviet Union and Western democracies, implying that prevailing in this competitive context would require the US to promote its ideological interests in a more forceful way. Although he rarely delved into matters of international information and cultural diplomacy, Acheson characterized the Soviet offensive against American power in Europe as an offensive waged in the realm of "international discussion, where

[23] William Benton, "Statement to the US Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing 8 May, 1946;" *State Department Appropriation Bill, 1947*; Y4 Ap6/2:st2/947; (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1947).

[24] William Benton, "Statement to the US Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing 8 May, 1946;" *State Department Appropriation Bill, 1947*; Y4 Ap6/2:st2/947; (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 24.

[the USSR's] stubborn and skillful opposition to American proposals could be successful with little cost."[25] In early 1947 Marshall cautioned, "[o]ur actions do not always speak for themselves unless the people of other countries have some understanding of the peaceful intention of our people." He then suggested that US informational diplomacy should be grounded in an underlying narrative about the historical trajectory and values of United States politics, leading to an appreciation by its audience of the underlying fact of Washington's reluctance toward propaganda. This was because "an understanding of our motives and our institutions can come only from a knowledge of the political principles which our history and traditions have evolved," particularly the way in which the US approached the manipulation of information.[26] An influential 1947 working paper on economic aid to Europe prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff also noted that in conjunction with material assistance, US interests demanded an equally strong effort to transmit public information and explain the "conflict between free and totalitarian or imposed forms of government."[27] To help direct US informational diplomacy and other elements of US foreign policy toward forestalling Soviet expansion, in the middle of that year Marshall established a committee called the Policy Planning Staff headed by the Department's rising star George F. Kennan, which would assess the Soviet threat and US responses to it in a comprehensive way.

As a result, 1947 saw a significant shift in terms of the way VOA articulated its message in its international broadcasts, particularly in those to contested parts of Europe. The Voice began to cultivate a more instrumental and politicized tone, as US concerns about the Soviet propaganda threat became more pressing. A VOA Russian-language service was inaugurated for broadcasts to the USSR in February, and it was in many respects the result of this shift in emphasis. The former diplomat and future head of the VOA Charles Thayer, who was soon after succeeded by Foy Kohler after Kohler had helped launch a Ukrainian service in 1949, headed the Soviet desk. It was instructed as a general guideline to provide an honest dialogue about the US and its policies,

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[25] Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 194.

[26] George Marshall, quoted in W. Phillips Davidson, "Voices of America," in Lester Markel (ed.), *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*. Council on Foreign Relations Publications. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 157. Elsewhere Marshall wrote: "the use of propaganda as such is contrary to our generally accepted precepts of democracy and to the public statements I have made." George Marshall, Letter to William Benton (April 15, 1947). Benton, William, Papers, [Box # 375, Folder # 16], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[27] State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee Subcommittee on Information (1947), quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 349–50.

but its programming directives for the desk's one-hour per day of Russian-language content emphasized political persuasion and the refutation of false Soviet claims. Script guidelines indicated that "special attention ... be given to important statements and speeches by high United States officials explaining American aims and policies." This moved the VOA toward a much more one-sided, propaganda style of broadcasting.[28] Thayer subsequently reflected in his memoirs that in its first years the Soviet desk "frequently fell to the temptation of broadcasting bitterly sarcastic, almost vitriolic anti-Stalinist attacks" in order to fit in with more strident programming directives and to demonstrate the station's value to Congress and the public, though this also sometimes made VOA less credible to its listeners.[29] The Russian-language service also struggled to pull together its light entertainment, cultural and music programming into a coherent service, although these were priorities given that US popular culture was thought to have significant appeal to Soviet listeners. The station's technical progress was more rapid: VOA achieved a signal as far afield as Odessa and the Caucusus despite the fact that the German shortwave transmitters that the US had commandeered to relay the VOA Russian service were initially thought to be only capable of reaching Moscow.[30]

Embracing Propaganda Techniques in the Early Cold War

William T. Stone supervised a review of the Voice's global operations and policy shortly after the commencement of the Russian-language service. The document highlighted the persistent challenge of reconciling Americans' traditional skepticism of propaganda and the imperatives of the Cold War national interest. Having been completed in April, 1947 by W.R. Tyler of the Office of Information and Cultural Affairs, it reported that VOA's format was too "inconclusive and theoretical" to effectively confront the Communist propaganda onslaught. Its journalistic approach was, overall, "inadequate in proportion as the exigencies of the international situation present an increasing challenge to us."[31] Somewhat paradoxically, Tyler also reiterated the theme of American distrust of propaganda:

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[28] Heil, *Voice of America*, pp. 46–7.

[29] Thayer, quoted in Alan Heil, "The Voice of America: A Brief Cold War History," in A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta (eds) *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 30.

[30] Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens*, pp. 18–19.

[31] My own emphasis added. W.R. Tyler, "Notes on the OIC Program," to William T. Stone (April 22, 1947), pp. 1–2; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

> As anti-American propaganda has increased in volume and intensity the threat of psychological warfare has reared its ugly head *like a threat to our virtue. We fear increasingly the loss of the ethical basis, or the idealistic inspiration of our work.* We are torn between the desire to restrict ourselves to the presentation of a 'full and fair picture' of our land and our people, and the realization that to engage in this task alone is not enough, in the face of the intense and systematic campaign against our policies and our motives which are today turning the minds of men against us, while masquerading under the banners of freedom and democracy.[32]

But the solution to this conundrum would have to be a pragmatic one; the American government must select the most effective means for achieving the desired end, so long as the "means should not be more distasteful, or ethically deplorable, than the accepted necessity of having recourse to war in order to ensure national survival."[33] In accepting the recommendations, the Office of Information and Culture emphasized the vision of open informational exchange that had been cultivated by the founders of the informational and cultural programs. It also specified that VOA would no longer independently set programming directives, recommending instead closer coordination between informational objectives and US foreign policy. The review endorsed broadcast techniques more readily associated with Nazi or Soviet propaganda approaches, such as simplification, and the repetition of key messages, which would now be a "top priority."[34]

The combative objectives of Soviet cultural and informational diplomacy became an increasingly urgent matter during 1947. A report from the American embassy in Moscow in the middle of that year warned that, "unbelievable as it may seem, the Soviets appear to be steadily convincing the mass of the people of many lands that in the USSR lies the great white hope of the future, while the US constitutes the dark terror."[35] As a result, it advised that US informational diplomacy be directed toward refuting the Soviet Union's ideological attacks. Combat through propaganda was necessary "because the USA and USSR alone rate as 'great' powers and because the ideologies they stand for are incompatible, no arrangement, no agreement to live together in the world as equals is possible." Hence, "the power and influence of one or the other must diminish. No 'balance of power' between the USA and the USSR is possible" in this bipolar world

[32] My own emphasis added. W.R. Tyler, "Notes on the OIC Program," to William T. Stone (April 22, 1947), pp. 1–2; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[33] W.R. Tyler, "Notes on the OIC Program," to William T. Stone (April 22, 1947), pp. 1–2; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA, p. 2.

[34] W.R. Tyler, "Notes on the OIC Program," to William T. Stone (April 22, 1947), pp. 1–2; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA p. 7.

[35] Mose Harvey, Moscow Embassy, to William T. Stone & staff (July 3, 1947), p. 1; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59, NARA.

order.[36] In December, the VOA was given instructions from the Department of State that its prime function, particularly in contested areas of Europe, was to refute the validity of the claims broadcast via the USSR's propaganda channels.[37]

The shift toward a traditional propaganda format did not go uncontested, however. Four months earlier, Stone had been advised by the State Department's E.H. Biddle that the question of whether the US must adopt a "slanted" propaganda format or simply hold up a "mirror" on world politics in a more journalistic fashion must not yet be considered a settled issue. Although it was "axiomatic" that a great power such as the US must have some kind of official global mouthpiece, Biddle warned that "experience has convincingly demonstrated that a 'freedom of information' policy, i.e., straight, unslanted news and the freest possible cultural exchange apart from its superior moral value, is the best and most repaying policy."[38] Hence, the station should still strive to demonstrate to the peoples of the world practical workings of representative government and the vitality of American principles, particularly its "grass roots" democracy.[39] As Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of International Information, former OWI representative in India Ralph Block took to the pages of *The Public Opinion Quarterly* the following year to reflect at length on the American ambivalence toward propaganda, speculating that it was "possible that more Americans approve of the use of the atom bomb in defensive warfare than approve the use of propaganda to forestall war." Nevertheless, the changing context of global politics and America's inexorable rise to global influence had rendered it necessary to maintain a propaganda program, though it should maintain its American character with its political message "expressed openly and without deceit."[40]

A memorandum from the Moscow Embassy similarly queried whether the Voice should so hastily abandon its efforts to demonstrate the workings of democracy through its unimpeachable journalistic standards. In mid-1947 Mose Harvey, also at the Moscow Embassy, wrote to Stone, asking: "We doubtless make men everywhere marvel and envy, but do we offer them something which they can adopt and follow that they and their children can live?"[41] Stone himself

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[36] W.R. Tyler, "Notes on the OIC Program," to William T. Stone (April 22, 1947), p. 1; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[37] Unattributed, "US Information Policy With Regard to Anti-American Propaganda," (December 1, 1947), p. 1; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[38] E.H. Biddle, Letter to William T. Stone (August 25, 1947), p. 17; IIA 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[39] W.C. Johnstone, "Observations Concerning the Information and Cultural Program," to William T. Stone (December 1, 1947), p. 8; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

[40] Block, "Propaganda and the Free Society," pp. 678 and 685.

[41] Mose Harvey, Moscow Embassy, to William T. Stone & staff (July 3, 1947), p. 3; IIA. 1938–53; RG 59, NARA.

had strongly supported the Voice as a journalistic outfit, while pressures to move toward a propaganda format came from higher up in the Department of State. When pressed on whether the VOA's journalistic ethic should extend to controversial areas like truthfully reporting on America's racial problems or its recent labor strikes, Stone had replied that the Department should not "hide the fact that we have social problems" but rather "try to present them in perspective."[42] Progressive ideals thus remained persistent within the information program, even during the first, fearful years of the Cold War struggle.

The US Congress had also begun to take an interest in the Soviet ideological threat and the scope of Washington's response to it in 1947, although Congressional Republicans continued to denounce the OIC and the Voice as partisan mouthpieces that were inadequate to the task of confronting the USSR. In the years since Emmanuel Celler's proposals that Congress authorize an official US international radio operation in the 1930s, a bill in 1945 to provide for informational diplomacy proposed by the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Sol Bloom had also foundered. But by January 1948 Smith and Mundt's efforts to get Congress thinking about US informational diplomacy had seen a group of Congressmen returned from a fact-finding tour to Europe convinced of America's vital obligation to support its reconstruction and ideological reorientation as much as possible. The Act authorized the Department of State to "promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries, and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries" through an enhanced information and cultural exchange program.[43] It gave the information programs, and VOA in particular, a more certain future, increased funding, and the wording of the Bill directed the information programs toward a more unambiguously instrumental role. Some Congressional critics objected to the increasingly close association between international information and the prosecution of American strategic objectives, but they were working against the tide. A number of noted liberal journalists such as Raymond Moley also expressed support for Smith and Mundt's mission to provide accurate information, what Moley termed "legitimate propaganda," and correct misperceptions of the United States abroad.[44]

After the passage of the Smith–Mundt Bill, the Voice's broadcasting languages were increased with the addition of several new Middle Eastern services, and the station was able to extend its English language programming. The Act had been unambiguous in situating international broadcasting as an instrument of

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[42] Stone quoted in Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, p. 13.

[43] Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 47. The Smith–Mundt Bill also reaffirmed the ban on VOA broadcasting any material to a domestic audience.

[44] Raymond Moley, "Legitimate Propaganda," *Newsweek* 29, 3 (March 31): 100.

the national interest rather than an exemplar of democratic practices and open dialogue intended to affect progress within an inchoate global public sphere. The Act specified that international information, as well as cultural and educational policies, should be commensurate with the global "ideological struggle." After successfully lobbying for the Smith–Mundt Act in January, Benton spent much of 1948 seeking to persuade the American public and the major media organizations to join the "crusade" against Communism.[45] In a statement to the Audio Visual Education Association of Southern California that year, he cited the Declaration of Independence as the United States' first, and most successful, effort to use the power of ideas in support of its national interests. He lamented that Washington had "forgotten our own lessons of yesterday" by failing to share its message and its promise with other nations.[46]

Benton's efforts to rehabilitate VOA's reputation in 1948 were set back by controversy over a series of broadcasts prepared by the station during the previous year. The subject was the *Know North America* series, which presented dramatized tours of each US state and had been written and produced by CBS and NBC. The broadcasts included features that described Pennsylvania's Quakers as "a social problem" because of their pacifism, and told of Wyoming's Native Americans living "naked and feathered." Less controversial programs within the series included a piece on Alabama that discussed how, despite the solemn tone of African American spirituals, African Americans in that state were "free and happy and of the tragic times [of slavery] only songs remain."[47] By way of introducing the state of Texas to the world, another episode outlined the history of Spanish conquest and Sam Houston's independence movement, but also assured listeners that "the typical cowboy with leather chaps and large Stetson hat does exist in the agricultural regions."[48] The House purported to be "incensed, as well as disgusted" by the broadcasts' failure to "correctly interpret"

[45] Associated Press and United Press were steadfastly opposed to government broadcasting in this period, and refused to supply their news services to the Voice even though they still supplied these services to the Soviet propaganda agency TASS. Barrett, *Truth is Our Weapon*, p. 60.

[46] William Benton, "Ideas and International Understanding," 29 October, 1948. Benton, William, Papers [Box # 467, Folder # 21], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[47] National Broadcasting Corporation, "Know North America: Script #2 Alabama," 18 December, 1947, p. 2; Papers of Charles Hulten; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

[48] National Broadcasting Corporation, "Know North America: Texas," December 11, 1947 p. 2; Papers of Charles Hulten; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

the purpose of US informational diplomacy.[49] The series was mocked mercilessly by the American press.

During the Congressional hearings on State Department appropriations in 1948, Benton argued that the valuable contributions that an effective information program could make should not be overlooked on the grounds of the scandal. In a Cold War context, "the United States needs friends and supporters, and to have friends the United States needs to be understood." As such, what was needed was a more carefully planned US information program with control over its own productions so that it could explain Washington's "policies and the background that gives rise to these policies," because "sympathy has its roots in familiarity, and suspicion breeds in ignorance."[50] He made a convincing case that the US information programs ought to be better funded to ensure better outcomes and prevent the loss of qualified personnel that had occurred during the successive administrative overhauls of the previous three years.[51] Nonetheless, as a result of this episode, Congress began to monitor US broadcasts carefully. The station had to accommodate constant requests from Congress to review scripts before they went to air so they could be scrutinized for everything from pro-civil rights sentiments to Democrat boosterism to latent Communist sympathies. The administrative burden on the Voice was significant. The *Know North America* controversy also needed to be explained by the Voice to its global audiences. Its solution, an unimpeachably progressive one, was to celebrate Congress's attacks on the series as an example of American democracy functioning exactly as it should.

Benton returned to the private sector at the end of 1948 after the resignation of Secretary of State James Byrnes. He was replaced by George Allen. Like Benton, Allen was an articulate and influential advocate for informational diplomacy, favoring an even more unambiguously instrumental approach to the diplomacy of information than Benton had. His statements on the information program invariably referred to the global division of power between two states with inherently opposed ideological systems, which posed

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[49] United States House of Representatives Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, *Investigation of the State Department Voice of America Broadcasts* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1948). See also George V. Allen, "The Voice of America," *Department of State Bulletin* 3336 (November 7, 1948); David F. Krugler, *Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), pp. 80–84.

[50] William Benton, Statement to Senate Appropriations Subcommittee; *Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriation Bill for 1948*; Y4.Ap6/2:st2/948; (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1948).

[51] William Benton, Letter to Cordell Hull, 5 November, 1948. Benton, William, Papers [Box # 273, Folder # 3], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

the added challenge for the United States of wooing war-weary European audiences away from neutrality or Communist sympathies.[52] By 1949 the Voice had regained its programming from CBS and NBC, and Allen brought in career diplomats to staff the information programs and ensure coordination across the foreign policy and information spheres. As a consequence, the Voice was tied even more closely to US foreign policy imperatives.[53] Allen later recalled that the approach at the Voice became unduly strident in this period: "perhaps our tone wasn't justified. A calm, persuasive tone is much better than a mere calling of names."[54]

US Secretary of State George Marshall's European Recovery Program, known as the Marshall Plan, had also been announced in 1948, and the VOA was instructed to support the program by making aims and objectives of US economic aid known to its recipients and the wider global public. The plan also included provisions to ensure concessionary US media exports to struggling European nations. By 1949 the US could cheaply export books and films that showcased the best of America. The biggest hits for the information programs that year were the re-releases of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* and *Fantasia*.[55] Although he was no longer in government service, Benton continued to laud the contribution of the cultural and information programs to US foreign relations, likening them to a "Marshall Plan for Ideas." The information programs had, in this context, a vital responsibility to "close the mental gap between ourselves and the rest of the world," so that the nature of US economic assistance could be properly interpreted by targeted populations.[56] With the Yugoslav–Soviet split and Washington's subsequent declaration of support for the Tito regime in 1949—support that included a pledge of American assistance against any future Soviet aggression—guidelines for information to Yugoslavia instructed all agencies to immediately cease their critique of Communist ideology. This was in order to help Yugoslavia to consolidate its break from the USSR by endorsing its independent brand of Communism. Fostering "heretical" Communism thus became a new platform for the US international information program. According to the Public Affairs advisory staff this was a strategy that "could, without military action, reduce and eventually eliminate preponderant Soviet power from those areas which have fallen under USSR

[52] George V. Allen, "US Information Program," *Department of State Bulletin* 3218 (July 18, 1948), p. 90.

[53] Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 49.

[54] George Allen, quoted in Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 49.

[55] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 44.

[56] Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, p. 97; Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 152.

control as a result of World War II."[57] Although this approach failed to raise significant controversy within or beyond the US information programs, it once again signaled the erosion of the journalistic principles of VOA for the sake of political pragmatism.

In May 1950 President Harry Truman announced a new publicity initiative, the Campaign of Truth. His announcement heralded an expanded international information effort, and a more combative presentation of America's message, and the plan received strong endorsement from the US Senate. The Soviet desk added Albanian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Estonian, Georgian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Slovenian, Tartar and Turkmen language services that year—an astonishing expansion given that the very survival of the Voice and other information programs was under question only a few years before. It established a new program center in Munich at which a range of European and Soviet broadcasts were prepared, and from which Radio Free Europe had launched the year before. The Campaign also brought a renewed focus on cultural and educational exchanges, particularly in areas where Cold War neutrality was on the rise. VOA's broadcast hours went up to 400 hours per week by the following year. In announcing the Campaign, Truman depicted the Cold War as "a struggle, above all else, for the minds of men. Propaganda is one of the most powerful weapons the Communists have in this struggle. Deceit, distortion, and lies are systematically used by them as a matter of deliberate policy." America would confront Soviet propaganda with "truth—plain, simple, unvarnished truth—presented by newspapers, radio, and other sources that the people trust." The US information programs would therefore be assuming a "task ... not separate and distinct from other elements of our foreign policy" but rather one that is "a necessary part of all we are doing to build a peaceful world," as important "as armed strength or economic aid."[58] Key themes for VOA programs at the end of 1951 were the role of the United Nations in preventing aggression in areas such as Korea, the role of the United States in defending peace, the advance of democracy, and the discrediting of Soviet motives and allegations.

Ed Barrett reflected that the President and the foreign policy establishment in Washington now understood that the connection between effective foreign policy and favorable international opinion was a deep and important one. In this context, Barrett stressed that the Cold War demanded an end to all "half

[57] Public Affairs Policy Advisory Staff, "Special Guidance Paper #25: Yugoslav-USSR Relations," (November 15, 1949), p. 2; Policy Papers and Meetings, 1949–1950 (PPM 1949–50); General Subject File 1947–1950 (Subj 1947–50); Files of the Assistant Sec of State for Public Affairs, 1947–1950 (ASPA 1947–50); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

[58] Harry Truman, "Going Forward With A Campaign of Truth," *Department of State Bulletin* 3832 (May 1, 1950), p. 669.

measures" in the struggle to win hearts and minds. "Call it getting to know each other, or even call it propaganda (in the best sense of the word), if you will. The fact remains that the time has come for an all-out effort in this field."[59] The Campaign of Truth had been announced at a difficult time for the Truman administration, however, with the President facing criticism in Congress and the media over the loss of China to Communism and the sluggish progress of US grand strategy in the Far East. A renewed effort in the information area was thus a strategy adopted by the President intended, in part, to dispel these criticisms of his foreign policy. The Campaign signified that the White House had adopted at least one assertive strategy to recover the upper hand from the USSR.[60] VOA's broadcast hours and its Asian language services were substantially increased during 1950. Vietnamese language programming was added in July, and the range of the Korean and Cantonese services was extended in September. The Korean and Chinese services took on psychological warfare functions for the Korean War, which had begun two months before. At this time American academic Ralph K. White provided a perceptive account of the changing tone of American broadcasting. His analysis concluded that the "Voice of America is definitely more hard-hitting, more outspokenly anti-Communist, than the BBC," and this departure from journalism "has reaped dividends in Iron Curtain countries where the audiences crave hope and vicarious expression of their own hostility to the Stalinist tyranny" through emotive programming.[61] In defense of this changing approach, former VOA news analyst and chief of the German desk John Albert defended the "hard-hitting" and "negative" approach of the Voice. It was justified because it gave vent to the frustrations of the occupied nations of Eastern Europe.[62] In occupied Austria and Germany, too, VOA and USIS materials were geared toward undermining Soviet claims. During the early 1950s the USIS daily *Wiener Kurier* included stories about

[59] Edward W. Barrett "Truth Campaign Needs Support of Private and Government Groups/Mobilization of American Strength for World Security," *Department of State Bulletin* 4012 (November 6, 1950), p. 735.

[60] The influential National Security Council Memorandum #68, was also written between April and May 1950, and gained an enthusiastic reception by the administration partly because it seemed to symbolize in international affairs the beleaguered situation that the administration was subject to in Washington. Krugler, *Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles*, Ch. 4, especially pp. 96–7, 114.

[61] White grants that the BBC had a more news worthy reputation than the Voice, but that the Voice's emotional appeal was greater. Ralph K. White, "The New Resistance to International Propaganda," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 16: 4 (Winter, Special Issue on International Communications Research, 1952–3), p. 547.

[62] John Albert quoted in Heil, "The Voice of America: A Brief Cold War History," p. 31.

Soviet slave labor camps and its attacks on the church in Eastern Europe.[63] But American writers were also warning that, with the VOA indulging in such tactics for audiences in Western Europe, it might have less substantive impact than a more balanced approach. One piece in the academic journal *Social Research* noted that Washington's post-war under-investment in cultural and informational diplomacy had failed to clear up substantial misunderstandings of US economic ideas and political principles, and even in Western Europe US foreign policy was often misunderstood. White also warned that it wasn't just in the developing world, but also in Europe, that America's sheer post-war wealth and influence could attract resentment rather than admiration. Here, VOA and the other information programs had to operate with much more sensitivity to their audiences.[64] Former OWI regional chief for Latin Europe Percy Winner, writing in the *New Republic*, excoriated the information program's approach and assumptions in Europe as "packaging," "salesmanship" and "billboard blasts for American democracy." Rhetorical gestures were meaningless, he warned, when Europeans had a sophisticated sensibility about global politics and wished to see the United States act in a more nuanced way to confront Communism and support democracy.[65]

As a consequence of the addition of new Asian language services and the extension of the Voice's signal range worldwide, and most likely also as an indication of the more combative tone that VOA broadcasts took on during the Campaign of Truth, correspondence from VOA listeners increased dramatically after 1949. By mid-1950 the number of letters received per month had doubled within the space of one year, to 20,000.[66] In a further departure from the progressive vision of the Voice as a journalistic rather than a persuasive or diplomatic agency, VOA added a number of public relations and advertising specialists to its advisory staff in 1950.[67] It began to use structured content analysis to evaluate its own broadcasts and those of its competitors.[68] VOA also focused on more careful development of broadcast techniques to appeal to specific segments of its audience. Instructions for VOA Argentinean service, for instance, indicated that American information must appeal to "the young

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[63] Cameron, "We are Now Fighting," p. 17.

[64] Saul K. Padover, "America and Europe: Mutual Misunderstandings," *Social Research* 17: 1/4 (1950), p. 415. This point was also made in the US media: Dean, "Strategy for a War of Ideas," p. 185; Spitzer, "Presenting America in American Propaganda," p. 216.

[65] Percy Winner, "Outside America," *New Republic* 122 (May 8, 1950), p. 9.

[66] Barrett, *Truth is Our Weapon*, p. 77.

[67] Edward W. Barrett, "Need for Public Assistance in the Campaign of Truth," *Department of State Bulletin* 4041 (December 18, 1950), pp. 968–70.

[68] Research Center for Human Relations, New York University, "Broadcast in English to Europe in the 'Cold War' and Korean Periods (Spring 1950 and Winter 1950–51)," 1951; IIA- 1938–53; RG 59; NARA.

men and women ... Of special importance are the primary and secondary school teachers, and the small businesses."[69] Elsewhere, the Voice was instructed to use repetition and other techniques to saturate the media environment in targeted states. For example, the steadily declining influence of Britain and France in Egypt caused concern that it might turn toward the Communist bloc, and the staff of the information programs were instructed "to permeate Egyptian channels of communication and make American influences felt at all levels of Egyptian life."[70]

With the military campaign in Korea suffering major setbacks toward the end of 1950, information guidelines issued to the Voice reflected a widespread concern in Washington that the US had lost the initiative in the Cold War. At the outbreak of the conflict, Benton had warned the US Senate that the war itself was the result of the "direct failure of this nation to project the idea of democracy in the world." and he corralled some extremely influential figures such as John Foster Dulles, Dean Acheson, and Walter Bedell Smith to address the Senate in support of increased information funding.[71] America had sustained further losses in the "war of ideas," according to the director of the Foreign Policy Association Vera Micheles Dean, by failing to articulate its stance on imperialism and seeming to endorse the restoration of colonial power in most cases.[72] The advance of North Korean forces in the months since the start of fighting brought further urgency to the situation. In an internal State Department memorandum that is striking for its emotive tone, Lewis Revey characterized a possible change to the global balance of power after Korea as most problematic for Washington's propaganda position.

> Korea has shown that the USSR is militarily strong as well as morally uninhibited. Military strength added to ruthlessness, oppressive conduct form a terrifying combination particularly to nations and peoples sensitive to the realities of power. The upshot of all this is that the US today finds itself in a precarious propaganda position. The line which we have been propagating so assiduously threatens to boomerang (not because of inherent logical facilities but rather because it was not accompanied by the required military strength) at least until such a time as our information media can reflect establishment of impressive and reassuring facts of strength. For while one can afford the luxury of reacting to evil with righteous

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[69] Morril Cody, "Argentina: Country Papers on USIE program requested in January 1950," p. 1; PPM 1949–50; Subj. 1947–50; ASPA 1947–50; RG 59; NARA.

[70] John Devine, "Egypt: Country Papers on USIE program requested in January 1950," p. 4; PPM 1949–50; Subj. 1947–50; ASPA 1947–50; RG 59; NARA.

[71] "Propaganda: A Confusion of Mind," *Time Magazine* 56: 3 (July 17, 1950), p. 13.

[72] Dean, "Strategy for a War of Ideas," p. 186.

> indignation when one is strong, great power directed by evil strikes terror in the hearts of the weak and the exposed.[73]

The memorandum was one of the earliest depictions within the information program of the Cold War as a struggle between good and evil, which pit the righteous character of the United States against the Soviet practice of using propaganda to spread "terror" and prey on the "weak."

There is evidence that Congress had formed a similar opinion about the significance of global public opinion to the Cold War struggle by 1950. A letter from a group of US Senators to the President in August endorsed the Campaign of Truth and advocated the expansion of the information programs in the context of the Korean struggle. For them, the conflict necessitated "a psychological and spiritual offensive against the Kremlin," and they worried that the United States had lost the initiative and had settled for combating Communism only "in an indirect and partial way through the Voice of America." The Senators recommended "more funds and a great expansion of facilities. But more than money, we need a new vigor, a new imagination, a new directness and plainness of speech." As for the tone of US broadcasting and other informational programs, earlier scruples about engaging propaganda techniques had well and truly dissipated. The President was instructed to ensure all possible conduits to refute Soviet claims would be utilized. America must "use means new and old, thought of and unthought of, traditional and revolutionary" to recover the upper hand.[74]

Congress increased the Voice's funding from $9 million in 1950 to $13 million in 1951, with an additional appropriation for an ambitious project to construct a ring of shortwave transmitters around the Soviet Union to overcome its jamming of the US radio signal.[75] VOA programs to the Russian people were as strident as ever; the émigré writer George Grebenshikov's Christmas message to the Russian people asked sadly: "Are you celebrating Christmas? Do they allow you to celebrate it? Do they allow you to glorify the Christ-child in the manger as he is glorified and adored during these days all over America?"[76] A set of 15-minute documentary programs for worldwide transmission entitled *This is the USA* were also unveiled that year. They included segments on "The American

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[73] Lewis Revey, "Holding the Political and Psychological Initiative," to Philips (first name unrecorded), August 16, 1950, p. 2; PPM 1949–50; Subj. 1947–50; ASPA 1947–50; RG 59; NARA.

[74] United States Senate, to President Harry S. Truman, August 19, 1950, pp. 1–2; President's Official File; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

[75] Heil, *Voice of America*, p. 49.

[76] George Grebenshikov, "Christmas Message to the Russian People for broadcast December 24, 1951," 24 December 24, 1951, p. 1; President's Official File; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

Character"—which gave "Joe America's frank portrait of himself"—as well as "Milestones in American History," "The Frontiers of American Arts" and "Government."[77] The next year, the Voice inaugurated its "floating transmitter," a US coastguard vessel fitted out with a 150,000-watt medium wave broadcast capacity.[78] That year the State Department also took the US government's first steps toward using television as a vehicle for the promotion of US interests abroad. The expansion of the Voice's programming also brought with it more frequent and detailed assessments of VOA's effectiveness, which utilized statistical techniques and listener feedback analysis. But although the Truman administration had endorsed the international information program as an indispensable instrument of Cold War diplomacy, some skepticism toward VOA's work remained among diplomatic traditionalists in the Foreign Service.[79] George Kennan, for example, whose dispatches from the US Embassy in Moscow had done so much to catalyze the government's concerns about Soviet intentions, and who continued to comment on foreign affairs in this period, now cautioned his fellow policymakers that propaganda was unlikely to be effective. Kennan averred that "talking by one nation to another about the latter's political affairs is a questionable procedure, replete with possibilities for misunderstanding and resentment." To expect that propaganda could bring America victory in the Cold War betrayed "a shallow view of the workings of history."[80] He did concede, however, that if the Voice could faithfully represent America's *cultural* qualities it would do little harm by doing so.[81] There were stronger criticisms of the Voice in the US media, however. US advertising experts charged that the station was a feeble mouthpiece for US interests. Its confused message and—here the criticism was unintentionally ironic—its apparent belief that "international propaganda" could be done in the same way as "peddling soap" left America ill-equipped to defend its national interests against Communist aggression.[82]

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[77] Radio Outpost Division, "Clip Sheet for 'This is the USA,'" 1951; Papers of Harry S. Truman National Security Council Files; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

[78] Department of State, "Press Release: Welcoming Ceremonies for Voice of America's Floating Transmitter- US Coast Guard Cutter *Courier*," 29 February, 1952; President's Official File; Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence MO.

[79] 'Diplomatic traditionalism' also characterizes Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's attitude to international information after 1953, and the decision by Dwight Eisenhower to establish an US information agency outside the State Department that year.

[80] Kennan, quoted in Hans Speier, "International Political Communication: Elite vs. Mass," *World Politics* 4: 3 (April, 1952), p. 306.

[81] Kennan quoted in Speier, "International Political Communication," p. 306.

[82] William H. Wells, "The Mumble in the Voice of America," *Harper's Magazine* 202 (January, 1951), p. 27.

Congressional support ran strong into the following year, with the Subcommittee on Overseas Information Programs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations observing how American "information programs" were aimed at "the furtherance of understanding and good will among nations," and were vital as a bulwark against the USSR's "gigantic, all-embracing propaganda machine" which sought to widen "the cleavage between the governments and peoples of the Communist and non-Communist world."[83] US scholars added to this sense of urgency. Academic journals were full of dire warnings about the Soviet adeptness at the use of mass indoctrination and propaganda formats of all kinds, while the United States' "more rational" approach, based on its "scruples concerning truth," was novel and largely untested.[84] Some even contended that Soviet propaganda was sufficiently aggressive as to constitute a violation of international law.[85]

During the years between 1945 and 1952, the Voice's broadcasting style and editorial policies moved much closer to the types of propaganda that the station's founders had sought, during 1942–45, to reject. The establishment of the US information program was a product of the Second World War and even then had been accepted only because the VOA's directors had carefully articulated a journalistic approach that was in line with the interwar progressive critique of propaganda. The journalistic paradigm provided an assurance that even during wartime the station would seek to embody processes of free debate, truthfulness, and the honest discussion of US foreign policy and military objectives. Yet the Voice labored under the paradoxical demands of these journalistic aspirations and the reality that the United States government had established and funded the station for military and diplomatic reasons. This ambiguity was particularly obvious in the course of the fraught administrative relationship between New York and Washington, and it accounts in part for Congress's willingness to jettison much of the Voice's broadcasting work in the years immediately after the war.

The recovery of the Voice after the post-war cuts of 1945–6 also depended on a shared sense of America's exceptional attributes, its progressive tone, and in its effort to develop the international public sphere, this time with a

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[83] Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Overseas Information Programs of the United States, *The Soviet Propaganda Program* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1952).

[84] John B. Whitton, "Propaganda in Cold Wars," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 15: 1 (Spring, 1951), pp. 143–4.

[85] Quincy Wright noted that international law, particularly newly created United Nations statutes, had come to recognize various forms of international publicity as aggression. Quincy Wright, "The Crime of 'War-Mongering,'" *The American Journal of International Law* 42: 1 (January, 1948). John B. Whitton, "Cold War Propaganda," *The American Journal of International Law* 45: 1 (January, 1951).

steadily growing bi-partisan support in Congress. A growing awareness of the extent of the Soviet propaganda threat played a central role in the revival of shortwave radio as a diplomatic tool and in the initiation of new investment in infrastructure and evaluation techniques for the Voice. But at the same time, the distinction between the Voice's psychological warfare and informational aims became increasingly unclear as the Cold War unfolded into a worldwide ideological struggle. Though Voice officials continued to espouse an enlightening, apolitical view of international information into the final months of the Truman administration, planning and operations had drawn the station much closer to a traditional propaganda format, and further than ever from the progressive origins of the Voice of America and US informational diplomacy.

Chapter 7

Cultural Democracy and the Iron Curtain: Unesco, Multilateralism and the Cold War

Unesco's first General Conference was held in Paris in November 1946. The US delegation regarded the new institution as a reflection of their country's most far-reaching and idealistic aims for the post-war settlement, as the ultimate expression of America's quest for security through global cultural rehabilitation and educational reconstruction.[1] But the majority of Unesco's members and its first two Director Generals believed that the organization's philosophy and programs required a firm stance of neutrality in relation to the emerging Cold War struggle, putting Unesco and the United States on something of a collision course. The conflict led the US delegation to question Unesco's usefulness for US interests, despite the active role it had played in the founding of the organization.

Through 1946–48 the US delegation pressured Unesco to shift its emphasis from educational and cultural projects to the distribution of anti-Communist information. This approach came under fire from a collection of Western European and Latin American delegations, which regarded the distribution of information commenting on current geopolitical events as tantamount to turning Unesco over to the production of pro-American propaganda. The rise of this opposition was unexpected and it caused great frustration for the US delegation. In the face of this obstructionism, Washington became increasingly willing to exert diplomatic and financial pressure on the organization to ensure its objectives would prevail. In the summer of 1948 deputy Assistant Secretary of State Howland Sargeant warned George Allen that there was "a logical and convincing [indication] that Unesco will wither on the vine and die if it does not face up to some of the immediate explosive issues of our times" and support the anti-Communist cause.[2] Allen endorsed this tough stance on Unesco's

[1] As I have noted in foregoing chapters, I use the term 'positive project' to denote the prevailing sentiment in Washington that its national interests were not exclusive (or 'zero-sum' in contemporary parlance) but rather working toward mutual benefit by fostering global cooperation and interdependence.

[2] Howland Sargeant, Memorandum for George V. Allen (May 3, 1948), p. 1; Policy Papers and Meetings, 1947–50 (PPM 1947–50); General Subject File 1947–50 (Subj. 1947–50); Records of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs 1947–50 (ASPA 1947–50); General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59 (RG 59); National Archives and Records Administration, College Park MD (NARA).

Cold War responsibilities: "we recognize in Unesco an international forum or academy, where speech is free. We recognize, however, that a forum is also a battleground. We go to it prepared not only to defend, but to advance our principles, forcefully and vigorously."[3] Throughout 1948 US representatives tried to establish the equivalence between the humanist ideals that had been espoused at the founding of Unesco and the ideological defense of the West, with limited success.

The American position on Unesco's anti-Communist role hardened further in 1949–50. The US delegation appeared to regard cultural and ideological warfare as the organization's chief rationale, often describing Unesco as a "lever" in the struggle against the Soviet Union and decrying the notion that the UN's cultural, scientific and educational institution might take a neutral position on the Cold War. This hardline position also departed from the cosmopolitan sentiments of many of the American education and cultural advocates who had initially supported the organization.[4] The Korean War was a significant watershed in this context. The US delegation was instructed that its main priority must be to "tirelessly ... urge Unesco on to a more affirmative and effective action [for democracy]," and to ensure "improved action in future similar cases, which seem bound to arise" in the polarized global order.[5]

As was the case with the State Department's bilateral cultural diplomacy in the period, American officials had begun to regard Unesco as a vehicle for geopolitical competition rather than open-ended engagement. Like its US information programs, Washington's approach to Unesco had taken a decisive turn toward instrumentalism and competitiveness in the three years following the war. Spokespeople for the cultural diplomacy program continued, nonetheless, to assert that America's principles of openness and democracy remained central to the Department of State's aims and approach for Unesco, though these principles were increasingly contradicted by their heavy-handed diplomatic tactics with respect to the other national delegations. As a multilateral and universalist institution, Unesco was a test of Washington's commitment to apolitical cultural relations, which it failed dramatically.

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[3] Allen, George V, "Abstract of Speech to be Given by Mr Allen at San Francisco," (April 19 1948), p. 4; PPM 1947–50; Subj. 1947–50; ASPA 1947–50; RG 59; NARA.

[4] Alfred McClung Lee, "Can the Individual Protect Himself Against Propaganda Not in His Interest," *Social Forces* 29: 1 (October, 1950).

[5] Unesco Relations Staff, Department of State, "Report on the Unesco Secretariat's Carrying Out of Unesco Executive Board Resolutions on Korea," (7 March, 1951), p. 13; Records of the Unesco Delegation, 1950–54 (Unesco 1950–54); Records of the Paris Embassy, France (Paris Emb.); Records of the Foreign Service Posts, Record Group 84 (RG 84); National Archives, College Park, MD (NARA).

Framing Unesco's Post-War Mission

Unesco was established on November 4, 1946, with the opening of its first General Conference in Paris. The preamble to the Unesco constitution had been taken from Attlee's speech opening the Unesco planning conference a year earlier, and set out the working philosophy for the organization by asserting that peace, like war, originates in the minds of the public. The constitution went on to define Unesco's main objective as affecting substantive reforms to the international system. It sought the reconstruction of inter-state diplomacy through the reconstruction of popular attitudes and public understanding of global politics. Unesco would "contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture." In doing so, it ultimately sought a "universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world ... by the Charter of the United Nations."[6]

The final constitution had stipulated that Unesco's General Conference would set the broad outlines of policy, an Executive Board to develop policy proposals, and a Secretariat to implement the Unesco program and undertake administration. This demarcation of responsibilities was vague, and much of the discussion that occurred at the first General Conference was about how to transform the procedural framework agreed to in London the year before into an effective working structure. A budget of $6,950,000 was approved for the first year's operations and administration costs, with more than 40 percent to be supplied by the US.[7] A large administrative staff had already been recruited by the 24-member Executive Board, which set out to refine possible policy initiatives in the months after the General Conference. These included assessments of wartime damage to the world's museums, surveys of various national education systems and their reconstruction requirements, the preparation of publicity materials to promote Unesco's goals and philosophy, and the organization of international scientific education congresses.

In the run-up to the first General Conference the US representatives to the Executive Board had worked consistently toward strengthening the organization's

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[6] Unesco, Constitution. http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

[7] Unesco, "General Conference 1st Session, Held at Unesco House, Paris, From 20 November to 10 December, 1946," http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001145/114580e.pdf, pp. 256–7. In two years the budget had risen only marginally, by less than $1 million, with large contributors such as the US and Britain allocating far less to Unesco than to their national cultural programs. See Unesco, "Records of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation 3rd Session, Beirut, 1948," vol. 2: Resolutions, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001145/11459e.pdf, p. 39.

"governmental" paradigm, encouraging national political negotiation over individual and civil society participation at the highest levels. Washington regarded multilateral cultural diplomacy as an instrument for the prosecution of its Cold War interests rather than as a vehicle for cultural cooperation defined in terms of long-range and nebulous processes of cooperation, democratization, and mutual understanding. Washington's view of Unesco as a vehicle for political interests was reflected in a dispute that occurred during the 1946 conference over the US delegation's proposal that Unesco's philosophy and program should be guided by the principle of "cultural democracy." Washington had proposed this as an alternative to the British interim Director General Julian Huxley's personal philosophy of "evolutionary scientific humanism"—an idiosyncratic, cosmopolitan notion of global cultural convergence. A typical rendering by Huxley of his philosophy was as a "single fabric of worldwide scope" to underpin "all aspects of human life," with Unesco's individual projects constituting a "single thread for such a fabric."[8] Huxley looked toward the "emergence of a single world culture," and regarded the exchange of persons as a way to overcome the "two opposing philosophies of life" that had undermined post-war cooperation.[9] Cultural democracy was a more politicized working philosophy, stressing the commitments of the West to freedom, democracy and open societies. A number of other national delegations opposed the notion, however, fearing that this would open the floodgates to ideological antagonisms and undue US dominance in the organization.

The most significant agenda item for the 1946 General Conference was to secure an agreement on the organization's first round of program initiatives, in line with the aims of the institution and in conjunction with post-war reconstruction efforts in Europe and elsewhere. A set of policy proposals had been prepared by the Executive Board that were heavily influenced by Huxley's evolutionary humanism, focusing on long-term, exchange-based projects.[10] To the great displeasure of the US delegation, Huxley also rejected the idea that Unesco should take any kind of position on the economic ideologies of the Soviet Union and the West through an information policy or any other projects.

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[8] Julian Huxley, "Unesco's New Tasks," *New Republic* 123: 13 (September 25, 1950), p. 18.

[9] See: Julian Huxley, *Unesco: Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (Washington DC: Public Affairs Press America, 1947); Charles S. Ascher, "The Development of Unesco's Program," *International Organization* 4: 1 (February 1950), pp. 18–19.

[10] Huxley's philosophy was ultimately criticized from several quarters and Huxley was dissuaded from seeking election to the first full Director Generalship of Unesco. To distinguish himself from Huxley and from the US position, the first elected Director General of Unesco, former Mexican foreign minister Jaime Torres Bodet, articulated a third overarching term for Unesco's work: "practical humanism," the connotations of which were never entirely clear.

Huxley later defined his position by insisting that "from acceptance of certain principles or philosophies, Unesco is obviously debarred ... Neither can it espouse one of the politico-economic doctrines competing in the world today to the exclusion of the others." Huxley's opposition to Unesco ruling on the "sectarian" tensions between the USSR and the United States was prescient. He correctly foresaw that "any such attempt would immediately incur the active hostility of large and influential groups, and the non-cooperation or even withdrawal of a number of nations from membership."[11] As it turned out, the organization could not effectively insulate itself from Cold War antagonisms.

Between 1946 and late 1948 Assistant Secretary William Benton and the US delegation in Paris missed few opportunities to register their displeasure with diffuseness of Huxley's philosophy and the Cold War neutralism it entailed. They made their concerns about his "evolutionary scientific humanism" plain by lobbying the Executive and Secretariat to ensure that when Huxley published any statements referring to this philosophy he would do so in a personal capacity only. Benton also did not mince words when he warned the Soviets that whereas Unesco's success would ultimately depend on some degree of Communist bloc participation with Unesco, such participation would have to be "constructive" and not politicized.[12] Benton fleshed out the cultural democracy idea in the following terms:

> [m]en [*sic*] have struggled for centuries to bring into being the ideal of political democracy ... More recently men have struggled for economic democracy. I propose for Unesco the development of ... cultural democracy; the opportunity for all to share in the ideas and the knowledge that will enable them to participate intelligently in the affairs of the world community.[13]

In his subsequent report on the first General Conference, parts of which were published, Benton made it explicit that the cultural principles Washington had enshrined in its own cultural and informational programs offered a model that Unesco ought to emulate.

Benton saw the concept of cultural democracy as being rooted in the democratic and progressive characteristics of American society itself.[14] He

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[11] Julian Huxley, quoted in Brenda M.H. Tripp, "Unesco in Perspective," *International Conciliation* 497 (March, 1954), pp. 341–2.

[12] William Benton, quoted in Bryn Hovde, "Unesco," *Social Research* 14: 1/4 (1947), p. 25.

[13] William Benton, "Speech to the First General Conference of Unesco;" "General Conference 1st Session, Held at Unesco House, Paris, From 20 November to 10 December, 1946," http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001145/14593e.pdf, p. 64.

[14] William Benton, "Report on the First General Conference of Unesco," *Department of State Bulletin* 2720 (January 5, 1947).

declared to the General Conference, Unesco was "founded on the belief that neither the forced unification of the world of the spirit, nor the forced standardization of the world of the mind can give men peace, but only a world democracy of mind as well as spirit." The idea of "forced unification" of the global mind might have applied equally to Huxley's "evolutionary scientific humanism" as it did to Communism. In contrast, Benton insisted that the "cultural democracy which Unesco proposes is a democracy of mind and spirit in which every culture shall be free to live and develop in itself and in the great community of common culture."[15] It was difficult to detect any clear difference between what evolutionary scientific humanism and cultural democracy actually proposed as practical contributions to international cultural, scientific and educational cooperation, beyond perhaps a stronger focus under cultural democracy on political reforms in targeted countries. The issue was at bottom about how far the US could assert itself as the dominant power within the organization.

The US delegation's effort to utilize Unesco as a vehicle to promote its informational interests at the 1946 General Conference was in keeping with Benton's remarks in 1945, in which he associated Unesco with the "struggle over the empire of ideas" and situated the institution in "the great stakes of diplomacy" on behalf of global peace.[16] On his return from Paris, Benton set about promoting Unesco to other US officials and the American public. He characterized the organization as vital to US national interests—"a political force of the first magnitude"—that could be a "major force in the security program of the United States, and in the furtherance of the broad objectives of American foreign policy." Though the humanist aspirations that had inspired the planning of Unesco were worthy in themselves, for Benton the inaugural General Conference was above all "a political conference. That fact is of great importance to the American people. Power in today's world is not merely economic power and military might. It also lies in the field of ideas." The historical forces signaled by the end of the war were monumental: while "older empires lose economic

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[15] William Benton, "Speech to the First General Conference of Unesco;" "General Conference 1st Session, Held at Unesco House, Paris, From 20 November to 10 December, 1946," http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001145/14593e.pdf, p. 64.

[16] William Benton, quoted in Preston, *Hope and Folly*, pp. 39, 48. Benton frequently employed a narrative structure in making such assertions. In the following quotation, he draws explicitly on America as an exceptional power in historical terms: "today the peoples of the world wield greater power by far than ever before. All of us know, 170 years of American example are at least partially responsible for this rise in power of the peoples of the world ... the world's best hope for peace lies in their rising to power. That is why it is vital to our interest that the peoples of other nations—and not merely their rulers—acquire an understanding of the United States." William Benton, "Understanding Among Peoples," *Department of State Bulletin* 2493 (March 17, 1946), p. 409.

and military power, and as new ones emerge, they are eager to gain strength on this new frontier—the frontier of the mind—where peace and security can be waged."[17] Thus, Benton sought to point out how imperative it was that the United States maintain a position of dominance on these frontiers.

Benton was also a strong proponent of the idea that America must make a strong commitment to freedom of international information. He had established a special State Department Committee of Consultants on Mass Media in early 1946. He instructed it to provide the American National Commission for Unesco and the American diplomatic delegation in Paris with detailed advice on "the quality of international communication through the mass media and ... the means by which the mass media may be of more positive and creative service to the cause of international understanding and therefore of peace."[18] Benton also argued that the United States should propose an international treaty on freedom of international information and communication. Its goals were stated in the following way in the *Department of State Bulletin:* "if its principles were to embrace all modern forms of information, including the press, the radio, and the motion picture, and if approved by a large number of states," a treaty on freedom of information would be a basis for an "adequate exchange" of ideas on sources of war and the safeguarding of global peace.[19] Arguments for freedom of information as a vital principle for post-war global politics also appeared in the pages of journals such as *Current History*, *Foreign Affairs* and the *New Leader.*[20]

These American efforts to make international freedom of information and the preparation of "creative" informational initiatives key platforms for Unesco policy were divisive, however. In surveys of the national delegations to Unesco conducted that year, it became clear that while US representatives wanted to see Unesco take on an active publicity role in global politics, almost all the continental European delegations sought independent training and support for the revival of their own national media industries.[21] The strongest objection came initially from the Yugoslavian delegation, which argued that the types of information that the US wished to see more freely distributed were not likely to

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[17] Benton, "Report on the First General Conference," pp. 20–21.

[18] US National Commission for Unesco, *Report of the US National Commission for Unesco With Letter of Transmittal from Assistant Secretary Benton to the Secretary of State* (United States Government Printing Office: Washington DC, 1946), pp. 13–14.

[19] Dorothy Fosdick, "International Understanding: A Foundation for the Peace," *Department of State Bulletin* 2273 (February 25, 1945), pp. 296–8.

[20] Alice R. Craemer, "Intellectual Solidarity," *Current History* 12: 67 (March, 1947); Edward Warner, "Airways for Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 22: 1/4 (1943); Robert J. Alexander, "Defending American Democracy: How Not to Fight Totalitarians," *New Leader* 31: 33 (August, 1948).

[21] René Maheu, "The Work of Unesco in the Field of Mass Communications," *Journalism Quarterly* 25: 2 (Jun. 1948).

acknowledge the legitimacy of dialectical materialism as a political philosophy. Hence, informational diplomacy of any kind, including the promotion of free information distribution in member states, represented an undue politicization of Unesco's mandate because it would fail to acknowledge the rights of member states to follow socialist economic principles if they so chose.[22] British commentators were also troubled by US efforts to shape the Unesco program on such a controversial issue as Unesco-authored propaganda. The British MP John Hardman publicly stated in 1947 that if Unesco had any responsibilities in facilitating the distribution of information it should encourage "cultural self-determination" rather than promote more widespread distribution of American statements on global politics and ideology.[23]

After a failed plan initiated by the US in August 1947 that would have seen Unesco establish its own shortwave radio station,[24] the Polish delegation also put forward a resolution for the upcoming Mexico City General Conference that November affirming member states' belief that the distribution of "war propaganda" was a criminal act.[25] This was widely regarded as a rebuff of the US delegation's insistence that Unesco should promote the principles of international freedom of information, and the US delegation spearheaded an effort to defeat the Polish resolution within the General Conference. They made the case for its defeat by arguing that the definition of war propaganda that it encompassed was overly wide. But privately, the Department of State's concern was that if "war propaganda" in all its forms was banned under Unesco auspices many of America's planned and existing efforts to distribute information on behalf of Allied interests would be hamstrung.[26] As a result, the 1947 General Conference was criticized in the US media for seeming to generate "more strife than peace."

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[22] Benton, "Report on the First General Conference," p. 21. There were perhaps grounds for the Yugoslavian concerns. As Jan Kolasa observes: "Western civilization in its capitalist version was markedly predominant both at the London Conference and during the subsequent years of the existence of Unesco." Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 161.

[23] John Hardman (1947), quoted in Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 99.

[24] This possibility had been debated, and rejected, during the founding conference of Unesco in 1945. Department of State, "Is Unesco the Key to International Understanding?" (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1946).

[25] One article branded the delegations from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia 'substantive refugees' in Paris who lived in fear of being recalled home and hence kept the lowest possible profile at Unesco meetings. See T.H. White, "Unesco is Dying," *Continental Daily Mail* (July 25, 1950). This is ironic given that exiled Czech, and Polish officials had been associated with the Unesco project from 1942.

[26] Clare Wells, *The UN, Unesco and the Politics of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 66–9.

The choice of Beirut as the venue for 1948's meeting would soon become controversial, and even a proposal to establish Spanish as an official language of the institution caused arguments among the Latin American members.[27]

Unesco and Neutrality

The year 1948 was a watershed for figures like Huxley who wished to see Unesco pursue its cultural, educational and scientific policy program in a manner that transcended the international ideological fault-lines of the Cold War. The passage of the Smith–Mundt Act that January shifted US cultural and informational diplomacy toward ideological combat and a hard-hitting approach. The passage of the Act had provoked some debate between the bilateral cultural program staff who were eager Cold Warriors and those who felt that the United States should retain its reciprocal and apolitical approach to cultural diplomacy. But the Unesco delegation in Paris, most of them career diplomats, largely refrained from such speculation about how this turning point in US public diplomacy might affect Unesco. Instead, they worked single-mindedly to limit the neutralist sentiments that were increasingly being articulated by other delegations. The US delegation insisted instead that Washington had an obligation to guide Unesco toward confronting the Communist threat.

Washington's position on European neutrality hardened with National Security Council Memorandum 10/2 of June 1948, which instructed the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency to plan strategies of cultural and intellectual subversion of Soviet propaganda in Europe. The NSC's instructions strengthened the perception among US diplomats that the neutralist sentiments of many leading intellectuals and political figures in France, Britain, Italy and other European states was the result of Communist brainwashing rather than an authentic and legitimate political position. Although much of the United Nations system was vulnerable to neutralist influences, Unesco seemed to be particularly vulnerable because of its wide-reaching objectives. A US delegation policy paper ahead of the General Conference in November noted that the Executive Board's objections to the founding of a Unesco-authored information program, which would provide a "positive" ideological position on the Cold War, were a symptom of Communist-orchestrated neutrality.[28]

The failed proposal to establish a Unesco radio station in 1947 had resulted in a vague promise by the Executive Board that it would at least examine the

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[27] "Policies and Principles: Man to Man," *Time Magazine* (December 15, 1947), p. 31.

[28] United States Delegation to Unesco "Third Session of the General Conference of Unesco Beirut, November 17, 1948: Position Paper on Unesco Program Concerning Freedom of Information," (November 17, 1948), p. 2; U 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA.

technological implications—presumably, mechanisms to prevent radio signal jamming and improve global shortwave infrastructure—of a Unesco effort to institute a global regime for freedom of information. The US delegation vented its frustration on the eve of the 1948 General Conference that little had been done in this respect.[29] By this time, French political commentators had taken to referring to the US doctrine of freedom of information as American "mass media imperialism," while British commentators speculated that US moves in Unesco constituted "an effort to spread US culture by a mass media network." Even American journalists were concerned that if freedom of information meant the penetration of global information networks by the US media—and this was indeed what Benton and others wished to see—"some pretty serious excesses, banalities, outright untruths and offences against decency and good taste" would likely be perpetrated against an unwitting global public.[30]

The State Department nonetheless remained wedded to the principle of promoting an international freedom of information policy through Unesco, envisaging it as a lever with which to direct Unesco's policies toward its desired outcomes in the context of the Cold War. "The United States must still carry the major burden of putting across its concept of the role of mass communications in Unesco," the US delegation reported to Washington; "we will have to supply leadership in ideas (constructive not negative criticism) and personnel to carry them out."[31] US diplomats had attempted to push through a freedom of information policy within ECOSOC and the UN Commission on Human Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt had made mention of freedom of information in several human rights speeches, and she travelled to Geneva in 1947 to head a subcommittee within the Commission on Human Rights to assess whether it could secure a global right to freedom of information and a free press. The effort was also partly to retaliate against Soviet efforts to initiate a discussion about the human rights of "minorities" living in the United States within the Commission. Freedom of information was clearly conceived as a means of competition with the USSR in this context. Benton and others also called for a dedicated UN Conference on Freedom of Information, which was convened

[29] United States Delegation to Unesco, "Third Session of the General Conference of Unesco Beirut, November 17, 1948: Position Paper on Unesco Program Concerning Freedom of Information," (November 17, 1948), p. 2; U 1945–4; DF; RG 59, NARA. See also Whitton, "Cold War Propaganda," pp. 151–3. The US failure to implement its views of Unesco's proper information functions was subsequently recalled by the former director of Unesco's information exchange division Theodore Besterman, *Unesco: Peace in the Minds of Men* (London: Methuen and Co., 1951), p. 63.

[30] Alan Barth and other unattributed quotations in Preston, *Hope and Folly*, p. 55.

[31] Arthur A. Compton, to George Allen, "Confidential Report on Third Session Unesco General Conference, November- December 1948," p. 2; D 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA.

in Geneva in May 1948. The conference considered a Draft Convention on Freedom of Information that had been partially authored by Benton, but since no agreement could be reached, Washington's attention turned back to Unesco as a forum for pursuing its informational agenda.[32] Under the circumstances, the 1948 Unesco General Conference in Beirut could be nothing less than a test of the durability of Unesco's apolitical mandate in the face of American diplomatic pressure. The location of the conference in Beirut had also proved controversial. Holding a General Conference in Lebanon while it was at war with the new state of Israel prompted an emergency meeting of the Executive Board to consider moving the venue, as a demonstration of Unesco's commitment to peace.[33] But they agreed to keep Beirut as the location, though the "deteriorating" political context in the Middle East remained a concern for some national delegations.[34]

The controversies that would unfold during the Beirut Conference foreshadowed Unesco's ultimate inability to function outside the terms of the Cold War, even though no representatives from the Soviet bloc actually attended. The Polish, Czechoslovakian and Hungarian delegations had made it known that they objected to Lebanon, "an aggressor" against Israel in "violation of U.N. high policy," hosting the meeting and boycotted the event.[35] Washington had no such scruples, and the US delegation's response when Lebanon's refusal to grant entry into the country of a non-governmental delegation of Israeli observers was weak. Instead, US officials hoped the gesture would help them court the Arab member states into supporting America's informational goals. The Americans had been warned that a rumored "postcolonial caucus," composed of Latin American and

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[32] Princeton University's John B. Whitton attempted to put a positive gloss on the meeting in the pages of *The American Journal of International Law*. But while the US's sponsorship of the conference may have been a symbolic gesture designed to show the Communist bloc in a negative light, it garnered very little goodwill from other nations. John B. Whitton, "The United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information and the Movement Against International Propaganda," *The American Journal of International Law* 43: (January, 1949).

[33] Arthur A. Compton, to George V. Allen, Enclosure "Report on General Political Relations During Third Session of the Unesco General Conference Beirut," p. 1; U 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA.

[34] J.L. Henderson, *Unesco in Focus* (New York: Anti-defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1949), p. 33.

[35] Arthur A. Compton, to George V. Allen, Enclosure "Report on General Political Relations During Third Session of the Unesco General Conference Beirut" p. 2; U 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA. The Yugoslav delegation had not been widely viewed as a proxy for Soviet interests within Unesco during this founding period, Ribnikar's celebration of dialectical materialism notwithstanding, and in any case Yugoslavia had been expelled from Cominform, cementing the break between Tito and Stalin, in June 1948.

Middle Eastern Unesco members with the support of France and Italy, would use the occasion to object to the promotion of "Western" values within Unesco programs. A State Department preparatory report instructed the US delegation to drop all support for Israeli membership or attendance on account of the "possibility of influencing [the Arab states] separately and also weaning them away from the Latin-American block."[36]

What particularly troubled the United States were the actions of the French and Italian delegations in offering moral support to what it perceived to be a nascent anti-American movement within Unesco. The post-colonial states, as one report observed, were "greatly influenced by French intellectual leadership" in framing their positions on global politics.[37] In adopting the post-colonial moniker, the neutral bloc had made a clever rhetorical move. They rejected US proposals on the same progressive, anti-imperialist grounds upon which Washington had established its own informational and cultural credentials before and during the war.[38] The US did indeed take the post-colonial bloc as an affront to its rhetorical position and planned to exert as much diplomatic influence as possible to undermine it. An extract from the US delegation's Conference report reflected that:

> the characteristics of [Unesco] leadership is shifting slightly to the 'Latin' (both American and European) from its original 'Anglo Saxon' domination. One of the most effective ways of dealing with this group is to maintain effective U.S. participation at all times by forceful well-briefed persons with great influence.

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[36] Arthur A. Compton, to George V. Allen, "Confidential Report on Third Session Unesco General Conference, November- December 1948," p. 1; DF 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA. On the emerging voting bloc (which secured agreements against the US's wishes on cultural centers and language issues in Beirut), see also: Arthur A. Compton, to George V. Allen, Enclosure "Report on General Political Relations During Third Session of the Unesco General Conference Beirut," pp. 4–5; DF 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA.

[37] Controversy over American administrative norms emerged at a number of points during the period under discussion here, and American reflections on this matter contrast American and European or British views on the role of a chief executive. The US delegation favored a more proactive role for the chief executive (or Director General) in directing policy and setting priorities. Opposition to America's interpretation of the Director General's role by the French, Italian and British delegations was therefore often put down to contrasting administrative traditions by the US, rather than a genuine concern about the concentration of power within the institution. See e.g.: Arthur A. Compton, to George Allen, "Confidential Report on Third Session Unesco General Conference, November- December 1948," p. 2; Unesco 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA.

[38] Considering that France retained parts of its formal empire at the time, this was a particularly ironic way to subvert US hegemony.

> On really vital issues, many (if not most) Board members can be influenced through their governments (but this must be done discreetly and not too often).[39]

In preparing for Beirut, the US delegation had also come to believe that, since their efforts to promote freedom of information had been ineffective, a more direct exertion of diplomatic influence was warranted in order to keep Unesco anti-Communist. They hoped to place Americans in the offices of Director General, Head of Administration, Head of Mass Communications and Public Information, as well as in various lower level administrative positions. They once again put forward Walter Laves as the US candidate for Unesco's first elected Director General, but their efforts went awry early and the delegation subsequently switched its support to the post-colonial bloc's choice of Jaime Torres Bodet, a former Foreign and Education Minister of Mexico. The State Department was vexed, having assumed that paying 40 percent of the costs of Unesco entitled the US to fill the Director General post.[40] After Torres Bodet was confirmed as Director General, the US delegation proposed that as a stopgap measure various external issues in US-Mexican relations could be brought to bear on the Director General to influence Unesco, even though Torres Bodet was not, strictly speaking, taking up the post as a diplomatic representative of Mexico. "The key part played by the U.S. in the election of Torres-Bodet ... should be recognized and used. In him we have a leader who is not necessarily going to be sympathetic to the U.S. views." The Department surmised that "our best method of procedure would be to present carefully considered views to him on basic issues ... *Being a man of no small political experience, he should also be susceptible to political influence (applied appropriately) on the most vital matters*."[41]

Assistant Secretary of State George Allen headed the delegation to Beirut, and his statements reflected an explicitly instrumental view of Unesco that departed significantly from the notion of an open public sphere favored by the early American sponsors of the organization. He observed in 1949 that, "while Unesco draws its mandate from the will of the peoples of the world, it must be

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[39] Arthur A. Compton, to George V. Allen, Enclosure "Report on General Political Relations During Third Session of the Unesco General Conference Beirut," p. 2; U 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA.

[40] Charles S. Ascher, *Program-Making in Unesco 1946–1951: A Study in the Processes of International Administration* (Chicago: Public Administration Clearing House, 1951), p. 10. This was an amount of $3,772, 775, an increase of $69,390 from US funding for Unesco in 1948. William Benton, "Excerpt From Report on State, Justice, Commerce, and Judiciary Appropriation, 1949." Benton, William, Papers, [Box # 376, Folder # 3], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[41] My emphasis added. Arthur A. Compton, to George V. Allen, Enclosure "Report on General Political Relations During Third Session of the Unesco General Conference Beirut," p. 3; U 1945–9; DF; RG 59; NARA.

operated ... as a part and parcel of the system of the United Nations."[42] For the State Department Unesco was becoming less a forum for generating consensus, and cultural and educational openness, and more a tool for Washington's more immediate concerns in waging the Cold War. Though Allen felt the United States was entitled to exercise leadership within Unesco—it had "demonstrated forcefully its desire to cooperate"—he noted that it would still be necessary "to avoid *giving the impression* that the United States wishes to wield such [governmental] influence."[43] The prominent English poet and critic Stephen Spender added his voice to the fray, noting that Unesco's big power-dominated, top-down approach was unsuited to its aims.[44] Departing from the concept of cultural reciprocity, the question of whether other delegations disagreed with American initiatives was irrelevant: what mattered instead was that the Communist threat would be confronted in all spheres of international relations. The "wrecking implications," as historian Clare Wells has termed it, of these efforts to make Unesco a forum of ideological struggle were evident in these highly public controversies around Unesco in 1948–49. The tension between the United States delegation and the rest of Unesco would be revealed even more starkly in 1950, during disputes over the organization's response to the Korean War.[45]

The invasion of South Korea by the Communist North on June 25, 1950 had a catalyzing impact on US strategic thinking about the Cold War conflict. The invasion seemed to confirm the logic of containment doctrine; that the worldwide extension of Communism was all but guaranteed unless the US fought back in all spheres. President Harry Truman's message to Congress on the outbreak of war charged that the psychological implications of the conflict were paramount: "Korea is not only a country undergoing the torment of aggression—it is also a symbol. It stands for right and justice."[46] The rhetoric adopted by various officials within the American cultural relations sphere who had previously espoused progressive internationalist sentiments, including Waldo Leland, Unesco Executive Board vice-chair Luther H. Evans, and University of Illinois President George Stoddard, fell into line with this doctrine of cultural and ideological containment. Stoddard, for instance, now took to referring to Unesco as part of America's "counterforce" in the "war of ideas,"

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[42] George Allen (1949) quoted in Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 155.

[43] Letter to George V. Allen (no author) (November 8, 1949), p. 1; U 1945–49; DF; RG 59; NARA. My emphasis added.

[44] Stephen Spender, "What's Wrong with Unesco?" *The Nation* 168: 25 (June 18, 1949), p. 686; see also another British critic: Howard R. Thomas, "Ideal, but It's Fated to Fail!" *The Rotarian* 71: 6 (December, 1947).

[45] Wells, *The UN, Unesco and the Politics of Knowledge*, p. 13.

[46] "Text of Truman Message to Congress on State of Union," *New York Herald Tribune* (January 9, 1951).

departing from the previous characterization of the organization as a sponsor of global integration and pluralistic debate.[47]

William Benton ran for election to the US Senate in 1950, and during his campaign he criticized Unesco for its "aloofness" from the global ideological struggle at hand. He called on Unesco to take up its responsibilities as a "political instrument in the Cold War." From the Senate, he later maintained that Unesco's goals must be "identical with American policy," and that the organization should seek to "pierce the iron curtain" by adopting a shortwave radio policy and broadcasting into Eastern Europe.[48] He registered his wider dissatisfaction with what he regarded as the tentative pace of US anti-Communist cultural diplomacy efforts with the following statement:

> We've sold the world everything from soap to Senator Byrd's apples. We've sold them our machines and our technology. We've sold them our movies, our music, and our dentistry. We have sold them everything but the most important item of all, our spiritual heritage of freedom and our intense belief in it.[49]

With George Allen having vacated the Assistant Secretary post to serve as US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, the new Assistant Secretary of State Edward Barrett defined the Korean War as a global public opinion issue and the top priority of the cultural and informational diplomacy programs.

> Few realize that the U.S.-U.N. decision to resist in Korea was, broadly speaking, a propaganda decision. On world military maps Korea was not strategically important; indeed the United States could not hope to hold it in the early days of a world conflict. Economically and politically, it was less vital to America than other areas. What was important and what all hands recognized was that a failure to resist unprovoked aggression would be interpreted world-wide as a sign of weakness.[50]

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[47] Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, pp. 154–5. The connection cannot be proved, but it is interesting to reflect that George Kennan's "Long Telegram" from Moscow of February, 1946, also used the term "counterforce" as a description of the posture Washington needed to adopt in confronting Soviet expansionism. Robert L. Messer, "Paths Not Taken: The United States Department of State and Alternatives to Containment, 1945–1946," *Diplomatic History* 1: 4 (Fall, 1977), p. 298.

[48] William Benton, quoted in Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, p. 140.

[49] William Benton, "Statement," *Expanded International Information and Education Program*, Hearing, 5 July, 1950; (Y4 1483 F76/2:In3/2); Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1950, p. 5.

[50] Edward Barrett, quoted in Leon Gordenker, "United Nations Use of Mass Communications in Korea, 1950–1951," *International Organization* 8: 3 (August, 1954), p. 336.

Consensus was no longer the overriding objective in Unesco, according to US officials. Washington instead had an obligation to show leadership and to "awaken the conscience of the world with regard to security." Washington's Cold War imperatives were configured, in this context, as following a legitimate interest in "organizing ... every means of information," including Unesco, to explain the "reasons for the struggle."[51]

As the Korean conflict took its rising toll on American lives and expenditures throughout 1950–51, Washington was confronted with a significant publicity challenge at a domestic level: much of the American public remained unconvinced of Korea's centrality to US national security. Positive international opinion about the US-led military intervention proved even more difficult to sustain, given growing international concerns about the risk of outright war between the nuclear-armed superpowers. Although the intervention had a legal mandate from the United Nations Security Council, there were strong disagreements within Unesco about how the organization should comment on the conflict. Several national delegations, notably the Eastern Bloc members, felt that the UN decision to call for intervention in Korea had been provocative and didn't adequately reflect international opinion. More widespread was the view that Unesco must, at the very least, refrain from supporting military hostilities of any kind.[52] These concerns, articulated with particular clarity by the French delegation and the post-colonial caucus, centered on US proposals for the distribution of "Unesco-authored" information about the war.

Shortly after the UN resolution authorizing the US invasion of Korea, the American delegation to Unesco approached the Executive Board with a proposal for a worldwide information program justifying the UN action.[53] The US plan was not simply about promoting the Allied position in the Korean conflict. The US delegation also understood that if Unesco did not take a strong position on the conflict the US Congress would be likely to turn against Unesco itself. However the US proposal for Korean War information "was immediately interpreted, by those all too ready to criticize 'American domination of Unesco,' as a US effort to change the nature of Unesco." It "brought an immediate negative reaction from the French Foreign Office ... that any Unesco action on this matter should be taken upon requests received from the appropriate organs

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[51] Cohen quoted in Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, p. 149.

[52] This was in line with the wider ambivalence of many US allies and UN members. As Gaddis notes, initial international support for the conflict is often downplayed in historical accounts, and the Truman administration was restrained in escalating its response into a war with China by its allies. John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 75.

[53] US officials went so far as to write the statements they wished Torres Bodet to present on the Korean situation. Sewell, *Unesco in World Politics*, pp. 148–9.

of the U.N."[54] While the prospects for getting an agreement looked slim, the US delegation, with the sanction of Director General Torres Bodet, was nonetheless able to convene a special session of the Unesco Executive Board to consider the proposals that August.

The Director General became the focal point for US lobbying, despite the fact that he had been quoted proclaiming Unesco's neutrality in all cases of military conflict just a few days before the outbreak of war. He had expressed the hope that his staff would "take care to become neither auxiliaries nor victims in the disputes by which the world is torn."[55] The US delegation's public statements had vaguely expressed an intention to see Unesco "reaffirm ... its decisions ... within the limits of its acceptance, to cooperate closely and actively in the program of peace of the United Nations."[56] But the Department of State privately instructed the US delegation that any and all available political leverage over Torres Bodet should be used to secure Unesco's commitment to producing war information. It speculated about his motives: "in this connection it would be interesting to know how much he is influenced by the philosophy of 'Neutralism' and how much by the pressure of or desire to please those opposing the US point of view."[57] While many of the national delegations to Unesco might have supported some kind of response to the Korean War, none publicly endorsed the adversarial information program that the US favored in the autumn of 1950. As American diplomats had observed in preparing for the meeting, it was "apparent that [Torres Bodet's] feeling is shared widely among Europeans who emphasize the concept of Unesco as an international cultural organization rather than primarily a political instrument." This statement in itself provides a stark reflection of the changing US attitude toward cultural diplomacy and its purposes. The progressive objectives that the American delegates lauded during the planning of Unesco, which cast the organization as a kind of open public sphere, had dissipated in the face of Cold War antagonisms.

With such substantial opposition to US information plans, however, the State Department had to be content with an agreement that Unesco would undertake significant efforts in the field of post-war reconstruction in Korea and it would publicize this reconstruction role without any comment on the

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[54] United States Delegation to Unesco, Paris, to Department of State, Cipher "Paris 166 (Unesco Series) August 4, 1950 'Report of Activities at Unesco House for the Week Ending July 29, 1950,'" pp. 2–3; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84, NARA.

[55] Torres Bodet quoted in Julian Huxley, "Unesco: The First Phase," *Manchester Guardian* (August 10, 1950).

[56] Unesco General Conference resolution (1950) quoted in Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 155.

[57] Unesco Relations Staff, Department of State, "Report on the Unesco Secretariat's Carrying Out of Unesco Executive Board Resolutions on Korea," (March 7, 1951), p. 4; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

war itself. Torres Bodet brokered the compromise but in the process he assured the US delegation in vague terms that Unesco might also provide some public comment on the military operations. When news of Torres Bodet's vague promise became known, comments from a number of other delegations showed that the idea of a propaganda, or "current information," role was still unpopular. The British, for instance, professed to the American delegation that they were "considerably embarrassed" by the US's apparent wish to involve Unesco in propaganda work.[58] Privately, the Foreign Office concluded Washington's goals for Unesco were one-sided and impractical. By pushing the boundaries of Unesco's involvement in political issues Washington had nobody but itself to blame for its succession of thwarted proposals for informational activities.[59] Twenty-three Unesco delegations formally submitted comments when informed of the Executive Board resolution to provide post-war reconstruction help to Korea. Only six were positive, four were openly negative and four expressed no opinion but merely acknowledged the communiqué. Two member states had added provisos that they accepted that UN action in Korea was warranted, but the involvement of Unesco in the conflict was not. It was a clear indication that most members felt the United States had used its financial and diplomatic position illegitimately, and that US information work was beginning to look to many other nations like war propaganda.[60]

The State Department took the Director General's compromise resolution as a victory, however, and subsequently pushed for a strong interpretation of Torres Bodet's vague point that Unesco could issue some sort of statement on the war itself. The American delegation reported to Washington that they intended to "use the Korean case as a lever to improve and strengthen the orientation of the Secretariat toward the U.N. and 'Peace and Security,'" which meant they would seek to push Unesco further toward US Cold War interests. The American delegation charged that "Militant Pacifism, not 'Neutralism' nor academism should be the prevailing spirit" of Unesco's program.[61] The very nature of

[58] Draft Telegram "August 1950: Unesco and the Korean Situation;" FO 371/88901; UK National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew.

[59] D.S. Cape, Draft Letter to F.R. Cowell (August 16, 1950), pp. 1–2; FO371/88901; UK National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew. See also: Unesco Relations Staff, "Report on the Unesco Secretariat's Carrying Out of Unesco Executive Board Resolutions on Korea," (March 7, 1951), pp. 2–3; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG84; NARA. On Torres Bodet and the Unesco secretariat's views of the role of Unesco in Korea, which conflicted with the US delegation's instrumental view of culture see also: Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics*, p. 149.

[60] Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, pp. 156–7.

[61] The placing of "peace and security" and "neutralism" in quotation marks by the Unesco staff is an interesting feature of this document. It suggests that the public and private sides of US language pertaining to the Cold War were increasingly bifurcated. Unesco

Unesco's mission—to foster peace and prosperity—appeared to William Benton, writing now as US Senator for Connecticut, to be entirely compatible with US dominance within the organization.[62] That August, the US delegation also discussed ways in which they might purge Unesco of its "fuzzy thinking" neutrality for good. "Secretariat members are now more than ever before being forced to 'stand up and be counted' as to their personal politics in favor of either the Eastern or Western form of democracy," the State Department was informed, though the salutary effects of Korea had "the accompanying problem ... of causing considerable unrest among the Unesco staff." In this context, the placement of US representatives in top positions within the Executive Board was a key priority.[63]

By January, 1951, provisional funds amounting to $175,000 out of the Unesco Executive budget had been drawn for "emergency relief and eventual reconstruction in the field of education, science and culture for the people of Korea" as well as, crucially, for "information through Unesco media and through all Unesco's educational facilities ... on the necessity for Collective Security."[64] Shortly after this budget was announced, printing began on Unesco-authored pamphlets interpreting the conflict in pro-United Nations terms, though the project was still unpopular and Executive Board meetings were "sometimes far from calm."[65] After forcing through its unpopular proposal, the Department of State now began to question Unesco's usefulness for furthering Washington's national interests in Korea and elsewhere. The struggle to achieve Unesco's commitment to a war information program pertaining to the Korean conflict had, as US diplomats foresaw, damaged Unesco's credibility both in the US and abroad. In the middle of 1951, the American Unesco delegate Arthur A. Compton warned his superiors that Unesco was now derided as a creature of US interests by some of its most important official and public spokespeople in Europe.[66]

Relations Staff, "Report on the Unesco Secretariat's Carrying Out of Unesco Executive Board Resolutions on Korea," (March 7, 1951), p. 12; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb; RG 84; NARA.

[62] William Benton, Letter to Jesse MacKnight, 31 May, 1950, p. 1. Benton, William, Papers [Box # 388, Folder # 2], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

[63] United States Delegation to Unesco, Paris, to Department of State, Cipher "Paris 167 (Unesco Series) August 9, 1950 'Report of Activities at Unesco House for the Week Ending August 4, 1950,'" p. 5; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

[64] Unesco Relations Staff, "Report on the Unesco Secretariat's Carrying Out of Unesco Executive Board Resolutions on Korea," (March 7, 1951), p. 1; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

[65] Unesco Relations Staff, "Report on the Unesco Secretariat's Carrying Out of Unesco Executive Board Resolutions on Korea," (March 7, 1951), pp. 2–3; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

[66] Arthur A. Compton, Letter to Charles A. Thomson (February 9, 1951), p. 2; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

Unesco's operations beyond Korea remained modest but had expanded steadily since 1946, and now included a program of assessments of adult education and literacy in the developing world, global school text book evaluation, scientific grant-making and a proposed European nuclear physics institute, as well as a circulation program for social scientific publications and research into the feasibility of funding a global art biennale. The political controversy within the organization ultimately slowed the progress of these projects and delayed the addition of new ones. Though the United States remained within Unesco, and continued to try to shape its ideological orientation through administrative channels in its decisions about new member states, it became increasingly dismissive and inattentive toward the organization.

The Rise of Soviet Interest in Unesco

The Soviet Union had refrained from mention of Unesco in its official media since it departed the London meetings during the war. Its propaganda agencies broke their silence after 1950 with a series of articles condemning Washington's display of "dollar imperialism" in its attempts to use Unesco as a proxy for Cold War propaganda.[67] The United States found itself a target of Soviet bloc criticisms in 1951 over its acceptance of ECOSOC and Unesco membership for Franco's Spain, despite the fact that the *Falangist* regime had once refused to allow a Unesco human rights display to enter the country. Recognition of Spain was a divisive move that generated strident criticism from the Eastern Bloc members and the USSR, as well as from exiled Spanish intellectuals and supporters such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, cellist Pablo Casals and Nobel Prize-winning author François Mauriac. Japan, Austria and West Germany also gained full membership that year, compounding fears that the United States was stacking Unesco with pliant allies. The Soviet media made a particularly damning point when it noted the defeat (by 30 votes to 4, with 13 abstentions) of a Czech proposal at the 1950 General Conference to replace the delegation of Nationalist Taiwan with one from Communist China. The Czech delegation had couched the initiative as a reflection of Unesco's founding commitment to humanism, its aloofness from political considerations, and its non-involvement in the Cold War.[68] But the US had taken the paradoxical position of supporting the principle of universal membership to admit Spain, West Germany, Austria

[67] Armstrong, "The Soviet Attitude Toward Unesco," pp. 217–33. This is supported by at least one other account stressing Soviet cultural isolationism prior to 1952. Frederick C. Barghoorn and Paul W. Friedrich, "Cultural Relations and Soviet Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 8: 3 (April 1956).

[68] Sewell, *Unesco in World Politics*, p. 145

and Japan, while denying that the same principle applied to Mainland China.[69] In 1952, the Eastern Bloc states officially withdrew from Unesco in protest. Though the Yugoslavian delegation remained, its head Vladislav Ribnikar, a prominent member of the Executive Board and an important spokesperson for political pluralism within the organization, resigned in protest.[70]

A 1952 budget freeze imposed by Britain and the United States was accompanied by demands by Washington and London that the Unesco program concentrate on issues with short-range political impacts rather than pursuing more nebulous, long-term educational and intellectual objectives. This gesture led to Torres Bodet's permanent resignation from the post of Director General.[71] He was replaced by his deputy, the American political scientist and former Librarian of Congress Luther Evans, who immediately sought to gain credibility as a fair-minded globalist by publicly criticizing the McCarthyite attacks that had blighted Washington that year. But the appointment of an American, any American, as Director General appeared to be simply another manifestation of America's effort to channel Unesco into anti-Communist propaganda. The British Foreign Office recorded France's "fury" at the election, due to the "the evident fact that [Evans] would not be the staunch upholder of French culture and the French language which the French had in Torres Bodet." In fact, the issue went deeper. The controversies over Korea and Spanish membership had left Unesco's credibility in tatters.[72] Unesco had been regarded in largely instrumental terms by Washington, though the US government now had far lower expectations about what could be achieved through the organization. Ensuring that Unesco staked a clear, pro-Western position in the Cold War struggle was the central priority in a Department of State Unesco staff memorandum of August 1952. It cast neutralism and anti-Americanism as the most important obstacles to US interests in the immediate future, implying the two were essentially the same

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[69] Armstrong, "The Soviet Attitude Toward Unesco," p. 229.

[70] On the Eastern Bloc withdrawal see: Polish Ambassador in Paris, Letter to the Unesco Director General (December 5, 1952); "Admission of New Members to Unesco; Admission of Spain in Spite of Protests; Withdrawal of Poland From Unesco; Speculation as to Reasons for Portugal's Not Applying to Join;" FO371/95913; UK National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew.

[71] The Director General had made a dramatic resignation speech after disputes at the General Conference that had been held in Florence in 1950, but was persuaded to return just days later.

[72] "Unesco Director General," (no author) (June 19, 1953), p. 1; FO371/107236; UK National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew. "Candidates for Director-Generalship of Unesco; Election of Dr Luther Evans, of the USA, as Director General at a Special Session of Unesco in July 1953," (no author); FO371/107236; UK National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew.

thing.[73] William Benton, who had continued to consult with the US mission, vented his frustration with Unesco in correspondence with his former deputy Howland Sargeant in 1953. Though Benton had been a committed supporter of Unesco during its founding, he now proposed that the US should try to "kill Unesco and toss it into the Atlantic," albeit in a "strategic" and "careful" way, and the US should replace Unesco with a forum for multilateral cultural cooperation more open to US national interests.[74]

The intrusion of Cold War tensions and controversies into Unesco occurred largely because of the ways in which US diplomats had come to understand cultural and informational diplomacy during the late 1940s. The Soviet Union and the Soviet Republics of Belorussia and Ukraine applied to join Unesco in 1954, after the organization had been subject to five years of controversy and impasse associated with the US delegation's Cold War policies.[75] The Department of State greeted the news of a possible Soviet accession with instructions that the US representatives within Unesco should "do all possible to fill vacant high ranking posts in Unesco, in order to forestall a Russian demand to place its nationals in these posts."[76] As one ex-Secretariat member from New Zealand observed, Washington's response to Soviet membership showed that "whatever the future holds," Unesco would now "be of greater significance to politicians" than it would to the educators, scholars, scientists and cultural figures that the organization had initially envisaged as one of its key constituencies.[77]

The course of American diplomacy in Unesco reflected the difficulty of sustaining a progressive account of propaganda in a multilateral context, where maintaining an open debate and democratic ethos might have in fact made a major difference to the organization's credibility and effectiveness. The Second World War had fostered a robust agreement on the principles that should underpin multilateral cultural cooperation. But even in Unesco's planning stages, the implementation of these principles caused disagreements. In the post-war years, the American Unesco delegation's pursuit of dominance within the institution threatened these core principles and lost it the support of other states. Washington's insistence that information functions be included within Unesco's program was especially controversial, and despite the cultural diplomacy staff's

[73] Robert S. Smith, to Charles A. Thomson "Report on Trip to the United States, July 21-August 8, 1952," (August 13, 1952), p. 3; Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

[74] Howland Sargeant, Letter to William Benton, 27 May, 1953, p. 1. Benton, William, Papers, [Box # 381, Folder # 6], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

[75] Armstrong, "The Soviet Attitude Toward Unesco;" Barghoorn and Friedrich, "Cultural Relations and Soviet Foreign Policy."

[76] Charles A. Thompson, Office Memorandum (April 20, 1954); Unesco 1950–54; Paris Emb.; RG 84; NARA.

[77] Clarence Beeby, quoted in Sewell, *Unesco in World Politics*, p. 170.

supposed commitment to reciprocity and openness, they seemed unable to take the concerns around Unesco information policies seriously. The US experience in Unesco thus reflects an interesting irony. The United States encountered in Unesco the kind of democratic, open public sphere devoted to global debate beyond the limitations of politics that the progressive propaganda critics had held up as an ideal. But when US cultural and informational diplomacy encountered this as a practical reality in Unesco, they found it frustrating and confounding. The US delegation dismissed the criticisms of US policies that other national delegations offered as petulant and excessively idealistic. By 1950, Washington seemed to regard Unesco as valuable only to the extent that it could play a direct role in the Cold War struggle, not for its capacity to lay the foundations of the kind of global public sphere the progressive architects of America's post-war cultural and informational diplomacy had supported in its founding phase.

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Conclusion

Americans had believed there were significant moral and political grounds for rejecting the practices of propaganda before the Second World War. When the US government did adopt policies akin to propaganda after 1936, the architects of these policies imposed limitations on the kind of practices that might be adopted, in line with the progressive sentiments that had informed the interwar American propaganda critics. The limitations that progressive beliefs required were "inherent in the nature of the society" from which the architects of US cultural and informational diplomacy hailed.[1] But the cultural and informational diplomacy programs that Washington adopted after 1936, circumscribed by progressive norms, were nevertheless highly successful. America's public diplomacy was instrumental both in supporting the Allied victory and in consolidating the post-war settlement of 1945. The public diplomacy program established the United States as the defender of democracy and free enterprise to global audiences during the early Cold War. Despite consistent opposition to the programs in Congress, from America's media corporations and sections of the public, the supporters of cultural diplomacy, international information and multilateral cultural cooperation in the foreign policy bureaucracy had managed to sustain their operations through wartime and the funding cuts of 1945–46. In this, the supporters of American public diplomacy ultimately prevailed in their conviction, expressed in a policy paper written during the folding of the OWI, that "there is no region in which the United States can renounce its moral and ideological interest … 'power cannot be left idle … it must be used constantly and wisely.'"[2]

This mixture of historic obligation and moral constraint played a vital role in the ways in which US cultural and informational diplomacy developed before 1953. It framed an American post-war reorientation and reconstruction effort in the defeated nations that was unprecedented in history. They were unprecedented because the cultural rehabilitation, educational reform, and media and informational diplomacy policies of the occupations were remarkably successful, even if they were also internally controversial. Cultural and informational diplomacy had also been vehicles with which the US publicized its views in favor of the sovereign independence and the economic development of the emerging Third World. Here, American success was more mixed, particularly in cases such

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1 Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 152.

2 OWI paper quoted in Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, p. 156.

as China and India. By 1953, the tarnished reputation of the United States in Asia, where audiences were increasingly suspicious of Washington's so-called "neo-imperialism" had become a topic of fierce public debate.[3] The republics of Latin America, too, received US cultural and informational diplomacy in a mixed way, and had a number of criticisms to make in particular about the stridency of the American position on Unesco. More successful were America's cultural and informational programs in Western Europe, where Washington affected a kind of cultural *rapprochement* in the early post-war years. Amid intellectual and cultural rivalry with the Soviet Union, the State Department had increasingly sought and managed to engage Europeans on their own terms, emphasizing America's high culture and intellectual achievements in addition to its popular culture. In Europe, in particular, the information and cultural programs also helped to popularize America's consumer culture, technology and prosperity, thereby promoting the extension of a "free market empire" with the United States economy as its locus.

The US president-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower acknowledged the substantial contribution of the cultural and informational diplomacy programs in 1952, when he initiated a series of reviews geared toward assessing whether the US publicity activities could be enhanced by a new departmental framework. As a former military general who had witnessed the power of propaganda during the Allied invasion of North Africa, and who sought to avoid the horrors of nuclear warfare with the USSR, Eisenhower understood that psychological factors were vital in containing Communism and maintaining the uneasy peace. In his inaugural address in January 1953, Eisenhower reflected on the global challenges America now confronted: "man's power to achieve good or to inflict evil surpasses the brightest hopes and the sharpest fears of all ages."[4] He assured the world that he was entering office with a determination to "tolerate diversity" in global public opinion. He assured the world he had a vision of American leadership via collaboration with allies and supporters, rather than by domination and coercion.[5] In this context, Eisenhower understood that it was imperative for the United States to muster its cultural and ideological resources for the task at hand.

Eisenhower had suggested as early as 1950 that information functions might be removed from the State Department and supervised by a "general

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[3] See, e.g.: Cowles, "Our Propaganda in Asia."

[4] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "First Inaugural Address of President Eisenhower, January 20, 1953," in Robert L. Branyan and Lawrence H. Larsen (eds), *The Eisenhower Administration, 1953–1951: A Documentary History* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 27. On his overall attitude see Osgood, "Form Before Substance."

[5] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 130.

staff of a new kind."[6] His review committees came to the same conclusion. One had been chaired by William H. Jackson, formerly of the CIA, in order to consider the nature of US information strategies. The other was chaired by Nelson Rockefeller, and set out to assess government organization. These coincided with a Senate Foreign Relations Committee review of United States information policies chaired by Republican Bourke Hickenlooper. With the support of all three committees as well as incoming Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, whose preference was to have the State Department maintain an exclusive focus on "traditional" diplomacy, Eisenhower moved to establish a separate agency to administer the information programs and take over some cultural initiatives, such as the USIS libraries and cultural centers program. Eisenhower announced his plan for the creation of the USIA on June 1, 1953, even before he had received the final draft of Jackson's report. The decision to establish an independent agency reporting directly to the President and the National Security Council was based, according to Eisenhower's statement to Congress, on the need to find a "sound way to provide real unity and greater efficiency" in the setting of US information policy.[7] The Unesco mission and the core of the cultural and educational exchange policies remained with the Department of State, but the Voice of America and the print information, film, magazine, cultural centers and libraries program were placed with the new agency. Whereas the USIA plan was a response to the Cold War and the much greater demand for psychological warfare and counter-propaganda the Cold War demanded, Charles Thomson remarked that the founding ideals of the cultural and informational diplomacy programs would be maintained by the USIA. One objective of the recommendations to reorganize cultural and informational diplomacy was to ensure the US programs would continue to avoid "a propaganda flavor" as much as possible.[8]

The National Security Council's mandate for USIA made similar assurances. Its instructions to the new agency echoed the progressive ideal by emphasizing the submission of "evidence" to foreign peoples that the United States embodied their "legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace." But the NSC's instruction that USIA undertake the "interpretation" of news and that it should seek to show "imaginatively the correlation between US policies and the legitimate aspirations of other people" was a reminder of the psychological warfare role that the new agency would also encompass.[9] As Nicholas Cull notes, while USIA was instructed to select material for broadcast or circulation that

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[6] "Propaganda: A Confusion of Mind," *Time Magazine* 56, p. 13.

[7] Dwight D. Eisenhower quoted in Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 91.

[8] Thomson cited in Leo Bogart, *Cool Words, Cold War: A New Look at USIA's Premises for Propaganda* (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995), p. x.

[9] National Security Council quoted in Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens*, p. 85.

could be attributed to the US government if need be, VOA itself was given a special exemption from this provision.[10] Nevertheless, top officials within USIA saw value in upholding the distinction between the notion of "propaganda," which Americans instinctively rejected, and the truthful, reciprocal approach to cultural and informational diplomacy that the Department of State had crafted as an alternative in the years since 1936. The Agency's first director Theodore Streibert thus privately informed the president that his staff would be "avoiding a propagandistic tone," and would "concentrate on objective, factual news reporting and appropriate commentaries, designed to present a full exposition of important United States actions and policies."[11] Hence, the legacy of interwar progressivism and the contradiction between propaganda and democracy continued to shape discourses around American public diplomacy well into the 1950s, even if a number of its programs had devolved into a hard-hitting, propagandist approach.

The French sociologist Jacques Ellul remarked in 1965 that democratic governments are inherently "ineffectual" at propaganda because "to the extent that the democratic propagandist has a bad conscience ... he cannot do good work."[12] Ellul's insight captures the impact of interwar progressivism on the wartime and post-war American public diplomacy program. When one considers that a former director of Voice of America wrote in 1988 that the United States is both the best and worst propagandist in the world—"[b]est because of its unmistakable virtues, worst because its vices can't be hidden. America has the most visible dirty laundry in the world," because unlike other countries the "USIA ... must fashion their wares out of truth"—it is clear that these sentiments retained their potency for US policymakers over many subsequent decades.[13] The American people's liberal democratic "conscience" led the leading scholars, journalists, and government officials of the 1930s to reject the idea of US government propagandizing at home, and to oppose the use of propaganda abroad in support of US interests. Even at the height of fears about the Communist infiltration of America in 1953, the Eisenhower administration did not contemplate overturning Smith–Mundt and imposing a large-scale domestic information program to ensure public compliance with its Cold War objectives.

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[10] Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 102.

[11] Theodore Streibert, quoted in Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 102.

[12] Jacques Ellul, cited in Gary Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VOA in International Politics, 1956–64* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 9. A perceptive scholarly discussion from 1935 that came to a similar conclusion is: George E.G. Catlin, "The Role of Propaganda in a Democracy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 179 (January, 1935).

[13] John Chancellor, "Foreword," in Fitzhugh Green, *American Propaganda Abroad* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988), p. xii.

America's international propaganda efforts were instead couched in terms of a truthful, enlightening approach to the exchange of culture and information with foreign audiences. American public diplomacy was situated in the context of a fostering of a democratic, rational global public sphere. Under the rubrics of a journalistic approach to information, mutual acceptability and reciprocity within the bilateral cultural programs, and with the principle of multilateralism in Unesco, American policy-makers and diplomats wished to see their work embody the norms of open communication and individual rationality. At the same time, Congress and the US media continued to question whether informational and cultural diplomacy had much of a role to play in the pursuit of American national interests. The downscaling of the VOA and other information programs after 1945, the enduring modesty of the bilateral cultural diplomacy program, and the State Department's frustrated pull-back from Unesco after its failure to secure support over Korea, all reflect the fact that many Americans and many US government officials remained ambivalent about the practices of international persuasion well into the post-war era. Whereas much of this opposition to the cultural and informational programs was partisan, much of it was also inspired by a pragmatic argument, which held that America's cultural, political and economic achievements as a vibrant and materially abundant democracy, could be better conveyed through existing private channels. In fact, the latter view held that America's qualities would be corrupted by their incorporation into governmental programs.

The fact that the US public diplomacy programs and the discussions about them reflected Ellul's observation, expressing the enduring American tension between progressivism and propaganda, nonetheless brought vibrancy and credibility to the US cultural and informational diplomacy programs. In the dialectical tension between openness/democracy and control/power there emerged dynamic and interesting policy solutions. The democratic, progressive American "conscience" created an association between the new practices of cultural and informational diplomacy and the longstanding ideals of American political culture. At the founding of the American Republic, the opinions of the people had acquired their enduring "special power" in US politics. The United States was the first state to give public opinion its "modern significance" as a political force. And in the early twentieth century, as American progressives confronted the rise of media, they continued to regard public opinion as the "invisible guardian of honor" in America; the country for which "separate and diverse interacting opinions" was "the repository of ultimate truth."[14] These views shaped the design as well as the rhetoric of American cultural and informational

[14] Gordon S. Wood, "The Democratization of Mind in the American Revolution," in Robert H. Horwitz, ed., *The Moral Foundations of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), pp. 125–6.

diplomacy. In this, the course of Washington's adoption of cultural diplomacy and international information mirrored the global transmission of American principles in the economic, strategic and institutional arenas.

The Cold War challenged established notions of US public diplomacy as an open, democratic and progressive project, but it did not entirely extinguish progressive ideas about propaganda, especially the notion that America should be exceptionally careful in shaping the media and global public opinion for political purposes. Controversy accompanied the increasingly pragmatic format adopted in the US cultural diplomacy sphere, where cultural prestige overtook reciprocity as the prevailing policy approach, and in the Voice of America's decisive shift toward the use of traditional propaganda broadcasting techniques. The shift was most evident in the case of Unesco. Washington believed its right to dominate and shape the policy agenda within Unesco was a product of its post-war global influence. But the US delegation came to greatly dislike operating in an open, reciprocal framework when its interests were not necessarily likely to prevail, even though this was the kind of informational and cultural context that American progressives had once hoped for. Yet even in the early 1950s the American critique of propaganda re-emerged as a theme when public diplomacy was explained by the US government to the American people, and in media comment emphasizing that Washington should exercise a "voluntary abstention from the exercise of power" to cultivate trust and admiration.[15] The notion that America had an exceptional approach to propaganda was also in circulation among American officials themselves. The reconciling of progressive ideals and pragmatic realities—sustaining the contrary logics of restraint and power—was a complex and unfinished process for American public diplomats in 1953. It was a process that accounts for much of the distinctive style, creativity, and flexibility of American public diplomacy, then and now.

[15] Dean, "Strategy for a War of Ideas," p. 186.

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