

Every Citizen a Statesman

Building a Democracy for Foreign Policy in the American Century

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## Abstract

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This dissertation asks how far Americans in the twentieth century reconciled the demands of global supremacy with the claims and realities of democracy. As an answer, it offers the first history of the movement for citizen education in world affairs. This movement, loose but coherent, acted on the belief that since the United States was a mass democracy, the creation of an interested, informed public for foreign policy was essential to its peace and security.

After World War I, members of the foreign policy elite resolved to teach Americans to lead the world, and they created a network of new institutions to do so. The most important and visible of these institutions was the Foreign Policy Association, a non-profit, non-partisan group founded by New York progressives in 1918 to support Woodrow Wilson in the fight over the Treaty of Versailles. By 1925, it had morphed into the first true foreign policy think tank in the nation, with a research staff creating new, public-facing knowledge and disseminating it to a broadening public. The research staff's *Foreign Policy Reports* and *Foreign Policy Bulletin* gave information to diplomats, scholars, editors, businessmen, lawyers, and teachers, information that was otherwise inaccessible. As democracy was threatened at home and abroad during the Great Depression, the Association became more ambitious, founding branches in twenty cities to

circulate foreign diplomats and a new breed of experts in international politics around the country. It pioneered broadcasts over the nascent national radio network, and tapped into a broader movement for adult education. With the encouragement of Franklin Roosevelt, a former member, the Association promoted intervention in World War II, and became a key partner of the State Department in the selling of the United Nations.

Many members of the foreign policy elite believed that the rise of the United States to world leadership entailed new responsibilities for its citizens. As the prewar functions of the Association had been rendered obsolete, it resolved after 1947 to promote community education in world affairs, to make world leadership a part of daily life. Under the rallying cry of “World Affairs Are Your Affairs,” the Association partnered with the Ford Foundation to help create dozens of World Affairs Councils, most of them patterned on the success of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs. These Councils became a stage for international politics, bringing the world to cities across America, and those cities to the world.

But by its own measurements, let alone the results of surveys or the intuition of officials, this movement to make every citizen a statesman failed. The Association and its subsidiary Councils remained weak, short on cash and beset by rivalries. Increasingly, they took refuge in an ever-smaller, educated, white elite, and, informed by social science, they wrote off ever more of the American electorate as uninterested or incapable when it came to world affairs. Very few Americans, it became clear by the early 1960s, were willing to dedicate themselves to world affairs on the model of citizenship that their leaders hoped, and to those leaders, the public therefore seemed fundamentally apathetic. The infrastructure that the foreign policy elite had spent decades building calcified, even before the traumas of the Vietnam War. A chasm developed between policymakers and the public, one that has proven impossible to bridge since.

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## List of Abbreviations

CC	Carnegie Corporation Records
CCFR	Chicago Council on Foreign Relations Records
CCWA	Cleveland Council on World Affairs Records
CEIP	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Records
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations Records
FAE	Fund for Adult Education
FF	Ford Foundation Records
FPA	Foreign Policy Association Records
IPR	Institute of Pacific Relations Records
IPRSF	Institute of Pacific Relations, San Francisco Bay Region, Records
RBF	Rockefeller Brothers Fund Records
RF	Rockefeller Foundation Records
RG 59	Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration

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One could measure a dissertation by the number of pages it contains, or by the number of sources it cites; this one is best measured by the number of daughters it has witnessed born. Rory arrived just as I left the archives; Finn celebrated her first birthday days after I handed it in. If the cadences of their favorite picture books have rhymed their way into this thesis, it is only because they have reminded me, daily, that there are more enjoyable and important things to read than historiography. My dear and beloved Tian has reminded me of much more than that.

Moving so far from home, even as Tian and I have made a new one, has been the hardest thing about doing this project, and yet the support of my family has remained total. There is no way adequately to thank them for all they have given me, except to tell them that it is, finally, finished. And it means more than anything to me that for my mother, to whom this dissertation is dedicated, it is finished just soon enough.

*For my mother*

## Introduction

*Life* magazine always presented its millions of readers with a glossy, optimistic vision of the future, but the issue it published on June 5, 1939, went further than usual.<sup>1</sup> Timed for the opening of the New York World's Fair, Lady Liberty soared on its cover. Inside, the pages were filled with the photojournalism that the magazine so successfully brought to the masses, but this week there were also an unusual number of maps. One set of twelve, specially-drawn, pointed to the economic capacity of the United States, plotting its ability to produce iron, cotton, wheat, and electricity. The maps showed not only that the country was “richer’ and ‘greater’ than any other in the world,” the text said, but that it was “so basically different from the rest of the world’s nations that it can hardly be compared with them.” That, indeed, was the point of the issue. “By examination of our heroic past and hopeful present,” an editorial said, it aimed to suggest “the richer and happier America which will be ours when we have nerved ourselves to accept our bounty and our destiny.”<sup>2</sup>

Henry Luce, the publisher of the *Time-Life* empire, left Walter Lippmann to elaborate. The American people were troubled, indecisive, scared, Lippmann wrote in the only serious article in the issue, “The American Destiny.” They were “embarrassed” by their preeminence. Their foreign policy was consequently “an attempt to neutralize the fact that America has preponderant power and decisive influence in the affairs of the world.” They had tried to act out

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<sup>1</sup> *LIFE* had a circulation of 2,500,000 million by the summer 1939; many more Americans read it than bought it. See Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (New York: Knopf, 2010), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> “America: Rich In Union,” *Life* (June 5, 1939), pp. 50-51.

that power once before, and remained scarred twenty years later. They had not yet, therefore “acquired the training or the experience that were needed in order to succeed,” nor developed the “experienced men” required to run the foreign policy of a great power. But surely, Lippmann wrote, this was just a “passing mood, the curious mood of a peculiar epoch.” Surely Americans would accept their fate one day, for they lived amid “one of the greatest events in the history of mankind.” America had been made great. “What Rome was to the ancient world,” Lippmann wrote, “what Great Britain has been to the modern world, America is to be to the world of tomorrow.” And there was no way to avoid all that that entailed. “When the destiny of a nation is revealed to it,” Lippmann said, “there is no choice but to accept that destiny and to make ready in order to be equal to it.”

There was a catch, and Lippmann knew it; indeed, it was why he was writing in a mass-market magazine like *Life*, and not in his usual *New York Herald Tribune* or *Foreign Affairs*. There *was* a choice. After all, America was not Rome. America was not even Great Britain. America was special, America was different; America was to become the leading power in the world not as a republic, nor as a parliamentary monarchy, but as a mass democracy. That mattered. The problem of America was not a problem of policy, or of party, but of people. “The indecision which pervades the American spirit,” Lippmann said, “has its root in the refusal by the American people to see themselves as they are, as a very great nation, and to act accordingly.” Americans still clung, he continued, to “the mentality of a little nation on the frontiers of the civilized world, though we have the opportunity, the power, and the responsibilities of a very great nation at the center of the civilized world.” This would not do. Americans would move forward only “when they allow themselves to become conscious of their greatness, conscious not

only of their incomparable inheritance but of the splendor of their destiny.” Americans needed to teach *themselves* to lead the world. “Then the things that seem difficult will seem easy,” Lippmann concluded, “and the willingness to be equal to their mission will restore their confidence and make whole their will.”<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Walter Lippmann occupied a particular position in American life, as a theorist and commentator on both foreign policy and democratic theory. Particular, this dissertation argues, but not unique. Lippmann was just one of many Americans who thought hard about how to reconcile American power with American democracy. Some did it as academics, or as columnists. Some did it as policymakers, whether at the State Department, or at the non-state institutions that have circled it. Some did it as activists, rousing their neighbors, their cities, their states, to take command of their nation’s diplomacy. Many more looked at foreign policy and decided to leave it well alone. Either way, to think about foreign policy in the United States has been, however implicitly, to think about democracy in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Which foreign policy the United States should follow has, at bottom, often been a question of who has had the power to decide.

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<sup>3</sup> Walter Lippmann, “The American Destiny,” *Life* (June 5, 1939), pp. 47, 72-73

<sup>4</sup> I thank Tom Arnold-Forster for this insight, from Tom Arnold-Foster, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the Political Thought of Walter Lippmann,” SHAFR Annual Conference, June 22, 2018.

How, then, did people like Lippmann try to reconcile democracy and diplomacy? As one of Lippmann's friends put it, they sought to make "every citizen a statesman."<sup>5</sup> They did not agree on what those words meant — not "every," not "citizen," and not "statesman." Some looked forward to the day when the entire population had a working understanding of world affairs. Others felt that it would be more proper to sustain the interest of a few, chosen notables who might one day become policymakers themselves. These debates were not just theoretical, but practical; they played out in the pages of journals, yes, but also in board meetings, discussion groups, and parades across America.

What follows is the first history of the foreign policy elite's effort to interest, inform, and educate Americans about the world, so that they could play their necessary role in a democratic foreign policy. At its most energetic between the end of the Great War and the start of the war in Vietnam, this movement for what became known as "citizen education in world affairs" was led nationally by the Foreign Policy Association, a non-profit, non-partisan, and relatively progressive institution based in New York City, and extended locally by a host of community groups, eventually called World Affairs Councils, in cities across the country.<sup>6</sup>

These voluntary associations were far from trivial. They were central to the project of American world leadership, and they played with high stakes. High government officials lent them their support. Philanthropists spent four decades and millions of dollars funding them.

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<sup>5</sup> Brooks Emeny, "Every Citizen a Statesman," *The Kiwanis Magazine* (November 1946), pp. 7, 30-31, Brooks Emeny Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 1.

<sup>6</sup> This name comes from Bernard C. Cohen, *Citizen Education in World Affairs* (Princeton: Center of International Studies, 1953). Taking this name for the movement is not ideal, as it reflects Cohen's own understanding of how citizens related to policymakers and experts, as explained in chapter five. However, no better name exists to describe the movement over sixty years, so it is used throughout here. The term "citizen educators" refers to those led the movement, particularly staff and volunteers at the Foreign Policy Association and the World Affairs Councils.

Their prestige and their power shifted over time, as did their aims. At first, they brought foreign policy to high society, then to the newspapers, in the hope that the information they provided to the wealthy and the educated would trickle down. Later, when trickle-down diplomacy seemed insufficient, they tried to take foreign policy to the masses. There were times when they thought they were about to succeed, times when American foreign policy seemed more truly democratic. And yet, a decade or so into the cold war, these institutions started to fade. Those who ran them became convinced that they had failed. An informed, educated public did not really appear to have been built, at least not an adequate one. As protests broke out over the war in Vietnam, the institutions that had tried to make sure that foreign policy was not merely the plaything of the establishment were accused of serving that establishment alone. The institutions lived on, but their animating, officially-sponsored dream of a more democratic foreign policy was dead.

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Why take this approach to the question of the public, beyond the most basic intention of writing the history of institutions that have, so far, gone largely unexamined?<sup>7</sup> Scholars, after all, have

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<sup>7</sup> Only three previous works have dedicated more than a page or two to the Foreign Policy Association, and one of those is an internal chronicle published by a former staff member, rather than a scholar. See Don Dennis, *Foreign Policy in a Democracy: The Role of the Foreign Policy Association* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 2003). One dissertation has sketched the first two decades of the Association's work, but it primarily looks at how Association figures responded to specific diplomatic problems, rather than the problem of the public. See Frank Winchester Abbott, "From Versailles to Munich: The Foreign Policy Association and American Foreign Policy," PhD thesis, Texas Tech University, 1972. The only published academic work on the Association is a comparison with the Institute of Pacific Relations, again from the perspective of foreign policy issues. See Alan Raucher, "The First Foreign Affairs Think Tanks," *American Quarterly* 30 (1978), pp. 493-513. This dissertation is the first work to use the Association's full archive, the first to use the archives of any World Affairs Council, and the first to put those archives in the context of government records, foundation records, and personal papers.



needed no instruction on the importance of the public in the making of U.S. foreign policy, nor in the history of U.S. foreign relations more broadly. Often, however, the way in which we have expressed that understanding has been oblique, an incidental corollary to studies of domestic, partisan politics.<sup>8</sup> Careful historians have tried to trace the impact of specific opinions on specific policies, but without digging much into the political theories and communications technologies through which that process has operated.<sup>9</sup> Others have tried to show how individual policies or entire wars have been sold, again without paying much attention to how public opinion has been conceived of politically, intellectually, or technologically.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, cultural historians have spent decades looking at how what we might think of as specific publics have thought about and expressed themselves on foreign policy, as a by-product of using the analytical categories of gender, of race, of religion, and more.<sup>11</sup> Scholars combining cultural and transnational history have shown us that Americans have been implicated in world affairs in myriad ways, whether in their civic politics, in their faiths, or in the movies

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<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Fredrik Logevall, "Politics and Foreign Relations," *Journal of American History* 95 (2009), pp. 1074-1079; Thomas Alan Schwartz, "'Henry, ... Winning an Election Is Terribly Important': Partisan Politics in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009), pp. 173-190.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War Against Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mara Oliva, *Eisenhower and Public Opinion on China* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Steven Casey, "Selling NSC-68: The Truman Administration, Public Opinion, and the Politics of Mobilization, 1950-51," *Diplomatic History* 29 (2005), pp. 655-690; Steven Casey, "The Campaign to Sell a Harsh Peace for Germany to the American Public, 1944-1948," *History* 90 (2005), pp. 62-92; Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> For summaries of these literatures, see Paul A. Kramer, "Shades of sovereignty: racialized power, the United States and the word," in Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); pp. 245-270; Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Gendering American foreign relations," in Costigliola and Hogan (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, pp. 271-283; Andrew Preston, "The religious turn in diplomatic history," in Costigliola and Hogan (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, pp. 284-303.

they have seen, the crops they have grown, even the kitchens they have bought.<sup>12</sup> We are left with an odd paradox. Americans, as historians now see them, have always been “in the world”; Americans, as policy elites have seen them, have always been out of it.

This dissertation uses the frame of “public opinion” to explore this tension. At precisely the moment that historians have embarked on an immense effort to show how world affairs inflected every aspect of American life, “public opinion” has dropped out of our analyses. It was the recipient of an article in the first edition of the field-defining *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, published in 1991, but it has not been heard from in any edition since. Even historians who are deeply interested in the subject, and insist on both the importance of studying policymakers and the influence of public opinion upon them, tend to think not in that precise category, but in terms of domestic politics.<sup>13</sup> And yet the category was separate, productive, and important — an intellectually-constructed, elite-dominated field of contestation that allowed policymakers to decide who *really* mattered, and who did not. It still does, with

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<sup>12</sup> For arguments that this is, or is not, the strength of current diplomatic historiography, see the debate around Thomas W. Zeiler, “The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field,” *Journal of American History* 95 (2009), pp. 1053-1073. For these examples, see, e.g., Meredith Oda, “Masculinizing Japan and Reorienting San Francisco: The Osaka-San Francisco Sister-City Affiliation During the Early Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 41 (2017), pp. 460-488; Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Knopf, 2012); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Kristin L. Hoganson, *The Heartland: An American History* (New York: Penguin, 2019); Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann (eds.), *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009). For one example of the limits of this cold war politics, especially relating to the consumerism of national security policy, see Thomas Bishop, “‘The Struggle to Sell Survival’: Family Fallout Shelters and the Limits of Consumer Citizenship,” *Modern American History* 2 (2019), pp. 117-138.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Logevall, “Politics and Foreign Relations”; Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Fredrik Logevall, “Structure, Contingency, and the War in Vietnam,” *Diplomatic History* 39 (2015), pp. 1-15; Fredrik Logevall, “Domestic politics,” in Costigliola and Hogan (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, pp. 151-167.

serious consequences for U.S. foreign policy specifically, and international politics more broadly.<sup>14</sup>

Part of the problem has been that the very idea of public opinion has been intractable. Definitions have proven impossibly unstable, shifting violently over time.<sup>15</sup> Harwood Childs, the founding editor of the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, of all journals, wrote eighty years ago that the term “by itself has very little meaning,” a useful evasion that allowed him to suggest that “the

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<sup>14</sup> Patrick Porter, “Why America’s Grand Strategy Has Not Changed: Power, Habit, and the U.S. Foreign Policy Establishment,” *International Security* 42 (2018), pp. 9-46. Unlike historians, political scientists and international relations theorists have not forgotten the category of “public opinion.” For an idea of where that scholarship lies, see the implicit debate going on in Elizabeth N. Saunders, “War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force,” *Security Studies* 24 (2015), pp. 466-501; Joshua D. Kertzer and Thomas Zeitzoff, “A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion about Foreign Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (2017), pp. 543-558; Alexandra Guisinger and Elizabeth N. Saunders, “Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion across International Issues,” *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (2017), pp. 425-441.

<sup>15</sup> Insisting that the “public,” its “opinion,” and “public opinion” are constructed ideas, this dissertation uses no set definition of these terms. However, it employs one crucial distinction that needs elaboration in terms of theory.

Citizen educators thought of the “public” in much the same, classical terms as Jürgen Habermas, which is no surprise, as they were influenced by John Dewey and Walter Lippmann just as much as he. Central to Habermas’s idea of a classic public is “organized discussion among private people that tended to be ongoing,” discussion that “presupposed the problematization of areas that until then had not been questioned” and that “became ‘general’ not merely in their significance, but also in their accessibility.” See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 36. As both theoretical constructs and historical realities, such publics do not naturally exist. See, e.g., Michael Schudson, “Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case,” in Craig J. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 143-164. Publics have to be built. Even if citizen educators thought in terms of reforming democracy, or informing public opinion, this is what they were functionally trying to do — trying to create a “public” that came closer to normative goals. Habermas feared that a classical “public” would be impossible under conditions of mass society; Dewey and those he inspired feared likewise, but tried to prove themselves wrong.

The crucial distinction to be made is between a “public” and an “audience,” one that relates to ideas about publics that have followed Habermas. Michael Warner sees a public as a “social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse,” and that a public therefore exists “only by virtue of address” by a “concatenation of texts over time.” When actual people appear in Warner’s theory, it is as an “audience” which is no more than “a crowd witnessing itself in visible space.” Warner’s telling example is that he considers someone “sleeping through a ballet performance as a member of that ballet’s public because most contemporary ballet performances are organized as voluntary events, open to anyone willing to attend or, in most cases, to pay to attend.” See Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics,” *Public Culture* 14 (2002), pp. 49-90. Citizen educators probably would have taken the entrance fee of Warner’s somnolent ballet-goer, but they would not have been impressed. They sought not a passive audience, but an active public, a public of discussion like that described by Habermas.

nature of public opinion is not something to be defined but to be studied.”<sup>16</sup> Rather than being stipulated precisely in itself, Susan Herbst has written, public opinion has often been thought of in terms of “the tools we have on hand to measure it at any given historical moment.”<sup>17</sup> For most since Childs’ time, public opinion has been reduced to the results of opinion polls.<sup>18</sup> But polling has always been a methodologically controversial technology, so much so that Pierre Bourdieu has declared that, if seeing through surveys, “public opinion does not exist.”<sup>19</sup> And yet clearly it does, at least in the sense that policymakers have thought about it, have acted upon it, have found themselves sending people to their deaths by it.

This tension between the theoretically ephemeral and all too real senses of public opinion has exasperated the few historians who have confronted the question directly. Bernard C. Cohen spent his career on the question of public opinion and foreign policy, and his research features prominently in the story told here. But after twenty years of effort, crowned by *The Public’s Impact on Foreign Policy*, he still found himself “with the unsatisfactory conclusion that public opinion is important in the policy making process, though we cannot say with confidence how,

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<sup>16</sup> Harwood L. Childs, “By Public Opinion I Mean’ —,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 3 (1939), pp. 328, 336.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Herbst, “Public Opinion Infrastructures: Meanings, Measures, Media,” *Political Communication* 18 (2001), pp. 451-464. For the history of those “tools,” see Susan Herbst, *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> Philip E. Converse, “Changing Conceptions of Public Opinion in the Political Process,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51 (1987), pp. S12-S24.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Public Opinion Does Not Exist,” in Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegeluab (eds.), *Communication and Class Struggle: An Anthology in 2 Volumes* (New York: International General, 1976), pp. 124-130; Susan Herbst, “Surveys in the Public Sphere: Applying Bourdieu’s Critique of Opinion Polls,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 4 (1992), pp. 220-229. As Herbst points out, Bourdieu’s argument largely follows that of Herbert Blumer, “Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling,” *American Sociological Review* 13 (1948), pp. 542-549.

why, or when.”<sup>20</sup> Melvin Small agreed in that lonely article in the 1991 edition of *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* that “it is one thing to assert that public opinion plays an important role in the decision-making process,” but “quite another to demonstrate that impact.” He warned those who would try to do so that “the public opinion factor is ever present but always elusive,” that “the search will be arduous, the evidence often impressionist, and the intuitive leaps challenging.”<sup>21</sup> Ernest R. May had more of a chance than most, moving so easily between academia and policymaking, but even he struggled to get much further. Writing between the publication of two books on public opinion and the colonial wars of the turn of the twentieth century, May argued in 1964 that it was “one of our most powerful traditions” to have “faith that public policy is an expression of public opinion.” But he was not so sure that that faith was not “largely mythical.” May notably took issue with the idea that “public opinion is an entity which can be described, dissected, and analyzed at all,” variously dubbing it a “tradition,” an “invention,” a “construction,” and even a “fiction.” “Perhaps at least some studies of it,” he concluded, “ought to begin not with what is observed but with the observers.”<sup>22</sup>

Fifty and more years later, that is the approach taken here. As the chosen instruments of the foreign policy elite for reconciling diplomacy with democracy, the Foreign Policy Association

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<sup>20</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Melvin Small, “Public Opinion,” in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 169, 175-176. Small ended up writing less on “public opinion” and more on domestic politics. See Melvin Small, *Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Ernest R. May, “An American Tradition in Foreign Policy: The Role of Public Opinion,” in William H. Nelson and Francis L. Loewenheim (eds.), *Theory and Practice in American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 102, 121-122; Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1961); Ernest R. May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

and its associated World Affairs Councils thought constantly about public opinion. They did not always think about every aspect of public opinion in equal measure. They paid more attention to who it ought to include than what it ought to know, more attention to how to create it than how to use it. In every aspect of their operations, they took intellectual constructions of public opinion and tried to enact them on the ground. This interaction of theory and practice was not simple, but contested. Activists had their own ideas about public opinion, ideas that often conflicted with those of intellectual pioneers, whose fields were themselves changing. In a process that took in everyone from government officials to volunteers, foundation grant officers to interested scholars, publics were defined, produced, organized, used, and, ultimately, ignored. And it is in that contestation that we can see that the argument that the foreign policy elite, working inside and outside the government, somehow succeeded in “engineering consent” for “globalism” is far too simplistic.<sup>23</sup> To be sure, the staffs of the Foreign Policy Association and the World Affairs Councils were avowed internationalists, and, very occasionally, they sought to “sell” individual policies on that basis. Their work on the whole, however, was slower and directed to less specific ends.

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<sup>23</sup> Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 27. Parmar gives a pocket history of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Foreign Policy Association, and the Institute of Pacific Relations (pp. 65-96), but one that is both archivally thin and intended only to show the power of top-down opinion-making unleashed by the state. This dissertation instead illustrates how the state, foundations, voluntary associations, and activists contested visions about democracy and foreign policy. Parmar’s work does, however, raise the question of the state, particularly in terms of foundations. To be sure, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations (especially the latter) were imbued with the “state spirit” with which Parmar attributes them, but the documentary evidence suggests that their support of the citizen education movement was about more than just perpetuating elite or state control. Rockefeller and Ford did not want to create an internationalist public that would solely support the state; “support,” yes, “unquestioningly,” no. In its emphasis on the unity of purpose among the state, foundations, and voluntary associations, *and* on the ways in which that unity was contested, what follows is indebted to Brian Balogh, *The Associational State: American Governance in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

Narrating the course of this movement requires combining several kinds of historical inquiry. Touching on the histories of urban life, education, communications, political science, democratic theory, and more, this dissertation takes a broad view of what political history entails, combining social and cultural approaches. Among the most important is to insist on the unity of the histories of foreign relations and political thought. This is far from new; witness, for instance, the many histories of modernization theory, or of the cold war social sciences more generally.<sup>24</sup> The difference comes in asking how that unity was expressed at home, in the State Department's Office of Public Affairs, rather than in the Peace Corps or the United States Information Agency. The same definitions of democracy that modernization theorists employed abroad, with all that those definitions entailed for the client states that theorists sought for America, were also employed at home. The same fears of propaganda that psychological warfare specialists slowly but surely put aside in the face of the Soviet threat, were felt at home, albeit in a different way and for different reasons. Moreover, intellectual history here is not treated as the sole property of intellectuals. This dissertation argues that thinking about the relationship between democracy and diplomacy is found not just among university faculty or government propagandists, but also among the program committee chairs, the membership secretaries, the treasurers, and the discussion participants who enacted the commitment to a democratic diplomacy on a day-to-day basis, across the country.

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<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Philip Mirowski, "A History Best Served Cold," in Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell (eds.), *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 61-74; Lawrence Freedman, "Social Science and the Cold War," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38 (2015), pp. 554-574.

Mediating activism and academia were the foundations, another relatively new field of inquiry for historians of foreign relations.<sup>25</sup> Each of the major philanthropic foundations in turn — Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford — took responsibility for the citizen education movement, expending millions of dollars on the conviction that the creation of an informed, educated public was possible, would benefit policymakers and, ultimately, might secure a more peaceful world under American leadership. Seeing the foundations from the perspective of groups seeking their favor, as well as from the perspective of those trying to direct them, this dissertation draws special attention to the capricious nature of foundation policymaking. Foundations are not monoliths any more than government departments; they are sites of politics, as well as actors. The members of the Social Sciences Division at the Rockefeller Foundation did not all agree with one another on the nature or urgency of a democratic foreign policy; nor did the members of the International Affairs staff at the Ford Foundation. Moreover, both of those foundations undermined their own programs. One part of the Rockefeller Foundation sought to achieve a democratic foreign policy through adult education; another sought to achieve it through the propaganda techniques that adult educators thought fascistic. One part of the Ford Foundation filled the airwaves with the idea that “world affairs are your affairs”; another funded the behavioral social science that fatally undermined the progressive democratic theory on which that idea relied. If the professional staffs of the major foundations were hardly unified, they clashed, too, with the trustees who doled out the cash, This story ends, for instance, with turmoil at Ford,

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<sup>25</sup> See, esp., Inderjeet Parmar and Katharina Rietzler, “American Philanthropy and the Hard, Smart and Soft Power of the United States,” *Global Society* 28 (2014), pp. 3-7.



a battle among trustees, staff, and the foundation's president, McGeorge Bundy, about the very nature of democracy, a battle that Bundy won.

Bundy was an elitist's elitist, a card-carrying member of the establishment who contributed nothing to the citizen education movement, then killed it off. But among men in his position, Bundy was the exception to the rule, not the rule itself. The need to teach Americans to lead the world was not a minority pursuit among leading policymakers, who tended at the very least to offer rhetorical support, or who exerted their influence through a quiet word. Secretaries of state, undersecretaries of state, and assistant secretaries of state all were involved in the affairs of the Foreign Policy Association in one way or another; all spoke from its platforms, or for the World Affairs Councils. The fact that the citizen education movement drew such support from policymakers, albeit support that ebbed over time as the nature of the national-security bureaucracy changed, makes it all the more important to understand the public that the movement sought to create.

If we see in the history of the Foreign Policy Association that the foreign policy elite did not reserve to itself sole power over U.S. foreign policy, we see, too, that the public it sought to create was strictly limited. The standards that the policy elite set for authentic participation in foreign policy were extraordinarily high, and became higher over time. Elite definitions of participation, not coincidentally, correlated with social standing, wealth, and, above all, education. That had significant consequences. Although Americans of color had a long history of engagement with the world on their own terms, the foreign policy public of the elite's

imagination was almost exclusively white.<sup>26</sup> The Foreign Policy Association made next to no effort to ally itself with black voluntary associations; it made no explicit effort to desegregate its events; it avoided the South so that it would not have to deal with the politics of racism. When non-white Americans are permitted to appear in its minutes, it is always with a strange mix of pride and outright shock. The same was the case with Americans of lesser wealth. Membership in the foreign policy public was expensive. It cost money to be a member of a World Affairs Council, to attend a luncheon, to subscribe to publications, even to spare the time to listen to a radio broadcast or to watch a panel show on public television. The Association's early commitment to high-society diplomacy meant it never quite shook off its reputation as being a forum for the well-off, for bankers and lawyers, for corporate professionals, if not for corporate titans. Its persistent interest in working with labor only rarely resulted in serious engagement.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Jonathan Rosenberg, *How Far the Promised Land? World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World to Vietnam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Sean L. Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017); Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Keisha N. Blain and Tiffany M. Gill (eds.), *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019). Parmar offers an example of a foreign policy institution trying to engage with the black community, but his article relies on an incorrect conflation of the Council on Foreign Relations with the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which was merely a pressure group, seeking support wherever it could find it. When it came to creating permanent publics for foreign policy, institutions were not so inclusive. Cf. Inderjeet Parmar, "... Another important group that needs more cultivation': The Council on Foreign Relations and the Mobilization of Black Americans for Interventionism, 1939-1941," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27 (2004), pp. 710-731.

<sup>27</sup> Despite being staffed mostly by progressives, the Foreign Policy Association did not work closely with labor until the late 1950s and early 1960s; World Affairs Councils certainly did not. For labor internationalism, see, e.g., Elizabeth McKillen, *Chicago Labor and the Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy, 1914-1924* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Elizabeth McKillen, *Making the World Safe for Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Dorothy Sue Cobble, "A Higher 'Standard of Life' for the World: U.S. Labor Women's Reform Internationalism and the Legacies of 1919," *Journal of American History* 100 (2014), pp. 1052-1085.

If the foreign policy elite's preference for its wealthy and white own is not a surprise, this might be: the history of these institutions shows that active interest in foreign policy in the United States has primarily been the province of women. It is no exaggeration to say that none of the institutions devoted to citizen education in world affairs could have survived without the work, professional or otherwise, of women; if they did not quite emerge from the women's movement, they thrived only in alliance with it. Most of those who volunteered, who bought memberships, and who went to events were white, upper- and upper-middle class, often college-trained women. The senior leadership of the League of Women Voters had places on the board of the Foreign Policy Association almost by tradition; League of Women Voters members and their like took the lead making sure that foreign policy discussion became part of their communities; they tended to be better than their male, often academic counterparts at the hard work of improving attendances, at selling memberships, at devising new ways to interest people in world affairs. These institutions, occupying a half-lit place in the shadow of the state, were crucial places through which women could access the foreign policy world, shaping how foreign policy was perceived. That access was not unlimited. Female participation (and, not least, pay) was always regulated by prevailing norms and underlying power structures. Men like Christian Herter and Adlai Stevenson used foreign policy institutions to launch their careers; Louise Leonard Wright and Vera Micheles Dean went no further. And that points to one reason why men like Bundy, ultimately, chose to efface the vision of a democratic foreign policy that they pursued.

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Chapter one tells the story of the early years of the Foreign Policy Association, starting with an account of its birth as a progressive alternative to conservative internationalism in the fight over the Treaty of Versailles. Once that fight was lost, the Association promoted public discussion about foreign affairs through society luncheons in New York and elsewhere, but it struggled to reconcile its desire to promote a more liberal world with its ambition to become the dominant national institution devoted to foreign policy education. By the late 1920s, the latter tendency had won out, and the Association had turned to the production of “objective” research on international affairs, as part of a global burst of knowledge creation and a turn to expertise. Acting as the first genuine foreign-policy “think tank” in the United States, the Association hired a research staff and pumped information about international relations into the public sphere, aiming particularly at a reading public. Drawing particular attention to the centrality of women in the Association’s work, this chapter shows how it operated on traditional assumptions about how public opinion operated, and sought to create an opinion elite from which enlightened, internationalist opinions would trickle down.

Chapter two demonstrates how that faith in trickle-down diplomacy weakened during the depression, as activists outside New York sought to push deeper into their communities, to make the facts mined by the first generation of foreign-policy researchers more widely known. The Cleveland Council on Foreign Affairs was the pioneer in this, allying with the adult education movement, which came to the social sciences before World War II. Community education in foreign affairs was hard work, requiring the forming of all kinds of alliances between institutions with competing understandings of democracy, and, in the view of the Cleveland Council’s leadership, requiring the masculinization of a domain previously dominated by women.

The aim was still the creation of a public, however, rather than the promotion of a single understanding of foreign affairs; and, as the end of the chapter shows, that public could escape the control of the experts who formed it, especially when it came to questions of war and peace.

Chapter three shows how the Foreign Policy Association eventually began to seek a broader public, under the pressure of the intervention debates and, ultimately, World War II. What it concentrates on, however, is how the war played out across the foreign-policy infrastructure, picking winners and losers and, in turn, elevating certain visions of a democratic foreign policy over others. With the Council on Foreign Relations ascendant, the Association remained a trusted partner of the State Department, but its earlier functions as an information bureau, and as a center of independent research, were seriously threatened. Meanwhile, although adult education approaches found a voice at State, they were quickly eclipsed by understandings, methods, and institutions that promised to mobilize Americans more quickly and more reliably. This was a fateful choice. The heady success of the United Nations campaign masked what would become fundamental difficulties, as deliberative, participatory visions of democracy in foreign policy were overshadowed by the creation of the national security state. Those difficulties continued throughout the early cold war, chapter four shows, until the Ford Foundation came onto the scene. Bankrolling the Association to the tune of millions of dollars, Ford pushed the development of World Affairs Councils across the United States, all of them based on the Cleveland model. Few succeeded in becoming genuine community centers, as the social fabric on which the white, urban vision of the Councils was torn apart by suburbanization and racism.

As chapter five shows, that failure was proof, to many postwar social scientists, that older ideas about democracy were outdated and unworkable in the atomic, superpower age. Social

scientists across several fields rapidly rethought political theory, downplaying the ability of, and the need for, the public to participate, privileging expertise. Even at the height of the cold war, social science and foreign policy did not exist in an exact and consequent relationship. The Association therefore tried to prove the conclusions of social science wrong, and tried to bring world affairs to the masses through a study-discussion program, “Great Decisions,” in which hundreds of thousands of Americans met in private homes, in libraries, even in car pools, to talk about foreign policy. Although the headline numbers of the “Great Decisions” program were startling, it failed to reach the public for which it had been intended, ironically confirming a suspicion that it was created to disprove: that participation in foreign policy, as elites conceived of it, was the preserve of a white, educated, and usually wealthy elite.

Chapter six, finally, shows how the Ford Foundation steadily lost faith. It proved impossible, over the long term, to sustain public engagement on the terms that policymaking elites understood. The foreign policy infrastructure steadily calcified, not least as it became clear that the public it had created was of little use to policymakers. Vietnam only confirmed this trend, rather than starting it. Ford withdrew its funding at the end of the 1960s, turning to the urban crisis. Citizen education institutions lived on, but barely.

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Studying how the foreign policy elite imagined reconciling diplomacy with democracy has value. Neither the stereotype that that elite was stubbornly insular nor the faith that public opinion has interacted easily with foreign policy will suffice. The story is one of change over time, of rise and

fall. Pursuing American supremacy, the foreign policy elite steadily set aside the institutions it had created to secure the democratic foreign policy that it claimed to represent. The roots of the contemporary crisis in the legitimacy of American power at home are to be found here; so, too, might be the roots of a way out.

# Chapter 1

## Trickle-Down Diplomacy

Herbert Croly and Alvin Johnson were there, from *The New Republic*. Representatives of *The Public*, *The Dial*, and *The Independent* were there too. Charles Beard showed up, the historian who had resigned from Columbia over the war, and Henry R. Mussey of *The Nation*, who had resigned from Columbia over its treatment of Beard. British allies arrived, notably Norman Angell, author of *The Great Illusion* and founder of the Union of Democratic Control, which was sending shockwaves through the traditionalist corridors of Whitehall.<sup>1</sup> Given all their divisions over the war that the United States now fought, it was a surprisingly catholic group of progressives that assembled on April 23, 1918, at the Columbia University Club.<sup>2</sup> And they were there at the asking of Paul U. Kellogg, the social worker turned editor of *The Survey*.

Kellogg was a protean, popular figure among these men. A player in both the American Union Against Militarism and the American Neutral Conference Committee, he was not

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<sup>1</sup> The Union of Democratic Control, founded in Britain in 1914, anticipated many of the views later expressed by the League of Free Nations Association, but connections between the two were limited at best. The Association rejected affiliation with the Union in October 1919. See Sally Harris, *Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control, 1914-1918* (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1996); James Cotton, "On the Chatham House project: interwar actors, networks, knowledge," *International Politics* 55 (2018), pp. 820-835; "Executive Committee Meeting L.F.N.A.," October 21, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>2</sup> "In Attendance at Meeting Columbia University Club, April 23, 1918, to Discuss Organized Group Action Backing Up Wilson Policies," Paul U. Kellogg Papers, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota, Box 33. The League of Free Nations Association period in the history of the Foreign Policy Association is its most studied. For a sustained treatment, see Wolfgang J. Helbich, "American Liberals in the League of Nations Controversy," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 31 (1967), pp. 568-596.



himself a radical pacifist, or a radical anything. He had easily reconciled himself to American entry into the war, and had cooperated with statesmen holding far more conservative views to plan for the peace.<sup>3</sup> In September 1917, he had gone to Paris to spend five months working for the Red Cross. On his way home, he had stopped in England to acquaint himself with its trade unions and its Labour party.<sup>4</sup> What struck him, he told the editors, academics, and activists who gathered that night back in New York, was the difference in atmosphere on the progressive left. England, he wrote in a report, was a place “where Wilson’s name is cheered, where people speak of the American policies as if the whole new world were ablaze with them.”<sup>5</sup> And yet it seemed to Kellogg that “the principles which President Wilson has made the hope of the world” had not caught fire at home. The only real work was being done by the League to Enforce Peace, what he thought of as “the forces of reaction.”<sup>6</sup> Liberals, even the more pacifically inclined, retained an

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<sup>3</sup> On Kellogg’s work before Congress declared war, and particularly on the way that Kellogg cooperated with movements that were led by women, see David S. Patterson, *The Search for Negotiated Peace: Women’s Activism and Citizen in World War I* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Kellogg cooperated with conservatives including Elihu Root, Charles Evans Hughes, Nicholas Murray Butler, Henry Morgenthau, and Henry Stimson to set up the Conference on the Foreign Relations of the United States, held over three days at Long Beach in the spring of 1917, at which nearly 300 policymakers, academics, lawyers, and activists had gathered to educate themselves — and, through the attendant press, others — about international politics. See Stephen Duggan, “Conference on the Foreign Relations of the United States: An Experiment in Education – Report of the National Conference on the Foreign Relations of the United States, Held at Long Beach, New York, May 28–June 1, 1917,” *International Conciliation* 4 (1917), pp. 235–302.

<sup>4</sup> Clarke A. Chambers, *Paul U. Kellogg and the Survey: Voices for Social Welfare and Social Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), pp. 62–76.

<sup>5</sup> On the spread of Wilsonian ideas beyond American borders, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> The League of Free Nations Association did collaborate with the much more powerful, and far better-financed, League to Enforce Peace. Their members shared platforms, and signed onto joint programs. See, e.g., “League Writes Platform for Lasting Peace,” *New York Tribune* (November 25, 1918), p. 3. But this collaboration was never taken all that seriously by either side. On the League to Enforce Peace, see Stephen Wertheim, “The League That Wasn’t: American Designs for a Legalist-Sanctionist League of Nations and the Intellectual Origins of International Organization, 1914–1920,” *Diplomatic History* 35 (2011), pp. 797–836; Benjamin Coates, *Legalist Empire: International Law and American Foreign Relations in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 136–176.

“ignorance of foreign affairs,” Kellogg explained, and they still suffered under “the psychology of the first year of the war,” in which progressive hopes for reform had been dashed by censorship, propaganda, and nationalism.<sup>7</sup> This was unacceptable. “It is thoroughly undemocratic and unsound not to have a body of thinking democratic citizens banked up behind the policies of a democratic president,” Kellogg wrote. What was needed was a group that would be more than the peace movement rebranded. It would be non-partisan, open especially to “radicals and democrats and liberals.” It would support the administration, and a “democratic order of world relations.” It would claim Wilsonianism for itself, true Wilsonianism.<sup>8</sup>

Over the next few months, the new Committee on American Policy grew to include more journalists and more academics.<sup>9</sup> They met every so often to learn the catechism of internationalism. Beard wrote a curriculum, covering trade, “backward countries,” “racial antagonisms,” raw materials, and the idea of a League of Nations.<sup>10</sup> They heard from outside speakers, including Tomas Masaryk, who was months away from becoming president of Czechoslovakia.<sup>11</sup> They asked Stephen Duggan, who would soon found the Institute of International Education, to draw up plans for an institution that would provide for nationwide

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<sup>7</sup> See, esp., John A. Thompson, *Reformers and War: American Progressive Publicists and the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> “Memorandum by Paul U. Kellogg,” attached to “Minutes of Meeting of the ‘Committee on Nothing at All,’” April 23, 1918, Records of the Foreign Policy Association, Wisconsin Historical Society [FPA], Part II, Box 15.

<sup>9</sup> “Committee on American Policy: List of Members,” undated, Kellogg Papers, Box 33.

<sup>10</sup> “Committee on American Policy,” June 27, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>11</sup> “Committee on American Policy,” July 11, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

education “by liberally minded men” towards “the international mind.”<sup>12</sup> Taking their cue from kindred spirits across the Atlantic, they decided in October to form a “League of Nations Society,” to aid “in development and popularizing the plans for the formation of a League of Nations on sound and practicable lines.”<sup>13</sup> Days after the Armistice, they elected the former *Harper’s* editor Norman Hapgood as their president, and adopted another name used by British activists. Then they went public.<sup>14</sup>

The League of Free Nations Association announced itself on November 27. Much of its statement of principles was stock internationalism, broad enough that it could be signed by figures as politically diverse as John Dewey, Felix Frankfurter, Jane Addams, and the J. P. Morgan banker Thomas W. Lamont.<sup>15</sup> It accepted the use of power in international affairs, but sought to end power politics through the promotion of “security” and “justice.” Security, it stated,

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<sup>12</sup> “Minutes of Meeting of the ‘Committee on Nothing at All,’” May 13, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Meeting of the ‘Committee on Nothing at All,’” June 14, 1918, Survey Associates Records, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota, Box 67; Stephen P. Duggan to Kellogg, July 31, 1919, Kellogg Papers, Box 33; Kellogg to Duggan, August 8, 1918, Survey Associates Records, Box 67.

<sup>13</sup> “Committee on American Policy in International Relations,” October 3, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 15. For the international context and the rise of League of Nations Societies in member and non-member states, see Thomas R. Davies, “Internationalism in a Divided World: The Experience of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, 1919–1939,” *Peace & Change* 37 (2012), pp. 227–252. For the League of Nations Society and League of Free Nations Association, which merged to become the powerful League of Nations Union in 1918, see John A. Thompson, “The League of Nations Union and Promotion of the League Idea in Great Britain,” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 18 (1972), pp. 52–61; Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 2–3.

<sup>14</sup> “Minutes of Meeting of Organizing Committee of League of Free Nations Association,” November 13, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of Meeting of Organizing Committee of League of Free Nations Association,” November 19, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>15</sup> Dewey said that although he signed the Association’s statement of principles, his “personal connection with the document was nil.” See Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 235–236. Lamont wrote to Duggan that “I still feel that the attempt has been made to cover too much ground, opening way to possible controversy, where a simpler, briefer statement would gain more prompt adherents. But I have been glad to subscribe to the document and shall give it my best support.” See Thomas W. Lamont to Duggan, December 4, 1918, Thomas W. Lamont Papers, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Box 48.

would be achieved if nations ended their search for an “individual preponderance of power,” and “pledged to uphold by their combined power international arrangements ensuring fair treatment for all.” Justice, it said, would come if “co-operative” nationalism replaced “competitive,” if “interdependence” and “equality of economic opportunity” could be promoted everywhere. More radical was the deliberative, democratic political order that they sought to erect. “If the League of Nations is not to develop into an immense bureaucratic union of governments instead of a democratic union of peoples,” they declared, “the elements of (a) complete publicity and (b) effective popular representation must be insisted upon.” That way, the League would become “an extension of the principles that have been woven into the fabric of our national life.” Just as they had sought reform through public opinion at home, so these progressives sought to reform the world.<sup>16</sup>

Kellogg had brought together enough people of prominence to draw fire from the *New York Times*, which snickered that this “somewhat eclectic body,” with its “hackneyed Socialist theory” and hopes for “the reformation of fallible humanity,” might better be called the “League for the Resuscitation of German Commerce at the Expense of the Allies.”<sup>17</sup> As the *Times* implied, this loose alliance of lawyers, bankers, academics, journalists, clergy, social workers, and heiresses could not hold. Anxious that they were cut out of the secret negotiations in Paris,

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<sup>16</sup> League of Free Nations Association, “Statement of Principles,” November 27, 1918, FPA, Part II, Box 224; Thompson, *Reformers and War*, pp. 197-198; Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 160; Trygve Throntveit, *Power Without Victory: Woodrow Wilson and the American Internationalist Experiment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 263-270. The Association is absent from John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), which underplays the fractures among Wilson’s progressive supporters that are rightly emphasized by the three authors above.

<sup>17</sup> “The League of Free Gratis Nations,” *New York Times* (November 28, 1918), p. 16

despite sending Angell to France, they soon fell out.<sup>18</sup> The Covenant of the League of Nations was a disappointment. The executive committee liked the creation of a “permanent international instrumentality,” the protection of “backward races,” and the assurance of publicity, but they were angry, if not surprised, that a League “drawn according to old-fashioned, diplomatic formulae” was “not self-powerful,” “not democratic,” “not world comprehensive,” and, worst, “a league of governments not of peoples.”<sup>19</sup> They immediately took their complaints directly to Wilson.<sup>20</sup>

Wilson seems to have seen that the Association was a serious threat to his policy. The president sent the assistant secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to speak at an Association event in New York, and bought Hapgood off with an appointment as minister to Denmark.<sup>21</sup> It worked. The president granted that the Covenant was not ideal, but urged Hapgood and Duggan at the White House to “get behind the Covenant as it is.”<sup>22</sup> After a referendum of its few hundred members, the Association issued a pamphlet advocating ratification, although it noted that the Covenant “is not perfect, failing in particular to go far enough toward securing the popular control of the proposed league so often emphasized by

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<sup>18</sup> “Cables Protest to Wilson: League of Free Nations Association Demands Peace Publicity,” *New York Times* (January 18, 1919), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> “Meeting of the Executive Committee,” February 18, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Tumulty to James G. McDonald, February 27, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 11

<sup>21</sup> “No ‘Red Flag’ in League, Says F. D. Roosevelt,” *New York Tribune* (March 2, 1919), p. 4; “Hapgood for Danish Post,” *New York Times* (February 27, 1919), p. 7; Hapgood to Woodrow Wilson, February 26, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 11; Hapgood to Wilson, March 4, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 11.

<sup>22</sup> “Meeting of Executive Committee,” March 4, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

President Wilson.”<sup>23</sup> Others, most angrily the same editors of *The New Republic* and *The Nation* who had met at Columbia a year earlier, split off, taking their irate opposition to its logical conclusion.<sup>24</sup>

Support for Wilson weakened still more after the unveiling of the full Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty, the Association told Wilson in a cable, was “unfavorable to future peace and incompatible with principles mutually accepted as a basis for the armistice.”<sup>25</sup> A slim majority of members still voted in favor of ratification in another referendum taken in July, but only if ratification were to be accompanied by a unilateral declaration interpreting the Treaty in a liberal light.<sup>26</sup> Even that compromise was not enough, as what little progressive unity still remained broke down, not least as leftists also divided over labor strife, anti-communist hysteria, and Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer’s raids on radicals.<sup>27</sup> Kellogg was the only founding editor still actively involved; Hapgood proved too sympathetic to the Bolsheviks to have his nomination even voted on by the Senate; Dewey, only ever peripherally involved, had taken up a much more radical position. Executive responsibilities fell to James G. McDonald, a nobody in

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<sup>23</sup> “Conference of Members,” March 8, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Meeting of Executive Committee,” March 11, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Meeting of Executive Committee,” April 1, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “L.F.N.A.,” undated [late March, 1919], FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>24</sup> Knock, *To End All Wars*, pp. 233-239.

<sup>25</sup> “Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting,” May 27, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15;

<sup>26</sup> “National Conference of Members,” July 8, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15; James G. McDonald to Norman Angell, July 10, 1919; “The League of Free Nations Association,” July 13, 1919, Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 12.

<sup>27</sup> Knock, *To End All Wars*, pp. 252-256; Throntveit, *Power Without Victory*, pp. 283-289. It was not a coincidence that the first issue of the Association’s *Bulletin* featured reprints of speeches made by Walter Lippmann and Zechariah R. Chafee, Jr., denouncing the “red hysteria” and “repression.” Walter Lippmann, “Free Speech and Free Press As Factors in International Affairs,” and Zechariah R. Chafee, Jr., “The Danger of Repression,” *The Bulletin* 1 (March 1920), pp. 1-3, 5-6; “See ‘Red Hysteria’ in Sedition Curb,” *New York Times* (February 29, 1920), p. 14.

progressive politics who had just arrived in town, having abandoned life as a history professor in Bloomington, Indiana.<sup>28</sup> Adrift, like the League to Enforce Peace, the Association could do little.<sup>29</sup> Before the first Senate vote on the treaty in November, it resolved to oppose the Lodge reservations, believing that “the Treaty was at best a compromise with old world diplomacy and that if further emasculated by the fifteen reservations proposed it would be difficult to urge its ratification.”<sup>30</sup> After the vote, it shifted course. McDonald saw Colonel House to urge that Wilson accept most of the Lodge reservations, including the most controversial, which watered down Article X and its call for collective security among members of the League.<sup>31</sup> When Wilson refused, McDonald forlornly wrote that “the entire League of Nations Covenant may be lost.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> James G. McDonald, Grover to his family but to nobody else, was born in Coldwater, Ohio, in 1886. He moved to Albany, Indiana, around 1898. He graduated from the University of Indiana in 1909, and started doctoral work at Harvard, which he never completed. Returning to Bloomington in 1914, he taught history and political science, and he initially defended Germany from accusations of atrocities and aggression, a position he likely found it easier to take because of his German ancestry. See James G. McDonald, *German “Atrocities” and International Law* (Chicago: Germanistic Society of Chicago, 1914). In time, however, McDonald supported American entry into the war. He left Indiana to take up a position at the Civil Service Reform League in New York in the fall of 1918. See Richard Breitman, Barbara McDonald Stewart, and Severin Hochberg (eds.), *Advocate for the Doomed: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1932-1935* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 2-7.

<sup>29</sup> For the League to Enforce Peace around the time of the Senate votes, see Warren F. Kuehl and Lynne Dunn, *Keeping the Covenant: American Internationalists and the League of Nations, 1920-1939* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1997), pp. 8, 21-27.

<sup>30</sup> “Meeting of Executive Committee L.F.N.A.,” November 13, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Meeting of the Executive Committee of the League of Free Nations Association,” November 24, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>31</sup> “Observations by the Executive Committee of the League of Free Nations Association on the Treaty Reservations,” November 24, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15. The Association sanctioned the Lodge reservations even after the presidential election of November 1920. See League of Free Nations Association, “Our Duty At This Hour,” November 27, 1920, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>32</sup> McDonald to Members, December 20, 1919, Lamont Papers, Box 48. McDonald and the Association might have been more Wilsonian than Wilson, whose refusal to amend to a Treaty that could be adjusted by the League sat ill with his evolutionary approach to politics. See John A. Thompson, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Longman, 2002); John A. Thompson, “Woodrow Wilson and a World Governed by Evolving Law,” *Journal of Policy History* 20 (2008), pp. 113-125.

By March, and the second vote, it was. “To speak frankly,” the executive committee wrote sadly to Wilson in May, “we have all of us failed.”<sup>33</sup>

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The debacle of the Treaty of Versailles was a funny kind of failure. The Treaty, after all, was remarkably popular. The Senate defeated the peace despite the avowed support of most newspaper editors, a majority of state legislatures and gubernatorial mansions, and almost every major voluntary association in the land.<sup>34</sup> There was not yet a surge of “isolationism,” as later propagandists would claim, but rather a surge of internationalisms, internationalisms that overlapped, conflicted, and, ultimately, clashed to ruinous effect.<sup>35</sup> Those internationalisms survived the vote of March; indeed, they prospered as never before. At home and abroad, American internationalists, men and women alike, built a remarkable array of institutions,

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<sup>33</sup> McDonald *et al* to Wilson, May 28, 1920, FPA, Part II, Box 11.

<sup>34</sup> Knock, *To End All Wars*, pp. 239, 252; Throntveit, *Power Without Victory*, pp. 289-294. The fact that such voluntary associations resolved to support ratification does *not* mean, as Throntveit supposes, that the “tens of millions” of Americans that those associations claimed to represented supported the League as well. Cf. Throntveit, *Power Without Victory*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy in World War II,” PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2015, pp. 46-50, 227-270; Coates, *Legalist Empire*, p. 167. Cf. Christopher McKnight Nichols, *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), which prefers to describe varieties of internationalism as varieties of “isolationism.” Historians have rarely tired of pointing out that “isolationism” does not fit postwar American foreign policy or postwar public opinion. See, e.g., William Appleman Williams, “The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920’s,” *Science & Society* 18 (1954), pp. 1-20; Warren F. Kuehl, “Midwestern Newspapers and Isolationist Sentiment,” *Diplomatic History* 3 (1979), pp. 283-306; Bear F. Braumoeller, “The Myth of American Isolationism,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6 (2010), pp. 349-371; Brooke L. Blower, “From Isolationism to Neutrality: A New Framework for Understanding American Political Culture, 1919-1941,” *Diplomatic History* 38 (2014), pp. 345-376.



official, semi-official, and private.<sup>36</sup> Attuned by their progressivism to the importance of expertise and the shaping of public opinion, American internationalists were particularly influential in the creation and expansion of new forms of knowledge, in binding and reshaping networks of scholars and practitioners, and in founding new avenues of intellectual inquiry, including the discipline of international relations theory.<sup>37</sup> If it took years for many of them to abandon their hopes that their government might ultimately join the League, they found still that the deliberative, “scientific” order they had helped to conceive — which their hero, Wilson, said “substitutes discussion for fight” — gave them a microphone through which to speak.<sup>38</sup>

Trying to reform the world at large, American progressives did not stop trying to reform their polity or their citizenry at home. True enough, progressivism did not recover as a force in national elections after the victory of Warren Harding. But while most historical treatments of

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<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., Carrie A. Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: The U.S. Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Christy Jo Snider, “The Influence of Transnational Peace Groups on U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Makers during the 1930s: Incorporating NGOs into the UN,” *Diplomatic History* 27 (2003), pp. 377-404; Kathryn C. Lavelle, “Exit, voice, and loyalty in international organizations: US involvement in the League of Nations,” *Review of International Organizations* 2 (2007), pp. 371-393; Joyce Goodman, “International citizenship and the International Federation of University Women before 1939,” *History of Education* 40 (2011), pp. 701-721; David Ekbladh, “American Asylum: The United States and the Campaign to Transplant the Technical League, 1939-1940,” *Diplomatic History* 39 (2015), pp. 629-660; David Allen, “Internationalist exhibitionism: The League of Nations at the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940,” in Jonas Brendebach, Martin Herzer, and Heidi Tworek (eds.), *International Organizations and the Media in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Exorbitant Expectations* (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 91-116.

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Brian C. Schmidt, “Lessons from the Past: Reassessing the Interwar Disciplinary History of International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly* 42 (1998), pp. 433-459; Katharina Rietzler, “Philanthropy, peace research and revisionist politics: Rockefeller and Carnegie support for the study of international relations in Weimar Germany,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 5 (2008), pp. 61-79; Katharina Rietzler, “Before the Cultural Cold Wars: American philanthropy and cultural diplomacy in the inter-war years,” *Historical Research* 84 (2011), pp. 148-164; Inderjeet Parmar and Katharina Rietzler, “American Philanthropy and the Hard, Smart and Soft Power of the United States,” *Global Society* 28 (2014), pp. 3-7; Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015); Daniel Gorman, *International Cooperation in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), esp. pp. 39-66.

<sup>38</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “Address at the Fairgrounds Auditorium in Billings, Montana,” September 11, 1919, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-fairgrounds-auditorium-billings-montana](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-fairgrounds-auditorium-billings-montana).

the progressive movement end there, with its coherence gone, its vitality sapped, its characters broken, history itself was not so clean.<sup>39</sup> Progressives lived.<sup>40</sup> Many of them, indeed, expanded the spatial imaginary of their politics, continuing their work at the local and state levels and combining it with a new or renewed interest in the international, pushing beyond their borders their concerns about democracy, about expertise, and more.<sup>41</sup> They applied what they had learned in municipal reform, in settlement houses, and in industrial relations.<sup>42</sup> They applied the methods and the institutional templates that they had developed to a newly unified field, one that merged their interests in law, in empire, in faith, in peace, and in much else.<sup>43</sup> Conscious that the power and position of the United States required a more coherent and sustained approach than it had had before, they called this field “foreign affairs,” “foreign relations,” or, increasingly, “foreign policy.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See, e.g. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003); T. J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009). Debates about the relative coherence of progressivism are endless, but see especially Daniel T. Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” *Reviews in American History* 10 (1982), pp. 113-132.

<sup>40</sup> Still among the best treatments of this is Arthur S. Link, “What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920s?” *American Historical Review* 64 (1959), pp. 833-851.

<sup>41</sup> The standard history is Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., Katharina Rietzler, “Experts for Peace: Structures and Motivations of Philanthropic Internationalism in the Interwar Years,” in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 45-65, esp. pp. 50-51; Nichols Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 42-44.

<sup>43</sup> On the importance of political methods and institutional templates — what we might call the techniques of progressivism — see Elisabeth S. Clemens, *The People’s Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890-1925* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

<sup>44</sup> Although historians have spent a considerable amount of time debating the name with which they describe their field — whether “diplomatic history,” the history of “U.S. foreign relations,” or the history of the “U.S. in the world”

As even diplomats understood, the new diplomacy was here to stay.<sup>45</sup> The only question was what kind of democracy foreign policy might require. Conservatives offered one set of answers, particularly the international lawyers who had spent years championing “public opinion” — felt, or bred, as character and morality — as the ultimate guarantor of a world of law.<sup>46</sup> One of these, Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia University, had pleaded as early as 1912 for the inculcation of an “international mind,” and put the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace behind that vision.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps even more influential in a purely domestic context was Butler’s fellow Republican, Elihu Root. Root had been calling for a better popular understanding of

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— surprisingly little work has been done on the conceptual and political history of those terms. For a start, one that emphasizes public opinion as a decisive factor, see David Clinton, “The Distinction between Foreign Policy and Diplomacy in American International Thought and Practice,” *Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 6 (2011), pp. 261–276.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., DeWitt Clinton Poole, *The Conduct of Foreign Relations Under Modern Democratic Conditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924). A State Department diplomat, Poole would end up founding the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, a forum for polling specialists that doubled as the journal of choice for experts in psychological warfare. The impact of public opinion on foreign policy had been dawning on the executive branch for some time. See Robert C. Hildebrand, *Power and the People: Executive Management of Public Opinion in Foreign Affairs, 1897–1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

<sup>46</sup> Coates, *Legalist Empire*, pp. 73–74.

<sup>47</sup> Nicholas Murray Butler, *The International Mind: An Argument for the Judicial Settlement of International Disputes* (New York: Charles Scribners’ Sons, 1912), p. 102. Butler reiterated the theme in a speech more attuned to a specifically American context in Nicholas Murray Butler, “The International Mind: How to Develop It,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 7 (1917), pp. 16–20. On Butler generally, see David Clinton, “Nicholas Murray Butler and ‘The International Mind’ as the Pathway to Peace,” in Molly Cochran and Cornelia Navari (eds.), *Progressivism and US Foreign Policy Between the World Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 49–72. On the Carnegie Endowment, see, esp., Steven Witt, “International Mind Alcoves: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Libraries, and the Struggle for Global Public Opinion, 1917–54,” *Library & Information History* 30 (2014), pp. 273–290. The idea of the “international mind” was taken up in all kinds of different contexts, but it was especially promoted by institutions tied, officially or semi-officially, to the League. See, e.g., Heidi Tworek, “Peace Through Truth? The Press and Moral Disarmament through the League of Nations,” *Medien und Zeit* 25 (2010), pp. 16–28; Daniel Laqua, “Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations and the Problem of Order,” *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011), pp. 223–247; Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 45–78.

international relations since his service as secretary of state under Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>48</sup> “A democracy which undertakes to control its own foreign relations ought to know something about the subject,” he told the American Society of International Law in 1916.<sup>49</sup> Root put stark limits on this. “Popular diplomacy” was a naturally progressive idea, he wrote in 1922, one that inevitably and irrevocably “followed the exercise of universal suffrage, the spread of elementary education, and the revelation of the power of organization.” But it would be dangerous unless properly led. “The people of the United States have learned more about international relations within the past eight years than they had learned in the preceding eighty years,” he admitted, but they were “only at the beginning of the task.” They needed officials with a “sense of public responsibility in speech and writing.” They needed “correct information.” And they needed a sense of place. “This is a laborious and difficult undertaking,” Root wrote; “the subject is extensive and difficult and a fair working knowledge of it, even of the most general kind, requires long and attentive study.”<sup>50</sup> But the postwar years were extraordinarily participatory by the standards of U.S. foreign policy, and by 1925, Root already thought that things were getting out of hand. “What is everybody’s business is nobody’s business,” he huffed. “To get things done some human agency must be designated to give effect to the general desire that they be done.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Elihu Root, “The Need of Popular Understanding of International Law,” *American Journal of International Law* 1 (1907), pp. 1-3; Elihu Root, “The Effects of Democracy on International Law,” *American Society of International Law Proceedings* 11 (1917), pp. 1-11; Martin David Dubin, “Elihu Root and the Advocacy of a League of Nations, 1914-1917,” *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (1966), pp. 439-455.

<sup>49</sup> Elihu Root, “The Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Nations Adopted by the American Institute of International Law,” *American Journal of International Law* 10 (1916), pp. 211-221, at p. 211.

<sup>50</sup> Elihu Root, “A Requisite for the Success of Popular Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs* 1 (1922), pp. 3-10.

<sup>51</sup> Elihu Root, “Steps toward Preserving Peace,” *Foreign Affairs* 3 (1925), pp. 351-357, at p. 353. See also Elihu Root, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 9 (1931), pp. iii-x, which went even further.

Root had ideas about that, too. It was no coincidence that each of Root's three articles on public opinion appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal that was one of the few concessions made to the outside world by the Council on Foreign Relations, a secretive, all-male dinner-club-cum-study-group that Root helped to found in the three years after the war.<sup>52</sup> With that in mind, it is tempting to think of this new attachment to "popular diplomacy" as merely a "pretense," one that masked views not all that different to those held by later "realists."<sup>53</sup> Perhaps it merely shielded the creation of a "foreign policy establishment" or a "foreign policy elite."<sup>54</sup> Perhaps, but those terms were alien even to men like Root. They were an invention of the calamity of the cold war, bearing within themselves a critique of an insulated and undemocratic cabal of aging, white men who had sunk the ship of state on the shores of Vietnam.<sup>55</sup> Trying to locate the ancestry of that

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<sup>52</sup> Root's original vision was even more lofty than the Council as it transpired. The first "Council on Foreign Relations" was an outgrowth of the ultra-elite Metropolitan Club, and charged \$100 in annual dues for roughly monthly dinner meetings. That Council eventually merged with the husk of the American Institute of International Affairs, which was all that remained of grand plans made during the Paris peace conference for a transatlantic institution. The extent of the literature on the Council vastly overestimates its importance in its early years, although it is representative of how far the Council that has become a synonym for the foreign policy elite. See, e.g., Whitney H. Shepardson, *Early History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (Stamford: Overbrook Press, 1960); Robert F. Byrnes, "Encouraging American Interest in World Affairs in the 1920's: The Council on Foreign Relations and *Foreign Affairs*," in Ulrich Haustein, Georg W. Strobel and Gerhard Wagner (eds.), *Ostmitteleuropa: Berichte und Forschungen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), pp. 385-402; Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 1-6; Michael Wala, *The Council on Foreign Relations and American Foreign Policy in the Early Cold War* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), pp. 1-13; Priscilla Roberts, "Paul D. Cravath, The First World War, and the Anglophile Internationalist Tradition," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 51 (2005), pp. 194-215; Priscilla Roberts, "The transatlantic American foreign policy elite: its evolution in generational perspective," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 7 (2009), pp. 163-183. For an overstated about the roots of *Foreign Affairs* in the *Journal of Race Development* see Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, p. ix.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen Wertheim, "Reading the International Mind: International Public Opinion in Early Twentieth Century Anglo-American Thought," in Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guillhot (eds.), *The Decisionist Imagination: Sovereignty, Social Science, and Democracy in the 20th Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), p. 49

<sup>54</sup> Priscilla Roberts, "'The Council Has Been Your Creation': Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Paradigm of the American Foreign Policy Establishment?" *Journal of American Studies* 35 (2001), pp. 65-94.

<sup>55</sup> An excellent account of this is Priscilla Roberts, "'All the Right People': The Historiography of the American Foreign Policy Establishment," *Journal of American Studies* 26 (1992), pp. 409-434. Full-text searches of the *New York Times*, which depend on somewhat unreliable OCR, reveal that the words "foreign policy elite" appeared in the

elite in the postwar period is valuable history, but it can obscure contingency. After all, although the Council was prestigious, it was rather a peripheral institution in its first decade and a half. It makes more sense to see it less as setting the tone for U.S. foreign policy, and more as an institution whose commitment to secrecy and restricted membership policies were a response to more revealing developments elsewhere.

The attention that the early Council has received — despite activities that were limited to private audiences with speakers, discussion groups for members, and the publication of *Foreign Affairs* and occasional books — is symptomatic of a tendency within the historiographies of both U.S. foreign relations and international affairs that underplays what we might call the publicness of public opinion. Yes, as international historians have emphasized, new knowledge networks, new forms of credentialing, and new species of institutions were dramatic developments in the postwar period; but much of that process took place in public view, and with good reason.<sup>56</sup> Yes, as intellectual historians have explained, progressives maintained their faith in expertise after their experience of the war, and heightened that faith as they sought new means of social control in response to new psychological theories, to new revelations about propaganda, to new evidence of the power of corporate marketing, all of which cast doubt on the power, the competence, and the rationality of the public; but the response outside the highest echelons of academia was not

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newspaper for the first time in 1971, and then not again until 1978. The words “foreign policy establishment” appeared for the first time in 1970, ironically enough in quotation of McGeorge Bundy, the scion of precisely that establishment. Bundy nonetheless declared as “nonsense” the idea that his Harvard was an instrument of “the military-industrial complex, the C.I.A., or a foreign policy establishment.” As that implied, the idea of an “elite” or an “establishment” was the slogan of campus leftists. See “Campus Violence Decried by Bundy,” *New York Times* (July 5, 1970), p. 28. On the explicitly gendered quality of *this* foreign policy elite, see Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Stephen Wertheim, Ludovic Tournès, and Inderjeet Parmar, “The birth of global knowledge: intellectual networks in the world crisis, 1919-1939,” *International Politics* 55 (2018), pp. 727-733.

one of retreat.<sup>57</sup> The intellectual spirits of the age were not always read by contemporaries in the way that they are read by historians today, Those still invested in the creation of a participatory, progressive democracy read books like Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* as encouragements, not as obituaries. As McDonald wrote in April 1922, while Lippmann made clear "the factors within and without ourselves which cause so seldom to understand and so frequently to misunderstand the world about us," he also helped show the way towards "appreciating more fully some of the ways in which these dangers must be met."<sup>58</sup> Calls for a "popular diplomacy," then, just like calls for an "international mind," could be read in more participatory ways than their conservative authors intended. Certainly that was the case with Root, whose words were quoted endlessly by much more progressive forces than the Council of his dreams, and not least, ironically, by the activist women whose suffrage he had opposed to the bitter end.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Edward A. Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1973); Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). Cf. Andrew Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> "Public Opinion': A Review," *News Bulletin* (April 7, 1922), p. 1. As if to make the point again, the very same issue of the *Bulletin*, the Association announced that it was sending out copies of Salmon Levinson's *Outlawry of War*, in an edition that came with a foreword by Dewey. Dewey wrote that even if "the peoples of the world are not yet educated enough in international affairs to guarantee the successful workings of a political League," peace could still be entrusted, through a simple law, to a public of "good-will and good faith." See John Dewey, "Foreword," in Salmon O. Levinson, *Outlawry of War* (Chicago: American Committee for the Outlawry of War, 1921), p. 7. For the hopes that Dewey invested in the outlawry movement, and particularly for his prayer that it would create the engaged public of his dreams, see Molly Cochran, "Dewey as an international thinker," in Molly Cochran (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Dewey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 309-336; Dominique Trudel, "«The Outlawry of War» ou l'autre débat Dewey-Lippmann," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 41 (2016), pp. 135-156; Charles F. Howlett and Audrey Cohan, "John Dewey and the Significance of Peace Education in American Democracy," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 16 (2017), pp. 456-472.

<sup>59</sup> To prove the point, for quotations of Root's 1916 line in Foreign Policy Association literature see, e.g., *A Constructive American Foreign Policy* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1928), FPA, Part II, Box 110; *Foreign Policy Association* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1930), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Series VI, Box 229; Frank Ross McCoy, "Democracy and Foreign Policy," October 29, 1939, Frank R. McCoy Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 90; "Foreign Policy Goals Defined," *Christian Science Monitor* (February 11, 1956), p. 17.

To be sure, foreign policy as conducted by the State Department at no point became a subject of mass concern, and few progressives thought it should. Progressives sought instead to create a different, more participatory kind of elite to that envisioned at the Council, one that was open as to gender, although still structured by the norms of the day; one that was more open as to class, although still mediated by cost and education; one that was not, however, particularly open as to race. What they built might be seen as the truer foreign policy elite, truer because it was intended to be more representative of the breadth of interest in foreign relations in postwar America, and of the diversity of ways in which that interest was enacted.<sup>60</sup> The story of public opinion in this dissertation is, then, about the rise and sidelining of this other, more participatory vision. And it was to pursue that vision, to promote democracy in foreign policy rather than merely to achieve specific internationalist aims, that the League of Free Nations Association changed its name in March 1921. It became the Foreign Policy Association.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Robert Vitalis has hinted at this by arguing that the Association was a “more influential group in those years” than the Council, but does not explore why: for all his laudable focus on race, Vitalis ignores the importance of gender, and especially the power and influence that the Association drew by harnessing the activism and expertise of (white) women. Cf. Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, pp. 9-11, 61-62.

<sup>61</sup> Although the idea of changing the Association’s name had been around for a while, what prompted the official change was pressure from the Boston branch, which feared that the old name “would be a serious handicap in getting adequate support for our work.” See “Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting L.F.N.A.,” April, 5, 1921, FPA, Part II, Box 15. In June, the *Bulletin* reported that the new name “at relieves us of the necessity of frequent explanations,” not least that “we are not propagandists for the Sinn Feiners, the Bolsheviks and the various groups working for the independence of Ireland, Egypt and West Ukraina.” Hence the new moniker better represented a group “working for real freedom of thought and discussion, and for popular education in foreign affairs,” a “vast field.” See “The Change of Name,” *Bulletin of the Foreign Policy Association* 2 (June 1921), p. 4.



The Foreign Policy Association celebrated its tenth birthday, on November 10, 1928, with a meal for a thousand paying guests in the grand ballroom of the Hotel Astor. It was the 109th such luncheon it had held in New York, a fixture in the social calendar that it replicated in fourteen other cities as far west as Minneapolis and as far south as Richmond. On its national council sat a roster of predominantly liberal lawyers, industrialists, and educators, as well as a who's-who of the international women's movement, led by Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt. At its head remained McDonald, who had shot to fame. Devoted to the promotion of foreign policy in the public consciousness, and to education in the facts, it was not a mass organization. With about 9,000 members, it had a budget of \$160,000, much of it raised from bankers including Felix Warburg, Otto Kahn, and Arthur Sachs.<sup>62</sup> But the Association was by far the most promising and potent institution of its kind, drawing admiring notices in the press and congratulatory telegrams from all over the country, and beyond.<sup>63</sup>

Only part of this dramatic growth can be attributed to the Association's Wilsonianism, to the policy positions it espoused in its first few years. As its genetics would suggest, it promoted the League, reporting on its proceedings from Geneva, celebrating its officials and its founding spirits in New York, and keeping close contact with its advocates in the United States and elsewhere. It pressed for disarmament. It sought normality in relations with Russia. It lambasted U.S. colonialism in the Caribbean. It sent a Howard University professor, Alain Locke, to report

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<sup>62</sup> "Contributions of \$500 and Over, October 1927-September 1928," undated, Carnegie Corporation Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Series III.A [CC, refers to Series III.A unless otherwise stated], Box 147.

<sup>63</sup> *Ten Years of the F.P.A.* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1929); "Says Japan Studies Monroe Doctrine," *New York Times* (November 11, 1928), p. 20; "Looking Out Across Borders," *New York Herald Tribune* (November 10, 1928), p. 10; "Facts Upon Facts Educating Public on World Amity," *Christian Science Monitor* (November 12, 1928), p. 5.

critically on the mandatory administration of the League.<sup>64</sup> Its staff were usually allowed to advance causes on their personal authority, as long as they did not create undue difficulties. And even when the Association lacked inspiration of its own, it was a gathering point for inspirations that came from elsewhere, using its good offices to coordinate, for instance, the crusade to join the World Court.

Despite its efforts, the early Association had little direct influence on diplomacy. Spats over Russian policy led to a frosty relationship with the State Department, so the Association turned to the semi-official figures whose work anyway seemed better to express the importance of the United States in the international community.<sup>65</sup> Bankers were favorites, despite the controversial space they occupied in the progressive imaginary. Rumors abounded that it was a front for the House of Morgan.<sup>66</sup> With the United States now a creditor nation, and with New York the center of the world financial system, the partners of J. P. Morgan & Co. were united in their awareness of their nation's power, and their own.<sup>67</sup> They differed, however, on what that

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<sup>64</sup> Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, pp. 79-82

<sup>65</sup> The Association, for instance, rashly published documents relating to Russian-American relations. See C. K. Cumming and Walter W. Pettit (eds.), *Russian-American Relations: March, 1917 – March, 1920* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920); "Nonpartisan Light on Russia," *New York Tribune* (June 6, 1920), p. F11; Felix Cole to Christina Merriman, October 22, 1920, FPA, Part II, Box 10; Merriman to Cole, November 4, 1920, FPA, Part II, Box 10. For the Association's early faith in experts, see, e.g., McDonald, "Will Experts' Report Be Accepted," *News Bulletin* 3 (March 14, 1924), pp. 1-2; McDonald, "The Dawes Report—An Analysis," *News Bulletin* 3 (April 18, 1924), pp. 1-2.

<sup>66</sup> Raymond Leslie Buell wrote from Washington that "some people told me the F.P.A. was a Morgan organization, while other people said that it was extremely radical, which is, I suppose, what we want them to say." Buell, "Memorandum on Washington Trip," October 4, 1927, Raymond Leslie Buell Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 41.

<sup>67</sup> On Morgan and diplomacy, see Ron Chernow, *The House of Morgan* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990), esp. pp. 165-301; Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Susie Pak, *Gentleman Bankers: The World of J. P. Morgan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 160-217.

power meant for American democracy. While some of the partners turned to the Council on Foreign Relations, others sought more inclusive approaches, above all Thomas W. Lamont, the suave senior partner who was the leading financial diplomat of the time and one of the most influential men in the world.<sup>68</sup> Lamont gave McDonald cash and he gave him access, whether that was gossip during their frequent rides uptown or an invitation to observe negotiations firsthand.<sup>69</sup> In return, McDonald sent Lamont articles to edit before publication, put his wife on the board, and provided him with a platform.<sup>70</sup> At a luncheon in January 1926, for instance, Lamont stood next to the president of the Fascist League of North America and declared his

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<sup>68</sup> On Lamont, see Robert Freeman Smith, "Thomas W. Lamont: International Banker as Diplomat," in Thomas J. McCormick and Walter LaFeber (eds.), *Behind the Throne: Servants of Power to Imperial Presidents, 1898-1968* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), pp. 101-125; Edward M. Lamont, *The Ambassador from Wall Street: The Story of Thomas W. Lamont, J. P. Morgan's Chief Executive* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1994). Dwight M. Morrow was another frequent contributor, and upon his appointment as ambassador to Mexico the board voted a special minute praising President Coolidge for a decision that was "courageous because certain to be attacked on the ground that the firm of Morgan has interests in Mexico," but "discerning because [of] Mr. Morrow's extraordinarily wide and thorough knowledge" and "high sense of public duty." See "Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board," October 19, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>69</sup> Although the Lamonts made significant contributions to many internationalist organizations, they contributed to the Association in comparatively vast sums. Their listed contributions from 1918 to 1947 topped \$75,000 (around \$1 million today); Florence Lamont gave another \$12,000 after her husband's death, having already donated \$100,000 of securities (just less than \$1 million today) as a special gift in 1946. Still, the Warburgs often outspent the Lamonts, usually giving \$5,000 per year, and sometimes more, until Felix Warburg died in 1937. The Warburgs, however, received none of the coverage of Lamont, and had nothing like his power. By comparison, for the access Lamont gave McDonald, see, e.g., McDonald's unofficial visit to Mexico at Lamont's side in October 1921, to witness the negotiations of the International Bankers Committee, "Minutes of the Executive Committee," September 29, 1921, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Meeting of the Executive Committee," October 24, 1921, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of the Executive Committee," November 2, 1921, FPA, Part II, Box 15. McDonald reported in the *Bulletin* that he was able to see President Obregon as well as the finance and treasury ministers, and lamented that "the Mexican government was unwilling to accept the very reasonable proposals of the International Bankers Committee, represented by Mr. Thomas W. Lamont, for the refunding of the Mexican debt." "Mexico," *News Bulletin* (November 18, 1921), p. 1. The following June, McDonald praised Lamont's settlement as "comprehensive and statesmanlike," and wrote that "the bankers' conference—informal, friendly and brilliantly fruitful—contrasts strikingly with the formal diplomatic negotiations of the State Department." "The Bankers Show The Way," *News Bulletin* 1 (June 23, 1922), p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Lamont to McDonald, March 23, 1922, FPA, Part II, Box 10. Lamont also did not hold back from criticizing the *Bulletin* when necessary, e.g. Lamont to McDonald, January 11, 1921, FPA, Part II, Box 10; Lamont to McDonald, Lamont Papers, Box 29; Lamont to McDonald, November 16, 1931, Lamont Papers, Box 29; Lamont to McDonald, November 28, 1931, Lamont Papers, Box 29.

admiration for Mussolini, asking an outraged audience whether it was “liberal enough to let Italy have the kind of government she seems to want?”<sup>71</sup>

What was a fascist doing speaking to these apostles of liberalism, over three courses and in white tie? Part of the answer lies in their desire to restore free speech after the restrictions of the war, at whatever the cost. But the larger part testifies to the continuing relevance not just of progressivism generally, but of pragmatism specifically. Increasingly unfashionable intellectually, the pragmatist legacy had been central both to Wilson’s plans for the League of Nations and to liberals’ rejection of them.<sup>72</sup> It was still claimed long afterwards by any number of activists who maintained deliberative visions of politics local and international, not least by members of the Association’s national council, Dewey and Addams included. And the events that made the Association’s reputation were distantly based on the pragmatist conviction that citizens, when gathered together in a public, could be educated towards truth through participation in open discussion of ideas. Such citizens could discover the public interest, and act upon it; publics could be educated and empowered at the same time, with little theoretical tension between the two. A luncheon, then, was not just a luncheon.<sup>73</sup>

The Association started its luncheon series shortly after it announced its creation, with a meeting of ninety or so guests at the Café Boulevard on January 11, 1919. Already wedded to the multi-speaker format that it stuck to for two decades, three speakers addressed themselves to

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<sup>71</sup> “Lamont and Kahn Defend Mussolini,” *New York Times* (January 24, 1926), p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> See esp. Throntveit, *Power Without Victory*.

<sup>73</sup> Charles F. Howlett, “John Dewey: A Pragmatist’s Search for Peace in the Aftermath of Total War,” in Cochran and Navari (eds.), *Progressivism and US Foreign Policy*, pp. 117-141; Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, pp. 300-318; Molly Cochran, “The ‘Newer Ideals’ of Jane Addams’s Progressivism: A Realistic Utopia of Cosmopolitan Justice,” in Cochran and Navari (eds.), *Progressivism and US Foreign Policy*, pp. 143-165.

“The Problem of the Adriatic”; the next week, three more discussed “Poland and Danzig”; the week after that, five discussed Russia, three anti-Bolshevik, and two pro-.<sup>74</sup> An internal history written by Edwin Björkman, a Swedish literary critic and wartime propagandist for the Committee on Public Information, recounted that “the membership sat back and listened while the various topics under debate were presented to them by experts representing every national interest, every racial cause, every territorial, political and economical problem,” and that “scrupulous care was taken to hear all sides.”<sup>75</sup> Even if all but a very few meetings had at least two speakers, this claim was not strictly true; in the first season, Manuel Quezon and other Filipino representatives presented their case for independence unchallenged.<sup>76</sup> But the choice and breadth of topics was indicative of the range of issues that an America fully engaged in the international community could expect to have to educate itself on. By April, when Hamilton Holt, David Lawrence, and Walter Lippmann were debating the relationship between the Fourteen Points and the League, 1,400 people were in attendance at the Hotel Commodore, and the discussions were being reported as news in the *Times*.<sup>77</sup> Three years later, the luncheons moved to the grand ballroom of the Hotel Astor, the playground of Gilded Age plutocrats that was the centerpiece of the entertainment district around Times Square.

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<sup>74</sup> “Call Soviet Money Mere ‘Dirty Paper’,” *New York Times* (January 26, 1919), p. 23.

<sup>75</sup> Edwin Björkman, “The League of Free Nations Association of the United States,” April 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>76</sup> “Final Plea Here For Free Filipinos,” *New York Times* (April 20, 1919), p. E1.

<sup>77</sup> “Luncheon Discussions 1919-1923,” FPA, Part II, Box 154; “Puts Peace Delay On Reactionaries,” *New York Times* (April 6, 1919), p. 12.

This was the public that the Association's leadership initially situated itself within, not so much intentionally as by the default of a privilege and wealth that progressive policies had only enhanced in New York City.<sup>78</sup> American internationalism of this kind was a product of the clubs and ballrooms that were, quite explicitly, intended to close off the elite from the mass.<sup>79</sup> Rare was the day that McDonald did not take both meals at a top-ranked private club. The executive committee that he chaired met in the clubs favored by elite reformers, or, more often, at the Cosmopolitan or Women's City Clubs, which were founded and frequented by the wealthy, progressive former suffragists that the board both comprised and hoped to attract.<sup>80</sup> And in a city painfully stratified by inequalities of all kinds, to learn about foreign policy in the ways sanctioned by these progressives was costly, assuming one had the right hat or ball gown. Membership cost at least \$5 annually, between \$60 and \$100 today, but a meal ticket to each of the twelve or so Saturday luncheons held every year cost \$2-\$3 for members, twice the price of a grandstand seat at Yankee Stadium. It usually cost 50 cents to \$1 to attend even for those who skipped lunch and wanted only to watch the spectacle of the discussions.

And a spectacle they often were, as dramatic as the pageantry that internationalist teachers employed in their classrooms, or as the rituals put on by the publicity wizards of

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<sup>78</sup> Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); David Huyssen, *Progressive Inequality: Rich and Poor in New York, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

<sup>79</sup> Clifton Hood, *In Pursuit of Privilege: A History of New York City's Upper Class and the Making of a Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 193-204.

<sup>80</sup> See, esp., Johanna Neuman, *Gilded Suffragists: The New York Socialites Who Fought for Women's Right to Vote* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), which in particular notes the activism of Katrina Ely Tiffany, who defied her jewelry-magnate husband to campaign for the vote, and then sat on the Foreign Policy Association's board. "Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board," April 13, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

Geneva.<sup>81</sup> McDonald built a supreme reputation as a commanding, witty, and charming chairman, and under his gavel the luncheons turned foreign policy into the stuff of society glamor. They tended to showcase academic experts, but more often political officials, bankers, lawyers, international civil servants, editors, and foreign correspondents, people who had lived their experiences, rather than learned them. Although education was the name of the game, and maps, reading lists, and pamphlets were laid out on the tables for perusal between courses, debate and dispute were the methods of choice. “I understand that the exigencies of the budget,” Edwin Borchard of Yale Law School quipped at a luncheon in December 1928, “require that these discussions become intellectual battles, and that people do not feel they have been a success unless there has been a very sharp and acrimonious, if not bloody, contest.”<sup>82</sup> Time was always left for audience questions, which often became notable speeches in themselves, written out by the speakers, planted in advance by the chairman, and reported as news in the papers.

For all their social standing, these luncheons were far from genteel. Gilbert Murray, the chairman of the League of Nations Union, discovered that when he was subjected to hostile questioning from “representatives of subject portions of the Empire” in November 1926. As McDonald recorded in his diary, the “cumulative effect caused him [Murray] to be a little explosive, particularly as he answered the Negro.”<sup>83</sup> One luncheon, in January 1925, devolved

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<sup>81</sup> Katherine Day Good, “Bring the World to the Child: Grassroots Media and Global Citizenship in American Education, 1900-1965,” PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 2015; Susan Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations,” *American Historical Review* 112 (2007), pp. 1096-1099.

<sup>82</sup> “Luncheon Discussion,” December 1, 1928, FPA, Part I, Box 80, pp. 5-6.

<sup>83</sup> “November 13, 1926,” Diary of James G. McDonald, James G. McDonald Papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Box 1. This diary entry is one of very few indications that black Americans were welcome at Association functions, which is unsurprising in a city as segregated as New York, especially during the Harlem Renaissance. However, black scholars did make the occasional appearance as speakers. See, e.g., a debate on Haiti involving W. E. B. DuBois in 1929, which descended into farce when the white speaker defending the

into “little short of a riot,” McDonald recalled, as “unprecedented hissing” accompanied recriminations between the American correspondent of *Izvestia* and an Irish journalist who had once been captured by the Red Army.<sup>84</sup> At the meeting where Lamont declared his favor for fascism, the *Herald Tribune* reported that “the members of the audience seemed about to resort to fisticuffs.”<sup>85</sup> At another, “boos mingled with derisive laughter” when a former Mexican official accused the State Department of promoting banditry to support oil interests.<sup>86</sup>

Spectacle did not reduce the participants to mere spectators, then, and the most insightful of onlookers understood that the luncheons relied on their drama, on the way that they physically staged a deliberative international community, for their power. Much as serious thinkers were loosely associated with the Association, in its board and office meetings it initially gave little explicit thought to what its public ought to be, how it might appeal to that public, and how that public might exert influence.<sup>87</sup> Despite consulting with editors and publicity experts, including the advertising maven Ivy Lee, McDonald admitted that the Association had grown through “trial and error,” that no “organic plan has ever been formulated for its future development.”<sup>88</sup>

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American occupation, W. W. Cumberland, was hooked up to seven more radio stations for his speech than DuBois had had for his. “National Broadcasting Corporation spokesmen said that no discrimination was intended,” the *Times* reported. See “Our Policy in Haiti Scored in Debate,” *New York Times* (December 22, 1929), p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> “1,000 at Astor Hiss Defender of Soviet Rule,” *New York Herald Tribune* (January 18, 1925), p. 5; January 16, 1925, McDonald Diaries, Box 1.

<sup>85</sup> “‘Lie’ Is Passed, Fists Menace in Fascism Debate,” *New York Herald Tribune* (January 24, 1926), p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> “Kellogg Attack Booed at Forum on Mexico Issue,” *New York Herald Tribune* (February 28, 1926), p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> Notably, when the *Bulletin* ran an obituary of James Bryce, perhaps the pre-eminent theorist of public opinion before Dewey, it ran it as a tribute to an internationalist, not to a theorist. See “James Bryce,” *News Bulletin* (February 3, 1922), p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> McDonald to the Members of the Standing Committee, “Re: Problems of Reorganization,” January 25, 1928, McDonald Papers, Box 11. For meetings with Ivy Lee, see “October 26, 1923,” “May 28, 1924,” and “February 20, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.



Indeed, Kellogg had to instruct McDonald that the problem of the public was “an intellectual problem, a piece of technique,” and that the luncheons rose to that level. In most cases, the editor explained in February 1926, “you choose a subject which is up in the news;

you pose it in the form of a debate and everybody likes a clash; you try to get people whose names, standing, or experience have a lure — they are your cast of characters; and you bring to the written words the fire of spoken delivery; you do not rest on securing these stars; the cross fire of questions and answers which you handle like an orchestra leader, with rare deftness, spreads the dramatic action out over the whole meeting; people at my table and the next get up, there is the inquisitiveness as to who that is speaking; there is the clash of wit and feeling. Besides all this, there is the stage setting of the speakers’ table, personalities and such; and, in the course of the last three years, the whole adventure has turned into a society event competing with the afternoon matinees.

To be sure, Kellogg understood that this was a restricted clientele. “They are not the man in the street,” he wrote, but a community of “people with a common thread of interest,” men and women possessed of “as much intelligence but not so much information to the subject in hand as the small group of experts.”<sup>89</sup> This community was valuable; a foreign policy elite in all but name.

Still, even if the Association never intended its luncheons to create the kind of mass-membership fervor stoked by kindred spirits in Britain and elsewhere, those luncheons were not intended to enforce strict limits on the membership of a democratic foreign policy.<sup>90</sup> Its restrictions were those of class, of cost, of capacity; it periodically, if infrequently, held free, open meetings at the Town Hall, whose director, Robert Erskine Ely, sat on the Association’s national

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<sup>89</sup> Kellogg to McDonald, February 3, 1926, Survey Associates Records, Box 95.

<sup>90</sup> Given the Atlanticist orientation of the Association’s leadership, it is a surprise that it took so few lessons from the triumph of the League of Nations Union, which at one point claimed 500,000 members; then again, it always kept its distance from the League of Nations Association in the United States, too. For the League of Nations Union, see Helen McCarthy, “The League of Nations, Public Ritual and National Identity in Britain, c. 1919-56,” *History Workshop Journal* 70 (2010), pp. 108-132; McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*.

council. “We are confident,” the Association told prospective donors in 1925, “that the thinking of millions of our fellow citizens on international affairs can be so underpinned with a deep foundation of facts that public opinion may become a sure and constant source of strength, and on occasion, of sound guidance to our Government.”<sup>91</sup> And if the “millions” were not in reach of cut glass and dessert, those who dined were expected to do more than eat and listen. If it was “our work” to reveal facts “free from the import tariff of prejudice, self-interest and narrow nationalism,” the Association’s secretary Christina Merriman told the members at their annual meeting in April 1927, it was “your work to help us get them out to a wider and wider public.”<sup>92</sup> Kellogg, too, instructed his flock on its “responsibility” to use what its learned, to make sure that diplomacy trickled down. If the members were “laboring under the illusion that your business with foreign policy ends when you have listened to a lively debate,” he said in 1928, they were wrong. “You can’t lunch your way into either the Kingdom of Heaven or a world safe for democracy.”<sup>93</sup>

Could you listen your way into it? Even when it came to a dramatic new invention that was widely seen as having the potential to reknit the fabric of international relations, the radio, the Association tended not to think too much about the public it was cultivating.<sup>94</sup> Its first

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<sup>91</sup> “Memorandum On Present World and Proposed Expansion of Activities of the Foreign Policy Association,” April 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 110.

<sup>92</sup> “Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association,” April 6, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 110.

<sup>93</sup> *Ten Years of the F.P.A.*, p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> For interwar radio generally, see Heidi J. S. Tworek, “The Savior of the Nation? Regulating Radio in the Interwar Period,” *Journal of Policy History* 27 (2015), pp. 465-491; Michael Stamm, “Broadcasting News in the Interwar Period,” in Richard R. John and Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb (eds.), *Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 133-163; Heidi J. S. Tworek, *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

appearance on the airwaves came on April 2, 1923, when the WEAF network broadcast a dinner in honor of Lord Robert Cecil, an author of the League Covenant whose tour of the United States that month the Association sponsored.<sup>95</sup> McDonald told the Hotel Astor crowd that evening that there were 800,000 people “reported” to be listening to Cecil’s plea for the power of public opinion, among them Woodrow Wilson himself. (“Applause,” the published transcript notes at the sainted hero’s mention; “prolonged applause; standing applause.”)<sup>96</sup> Most luncheons thereafter were likewise broadcast on WEAF and some, though not all, of the stations associated with its growing chain, reaching as far west as Indiana by January 1928. And although the programs were buffeted by commercialism, they were generally protected even after AT&T’s sale of WEAF to RCA in 1926, not least because of McDonald’s friendships with James Harbord, RCA’s president and a regular golf partner, and Owen D. Young, chairman of General Electric, national council member, and key figure in the renegotiation of German reparations.

Still, if the radio allowed McDonald to imagine a community of internationalists far beyond the walls of the ballrooms and banquet halls he usually addressed, at this point that community offered only a rarefied audience. Even a basic radio set cost about \$20 to purchase in 1925, and the Association hoped, at best, to append its usual techniques to the new technologies at its disposal. A Mrs. Walter Read of Indian Hill, New Jersey, drew praise in one *Bulletin* for

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<sup>95</sup> “Lord Robert Cecil,” *News Bulletin of the Foreign Policy Association* 2 (April 6, 1923), p. 1. Much of the funding for Cecil’s trip, which took him to Philadelphia, Des Moines, Chicago, Louisville, Richmond, and Washington, with a brief stop in Canada, came from Lamont, who also provided a private rail car for his lordship’s comfort. See McDonald to Lamont, April 16, 1923, FPA, Part II, Box 10

<sup>96</sup> Mrs. Wilson was in attendance, seated next to Bernard Baruch. “Disarmament and the League of Nations,” April 2, 1923, FPA, Part II, Box 110, p. 18. McDonald wrote in his diary that “Lord Robert remarked during the dinner that he had never in his life before attended a function of such size,” and that Colonel House remarked that “in his judgment it was the most brilliant affair ever held in New York.” See “Monday, April 2,” James G. McDonald Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Box 9.

hosting her own luncheon, at which members of her local Women's Club might listen remotely to the discussion across the bay. "We hope," the *Bulletin* said, that "other FPA members and their friends will entertain at FPA radio listening-in luncheons and also that they will not forget to write WEAF."<sup>97</sup> While there were fears that the broadcasts were eating into luncheon attendances at the Astor by 1928, McDonald remained satisfied that the "dozens" of letters that listeners sent to the office showed that "there is an audience for serious discussion of international affairs, an audience which will listen to such discussion even in competition with the latest African syncopation."<sup>98</sup>

McDonald's faith in the possibility of an active, if white and educated, radio public intensified over the following five years, even as the business of broadcasting turned in a more commercial direction. On the advice of Raymond Blaine Fosdick, the leading internationalist and advisor to the Rockefellers, Young arranged for McDonald to become one of the earliest commentators on foreign affairs.<sup>99</sup> McDonald's weekly, fifteen-minute show, *The World Today*, began in April 1928, and by its conclusion five years later it was reaching a national audience on NBC's Red Network. McDonald experimented with the radio as if it were an extension of his usual ballrooms, a participatory democracy in waiting; his aim was to create public discussion,

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<sup>97</sup> "Towaco Shows the Way," *News Bulletin* 5 (February 19, 1926), p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> "Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association," April 14, 1928, Baker Papers, Box 153, p. 6.

<sup>99</sup> Owen D. Young to Fosdick, March 8, 1928, McDonald Papers, Box 5. Fosdick told John D. Rockefeller, Jr., that McDonald "is doing more in the way of mass education in this field than any other agency I know of." Fosdick to Rockefeller, February 6, 1931, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1; Fosdick to Rockefeller, February 23, 1932, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1; Fosdick to Rockefeller, October 4, 1933, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

not to instruct an audience. “Ladies and gentlemen,” he opened his first talk, “this is not a lecture.

It is the first of a series of informal discussion conferences which I hope you will be willing to hold with me. I am convinced that my talks will have value in proportion only as you exchange ideas with me... My ideal is nothing less than such a mutual exchange of impressions and experiences that out of it may emerge for me as much as for you a fuller understanding of our rapidly changing world.<sup>100</sup>

Taking pragmatism to the airwaves was serious business for McDonald, within the confines of the available technology. An advisor to the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, he sought to stimulate a public, not acquire an audience.<sup>101</sup> He therefore frequently quoted and answered listeners who wrote in with questions and comments, had maps and transcripts ready for those who wanted them, and had bibliographies sent out to thousands of schools, colleges, and libraries, so that the increasing number of teachers who were taking international approaches in classrooms could use his broadcasts as a basis for their pedagogy. And while McDonald initially sought what he called “quality listeners,” he proudly circulated letters from citizens who could put pen to paper but could not otherwise involve themselves in formal discussions, and he drew up maps that visualized the depth and intensity of engagement beyond the northeast.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> McDonald, “Europe Convalescent,” April 23, 1928, Survey Associates Records, Box 73. In his introduction to one set of maps made available by NBC to listeners, McDonald wrote that the success of his “experiment” in radio “depends upon the degree of your cooperation. See *The World Today, 1928: 12 Maps Especially prepared to illustrate the Monday evening radio talks of James G. McDonald* (New York: National Broadcasting Company, 1928), p. 3.

<sup>101</sup> For the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, see Robert W. McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928–1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 47–57. For the distinction between a public and an audience on the radio, see Kate Lacey, “The Invention of a Listening Public: Radio and its Audiences,” in Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (eds.), *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 61–79

<sup>102</sup> “May 18, 1928,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; McDonald to Kellogg, January 31, 1929, Survey Associates Records, Box 73; James G. McDonald, “International Broadcasting—A Humanizing Force,” 1933, McDonald Papers, Box 36.

Trouble was, the mailbag held dozens of letters each week, rather than bursting with thousands or more.

One thing the radio broadcasts did do was help the luncheon idea cross the city limits, as wealthy listeners outside of New York started to replicate what they heard. The headline figures of the Association's push out of Manhattan looked promising. New York internationalists initially struggled to find common ground with their brethren in Boston, and attempts at a merger with the nascent Chicago Council on Foreign Relations were turned down. But as activists settled into a less turbulent period after the Washington Naval Conference, a more cohesive network started to develop. First the citizens of Cincinnati asked to set up a branch, then Philadelphia, then Hartford. Providence and Springfield followed, then Columbus. By 1928 there were fourteen branches, holding a total of 67 luncheons between them, with memberships anywhere between the 644 of Philadelphia and the 93 of Rochester. A dozen or so more cities seemed like immediate prospects, too.<sup>103</sup>

Until the Association hired Raymond T. Rich as its field director in the fall of 1925, these branches cropped up spontaneously, as small groups interested in foreign policy sought an alliance with centers of internationalism on the coast.<sup>104</sup> And from *where* they cropped up is

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<sup>103</sup> "Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association," April 14, 1928, Newton Diehl Baker Papers, Manuscripts Library, Library of Congress, Box 153.

<sup>104</sup> Like the Association's later field director, Francis Pickens Miller, Rich was heavily involved in the developing ecumenical movement, and by the summer of 1923 was the acting executive secretary of the World Student Christian Foundation's relief efforts in Europe, European Student Relief. It is worth noting that while the Foreign Policy Association, like the Council on Foreign Relations, was effectively promoting a (more) secular understanding of the world, it certainly drew strength from missionary, ecumenical, and other faithful work, and it collaborated with avowedly religious groups when appropriate. Its first treasurer, for instance, was Robert H. Gardiner, a leading figure in global ecumenical work; the moral theologian and committed reformer Rev. John Ryan sat on its national council for the entirety of its first two decades; McDonald was born a Catholic, and although he grew into a non-conformist who rarely attended church, he sat on the National Conference for the Christian Way of Life and wrote on a Christian foreign policy. See James G. McDonald, "The United States and Christian Statesmanship," in A. S.

crucial for understanding the nature of the public that was being created. The Boston branch set the tone. Although it contained within its leadership academics such as the Harvard law professor Manley O. Hudson, and editors including Willis J. Abbot of the *Christian Science Monitor* and Christian A. Herter of the *Independent*, its driving forces were women. Some were teachers, like the pioneering Fannie Fern Andrews; others were socialites, including Harriet Hemenway, whose portrait was painted by John Singer Sargent; one was Alice Hamilton, the Hull House social worker, first woman admitted to the Harvard faculty, and member of the League of Nations Health Committee; many more were active in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, not least the architect Rose Standish Nichols. And although Hudson presided at luncheons and used his wide connections to invite the mostly male roster of speakers, the chairman was Marguerite Hopkins, a former president of the powerful Women's City Club who served voluntarily until 1929.<sup>105</sup>

Indeed, the creation of a foreign policy public was a matter of male internationalists plugging into (and then rewiring) far more extensive, active, and internationalized networks of women dedicated to educating themselves and others to exercise the electoral power they had labored so hard to win.<sup>106</sup> Addams and Catt lent their names to the Association, but more important in its development were the suffragists who took particularly active roles on its

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Peake and R. G. Parsons (eds.), *An Outline of Christianity: The Story of Our Civilization V* (London: Waverley Book Company, 1926), pp. 168-189. For the persistence of religion in secularizing (albeit racialized and gendered) institutions, see Mark Edwards, "God in the Think Tank," *U.S. Intellectual History Blog* (June 20, 2014), [s-usih.org/2014/06/god-in-the-think-tank/](http://s-usih.org/2014/06/god-in-the-think-tank/).

<sup>105</sup> Marguerite Hopkins to A. Barr Comstock, April 11, 1929, Manley Hudson Papers, Historical and Special Collections, Harvard Law School, Box 137.

<sup>106</sup> On the educational activities of the early League of Women Voters, see Louise M. Young, *In the Public Interest: The League of Women Voters, 1920-1970* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), esp. pp. 71-88.

executive committee. These included Lillian Wald, the Henry Street Settlement Founder; Ruth Morgan, who served concurrently as vice-chairman of the Association and chief of the League of Women Voters' department of international cooperation; and, eventually, Eleanor Roosevelt. These were towering figures, of national reputation and more, but less heralded women took the initiative at the local level, too. The Philadelphia branch grew out of luncheons started by the city's League chapter, with which the Association was invited to cooperate.<sup>107</sup> When McDonald visited Providence and Springfield in February 1925, he was hosted by groups of women who sought to start Association branches, or at least to have the Association cooperate with their own work.<sup>108</sup> When Rich arrived in Minneapolis in October 1926, he thought the leading activist there, a Mrs. McKnight, "a genius" as an organizer.<sup>109</sup>

Women made up not just the active leadership of the Association, but its rank and file, too. So prominent were women in its first decade that at headquarters, the membership secretary Esther Ogden, who was also serving on the executive boards of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the Committee on the Cause and Cure of War, actually became worried.<sup>110</sup> At the executive committee meeting in January 1924, she reported that "a tally showed a preponderance of two-thirds women in the membership and raised the question of whether or not to concentrate for the future immediately on circularizing lists of men." The

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<sup>107</sup> "Meeting of the Executive Committee F. P. A.," December 14, 1922, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Meeting of the Executive Committee," March 19, 1924, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "F. P. A. Notes," *News Bulletin* (March 28, 1924), p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> "February 26, 1925," McDonald Diary, Box 1; "February 27, 1925," McDonald Diary, Box 1.

<sup>109</sup> Raymond T. Rich to Merriman, October 30, 1926, FPA, Part II, Box 11.

<sup>110</sup> "Esther G. Ogden, Suffragist, Dies," *New York Times* (January 15, 1956), p. 92.



seven members of the committee in attendance at the Women's City Club, numbering Wald and six men, vetoed the proposal.<sup>111</sup>

The Association was fundamentally dependent on the expertise of women precisely because of its public nature. Education offered these women access into a new diplomatic world, but their organizational work was profoundly intellectual work in its own right, a daily process of conceiving a public, trying to create it, reconceiving it, and trying to create it again.<sup>112</sup> Much of this burden fell on the speakers' bureau, run first on a voluntary basis and later staffed by Elizabeth Scott and Frances Pratt. As the branch network grew, with Rich travelling tens of thousands of miles in search of recruits, local leaders looked to New York for help connecting their cities to rapidly developing networks of expertise, both domestic and international. It was the responsibility of the speakers' bureau to think up topics and to find speakers who could adequately represent all sides of an issue. Even as early as the 1926-27 season, that task required hundreds of letters, telegrams, and phone calls to potential speakers and their secretaries, in the full knowledge that two-thirds of inquiries would be met with declinations.<sup>113</sup> Initially working with other organizations and lecture bureaus, the office brought order to the teeming mass of

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<sup>111</sup> "Meeting of the Executive Committee of the F.P.A.," January 9, 1924, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>112</sup> Recent work on women in international relations in this period has argued that, rather than looking for women within a discourse of international thought that has been defined by men, the study of women can help us reconceive what we think of as international thought itself, and particularly make room for those who theorized "the mechanics of participation" and who had "ideas about how different kinds of people might develop a stake in international society." See Valeska Huber, Tamson Pietsch and Katharina Rietzler, "Women's International Thought and the New Professions," *Modern Intellectual History*, [doi:10.1017/S1479244319000131](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244319000131), esp. pp. 5, 24. This is surely correct, and the approach of these authors is in part applied here. But it should also be noted that historians have more to do to recover, understand, and apply the work of women within traditional foreign policy institutions, a task that is made much easier by putting the Foreign Policy Association, rather than the Council on Foreign Relations, at the center of our analysis.

<sup>113</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board," February 9, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

foreign policy debate by acquiring the savvy necessary to compile long lists of eminent speakers on both side of suggested debate questions, and by circulating lists of “foreigners in the United States.”<sup>114</sup> By the spring of 1929, the speakers bureau had decided to manage speakers for itself, contracting with 45 experts, diplomats, and personalities to manage their appearances around the country. A year later, it was not only supplying multiple speakers to 92 branch meetings, with a total attendance of more than 37,000, but making nearly 300 engagements for outside groups, too. Here was the start of the foreign policy lecture circuit, with experts circulating around the country as never before.<sup>115</sup>

Set aside the fear that the Association’s commitment to free speech left it “slightly tinged with pink,” as one conservative fretted to Lamont, and it was the place it gave to women that kept it disreputable in the eyes of some traditionalists and Washington officials.<sup>116</sup> The most incendiary critic was John Franklin Carter, a diplomat turned journalist turned polemicist who rooted his disparagement of internationalism in human-nature realism. Carter’s *Man is War* savaged the Association in 1926 as promoting “foreign” propaganda, presenting the “thinking man” with “realists,” “scare-mongers,” and “horror-boys” under the “guise of impartiality.”<sup>117</sup> But

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<sup>114</sup> See, e.g., “The Kellogg Pact,” “Manchuria,” and “Dictatorship of Democracy,” October 1928, Hudson Papers, Box 137; “Foreigners in the United states,” September 7, 1928, Hudson Papers, Box 137.

<sup>115</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 8, 1929, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “The Annual Meeting,” April 22, 1930, Baker Papers, Box 99, p. 15.

<sup>116</sup> Harbord told Lamont, who had sent a letter of recommendation on McDonald’s behalf and who was a devoted Republican, that he was “especially glad to have your opinion as a man in whose conservatism I have confidence.” See James G. Harbord to Lamont, May 11, 1928, Lamont Papers, Box 29.

<sup>117</sup> Carter singled out “the various Foreign Policy Associations” as part of the “foreign” category, separating it out from the “indigenous” pacifist groups with which the Association was effectively allied, including the “Carnegie Foundation for International Peace” (*sic*), the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and the World Peace Foundation. See John Carter, *Man Is War* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1926), pp. 253-258. One reviewer lamented that Carter had “made the painful descent from the heights of Wilsonian idealism to the Avernus

his real issue, and by extension that of some of his colleagues, became apparent in “Foreign Policy on the Half-Shell,” a brutal magazine article from 1928 that took aim at a “hypothetical” “Foreign Relations Group, Inc., with its thirty branches, its twenty thousand members, its advisory committee of three bankers, two former Democratic Ambassadors, five wealthy and unemployed ladies, four absentee editors, and one very able publicity man.” The hypothetical fooled no one.<sup>118</sup>

To Carter, the free security that happily allowed U.S. foreign policy to be “broad, diffuse and somewhat undecipherable,” left a “comfortable intellectual vacuum” that had been “cleverly capitalized by that section of the American people which really believes that after dinner speeches create public opinion and that it is possible to run a government by public oratory.” Many of their initiatives were “interesting and amusing,” he wrote, “but none approaches the high comedy of the food-plus-oratory formula for hampering the administration of our foreign policy.” The “Foreign Relations Group,” Carter quipped, wanted to “knock the arrows from the claw of the eagle on our coins and to substitute an oyster-fork, prefatory to changing our national emblem from the Bird of Freedom to a Soft-Shelled Crab.” It harassed officials with “irrelevant opposition”; its luncheons made sure that “hard feeling is stirred up and nobody is benefitted”; it “persistently, inveterately, and well-nigh instinctively” perverted the “patriotic” — that is, nationalist or conservative — “American side of every question that comes before it.” This was

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of his present skepticism along a chute plentifully bestrewn with actual and non-bookish splinters.” See “‘War Is Hell’—But It Is Human,” *New York Times* (October 17, 1926), pp. 31, 51.

<sup>118</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” December 12, 1928, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

no place for “impartial and disinterested inquiries into the actual character of American foreign policy,” he complained.

“At bottom,” Carter inveighed, “the trouble seems to be due to the women who form 90 per cent of the Group’s membership.” Take a look at a luncheon, Carter wrote, notably seeing the Association as even more gendered than it really was. “You will see more beauty than brains, more furs and platinum than pencils and note-books, more white kid gloves than square chins.” Such “plump rich women,” who craved “emotion,” wanted “a sort of moral bull-fight in which Error shall be slain by the Toreador of Truth.” Such women sought new foreign policies for the same reason they sought “new hats,” not to “protect her head but because she is bored with the old ones.” Advocates of government policy could hardly defend themselves, and so “the wretched opponents of the cause of sweetness and light are lucky if they escape without being hissed.” Thankfully, while such women flattered themselves “that by a slight palpitation of their emotions they are really contributing to public opinion,” the men they scorned knew better. “The Department of State, to the credit of its intelligence,” Carter wrote, “has never been worried by the oyster-fork type of diplomacy.” And Carter would know: after he filed his article, he left the *New York Times* to become an economic specialist back at the State Department.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> John Carter, “Foreign Policy on the Half-Shell,” *Outlook and Independent* (November 28, 1928), pp. 1249-1250, 1260; “John Franklin Carter, 70, Dies,” *New York Times* (November 29, 1967), p. 47.

In the spring of 1932, McDonald wrote to his most generous donor, triumphant. “Five years ago,” McDonald wrote to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., those at the State Department who knew of the Association had met it with “suspicion,” or “as of little consequence.” “Today,” he declared,

the Foreign Policy Association is perhaps better known within the Department than any other organization; its publications are found on many desks; the Department as a whole is cordial and sympathetic in its attitude; many of the officers we regard as warm personal friends. About twenty State Department and foreign service officials are members of the Foreign Policy Association. Department officers frequently suggest topics of research, read and criticise our manuscripts, and provide us with valuable material.<sup>120</sup>

Diplomats had passed word to McDonald’s staff that the government was relying on them to break down the “narrow, isolationist attitude” that had reared from economic collapse.<sup>121</sup> Soon the secretary of state would tell one of them that he should regard himself as a member of the State Department, with all the privileges that would accompany that assumption.<sup>122</sup>

McDonald barely knew John D. Rockefeller, who held himself aloof in a way that the Warburgs, the Kahns, the Lamonts did not. But he knew Rockefeller’s wife, Abby, so well that she had trusted him to chaperone her eldest son, John, on a voyage around the world after he graduated from Princeton in 1929. Back in 1925, Abby had teamed up with Fosdick, the former League of Nations administrator who helped the family with internationalist causes, to ask Rockefeller to cut McDonald a check for \$10,000, to be spent on a new project.<sup>123</sup> With that

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<sup>120</sup> McDonald to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., May 18, 1932, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Records, Rockefeller Archives Center, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>121</sup> William T. Stone, “Memorandum,” January 5, 1932, McDonald Papers, Box 32; “Report of the Washington Bureau,” January 12, 1932, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>122</sup> Buell, “Interviews in Washington,” November 1934, Buell Papers, Box 42.

<sup>123</sup> “February 20, 1925” and “February 25, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.

money, and the \$141,500 that had followed it by 1932, the Association had founded a research department, a unique venture that was, arguably, the first “think tank” for foreign affairs.<sup>124</sup> In short order, its work was being read in banking houses, in editorial conferences, and in foreign offices the world over. Hjalmar Schacht, the German central banker, confronted McDonald about its interpretation of Hitler’s rise, in the same summer that the Indianan had audiences with Chancellor von Papen, Foreign Minister von Neurath, and Premier Herriot.<sup>125</sup> The Dominican ambassador lodged an official protest when one of its researchers labeled President Trujillo a dictator, forcing Ernest Gruening, a board member and the director of the Interior Department’s Division of Territories and Island Possessions, to resign from the Association to avoid further embarrassment. The Association had become a player in international politics in its own right.<sup>126</sup>

How was this possible, not least during a depression? McDonald, after all, remained no less ardent an activist than he had been, and briefly took up the chairmanship of the steering committee of the National Peace Conference.<sup>127</sup> The subordinates he hired for his research staff

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<sup>124</sup> Alan Raucher, “The First Foreign Affairs Think Tanks,” *American Quarterly* 30 (1978), pp. 493-513. Despite Raucher’s article, the Association plays next to no role in the literature on think tanks, which focuses on far lesser institutions. See, e.g., Donald E. Abelson, *A Capitol Idea: Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006); Donald E. Abelson, “Old World, New World: The Evolution and Influence of Foreign Affairs Think-Tanks,” *International Affairs* 90 (2014), pp. 125-142. The Association is mentioned in Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 63-64, but not on the basis of its research department.

<sup>125</sup> “September 1, 1932,” McDonald Diaries, Box 2. Schacht appeared at an Association dinner in New York in October 1930, speaking on the Young Plan with John Foster Dulles, and McDonald saw him frequently when in Germany.

<sup>126</sup> Andres Pastoriza to Secretary of State, April 30, 1936, Records of the Department of State, U.S. National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930-1939, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/70; Cordell Hull to Pastoriza, May 11, 1936, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930-1939, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/71; Pastoriza to Buell, May 12, 1936, H. Alexander Smith Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 226; Duggan to Hull, July 11, 1936, attached to RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930-1939, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/73.

<sup>127</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 10, 1933, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

were good liberals and more, and the board remained stocked with the kinds of progressives it always had been. Still, a shift took place. The word “liberal” was dropped from the constitution in October 1928, as the board newly declared that “the object of the Foreign Policy Association is to carry on research and educational activities to aid in the understanding and constructive development of American foreign policy.”<sup>128</sup> Three years earlier it had already declared that “we believe that the growth of a wider and more intelligent public interest in foreign affairs waits not upon propaganda but upon facts.”<sup>129</sup> This turn to objectivity had roots deep in progressivism. It had roots in the investigative journalism of the prewar era, as if trained scholars might muckrake the world. It had roots in the progressive impulse towards expert governance. It had roots, too, in the widespread horror at the extent, duplicity, and power of promotion, revealed in progressives’ experiences as both the creators and the targets of wartime propaganda.<sup>130</sup> And it had roots in the philanthropy-funded turn to positivism, objectivism, and functionalism in the social sciences, a development, both structural and intellectual, that lauded the value of facts, and just the facts.<sup>131</sup>

What should not be forgotten, however, is that this turn to putatively objective research by the Association — and the Council on Foreign Relations, the Institute of Pacific Relations,

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<sup>128</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” June 13, 1928, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association,” November 10, 1928, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>129</sup> “Memorandum on Present Work and Proposed Expansion of Activities of the Foreign Policy Association,” April 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 110.

<sup>130</sup> J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Brett Gary, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Jonathan Auerbach, *Weapons of Democracy: Propaganda, Progressivism, and American Public Opinion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2015); David Greenberg, “The Ominous Clang: Fears of Propaganda from World War I to World War II,” in Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (eds.), *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 50-62.

<sup>131</sup> Purcell, *Crisis of Democratic Theory*, pp. 15-30.

and the World Peace Foundation — was about more than the founding of international relations as an academic and semi-academic discipline, and about more than the creation of foreign policy professionals.<sup>132</sup> It was about publics. It was a choice about how to create the informed, engaged, participating populace of progressive dreams. And that choice still led the Association to cultivate an elite, an elite that it still hoped would both act upon its education and act to educate the mass. But rather than an elite with purely social standing, the new elite that the Association sought was quite different, comprised of “those men and women who, through their pens and voices, are reaching the minds of millions of Americans every day.”<sup>133</sup> Although there is no evidence that Association staffers read what little academic literature existed on public opinion, the assumption here, as at the luncheons, was that found in scholarship: informed public opinion would trickle down from an elite of editors, of professors, of experts, of diplomats, from a small, professional public with advanced reading skills, with access to communications technologies, and with influence, even with power.<sup>134</sup>

It was the very powerlessness of the Association in its early days, however, that prompted its turn to facts. It was initially set up as a committee of authorities who gathered to study and then to promote the League of Nations. It quickly applied the same technique to other issues. Lillian Wald took the chair of a committee on Russia in the summer of 1919, one that for the

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<sup>132</sup> See, esp., Katharina Rietzler, “From Peace Advocacy to International Relations Research: The Transformation of Transatlantic Philanthropic Networks, 1900–1930,” in Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel (eds.), *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks, and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), pp. 173–193.

<sup>133</sup> McDonald to Rockefeller, November 16, 1926, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Records, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>134</sup> See, e.g., James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), Volume II, pp. 251–378, esp. pp. 251–259.



next few years would count Adolf Berle, William Allen White, and the Rev. John A. Ryan among its members.<sup>135</sup> Committees on other topics followed, all involving quiet study among the members and some kind of effort to sway a broader public or government policy. Acting in the name of public opinion, these committees were ineffective except to the extent that they created controversy. After publicly imploring President Wilson to resist intervention in Mexico in 1919, McDonald was hauled before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and ridiculed for the weaknesses of his sources by Senator Albert Fall, later of Teapot Dome infamy.<sup>136</sup> McDonald fared no better on Russian policy, being publicly scorned by Acting Secretary of State Norman H. Davis, later a committed Association supporter, for falsely characterizing government policy.<sup>137</sup> Charles Evans Hughes, Davis's successor, proved no kinder upon being presented with a memorandum by 24 lawyers on the illegality of the U.S. occupation of Haiti, calling it "most inadequate and one-sided."<sup>138</sup> While less critical briefs on the World Court and the Lausanne Treaty were better-received, the wounded Association reflected that it was at least drawing the

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<sup>135</sup> "Meeting of the Executive Committee," July 17, 1919, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of the Russian Committee, L.F.N.A.," [1919-1921], FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>136</sup> "Has No Proof of Intervention Plot," *New York Times* (September 11, 1919), p. 17. The committee followed this with a confidential brief to Secretary Hughes, "In the Matter of the Settlement of Disputed Questions Between Mexico and the United States," April 18, 1921, Lamont Papers, Box 195.

<sup>137</sup> "Fictions About Russia," *New York Times* (January 15, 1921), p. 11; "Free Nation League Replies to Davis," *New York Times* (January 17, 1921), p. 11; "Not Fighting Soviets," *Los Angeles Times* (February 7, 1921), p. 11.

<sup>138</sup> "The Secretary of State Replies," *News Bulletin* 1 (May 5, 1922), p. 2; "Demand Americans Quit Haiti At Once," *New York Times* (April 28, 1922), p. 3; "Plea To Leave Haiti Refused By Hughes," *New York Times* (April 30, 1922), p. 16). Cutting across other internationalist dividing lines, several newspapers attacked these "excited humanitarians" as naïve, and declared again their support for trenchant military action in the Caribbean. See "Our Course In Haiti," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (May 4, 1922), p. 8; "The Rumpus Over Haiti," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (May 9, 1922), p. 8; "The Haitian Occupation," *New York Times* (May 1, 1922), p. 14; "Monroe Doctrine in Action," *Washington Post* (May 3, 1922), p. 6.

State Department out in the name of “democratic control.”<sup>139</sup> “However controversial the incident,” the Russia committee replied to Davis, “we believe it will be agreed that open and frank discussion of exactly this sort is the soundest American method of arriving at an enlightened foreign policy.”<sup>140</sup>

Only on the issue of narcotics did the Association have any success. An inherently global question, drug control was a symbolic issue for many internationalists, who used it to try to push the United States closer to the League of Nations by initially avoiding controversial questions of war and peace and focusing first on collaboration with the steadier, technical work of the Geneva agencies. Helen Howell Moorhead, a Bryn Mawr graduate and aid worker, and Herbert L. May, a former drug salesman and lawyer, were leading mediators in this process, and they used the Association’s opium committee, created late in 1922, as their base.<sup>141</sup> They acted as researchers, as observers at negotiations, and even, in the case of May, as a member of the Permanent Central Opium Board at the League.<sup>142</sup> They wrote the odd article in the Association’s publications, but their work was never central to the Association as a whole, except in one crucial way: they brought the Association its first contact with Rockefeller philanthropy, when the Bureau of

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<sup>139</sup> “For a Liberal and Constructive American Foreign Policy,” *The Bulletin* 1 (April 1920), p. 1; “An Opinion with Respect to Acceptance by the United States of the Permanent Court of International Justice,” attached to McDonald to Lamont, March 12, 1923, Lamont Papers, Box 23; “Meeting of the Executive Committee,” May 7, 1924, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>140</sup> “U.S. Russian Policy Defended,” *The Bulletin* 1 (January-February 1921), p. 11

<sup>141</sup> “Meeting of the Executive Committee,” December 14, 1922, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “The Reminiscences of Herbert L. May,” March 1951, Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University.

<sup>142</sup> William O. Walker III, *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-154* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); William B. McAllister, *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

Social Hygiene twice gave it \$10,000, in 1924 and 1925.<sup>143</sup> That grant was intended to help Moorhead and May send information about opium directly to newspapers, which were read, to a greater or lesser extent, by almost all Americans.<sup>144</sup> Word came back that sustained information on other aspects of international life would be welcomed, especially from editors outside the major cities, who otherwise struggled to piece stories together and to pay fees for wire services relating foreign news.<sup>145</sup> As a result, the Association founded an Editorial Information Service in April 1925, funded partly by Rockefeller himself.<sup>146</sup>

At first, McDonald tried to hire as his research director Raymond Leslie Buell, an absurdly prolific, 28-year-old Harvard specialist in colonial affairs. Buell, the prototypical foreign policy expert, had published one book on French politics shortly after his military service in Europe, another on the Washington Naval Conference two years after that, and was about to bring out a text book, *International Relations*, that would define the teaching of the subject for a decade and more.<sup>147</sup> Buell, however, was preparing to set off for Africa on a Rockefeller fellowship, to research what would become *The Native Problem in Africa*, a unique and unrivalled

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<sup>143</sup> "Meeting of the Executive Committee," March 5, 1924, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Foreign Policy Association," November 29, 1926, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>144</sup> On the centrality of newspapers to political discourse and national life, see Julia Guarneri, "Progressive Political Culture and the Widening Scope of Local Newspapers, 1880-1930," in Schulman and Zelizer (eds.), *Media Nation*, pp. 36-49; Julia Guarneri, *Newsprint Metropolis: City Papers and the Making of Modern Americans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), esp. 234-248.

<sup>145</sup> On foreign reporting, see John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roaming Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

<sup>146</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee," February 18, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board," April 1, 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>147</sup> Raymond Leslie Buell, *Contemporary French Politics* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1920); Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Washington Conference* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1922); Raymond Leslie Buell, *International Relations* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925).

study of the effects of colonialism on the colonized, running to 2,146 pages.<sup>148</sup> With Buell unavailable, McDonald persuaded the Columbia historian Edward Mead Earle, who had been elected to the executive committee with the lawyer James T. Shotwell a few months earlier, to take the post part-time.<sup>149</sup> Not as productive as Buell despite his two extra years, Earle practiced the activist, present-minded “New History” that he had learned from Charles Beard and James Harvey Robinson as an undergraduate in Morningside Heights.<sup>150</sup> And while Earle is primarily remembered for his work as a theorist of “national security” and a forefather of security studies, his more lasting contribution may well have come earlier than World War II, when he developed a form of research that promised to enrich public discussion of foreign policy with a common currency of facts mined from international quarries.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> “March 18, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: Macmillan, 1928). On the influence of Buell’s book, see Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 238-239, 258-259, 322-324.

<sup>149</sup> Edward Mead Earle, “The Lausanne Treaties,” *News Bulletin 2* (August 17, 1923), p. 1; “Announcement,” *News Bulletin 3* (August 8, 1924), p. 1; “February 20, 1925,” “May 11, 1925,” “May 12, 1925,” and “June 8, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; “Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee,” March 4, 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 15; McDonald to Earle, May 28, FPA, Part II, Box 6.

<sup>150</sup> Like Buell, Earle was trained in multi-lingual, international history, and, like Buell, he was no fan of imperialism, particularly American imperialism. See Edward Mead Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway: A Study in Imperialism* (New York: Macmillan, 1923).

<sup>151</sup> For Earle and the promotion of the “national security” paradigm, see Andrew Preston, “Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security,” *Diplomatic History* 38 (2014), pp. 494-496. For Earle and security studies, rather more tenuously, see David Ekbladh, “Present at the Creation: Edward Mead Earle and the Depression-Era Origins of Security Studies,” *International Security* 36 (2011), pp. 107-141, which incorrectly states that Earle was elected vice chairman of the Association in 1924, and skips over his work downtown; David Ekbladh, “The Interwar Foundations of Security Studies: Edward Mead Earle, the Carnegie Corporation and the Depression-Era Origins of a Field,” *Global Society* 28 (2014), pp. 40-53; Robert Vitalis, “Article Review 14 on ‘Present at the Creation: Edward Mead Earle and the Depression-Era Origins of Security Studies,’” *H-Diplo* (June 15, 2012), [issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-AR14.pdf](https://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-AR14.pdf); Michael P. M. Finch, “Edward Mead Earle and the Unfinished *Makers of Modern Strategy*,” *Journal of Modern History* 80 (2016), pp. 781-814. For Earle’s wartime promotion of a new doctrine of citizenship, see Dexter Fergie, “Geopolitics Turned Inwards: The Princeton Military Strategy Group and the National Security Imagination,” *Diplomatic History* (2019), [doi:10.1093/dh/dhz026](https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhz026).

Starting in October 1925, the *Information Service* claimed to offer “essential facts on international questions.”<sup>152</sup> It depended on harvesting the fruits of the new diplomacy, using government documents, treaties, and especially the publications of the League of Nations. Offering basic introductions with a minimum of commentary and a maximum of quotations from primary sources, the unsigned, mimeographed reports initially ran to eight or twelve page, often including timelines, maps, bibliographies, and excerpts from treaties, a format that Earle and McDonald developed in consultation with the Rockefeller publicity man Ivy Lee and journalists including Walter Lippmann.<sup>153</sup> The research staff, hired full-time and writing in the *Bulletin* as well as for the *Service*, selected and problematized particular aspects of foreign affairs, only some of which had obvious relevance to U.S. foreign policy. The first numbers covered “The Locarno Security Conference,” “The Chinese Tariff Conference,” “The Turco-Iraq Boundary Dispute,” “British Interests in Mesopotamia,” and “The French Mandate in Syria”; the second volume included “Open Diplomacy and American Foreign Relations,” “American Oil Interests in Mesopotamia” and “The International Credit Position of the United States,” but also “Colonial vs. Mandate Administration,” “The International Problem of Tangier,” and “Recent Legislation in Italy.” By April 1927, every daily newspaper editor in the country with a circulation of 10,000 or more was receiving a report, fortnightly and free, reaching a potentially but immeasurably vast audience. State Department press officers took personal responsibility for

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<sup>152</sup> See the text box on the top of early issues, e.g. “The Locarno Security Conference,” *Information Service* 1 (1925), pp. 1-8; “Memorandum On Present Work and Proposed Expansion of Activities of the Foreign Policy Association,” April 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 110.

<sup>153</sup> “February 20, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; “Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board,” January 6, 1926, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

distributing copies among Washington correspondents.<sup>154</sup> And the publications were used. Earle watched in amazement as newspapers reprinted reports in their entirety, or used isolated facts that could only have come from reading them closely.<sup>155</sup> Dropping in on newspaper offices on his tours around the country, Rich saw that editors were keeping indexes to the *Service* on their desks for “constant reference.”<sup>156</sup>

Why the attraction? One cause was the common, if usually anecdotal belief that there was a shortage of easily accessible information on international politics, the belief that “facts are our scarcest raw material” as the industrialist and diplomat Owen D. Young, a member of the Association’s national council, put it in a speech at Johns Hopkins in 1925. With wire services expensive, foreign correspondents rare, and no real discipline of international relations in academia, one could appreciate the need for facts even if one did not take the internationalist position, as Young did, that war could be cured by the application of scientific knowledge, as if it were “plague” or “yellow fever.”<sup>157</sup> Even the *Chicago Tribune* felt the need to subscribe to the *Service*.<sup>158</sup> Indeed, the deeper cause of the *Service*’s immediate success was that it managed to perform objectivity to the extent that it transcended political divisions. “It seems but fair to state that the interest of these different groups could only have been secured on the basis of an

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<sup>154</sup> McDonald was sure to acquire the cooperation of the State Department as soon as the first report was published. He won promises of cooperation from Secretary Kellogg and Undersecretary Grew, and went over specifics with the second-in-command of the press section, who offered to hand the reports to journalists himself. “October 22, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.

<sup>155</sup> “Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association,” April 6, 1927, p. 12.

<sup>156</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board,” October 13, 1926, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>157</sup> “Text of Owen D. Young’s Address at Johns Hopkins Celebration,” *Baltimore Sun* (February 24, 1925), p. 4.

<sup>158</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Board,” November 3, 1926, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

objective and well grounded program,” a staffer at the Commonwealth Fund surmised.<sup>159</sup>

McDonald’s suspicion that promoting foreign policy after Wilson’s death required “not special pleading, but clear and simple fact statements,” in other words, was borne out.<sup>160</sup> Propaganda had become a dirty word not only in democratic theory but in democratic life, despite the labors of Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays, and Harold Lasswell to secure its reputation.<sup>161</sup> “My chief impression from the trip is that this country is utterly weary of propaganda,” wrote Rich after covering 13,000 miles of railroad in fifteen weeks at the end of 1926, before he quit to become president of the World Peace Foundation.<sup>162</sup> Charles P. Howland, a former State Department official who had run the League’s Greek Refugee Settlement Commission, similarly advised his fellow board members that “the general public has immunized itself to that form of exhortation which is known as propaganda.” But if “crusading” would be counterproductive, “fact-finding and fact-presenting” would be “accepted at its face.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> The Commonwealth Fund at this point actually declined to give a grant to the Association on the assumption that its non-partisan, objective character would mean that it would be able to find ample funding privately. See “Foreign Policy Association,” October 10, 1926, Commonwealth Fund Records, Rockefeller Archives Center, SG 1, Series 18, Box 110.

<sup>160</sup> McDonald to Buell, February 7, 1925, Buell Papers, Box 41.

<sup>161</sup> In Chicago, Harold Lasswell urged the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations to ape the Association’s program, but got nowhere. See “Executive Committee Meeting,” February 5, 1926, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations Records, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago [CCFR], Box 8.

<sup>162</sup> “Report of the Field Secretary, Raymond T. Rich, to the Executive Board,” January 5, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 15. Rich pushed the Foundation in the same, “objective” direction; McDonald, incidentally, had previously turned the Foundation down. See “Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board,” May 28, 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>163</sup> Charles P. Howland to McDonald, March 11, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 9.

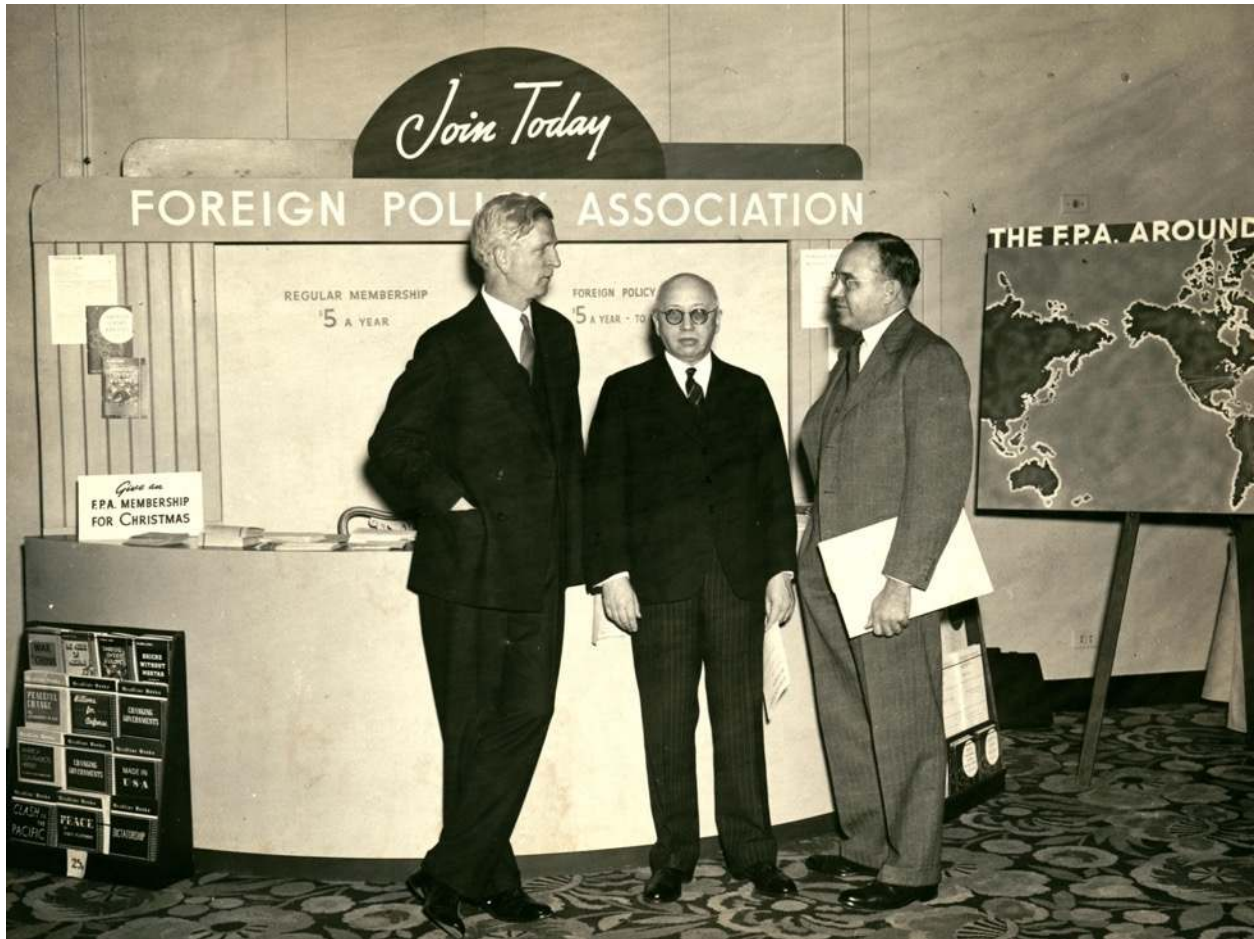


Figure 1. James G. McDonald (l), Sir Alfred Zimmern, and Raymond Leslie Buell (r), in the lobby of the Hotel Astor, December 10, 1938. Source: FPA, Part II, Box 287.

Did this mean that the Association had set aside its most immediate goals? Some of its founders feared as much. McDonald noted in his diary that Carrie Chapman Catt told him one night after dinner that there was a “danger of organizations going in for search after truth as an easier way out than to fight for any given cause.”<sup>164</sup> Norman Angell, lunching at the Harvard Club, granted that the *Service* “developed a more informed public opinion,” but asked if it was “not possible that unless that opinion has some sound philosophy of international relations, it may remain as much an isolationist opinion as at present, only more able to defend that

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<sup>164</sup> “May 14, 1926,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.



attitude?”<sup>165</sup> Paul Kellogg, meanwhile, challenged the board to use the supposed objectivity of its research as a platform to take distinct, strong positions on foreign policy, a stance that the rest of the directors feared would ruin the reputation that Earle’s department had quickly earned.<sup>166</sup> McDonald agreed with Kellogg, but told the board that “much of the recent growth of the Association, both in membership and in resources, has been either avowedly or tacitly on the assumption that the F.P.A. does not take stands,” which set it aside from the “dozens of national organizations actively engaged in expressing opinions on foreign affairs.”<sup>167</sup>

Moreover, objectivity did not entail abjuring internationalism. Promotional literature sent out in the fall of 1926 declared, under quotations of Elihu Root and Owen D. Young, that the Association was trying “to promote public discussion of our foreign relations” on the basis of “information, not prejudice or propaganda,” which would inherently “make more Americans see our stake in international affairs.” Objective facts would bring home that “the interests of one nation are, for good or ill, bound up in the interests of all,” and that “talk of isolation is academic and unreal.”<sup>168</sup> Christina Merriman, the disarmament activist and photographer who served in the pivotal role of secretary, told the rank and file at the annual meeting in 1927 that “the F.P.A. is not a propaganda organization, but if the result of less bias and more intelligence in public opinion is to make for a more livable world, we shall not be displeased.”<sup>169</sup> A year later,

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<sup>165</sup> “December 28, 1926,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.

<sup>166</sup> “Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Executive Board,” January 17, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>167</sup> “January 17, 1927,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.

<sup>168</sup> “Foreign Policy Association,” October 1926, Survey Associates Records, Box 73.

<sup>169</sup> “Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association,” April 6, 1927, FPA, Part II, Box 110.

McDonald told one critical member that it was incorrect to think that objectivity was a “neutral” space “between right and wrong.” “Our suggestion,” McDonald insisted, “is that the facts in a controversy are important, and usually right has less to fear from them than wrong.”<sup>170</sup>

If there was philosophical tension involved in the turn to objective education, that tension only heightened when McDonald finally got his man.<sup>171</sup> A year and a half after Buell had regretfully told McDonald that he was off to Africa, he sailed back to New York on the *Mauretania*, and took lunch at the Harvard Club. “I think he can be counted upon to cooperate with us,” McDonald reported.<sup>172</sup> A few months later, Buell quit Cambridge, yearning for something more active than life by the Charles.<sup>173</sup> Neither the Government department nor A. Lawrence Lowell, the president of Harvard and an active member of the Boston branch, held their superstar back. “I have great respect for what they are doing, and they need a man with your

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<sup>170</sup> “Foreign Policy Association: Annual Meeting,” April 14, 1928, FPA, Part I, Box 80.

<sup>171</sup> There was also legal tension. Often in the Association’s history, what appear to be philosophical, political developments often masked the legal and financial decisions that intellectual historians tend to underplay. This, in part, was one of them. The Association’s attempt to portray itself as an objective educational institution was partly philosophical, yes, but it was also in no small part basely mercenary. Its donors wanted to deduct their contributions from their tax burden, which they could not do if it remained a pressure group. Hence, in July 1922 the board passed a statement of purpose that declared that its activities were “now purely educational,” involving “careful study of all sides of every important international question affecting the United States,” and the “communication of the results of such study to as large a number of liberal-minded Americans as possible, to the end that there may be a better public understanding of what our foreign problems are and of how they may be dealt with most effectually.” The Bureau of Internal Revenue was not, however, convinced. See McDonald to Members of the Executive Committee, July 10, 1922, FPA, Part II, Box 15. In April 1929, the Treasury Department reversed its judgment, and declared that the Association had in fact been operating “exclusively for educational purposes” since 1927, mostly because of the prominence of the research department. As such, the amendment to the constitution that came in 1928 merely ratified developments that had been ongoing for several years. See C. B. Allen and L. K. Sunderlin to H. Maurice Darling, April 26, 1929, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 8, 1929, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “The Annual Meeting,” p. 3.

<sup>172</sup> “September 24, 1926,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1.

<sup>173</sup> “March 11, 1927,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; McDonald to Buell, March 16, 1927, Buell Papers, Box 41; Buell to McDonald, March 21, 1927, Buell Papers, Box 41.

fullness of knowledge of what is going on in the world today,” Lowell told Buell.<sup>174</sup> A quick intellect and a quicker writer, Buell was already one of the most prominent, enterprising, and controversial scholars of international politics in the United States, and he continued lecturing as a visiting professor at Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and elsewhere after his appointment in New York. But the Association gave him the platform to become even more so. A stubborn, relentlessly idealistic, but far from naïve Wilsonian, nobody more than Buell better symbolized the promise, and the frustrations, of that interwar creation, the international relations expert.<sup>175</sup>

As a scholar, Buell cultivated the exact sort of detachment that his new employers prized. Quincy Wright, for instance, praised his African tome as a “model of objectivity,” yet one which nonetheless left no doubt as to the implications of its analysis.<sup>176</sup> But Buell immediately strained at the tight leash on which he was kept in New York. Deeply read in the philosophy of history, he took a more relativist approach and insisted that his researchers ought to be able freely to state their conclusions, at least in the *Bulletin* that was sent to members, if not in the authoritative *Service*, which was renamed the *Foreign Policy Reports* at the behest of the Post Office in January 1931.<sup>177</sup> “Perhaps F.P.A. propaganda methods have been responsible for the fiction that facts

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<sup>174</sup> A. Lawrence Lowell to Buell, Buell Papers, Box 7.

<sup>175</sup> Partly because no history exists of the Foreign Policy Association, and partly because Buell fits few of the stories we traditionally tell about the history of U.S. foreign relations, he has been entirely forgotten in the historiography. Exceptions include David Steigerwald, “Raymond Leslie Buell and the Decline of Wilsonianism,” *Peace & Change* 15 (1990), pp. 391-412; David Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World.”

<sup>176</sup> Wright, half-jokingly, also wrote that the book was too short, even as he made sure to tell readers of his review that he had, as a matter of fact, read the book in its entirety. See Quincy Wright, Review of *The Native Problem in Africa*, *Political Science Quarterly* 44 (1929), pp. 276-279.

<sup>177</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” January 14, 1931, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

exist without interpretation,” Buell complained in February 1930,” but “in my opinion there can be no sound understanding of facts without interpretation.”<sup>178</sup>

A year later, Buell cast fundamental doubt on the evolving *raison d'être* of the Association at the annual meeting of members. In a speech entitled “What is Research?” Buell applauded the fervor of a “new faith,” whose “votaries” believed that the “social good which research in the physical sciences has produced” could be applied to human society, to “diagnose its ills and prescribe remedies.” For that purpose, new means and subjects of research were “consuming thousands of dollars of capital and the undivided attention of hundreds of personalities.” None of this university work, Buell immodestly but quite reasonably thought, compared to that of the Association, and it was precisely because of that quality that he resented being tied to the stake of objectivity. Deploring the “Fact Cult” that led to letters arriving at the office “criticizing the writer as being ‘partisan,’ ‘propagandist’ or lacking in ‘objectivity,’” Buell declared himself a “heretic.” Facts, he insisted, did not speak for themselves. One needed to make a judgment to select them, and to make a judgment one needed “a sense of values.” Buell confessed that his staff “put our own interpretations in the mouths of others,” with weaselly phrases like “it is contended by certain observers’,” but insisted that they did it on the road to salvation. “We seek,” he said, “to discover the nature of those barriers which seem to prevent international relationships from moving in the direction which seems to us to be right,” in the hope that “the

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<sup>178</sup> Buell, “Memorandum to the Board, in re The News Bulletin,” February 4, 1930, Survey Associates Records, Box 73. Kellogg, regretful of the turn from activism, agreed. “Of course a tepid middle of the road treatment of materials is just as blazingly editorial as to take an extreme position on either side, he told McDonald. “Truth is as likely to lie at a or z as at m. And truth is what we are after.” Kellogg to McDonald, February 6, 1930, FPA, Part II, Box 10.

world may gradually discard the harrowed, cynically hopeless exterior in which it now lives and bit by bit take on the garments of Utopia.”

For his blasphemy, Buell was publicly upbraided by the board member Eustace Seligman, a law partner of John Foster Dulles’s at Sullivan, Cromwell, and son of the Columbia economist E. R. A. Seligman, who was a direct influence on Charles Beard. Buell embraced Beard’s relativism; Eustace, however, was an objectivist. To abandon objectivity, Seligman sputtered, would be a reputational risk. And, for that matter, wasn’t “Mr. Buell being a little selfish?” Was it not better, in the long run, to state both sides of a problem, in good old pragmatist fashion, and let readers come to their own conclusions? Was the expert’s duty not to the public, rather than to policy?<sup>179</sup> A gregarious host reared on academic intercourse, Seligman relished the play of intellects, like others at the cream of the membership. “The special studies are done with clarity, fairness and thoroughness so that each time I read one,” wrote Newton D. Baker, Wilson’s secretary of war, “I have the sensation of having read widely on the subject and made up my own mind on it.”<sup>180</sup> Trained as a lecturer and prone to didacticism, Buell was not so sure as these most elite of his members that points could be left unmade.

If Buell relented for the time being, he nonetheless made sure that the *Reports* made their way into the hands of those who were in a position to apply the knowledge that they contained. While trying to bring the *Reports* to a circulation that approached the higher, if more scattered,

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<sup>179</sup> “The Annual Meeting: April 29, 1931,” July 1931, FPA, Part II, Box 111, pp. 1-11. Kellogg, naturally, sympathized with Buell, but thought that the real problem was that, in pursuit of objectivity, the Association had stopped listening to its members’ views, and was hence turning itself “into an audience,” rather than a public. See Kellogg to Esther Ogden, May 19, 1931, FPA, Part II, Box 10. McDonald, on the other hand, wrote in his diary that “Buell’s suggestion about changing the nature of the Research Reports drew from Seligman a clear and comprehensive reply.” “April 29, 1931,” McDonald Diaries, Box 2.

<sup>180</sup> Newton D. Baker to Ogden, June 12, 1929, Baker Papers, Box 99.

readership of *Foreign Affairs*, Buell tweaked their intended audience, hoping to reach four main classes of people. The first was members of the Association, but only about a tenth of the membership ever paid the few dollars extra necessary to subscribe to the *Reports*. (If anything the bulk of the membership sought material simpler to read even than the *Bulletin*, let alone the scholarly, 10,000-15,000 word monographs that the *Reports* became under Buell.) The second was the traditional newspaper clientele, which Buell expanded to include reporters and foreign correspondents on the belief that editorial pages had little influence over public opinion.<sup>181</sup> The third was his colleagues in universities, who increasingly depended on the *Reports* as material for their lectures and as set reading in history, government, and international relations courses.<sup>182</sup> And to these three Buell added a fourth class, “key men,” or “men of affairs” who had demonstrable influence in foreign policy. By 1932, the nearly 5,000 or so *Reports* being sent out a fortnight were being written to meet “the most exacting requirements of the scholar, the international lawyer, the educator, the administrative official, and the statesman,” the Association told the Rockefeller Foundation, so much so that “we envisage the possibility of becoming an unofficial civil service, performing for the organs and leaders of public opinion the same type of work that a civil service performs for cabinet ministers in power.”<sup>183</sup> The staff’s

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<sup>181</sup> Buell, “Report on Research Department Made Before the Executive Board,” October 19, 1927, Buell Papers, Box 41.

<sup>182</sup> Between 1928 and 1932, 55 universities put the *Reports* on their reading lists, including Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, and Princeton. In turn, the Association developed a special subscription plan for students to take out one semester at a time. “Memorandum on the Work of the Research Department of the Foreign Policy Association,” attached to McDonald to the Trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation, November 25, 1932, Rockefeller Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archives Center, Record Group 1.1, Series 200 [RF, refers to RG 1.1., Series 200, unless otherwise stated], Box 333, pp. 17-18.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 7, 9-10.

reports to their donors, and to their board, were soon replete with details about senators reading *Reports* in congressional hearings, about experts who asked for *Reports* before and even during diplomatic negotiations, and about statesmen from around the world who wrote in thanks that their problems and perspectives had been brought to an American, indeed an international readership. And if actors on both sides of an issue praised a piece of writing, that was so much the better to prove the objectivity and authority of the work.<sup>184</sup>

Supplying such “leaders of opinion” with timely, accurate information, which would then trickle down to a broader, reading public, dictated the shape of the research staff that Buell put together. Buell paid much more attention than Earle had to the kinds of information that his researchers used in their syntheses. He insisted that a library be built up, and the way that the librarian, Ona Ringwood, compiled and catalogued information was crucial for the speed with which she and the researchers could respond to outside inquiries and piece together articles on a deadline. The Association subscribed to dozens of newspapers and magazines, and as the major European, African, Asian, and South American dailies arrived in the office they were read, clipped, and classified by the researchers. They received every major book and pamphlet published on international politics, and wrote capsule reviews of many of them for *Bulletin* or, increasingly, outside publications such as the *New Republic*, the *Nation*, and the *New York Times*.<sup>185</sup> If the scale of that fact-finding apparatus was unique, so too was its collective access to

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<sup>184</sup> Buell was particularly proud of the reception of “The American Occupation of Haiti,” a 100,000 words special supplement that was praised by Charles Evans Hughes, as a defender of the occupation, and by leading Haitians, who opposed it. See *Ibid*, p. 13; Buell, “The American Occupation of Haiti,” *Information Service* 5 (1929), pp. 327-392.

<sup>185</sup> “The Annual Meeting,” April 22, 1930, p. 10.

policymakers. The researchers travelled relentlessly, particularly during the summers, and they were able to acquire interviews with whomever they asked. While they drew authority from reporting back publicly on their experiences, whether in print or at meetings, this travel was also essential to building the contacts and insights that were valued parts of their research background. “As a result,” the Association told the Rockefeller Foundation, “the *Reports* reflect an understanding of the questions dealt with which could not be obtained by mere documentary work within a library.”<sup>186</sup> And as international knowledge-creation networks gathered complexity and range, the task became less one of pushing information into the public sphere, and more one of making sense of the overwhelming amount of information that circulated by other means.

Making the Association more immediately useful also required forcing it to conform more to prevailing social structures. Buell has acquired an historiographical reputation for being unusually solicitous and supportive of scholars of color, but he was not much more radical in this than other progressives at the Association, and certainly he never dreamed of appointing Alain Locke or Ralph Bunche as one of his researchers.<sup>187</sup> A more immediate question was gender. Historiographically, the assumption holds that the interwar “ancestors” of international relations who took part in “funding committees, memorials, journals, summer institutes, research centers, conferences, and professional associations” were — and Robert Vitalis writes that he uses “this

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<sup>186</sup> “Memorandum on the Work of the Research Department of the Foreign Policy Association,” p. 10.

<sup>187</sup> Pearl T. Robinson, “Ralph Bunche and African Studies: Reflections on the Politics of Knowledge,” *African Studies Review* 51 (2008), pp. 1-16; Pearl T. Robinson, “Ralph Bunche the Africanist: Revisiting Paradigms Lost,” in Robert A. Hill and Edmond J. Keller (eds.), *Trustee for the Human Community: Ralph J. Bunche, the United Nations, and the Decolonization of Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), pp. 69-90; Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, pp. 11-13, 55-61, 74-90.



identifier intentionally” — men.<sup>188</sup> But even if we continue, wrongly, to write specifically female institutions and female scholarship out of disciplinary and other histories, this is still inaccurate, erasing the contingency of gender politics and underplaying the extent to which structures were increasingly, deliberately gendered after the first decade of the postwar period.<sup>189</sup>

One way to show this, as we have already seen, is to look at the work involved in building interwar institutions that has usually been seen as less prestigious. Contemporaries did so. In 1931, Marjorie Schuler of the *Christian Science Monitor* ran an article drawing attention to the “women workers” of the Association, specifically noting how it opened up “interesting professions” for, among others, the librarian Ona Ringwood, the cartographer Elizabeth Batterham, the assistant treasurer Carolyn Martin, and the secretary Esther Ogden, who had taken over from Christina Merriman. But “because the field of international politics has been slow to receive women,” what was “especially interesting” to Schuler was that four of its nine *researchers* were women.<sup>190</sup>

This already represented a regression from the legacy left to Buell by Earle. Earle’s first hires were mostly women, all of them talented, multi-lingual scholars. His first was Elizabeth MacCallum, a Canadian specialist on the Near East who had trained under Carlton Hayes, the Columbia historian and executive board member who had also trained Earle. His second was Ruth Bache-Wiig, a researcher at the Paris Peace Conference and former member of the League

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<sup>188</sup> Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, p. 7.

<sup>189</sup> For efforts to restore women to a place in a broadened canon, see Patricia Owens, “Women and the History of International Thought,” *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (2018), pp. 467-481; Jan Stöckmann, “Women, Wars, and World Affairs: Recovering Feminist International Relations, 1915-39,” *Review of International Studies* 44 (2018), pp. 215-235.

<sup>190</sup> “The Foreign Policy Association: Its Women Workers,” *Christian Science Monitor* (March 17, 1931), p. 8.

of Nations secretariat who had become assistant to Manley Hudson.<sup>191</sup> His third was Mildred Wertheimer, a remarkable scholar who had studied at Vassar and the University of Berlin, had worked for Colonel House's Inquiry, and volunteered for the Association while she finished her doctoral dissertation at Columbia.<sup>192</sup> Promoted to the staff, she became one of the world's foremost experts on Germany, warning of its rearmament and its threat until her tragically early death in 1937.<sup>193</sup> Buell's first hire was Vera Micheles, a young Russianist who had grown up in St. Petersburg and was finishing her doctorate at Radcliffe College.<sup>194</sup> William T. Stone, a former freelance journalist, was credited as an editor, and one or two male researchers came and went, but as late as the spring of 1929 only one permanent member of the research staff, Buell aside, was a man.<sup>195</sup>

With leading figures in the women's movement so prominent on the Association's board, perhaps this was no surprise, but the board members had no real influence on hiring decisions. And the role of women researchers at the Association, though it undoubtedly gave a lucky few exceptional access to the foreign policy world, was in fact the by-product of structural inequality.

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<sup>191</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board," May 28, 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>192</sup> Mildred S. Wertheimer, *The Pan-German League, 1890-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924).

<sup>193</sup> "Miss Wertheimer, Expert on Europe: Research Associate of Foreign Policy Association Dies in California at 41," *New York Times* (May 7, 1937), p. 30. Mary E. Townsend, of Columbia, wrote to the *Times* in a letter that the newspaper published that "American university women and scholars lost one of their best-known and brilliant representatives" upon Wertheimer's death. "American women scholars in their difficult and discouraging struggles these days for university recognition and academic opportunities may well be encouraged," Townsend continued, "while to those who discredit the contribution of women to intellectual life and who refuse them recognition, Mildred Wertheimer's distinguished, although short-lived, career may be cited as an ever-living vindication of the worth and potentiality of women's achievement. "The Late Mildred S. Wertheimer," *New York Times* (May 13, 1937), p. 24.

<sup>194</sup> Buell to Vera Micheles, April 16, 1928, Buell Papers, Box 5.

<sup>195</sup> "Who's Who' in the Research Department," attached to Merriman to Members of the National Council and Executive Board," January 9, 1928, Survey Associates Records, Box 73; *Ten Years of the F.P.A.*, pp. 26-28.

Shut off from the academy, these women took refuge in McDonald's Midtown office. Although they could write in the *Bulletin*, their major work in the *Reports* was unsigned until March 1929; the first signed *Report* was a Wertheimer analysis of the evacuation of the Rhineland.<sup>196</sup> They had to quit if their husbands demanded it, as Bache-Wiig's did.<sup>197</sup> (Micheles' did not.) There was little competition for them in a new, risky, and impoverished field, so they came cheap. Micheles was hired at the princely wage of \$200 per month; even MacCallum and Wertheimer, after three or four years of service, were paid about \$3,000 a year. Their rather less talented male colleagues earned \$4,000-5,000, and Buell far more.<sup>198</sup> But while the women received the compensation of "contacts," McDonald told Rockefeller when asking for a three-year grant in 1929, "first-rate" scholars, people like Herbert Feis or Jacob Viner or Stanley Hornbeck, would want real salaries, and a sense of tenure.<sup>199</sup> Buell rated Wertheimer and Micheles as two of the best scholars around, but he still sought academic excellence and policy relevance, which he defined in differently gendered terms.<sup>200</sup> He plugged the Association into the (largely) male networks of applied research being promoted by foundations. Five of the six researchers who he had hired by 1932 were men.<sup>201</sup> Buell was delighted that he was "in a position to attract the best graduates of

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<sup>196</sup> Wertheimer, "The Evacuation of the Rhineland" *Information Service* 5 (1929), pp. 1-18.

<sup>197</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board," March 3, 1926, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>198</sup> "Foreign Policy Association, Inc.," May 29, 1929, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>199</sup> McDonald to Rockefeller, April 27, 1929, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>200</sup> For an argument that "objectivity" *itself* was coded masculine, see Karen Garner, *Shaping a Global Women's Agenda: Women's NGOs and Global Governance, 1925-85* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>201</sup> McDonald to Rockefeller, May 18, 1932, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

our leading universities to our staff”; after Micheleles, he never hired another woman to a permanent post on the research staff.<sup>202</sup>

All this helped Buell to push the Association closer to power. “If I had my way about it, we would move the Research Department of the F.P.A. to Washington,” he wrote almost as soon as he arrived in New York.<sup>203</sup> He settled for an office in the capital, opened in 1928 and run by Stone. This had two functions. One was to secure fuller distribution of the *Reports*, which Stone achieved by renting an office in the National Press Building and handing them out to Washington and foreign correspondents, supplementing them with press releases. The more important thing, from Buell’s perspective, was Stone’s remarkable ability to link the research department to policymakers, at a time when the foreign policy research facilities of the executive and legislative bureaucracies were insignificant. Senators used Stone’s services regularly, calling on his office to supply factual data, briefs on specific issues, and, eventually, assistance on particular bills.<sup>204</sup> Secretary Kellogg told McDonald late in 1927 that his officers would “be glad to receive such added material as you may care to furnish, for the purpose of corroborating or supplementing information derived from official sources here and abroad.”<sup>205</sup> That alliance only

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<sup>202</sup> “Meeting of Branch Chairmen,” September 29, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 1.

<sup>203</sup> Buell, “Memorandum on Washington Trip,” October 4, 1927, Buell Papers, Box 41.

<sup>204</sup> Stone reported that twenty senators had written to express their appreciation of the *Information Service* by May 1927. See Stone to McDonald, May 24, 1927, McDonald Papers, Box 19. After that, almost all of Stone’s monthly reports to the board on the Washington bureau included some notice that a senator had asked him for a *Report*, for a specific piece of research, or some other service.

<sup>205</sup> Frank E. Kellogg to McDonald, December 16, 1927, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930-1939, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association, Box 5071.

strengthened after the Association board member Joseph P. Cotton was appointed Henry Stimson's undersecretary of state in 1929.<sup>206</sup>

Lacking real research or information facilities of their own, many State Department officers kept copies of the *Reports* on file. Many, including those who were members of the Association, expressed their appreciation by acting, or having their staff act, as peer reviewers. It became departmental business to read draft *Reports*, and to line edit them with the ritual disclaimer that such edits were, of course, unofficial. Sending three pages of "factual" edits on a draft *Report* on China, for instance, one desk officer reminded a researcher that he had "not offered suggestions in regard to matters of opinion," and that the comments ought to be regarded as "strictly confidential."<sup>207</sup> Stanley Hornbeck, the director of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, regularly leaked information to his friend Buell, and an African specialist told another researcher that he never hesitated to give Stone "confidential information, knowing that he will never abuse our confidence."<sup>208</sup> Washington instructed its embassies to assist the researchers when they were traveling, reminding foreign service officers that it was "making a real contribution" toward "the development of an enlightened public opinion."<sup>209</sup> In return, the

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<sup>206</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," June 12, 1929, FPA, Part II, Box 15. Stimson himself, Stone reported, "expressed most cordial interest in the F.P.A. and showed himself familiar with our luncheon discussions in New York and with our publications." See "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," April 10, 1929, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>207</sup> Maxwell M. Hamilton to T. A. Bisson, July 9, 1936, FPA, Part II, Box 11.

<sup>208</sup> Stanley Hornbeck to Buell, December 28, 1931, Stanley Kuhl Hornbeck Papers, Library and Archives, Hoover Institution, Box 168; Joseph A. Green to William Koren, Jr., January 25, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 11.

<sup>209</sup> Sumner Welles, "Visit of Mr. Charles A. Thomson of the Foreign Policy Association to South America," August 10, 1938, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930-1939, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/81.

Association not only made sure that the State Department's views were accurately represented in print, but it made every effort to support the department in Washington.<sup>210</sup>

Still, for all Buell's energy, his enterprise, and his expertise, for all his breathless exhortation that such intelligence as his must be applied to politics to save the cause of peace, he was never quite comfortable around power. He found it hard to raise money; he found it hard to ingratiate himself; he found it hard to get himself heard at the highest levels. He tried and failed to influence Roosevelt in 1932 and in 1936; he fell over himself to get close to his tariff-busting hero, Cordell Hull, whom he presented late in 1934 with a theoretically clear but politically impossible plan to "bring the world out of chaos" through "courageous statesmanship" that would lead to the United States joining the League, with Germany and Japan in tow.<sup>211</sup>

Annotating his papers thirty years later, even Buell's wife found his "'buttering up' approach" unfortunate.<sup>212</sup> Conceiving of politics as a matter of intelligence, of information properly applied, it was telling that he constantly returned to the safety of the lecture hall. A friend wrote that

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<sup>210</sup> Stone, for instance, urged Congress to permit the restructuring and proper funding of the department in 1929, writing a report that eventually helped to win an upturn in appropriations. See William T. Stone, "The Administration of the Department of State: Its Organization and Needs," *Information Service* 4 (1929), Special Supplement No. 3; McDonald to Stimson, June 19, 1930, FPA, Part II, Box 9. Eight years later, Buell offered the same service to Hull. Hull notably told Buell that the department needed much improved research facilities, but the effort petered out. See Buell to Hull, February 24, 1937, FPA, Part II, Box 7; Hull to Buell, March 11, 1937, FPA, Box 7, Part II.

<sup>211</sup> Buell to Raymond Moley, September 29, 1932, Buell Papers, Box 43; Buell, "Confidential Memorandum on the Foreign Policy of the United States," September 1932, Buell Papers, Box 43; Buell, "Interview with the President," September 15, 1936, Buell Papers, Box 41; Buell, "Raw Materials Commission and Conference," September 15, 1936, Buell Papers, Box 41; Buell, "A New Initiative in United States Foreign Policy," November 30, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 42.

<sup>212</sup> Frances Dwight Buell, "Buell: A World New Deal," March 1962, Buell Papers, Box 42.

Buell “lives in a world of documents;” he was, as one board member said, “a quite different type of man” to the dashing, charismatic McDonald.<sup>213</sup> And McDonald succeeded where Buell failed.

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Like so many other American internationalists, McDonald spent his summers in Europe, taking stock of the diplomatic scene and, often enough, heading to Geneva for the League of Nations Assembly. As the depression dimmed the prospects of cooperation, he spent more and more time in Germany, where the darkness was closing in. Protected by a press card and armed with a relationship with the Nazi foreign press chief Ernst Hanfstaengl, he did the rounds in Berlin in the summer of 1932. For the first time he understood the gravity of the Nazis’ anti-Semitism; for the first time he saw Hitler speak. “His reception was the most extraordinary I have ever seen given a public man,” McDonald noted; it was an experience that had “given me a new picture of him and his movement.” One of the banners read “Deutschland Erwacht”; “Germany arise.”<sup>214</sup>

Adolf Hitler gained power; so did Franklin Roosevelt. A few weeks before the election, McDonald drove up from Manhattan to Hyde Park, and came away unimpressed with Eleanor’s husband’s lack of interest in making foreign affairs an election issue. But his friends sensed an opportunity. His dream was to be the first U.S. ambassador to the League of Nations, but that was out of the question; another embassy would be too expensive for a family of only reasonable

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<sup>213</sup> Francis Pickens Miller to Richard F. Cleveland, November 4, 1935, National Policy Committee Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 1; “Foreign Policy Association: Interview with Dr. Joseph P. Chamberlain,” May 18, 1938, Commonwealth Fund Records, Box 110.

<sup>214</sup> Breitman *et al* (eds.), *Advocate for the Doomed*, pp. 12-18.

means to take up, given the social costs. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., wondered whether he had thought about the State Department. "I said that, of course, the undersecretaryship would be excellent," McDonald replied. But as the threat to German Jews grew, Germany called again. McDonald crossed the Atlantic on the spur of the moment in March, just as the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act. "This is a revolution in full speed," he reported back to New York, "but I would not miss it for the world." He met Hitler on April 8, and was subjected to a rant on the Jews. "No, the world has no just ground for complaint," Hitler said. "Germany is not fighting merely the battle of Germany. It is fighting the battle of the world." On McDonald's way out of the Führer's office, Hanfstaengl suggested that he put himself forward as the U.S. ambassador. "Your friend Mr. Rockefeller could arrange the finances," the Nazi advised.<sup>215</sup>

Back in New York, Morgenthau actually liked that idea, as did Colonel House. Indeed, most of those on whom McDonald called in his relentless social schedule did. An invitation to the White House followed, where McDonald discussed the ambassadorship with the president for so long that he had to stay the night in the Lincoln Bedroom. Stone mounted a quiet campaign in Washington on McDonald's behalf, but the post went to William Dodd. Still, having been horrified at what he had seen, and spending much of his time among the German, Jewish bankers he had befriended, McDonald felt it his duty to do what he could. Working with Wertheimer and others, he mounted a campaign for the League to take up the question of refugees from Germany. Another visit followed to Germany, where he and his wife, Ruth, visited the concentration camp at Dachau, and witnessed a rally at Nuremberg. They proceeded

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid, pp. 24-48.



to Geneva, where his lobbying helped to secure the creation of a High Commission. McDonald did not particularly want the post for himself, but by the end of October, the League Secretariat, ever anxious to secure American participation, had appointed him anyway. It was a weak position McDonald knew, but he had to take it.<sup>216</sup> His failure was inevitable, yet tinged with valor; he resigned two years later, angry about inaction in the face of “impending tragedies.”<sup>217</sup> After the war he feared would rage, he would become the first U.S. ambassador to Israel.<sup>218</sup>

Buell looked on. Unhappy that McDonald had spent a year “looking for new worlds to conquer,” he was also aware that his own attempts to find practical employment had failed.<sup>219</sup> Stone had quietly tried to have him appointed to positions in which he could use his academic expertise and his impulse against imperialism, whether that be as minister to Haiti, or a post for the League in Liberia, where Buell was a celebrity on account of his revelations about the use of slave labor.<sup>220</sup> Instead, he took over from McDonald, and, in the name of “self-respect,” stripped his predecessor from the board position that the Association’s old guard had hoped to provide.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid, pp. 49-133.

<sup>217</sup> “League Aid Asked by McDonald to End Nazi Persecution,” *New York Times* (December 30, 1935), p. 1; “Text of Resignation of League Commissioner for German Refugees,” *New York Times* (December 30, 1935), p. 12.

<sup>218</sup> Greg Burgess, *The League of Nations and the Refugees from Nazi Germany: James G. McDonald and Hitler’s Victims* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); James G. McDonald, *My Mission in Israel, 1948-1951* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951).

<sup>219</sup> Buell to Stone, May 1, 1933, Buell Papers, Box 42. McDonald was also offered the deanship of the new Fletcher School at Tufts. See “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 9, 1932, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>220</sup> McDonald to Stone, June 21, 1932, McDonald Papers, Box 19. The Liberian government proposed in June 1934 that Buell represent it at the League of Nations. Vera Micheles Dean advised that he had been selected “because you have the reputation of being a good fighter of causes,” and that, if he accepted, he would “detract from our hard-won reputation for objectivity.” Dean to Buell, June 22, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 42.

<sup>221</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee,” October 27, 1933, FPA, Part II, Box 15; [Notes by Buell], October 30, 1933, Buell Papers, Box 42; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 8, 1933, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

The Association of which Buell became president in October 1933 was in crisis. It was sufficiently valued among its wealthy supporters that the depression had taken time to weaken its operations, despite the protests of its finance chair, the banker Arthur Sachs, that it was a “luxury charity” and could not expect to survive.<sup>222</sup> Only a year and a half after the stock market crash did the membership start to show a “disquieting” decline; before that, the budget actually grew to nearly \$200,000, the membership to 12,500.<sup>223</sup> “It has without doubt become the most important educational force in this country in the field of international affairs,” Rockefeller’s advisors wrote in June 1932, and, “comparatively speaking, curtailment of its income has been very slight.”<sup>224</sup> But even Rockefeller had to cut back on his personal contributions that year, part of a pattern that saw total donations drop by a third.<sup>225</sup> By the start of 1934, the board was contemplating raising only half as much money as in 1930.<sup>226</sup> Attendances and enthusiasm suffered in the branches; the membership dropped beneath 10,000; neither recovered until 1936.<sup>227</sup>

Foundations stepped into the breach. The Association had used foundation funding before, but the depression made it fundamentally and permanently dependent on that funding, and on the policies that lay behind it. Under the sympathetic leadership of Raymond Blaine

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<sup>222</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 13, 1929, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Ogden to McDonald, November 22, 1929, McDonald Papers, Box 11.

<sup>223</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” April 10, 1931, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>224</sup> “Foreign Policy Association,” June 16, 1932, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>225</sup> Arthur W. Packard to McDonald, June 24, 1932, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1; “Foreign Policy Association,” June 15, 1933, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series Q, Box 1.

<sup>226</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” February 1, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>227</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” January 15, 1936, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” March 18, 1936, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

Fosdick, the Rockefeller Foundation was, for the time being, by far the most important of these. It started making an annual contribution to the research department of \$25,000 in 1933, and in 1935 accepted that “substantial support from the Foundation, now and for some years to come, seems essential.”<sup>228</sup> If the Rockefeller Foundation was largely content to leave the Association alone, their philosophies broadly in sync, other philanthropies were not. By the force of Nicholas Murray Butler’s personality, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace insisted that in exchange for its dollars, the Association would have to take the lead in restructuring the entire foreign affairs infrastructure, and explore how the big six organizations — the Association, the Institute of International Education, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the World Peace Foundation, the League of Nations Association, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation — could cooperate.<sup>229</sup> If the Association was by far the most imposing of these groups by budget, staff, and reputation, it was also by now the one most distant from the formal peace movement. Although it moved into the offices these groups started to share at 8 West 40th Street, thereby saving on rent and library costs, it found it could only really cooperate with the World Peace Foundation, which under Rich’s direction had become little more than a sales agent for League of Nations publications. Even that collaboration was brief.<sup>230</sup>

What the alliance with the World Peace Foundation encouraged, however, was Buell’s desire to make a more explicit contribution to policy. In his personal capacity, he launched wave

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<sup>228</sup> “Foreign Policy Association,” January 1, 1933, RF, Box 333; “Foreign Policy Association,” December 11, 1935, RF, Box 333.

<sup>229</sup> “The Six International Organizations,” July 28, 1933, Smith Papers, Box 225.

<sup>230</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 14, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Buell to Rich, April 11, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 8, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

after wave of attacks on neutrality policy, lambasting “isolationism” before it became a blood sport.<sup>231</sup> Organizationally, too, Buell sought greater political commitment. “We should frankly realize,” he wrote in a proposed plan of action in March 1933, “that although during the last ten years research in facts has been of primary importance, the future will depend upon how facts are interpreted and policies defined.” “In short,” Buell said, “hard thinking has become more important than factual data.”<sup>232</sup> With the World Peace Foundation, he sponsored a series of joint policy committees, on which carefully selected, male citizens made recommendations, such as on the eventual need for Filipino independence.<sup>233</sup> He accepted an invitation from President Mendieta to “make a survey of conditions in Cuba,” putting together a mostly-academic, Rockefeller-funded commission that notably included only one woman, which would have been impossible a decade earlier.<sup>234</sup> Its 500-page report was nicely written up in the press, but made little real impact.<sup>235</sup> With the World Student Christian Federation chairman Francis Pickens Miller, who briefly served as the Association’s field director, Buell sought to create a network of hundreds of “policy groups” across the country, which would gather together leading citizens to

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<sup>231</sup> See, e.g., Buell, “Is Neutrality Desirable?” January 15, 1936, CBS radio transcript attached to Buell to Butler, January 15, 1936, Nicholas Murray Butler Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Box 57.

<sup>232</sup> Buell, “Proposed Five Year Plan for the F.P.A.,” March 14, 1933, Survey Associates Records, Box 73.

<sup>233</sup> Committee on the Philippines, “Recommendations regarding the Future of the Philippines,” January 1935, Buell Papers, Box 43.

<sup>234</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee,” March 31, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Norma S. Thompson to Buell, April 23, 1934, RF, Box 335; “Personnel of Cuban Commission Announced by Foreign Policy Association,” June 1, 1933, RF, Box 336.

<sup>235</sup> *Problems of the New Cuba: Report of the Commission on Cuban Affairs* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1935).

study issues, foreign and domestic, and submit ideas to the government.<sup>236</sup> Painfully conscious of the interrelationship between foreign and domestic politics, Buell even proposed to convert the Foreign Policy Association into a Public Policy Association, one as comfortable debating the National Recovery Administration as the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act.<sup>237</sup> All this irritated the staff, but the board let that last project run as far as a conference of Southern notables in Atlanta in the spring of 1935. It correctly feared, however, that its purposes were being subverted, and forced Buell to form an independent National Policy Committee, which took up ever more of his time.<sup>238</sup>

While Buell tolerated the impulse of others at the Association to educate more of the public, his own, exhausting initiatives betrayed the steady shrinkage of what he thought a viable, real public might be. At a conference of branch representatives in September 1934, Buell was warned by one Midwestern chairman that he had “great difficulty in imagining just what sort of people will be included” in the “policy groups.” Miller, with Buell’s approval, responded that perhaps “a dozen or two” of even a branch’s membership would “rather like to go into some subject a little more thoroughly and fully with men and women of other points of view than they can by the question method after luncheon addresses.”<sup>239</sup> (This initiative, stripped of its pretense

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<sup>236</sup> Miller to Buell, September 4, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 44; Miller to Buell, November 13, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 44.

<sup>237</sup> Buell, “Proposal to Expand the Scope of the Foreign Policy Association,” October 23, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 42.

<sup>238</sup> Buell to Miller, December 4, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 5; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” June 12, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Buell to Arthur Sweetser, July 16, 1935, Buell Papers, Box 43.

<sup>239</sup> “Meeting of Branch Chairmen,” September 29, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 1, pp. 79-80.

to gender equality, found a home three years later at the Council on Foreign Relations.)<sup>240</sup> Despite, or even because of, their total lack of mass appeal, Buell thought that such “intellectual” forms of politics were a viable response to “new forms of unreasoning and unintelligent nationalism,” to the “demagoguery represented by Father Coughlin, Huey Long and others.”<sup>241</sup> Soon enough, Buell damned Roosevelt in that category, too, leaving behind his early interest in the New Deal to vote for Alf Landon, to work for Wendell Willkie, and, in 1942, to mount a laughable challenge against a fifteen-term incumbent in the Republican primary in the first congressional district of Massachusetts. (“A Man of Vision, Knowledge and Action,” his leaflet read.)<sup>242</sup> Like many of his fellow Wilsonians, then, Buell posed the challenges of the depression decade as a question of expertise versus stupidity, not of interests and power. What was needed, he wrote in 1935, was not a “preconceived political program,” but a “coordinated intellectual process.”<sup>243</sup> Peace needed people who could “intellectualize it,” he told one correspondent in 1937.<sup>244</sup> Increasingly defining “people” as experts like himself, Buell took the Association into the International Studies Conference and explored setting up a kind of international Foreign Policy

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<sup>240</sup> See below, pp. 140-145.

<sup>241</sup> Buell, “National Program of Public Education,” March 1935, Buell Papers, Box 44. Buell later frankly called Long the “first American fascist.” See Raymond Leslie Buell, *Isolated America* (New York: Knopf, 1940), p. 318. On Coughlin, Long, and mass politics, see Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Knopf, 1982).

<sup>242</sup> “For Congress,” 1942, Buell Papers, Box 40.

<sup>243</sup> Buell to Board Members, March 15, 1935, Survey Associates Records, Box 73.

<sup>244</sup> Buell to Brooks Emeny, March 25, 1937, Buell Papers, Box 5.

Association, based at the League's Geneva Research Center. But as international cooperation frayed, the time for such ventures was passing.<sup>245</sup>

Buell eventually took refuge in the business community, and later in journalism. In September 1938, *Fortune* magazine offered him the chance to edit its Round Table feature, a new effort to find policy agreement among suitable representatives of business, labor, agriculture, academia, and so on. Cloistered in the countryside for a weekend, the leaders would hammer out a compromise on various questions, mostly relating to domestic politics, and then announce their findings in a report written, by Buell, for the wealthy, corporate-minded readers of the magazine. An effort to rescue capitalist democracy, *Fortune's* feature reduced the public of public opinion to few enough men that they could sit comfortably around a single table. Buell jumped at the opportunity. He took a leave of absence at the end of 1938, and did not return. He spent much of the war in the postwar department of *Time* magazine, not as a writer for the public, but as an uninfluential to Henry Luce.<sup>246</sup>

At the heart of Buell's discontent was a loss of faith in the public. Buell did not abandon the cause of international cooperation, much as he struggled to reconcile it with a world of power politics at its most brutal. His most important book came out early in 1940, based on lectures

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<sup>245</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," March 18, 1936, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Buell, "Memorandum on Possible Future Developments of the Geneva Research Center," August 26, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Tracy Kittredge, "Projects for International Relations Studies in Geneva," November 21, 1935, RF, Series 910, Box 7; "Application on Behalf of the Geneva Research Center," December 1935, Buell Papers, Box 43; "Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 4, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15. On the International Studies Conference, and particularly the elitism it represented, like much interwar intellectual cooperation, see David Long, "Who Killed the International Studies Conference?" *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006), pp. 603-622; Michael Riemens, "International academic cooperation on international relations in the interwar period: the International Studies Conference," *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011), pp. 911-928.

<sup>246</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee," September 26, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee," October 13, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

given at the Fletcher School in the fall of 1939. Reviewed against Charles Beard's *A Foreign Policy for America* in the major newspapers, *Isolated America* was a calm, encyclopedic indictment of interwar diplomacy and an insistent account of the need for American responsibility within the world community.<sup>247</sup> The League had failed, Buell accepted, but that did not make it a bad idea. "The failure of the West to rid itself of the traditional power-politics system and to take the League seriously," he wrote, explained "why it is at war again today."<sup>248</sup> But the new League for which Buell provided a template was to be a quite different proposition to the old, rooted more in power politics, more in the need for economic cooperation, more in the name of international administration and expertise than Wilson's grand design. Buell's hopes for public opinion were drastically tempered. He still sought to increase popular representation in the League, but by having political parties or, preferably, voluntary associations nominate responsible delegates, not by throwing open the halls of the Palais des Nations to the masses beyond.

As in Geneva, so in Washington and New York: the American public did not appear to deserve the hopes that progressives had vested in it. "As a result of the work of such bodies as the Foreign Policy Association," Buell wrote, Americans had "a knowledge of international affairs far

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<sup>247</sup> Walter Millis, "Is it Internationalism or 'Continentalism'?" *New York Herald Tribune* (May 19, 1940), p. H3 and "What Policy, U.S.?" *Washington Post* (May 19, 1940), p. B8; "Fundamentalist v. Modernist," *Time* (May 20, 1940), Buell Papers, Box 37; Reinhold Niebuhr, "American Foreign Policy," *The Nation* (May 25, 1940), Buell Papers, Box 37. Allan Nevins, "Two Views of America's Part," *New York Times* (May 26, 1940), p. BR1.

<sup>248</sup> Buell was ashamed of the League as early as 1934. "I find myself in the embarrassing position of being asked at meetings what I think of the League of Nations Association's petition and whether I think the United Nations should join the League," he told Stone. "My answer is that if the United States joins the League and does nothing else, the situation would not be changed in any way whatever, and I also state my opinion that the League of Nations today has lost its former character and has now become an instrument for strengthening the European balance of power." See Buell to Stone, November 9, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 32. As Buell put it in 1940, "the record of the League in preventing aggression is not impressive; and the League generally has a bad name"; but Buell believed that "its defects are due not to its construction but to the treason of its members." See Buell, *Isolated America*, p. 419.



greater than at any other time in their history, and as far as information was concerned, more extensive than what was available to the public in any other country.” And yet politicians had capitulated to “pseudo-pacifism”; the “isolationists” had proven “strong enough to prevent the United States from accepting an international program which might have averted the outbreak of war.” Perhaps, Buell wondered, there was now *too* much information available, rather than too little. The “average individual,” he wrote, “is confronted with an immense number of unrelated facts on the one hand and untested generalities on the other.” The times belonged to those who could simplify, who could wield power. And in a world of power, rather than a world of deliberative cooperation, democracy in diplomacy was far harder to accomplish. “While every effort must be made to democratize the conduct of foreign relations,” Buell wrote with an unusually apologetic tone, “every American friend of democracy should realize that this is extremely difficult so long as we live in a jungle world.”<sup>249</sup>

Buell was not the only Wilsonian to have “lost his international mind,” as Stephen Wertheim has written, but as president of what may well have been the world’s leading, public-facing foreign policy institution, his unravelling might have been particularly symbolic.<sup>250</sup> Buell, after all, was not alone. As we shall see, many scholars of his temperament and outlook ended the decade, and especially the next one, shunning mass politics and swearing their allegiance to expertise. They would build different kinds of think tanks, serving a different kind of state. They would manage the public in different ways, developing new methods of propaganda that were

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<sup>249</sup> Buell, *Isolated America*, pp. 24-25, 71, 92, 287, 453.

<sup>250</sup> Wertheim, “Reading the International Mind,” p. 48. See also Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism in America*, pp. 169-228.

premised on the more skeptical view of the public at which Buell had, reluctantly arrived. But theirs was not the only available response, nor was it even necessarily the dominant one. Others, including friends of Buell's and fellow members of the Council on Foreign Relations, reacted differently. They sought to bolster the progressive legacy against those who abandoned it. They sought a broader public, not a smaller one.

## Chapter 2

### How to Teach a City to Lead the World

By the coming of the New Deal, the United States was home to an elaborate infrastructure of research-based, non-profit, non-partisan institutions, engaged in a loosely coordinated effort to create and inform the publics needed to meld democracy and foreign affairs. Most of these institutions, however, were based in New York City, based so close together in fact that their staffs could hardly avoid one another at lunch, or at the club. Outside of the area bounded by 125th Street to the north and Wall Street to the south, the reach of the foreign policy elite was weak. Aside from the luncheon clubs of the Foreign Policy Association branches, only a handful of cities had foreign policy institutions anything like those of New York. Under the energetic leadership of a young lawyer named Adlai Stevenson and a salaried director called Clifton Utley, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations was thriving, even if it had little desire to become anything more than a society forum.<sup>1</sup> A young professor of international relations, Ben M. Cherrington, was doing more radical work in Denver, Colorado. The leader of the Foundation for the Advancement of the Social Sciences, founded in 1926, Cherrington aimed to fill the city's

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Chicago Council on Foreign Relations: A Record of Forty Years* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1963); John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois: The Life of Adlai E. Stevenson* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 125-140; James C. Schneider, *Should America Go To War? The Debate Over Foreign Policy, 1939-1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 65-68.

“vacuum of reliable information regarding the contemporary world and America’s place in it.”<sup>2</sup>

Wielding a lucrative endowment, Cherrington linked community programs and public addresses with the University of Denver’s curriculum, creating a program so vital that the *Christian Century* claimed he had “made that Rocky Mountain capital world-minded to a degree which cannot be duplicated in scores of other cities supposedly much more nearly related to international affairs.” But neither Chicago nor Denver was a viable model for other communities.<sup>3</sup>

In Cleveland, an experiment of a different order was taking place, one that would become the template for a national movement after World War II. The Cleveland Foreign Affairs Council was an explicit attempt to root discussion of foreign affairs in community life, far more deeply than anything attempted in New York or elsewhere. It was the brainchild primarily of two

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<sup>2</sup> Ben M. Cherrington, *The Social Science Foundation of the University of Denver, 1926–1951: A Personal Reminiscence* (Denver: University of Denver, 1973), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> “Mr. Hull Makes a Wise Appointment,” *The Christian Century* (August 17, 1938), p. 981; “Culture Division,” *Time* (August 8, 1938), p. 8; Virginia F. Saurlein, “A History of the Social Science Foundation of the University of Denver with Emphasis on the Adult Education Program,” MA thesis, University of Denver, 1952. Cherrington’s educational work was a crucial justification for the State Department’s decision, in 1938, to appoint him to the Division of Cultural Relations, a bureau that aimed the combat fascist propaganda in Latin America by claiming the mantle of non-propagandistic, cultural or educational persuasion. “To one who has devoted as much time as you to endeavoring to interest the American people in international affairs,” Secretary of State Cordell Hull wrote, “it is unnecessary for me to emphasize the importance of an understanding of the habits of thought and mode of life of other countries to cordial and fruitful international relations.” See Cordell Hull to Ben M. Cherrington, June 29, 1938, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930–1939, 111.46/1A; Cherrington to Oscar Chapman, June 10, 1938, Ben M. Cherrington Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Denver, Box 5. Cherrington firmly believed that the lessons of the Foundation’s activities could be internationalized, as he later would try in his work with UNESCO. “Experiences of our Foundation to which you generously allude demonstrate American people quickly responsive to sound program of education in international affairs,” he told Hull. “We have been especially pleased to discover this responsiveness not confined to those with more advanced education but people in all walks of life have evidenced significant capacity for open minded inquiry.” See Cherrington to Hull, July 5, 1938, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1930–1939, 111.46/1½. This transference of expertise from the domestic realm to the foreign is overlooked in histories of the origins of American public diplomacy, but American cities, and the adult education movement, were the training ground. Cf. Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2006); Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Sarah Ellen Graham, *Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

men. Neither was a peripheral figure. One was Newton Diehl Baker, a progressive Democrat and former Secretary of War. Committed to supporting the League of Nations even when it torpedoed his own political ambitions, he was Woodrow Wilson's spiritual successor. The other man was a young scholar, Brooks Emeny, a Republican who trained in geopolitics at Yale, and was steeped in the new, scientific study of international relations. Baker was an idealist, so faithful to the idea that public opinion could save the world that he was willing to teach classes at a night school to make it so.<sup>4</sup> Emeny wore the intellectual mantle of realism, and saw the need to teach Americans what one historian has called "a sense of power," and to teach them to use it responsibly.<sup>5</sup> However divergent intellectually, the two men nevertheless had a few things in common. Both were members of the Council on Foreign Relations. Both were offered ambassadorships by Cordell Hull's State Department, and Emeny served on its Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy.<sup>6</sup> Both hated the New Deal, and feared the use of the state to police debate. Both believed in the power of public opinion. Both believed that an active, informed, responsible public would have beneficial effects on American foreign policy, indeed that without such a public, America was a danger to the world. They did not think that public opinion merely legitimated policy, nor that it could be ignored. Instead, they believed in the

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<sup>4</sup> "Idealism" and "realism" (let alone "Realism") are constraining categories, but also actor's categories. Emeny's realism did not bother Baker. "I am not disturbed by anticipation of the Simonds-Emeny tome," he in 1934. "As a matter of fact, I have enough idealism to withstand all the assaults of all the realists there are, and its [*sic*] probably good medicine for me to have these fact finders and hard reasoners to face." Newton D. Baker to A. Caswell Ellis, November 9, 1934, Newton Diehl Baker Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 67.

<sup>5</sup> John A. Thompson, *A Sense of Power: The Roots of America's Global Role* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015). In Thompson's account, the fact that Americans acquired a "sense of power" in World War II trumps alternative explanations for the rise of the United States. But how this "sense" was cultivated is not fleshed out. This chapter offers one way of doing so.

<sup>6</sup> Harley A. Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945* (Washington: Department of State, 1949), p. 73.

possibility — even the necessity — of applying progressive democracy to foreign policy. They were prepared to invest their time and money to make the Cleveland Council the model for citizen education in world affairs nationwide.

More than the Foreign Policy Association, the Cleveland Council took strength from a much broader movement for adult education, which took off in the years after the Great War. An afterlife of progressivism, adult education promised to create what the historian Andrew Jewett has called a “scientific democracy.”<sup>7</sup> Responding to an era of quickening social change, it tried to build an ideal political culture in which active publics participated, in which expertise was responsible to the electorate, in which social science was a common possession, and in which facts mattered more than fictions. Discussion groups swept the nation in the 1930s; public forums were set up in areas urban and local for citizens to debate the issues of the day; town hall meetings were simulated on the radio waves. This flourishing of talk was explicitly related to the perilous position in which democracy found itself, menaced abroad by rival ideologies, and at home by economic depression. And it was a development, usually ignored, that demonstrates how the growth of international relations as a field, as a body of knowledge, was a fundamentally public process. Since the end of the Great War, a network of new institutions had created a class of experts on world affairs, and even students of power politics could not resist a platform to teach the public. Idealist or realist; either way, to teach international relations in this period was ordinarily to teach that the United States had an inescapable role to play in international politics, whatever that role might specifically be.

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

That was certainly the case in Cleveland. Although the experts brought to Cleveland held markedly different conceptions of world affairs and the policies that the United States should follow, collectively they taught the Council's public an ample conception of America's role in the world. Americans, Emeny claimed, needed to be informed about the world not because they faced mortal threats, but because they possessed unrivalled, ultimate influence. American power, in this view, was a fact, and Americans needed to get to grips with it. War, peace, and everything in between, depended on the capacity of Americans to talk their way into leading the world.

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No man had a firmer hold on the Wilsonian spirit than Newton Diehl Baker. Baker was a prototypical progressive, who moved step by step from urban to national to international politics. At home in Cleveland, he had served as the city solicitor from 1901 to 1909, and its mayor from 1912 to 1915. In a city renowned as a cauldron of reform, Baker was a moderate, famous for taking on the streetcar monopoly, for building a municipal power plant, and even for making the sale of fish and ice cream the purview of city hall.<sup>8</sup> Woodrow Wilson twice offered him the Department of the Interior in 1913, and twice Baker declined, but when the president sought to make him the Secretary of War in 1916, this avowed pacifist accepted. Overseeing conscription, deployment, and demobilization, Baker, his biographer notes, was Wilson's "most visible

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<sup>8</sup> On progressive reform in Cleveland, see Shelton Stromquist, "The Crucible of Class: Cleveland Politics and the Origins of Municipal Reform in the Progressive Era," *Journal of Urban History* 23 (1997), pp. 192-220; Robert Bionaz, "Streetcar Politics and Reform Government in Cleveland, 1880-1909," *Ohio History* 119 (2012), pp. 5-29; Kenneth Finegold, *Experts and Politicians: Reform Challenges to Machine Politics in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 69-118

lieutenant” during the Great War.<sup>9</sup> He was also widely seen as Wilson’s natural successor, even as he retreated to a comfortable life in Cleveland, earning his keep by defending corporate clients from litigation.

Whispered about as a potential candidate for the presidency, Baker cared far more about international peace than his own political ambitions. At the Democratic convention at Madison Square Garden in 1924, he ruined a realistic shot at the nomination by issuing a powerful, futile call for the party platform to include a commitment to joining the League of Nations. Baker invoked Wilson with “the spirit of prophecy upon him,” the *New York Times* recounted. “I did my best,” he told the late president, whom he pictured “standing at the throne of God whose approval he won and has received” — “I am doing it now. You are still the captain of my soul.”<sup>10</sup> By 1932, when he was serving as a judge at the Permanent Court of International Justice, Baker was the prohibitive favorite for the nomination. But while Franklin Roosevelt was willing to compromise his ideals, promising William Randolph Hearst that he would renounce the League, Baker was not. He therefore lost.<sup>11</sup> All in all, no serious politician so relentlessly promoted the League. “The time has come,” Baker wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 1933, “for somebody to be ‘a fool in Christ’ if necessary”; he was quite prepared to volunteer.<sup>12</sup>

On his lonely quest, Baker sought community in the web of internationalist institutions that his progressive allies built up after the war, just as he did in legal, consumer, religious, and

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<sup>9</sup> Douglas B. Craig, *Progressives at War: William G. McAdoo and Newton D. Baker, 1863-1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> “Mr. Baker’s Speech,” *New York Times* (June 30, 1924), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Craig, *Progressives at War*, pp. 308-319.

<sup>12</sup> Newton D. Baker, “The New Spirit and Its Critics,” *Foreign Affairs* 12 (1933), p. 3.



labor associations. One biographer recalled that he would joke “that every time he stuck his head out of a door or window he became chairman of three more supposedly voluntary societies.”<sup>13</sup> At one point or another, Baker was a member, supporter, or director of every major international relations institution, as well as a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation, which helped to oversee the entire operation. So wide were his connections that when, in 1933, the Corporation pressed the Foreign Policy Association, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the League of Nations Association, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the World Peace Foundation to cooperate more formally, Baker was asked to lead the discussions as the only neutral arbiter who understood the positions of each.<sup>14</sup> But Baker was interested in this infrastructure not simply because he hoped that they were working to support his policy goals. He was interested in them, too, because they were committed, to a greater or lesser degree, to “education” in international relations, to building the democratic public opinion that he, like Wilson, sincerely believed would be the salvation of a warlike world. And through Baker we can understand how citizen education in world affairs, even if wielded by an internationalist elite, was not (or rather, not just) a synonym for propaganda, or manipulation, or social control.<sup>15</sup> Rather, it could promise much to those hoping to remake citizens, communities, and nations in the name of saving the world.

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<sup>13</sup> C. H. Cramer, *Newton D. Baker: A Biography* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1961), p. 187.

<sup>14</sup> Baker to Raymond Fosdick, May 12, 1933, Baker Papers, Box 99; James G. McDonald to Baker, July 6, 1933, enclosing minutes of meeting of June 21, Baker Papers, Box 99; Craig, *Progressives at War*, pp. 263, 380; Cramer, *Newton D. Baker*, pp. 187-198.

<sup>15</sup> What “education” was not was a synonym for “propaganda,” as much of the literature in the history of U.S. foreign relations assumes. For instance, Michael Wala writes that “to ‘educate the public’ is a euphemism commonly employed among internationalists and government officials to mean the use of propaganda for the manipulation of public opinion.” As intellectual historians have made clear, “education” was supposed to inoculate the public *against* propaganda; the word may have been used by state propagandists, but it had a quite different quality when they used it as opposed to progressives like Baker, and especially as opposed to adult educators. They genuinely valued the means as well as the ends, and, as we shall see below considered the kind of “propaganda” that Wala invokes to be little better than fascism, the arguments of Harold Lasswell notwithstanding. Cf. Michael Wala, “Selling the

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Mobilized and unified by a search for an informed citizenry, progressives had always placed ultimate faith in an educated public, suitably managed, to rule the society of their dreams. “Education,” just like “public opinion,” meant different things to different progressives, but its appeal had been broad enough on the eve of the war that its role as the last, best hope of democracy had united progressives as diverse as Jane Addams, John Dewey, and Nicholas Murray Butler.<sup>16</sup> Although some progressives soured on the potential of the citizen after the war, particularly the scholarly progressives on whose work intellectual historians have normally concentrated, faith in the power of education for the most part persisted.<sup>17</sup>

Even Walter Lippmann, who is usually presented as the most skeptical and disillusioned of progressives, took time to throw off his earlier convictions. Lippmann’s first two postwar books, *Liberty and the News* and *Public Opinion*, both saw democracy’s “supreme remedy” in education. To deny the power of facts, he wrote in 1920, was to claim “that the mass of men is impervious to education, and to deny that, is to deny the postulate of democracy, and to seek

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Marshall Plan at Home: The Committee for the Marshall Plan to Aid European Recovery,” *Diplomatic History* 10 (1986), p. 248, n. 3.

<sup>16</sup> This is not to say that progressives shared the same views of how education might work in practice. See Charles F. Howlett, “John Dewey and Nicholas Murray Butler: Contrasting Conceptions of Peace Education in the Twenties,” *Educational Theory* 37 (1987), pp. 445-461.

<sup>17</sup> Most intellectual historians emphasize scholarly refashioning of democracy, propaganda, and social control in this period, primarily as a preparation for the dominance of “realist” theory after World War II. See, e.g., Purcell, *Crisis of Democratic Theory*, pp. 95-117; Leon Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 13-51; Jonathan Auerbach, *Weapons of Democracy: Propaganda, Progressivism, and American Public Opinion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). Cf. Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University*.

salvation in a dictatorship.”<sup>18</sup> Only in *The Phantom Public*, published in 1925, did Lippmann commit apostasy. Now he saw “the usual appeal to education as the remedy for the incompetence of democracy” that ended conventional works of political theory as “barren”: the public was simply too ignorant, too busy, too uninterested.<sup>19</sup> For his pessimism, Lippmann feared he would be “put on trial for heresy by my old friends on *The New Republic*.”<sup>20</sup> In fact, having used as his straw man a theory so idealistic that even Dewey thought it wildly impractical, Lippmann merely found himself invoked as a foil by progressives who kept the faith.<sup>21</sup> Even if observers agreed with Lippmann’s critiques of the public, almost none accepted his conclusions. Lippmann himself, of course, continued to inform the public through his writing and his public speaking.

By the time *The Phantom Public* was published, the old recourse to education had been fleshed out. This was true not only in philosophy and political theory, but in practice. Adult education, an afterlife of progressivism that attempted to help citizens learn outside of formal schooling structures, has passed largely unnoticed by historians, including historians of American foreign relations, who have preferred to concentrate on how international relations became a subject of more formal scholarly inquiry.<sup>22</sup> But in the 1920s and especially the 1930s adult

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<sup>18</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 408; Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920), p. 99.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925), pp. 22, 26-27.

<sup>20</sup> Qu. in Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998), p. 212.

<sup>21</sup> John Dewey, “Public Opinion,” *New Republic* (May 3, 1922), pp. 286-288; John Dewey, “Practical Democracy,” *New Republic* (December 2, 1925), pp. 52-54.

<sup>22</sup> Even historians of adult education, with their vested interest in legitimating the field by writing its history, bemoan the field’s historiographical paucity. For introductions, see Harold W. Stubblefield, “Adult Civic Education in the Post-World War II Period,” *Adult Education* 24 (1974), pp. 227-237; Harold W. Stubblefield, “Adult Education for Civic Intelligence in the Post World War I Period,” *Adult Education* 26 (1976), pp. 253-269; Harold W. Stubblefield, *Towards a History of Adult Education: The Search for a Unifying Principle* (New York: Croon Helm, 1988); Malcolm S. Knowles, *A History of the Adult Education Movement in the United States* (Malabar: Krieger,

education was the most ambitious and consequential attempt at once to resolve the contradictions of progressivism and to improve the state of American democracy.<sup>23</sup> Part of a wave of attempts to popularize social science and democratize its methods, adult education initiatives proliferated, from the Department of Agriculture's creation of rural study groups, to the New Deal's national forum movement, to program after program on the national radio networks.<sup>24</sup> And adult education found a particularly welcoming home with precisely the Wilsonian, *New Republic* liberals whom Lippmann scorned.<sup>25</sup>

John Dewey showed the way, as he consciously built on his prewar work and responded to Lippmann's critiques.<sup>26</sup> Americans, Dewey argued, were now compelled by new developments in communications, travel, and trade to "live as members of an extensive and mainly unseen society," a society remote from their own experience and judgment. This was breaking down the bonds of community, and leaving nothing so valuable in their place. Modern advertising and

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1994); Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University*, pp. 109-147, 196-244.

<sup>24</sup> William M. Keith, *Democracy as Discussion: Civic Education and the American Forum Movement* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007); Andrew Jewett, "The Social Sciences, Philosophy, and the Cultural Turn in the 1930s USDA," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 49 (2013), pp. 396-427; David Goodman, "Democracy and Public Discussion in the Progressive and New Deal Eras: From Civic Competence to the Expression of Opinion," *Studies in American Political Development* 16 (2004), pp. 81-111; David Goodman, *Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> For adult education in the *New Republic*, see Herbert Croly, "Education for Grown-Ups," *New Republic* (December 12, 1923), pp. 9-11; R. H. Tawney, "Adult Education in England," *New Republic* (November 19, 1924), pp. 292-293; "Adult Education," *New Republic* (November 25, 1925), pp. 7-8; Alexander Meiklejohn, "Adult Education: A Fresh Start," *New Republic* (August 15, 1934), p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> The "Lippmann-Dewey debate" was not really a debate at all, and was in fact cooked up in the 1980s. See Michael Schudson, "The 'Lippmann-Dewey Debate' and the Invention of Walter Lippmann as an Anti-democrat, 1986-1996," *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008), pp. 1031-42; Sue Curry Jansen, "Phantom Conflict: Lippmann, Dewey, and the Fate of the Public in Modern Society," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6 (2009), pp. 24-45; Auerbach, *Weapons of Democracy*, pp. 93-129.

propaganda, he thought, had used this distance to create an “era of bunk, of being systematically duped, of indiscriminating sentiment and belief,” a time when “hokum” was “swallowed more eagerly and more indiscriminately than ever before.” Faced with change of unprecedented scope and complexity, people simply could not comprehend their world as they needed to. The speed of that change meant that teaching restricted to childhood, or even to college, was insufficient to create an adequately educated citizenry. It was no wonder that people were indifferent to or prejudiced about public affairs, because public policy was focused on questions that simply could not be understood through the education that most Americans had received. But Dewey, unlike Lippmann, saw no reason to mistake democracy as it existed for democracy as it could be. Education would bridge the chasm between theory and reality. It would have “to cultivate the habit of suspended judgment, of skepticism, of desire for evidence, of appeal to observation rather than sentiment, discussion rather than bias, inquiry rather than conventional idealizations.” Crucially, it would have to do so in local communities, which, even as modernity weakened them, offered the only hope of recreating viable democracy. Through educated, communicating communities, Dewey insisted, politics would be more than just voting, or consent — it would become “the intelligent management of social affairs.”<sup>27</sup>

Dewey provided the intellectual grounding for the adult education movement. He offered no prescriptions for how people could be educated in practice, for how they could be encouraged to overcome the inertia and uninterest that Lippmann had taken as read. Yet Dewey was not a theorist in a vacuum. He operated alongside practitioners, not least his counterparts at Columbia

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<sup>27</sup> John Dewey, “Education as Politics,” *The New Republic* (October 4, 1922), pp. 139-141; John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), p. 215.

and across West 120th Street at Teachers' College. Plenty of his followers were prepared to put his theory to work, most importantly a former dean of Columbia College, Frederick Keppel. Keppel was a disciple not only of Dewey, but of Baker, whom he had served at the War Department in part by overseeing a Commission on Training Camp Activities, which was intended to provide an education to troops while they served.<sup>28</sup> After directing the American Red Cross's efforts in Europe, Keppel had become president of the Carnegie Corporation in 1923. Keppel immediately made adult education a primary focus of its mission, as a means for using social scientific knowledge, which his grants were creating at universities and elsewhere, to solve public problems. If public problems could not properly be solved because education had not prepared people to solve them, Keppel wondered, why not teach them again? After all, adults were being educated in all kinds of ways, informally through the press and radio and formally in settlement houses, night schools, and university extension classes. American history, moreover, provided a long tradition of what could be called adult education movements, from the hallowed "town meetings" of colonial New England, to lyceums, Chautauquas, public libraries, and even the Americanization campaigns aimed at immigrant arrivals. But these efforts were neither scientifically rigorous nor, often, factually accurate.<sup>29</sup> The Corporation therefore founded the

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<sup>28</sup> Craig, *Progressives at War*, p. 163. One of Keppel's programs sent promising young soldiers to study on scholarships at universities; one of the beneficiaries was Raymond Leslie Buell. Keppel remained an adoring disciple of Baker's. For his eulogy, see Frederick P. Keppel, "Newton D. Baker," *Foreign Affairs* 16 (1937), pp. 503-514.

<sup>29</sup> Frederick P. Keppel, *Education for Adults and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), pp. 13-15. Keppel, like other intellectuals, made it clear that he was consciously borrowing European models, specifically from Denmark and Britain. For intellectual flows from Europe to the United States, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) in 1926. Led by Keppel's former assistant, Morse Cartwright, it had distributed \$4.85 million in grants by 1941.<sup>30</sup>

Under the AAAE's guidance, adult education became a sprawling, idealistic movement, ranging from philosophy classes and music appreciation to needlework and childrearing workshops. It was defined by the leading theorist Lyman Bryson as "including all the activities with an educational purpose that are carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life." Political or civic adult education was marginal within this whole, but immense hopes were vested in it all the same.<sup>31</sup> Its dreams of a public voluntarily educating and improving itself were tempered by the difficulties that Lippmann and Dewey alike knew it faced on the ground. In *Adult Education*, for instance, Bryson accepted Lippmann's complaint that "the complication and formidable quantity of public business have made it very difficult for the average man, even with the best intentions, to keep up with public affairs."<sup>32</sup> Eduard C. Lindeman, whose *The Meaning of Adult Education* made him the spiritual leader of the movement, agreed with Lippmann that citizens had lost "the sense of active, directive participation in affairs." But even if a layman might not be able to master politics, he could experience it in a more meaningful way than the assent to expertise that Lippmann demanded.<sup>33</sup> "Cynics," said Ben Cherrington of the Social

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<sup>30</sup> Amy D. Rose, "Beyond Classroom Walls: The Carnegie Corporation and the Founding of the American Association for Adult Education," *Adult Education Quarterly* 39 (1989), pp. 140-151; Morse A. Cartwright, *Ten Years of Adult Education: A Report on a Decade of Progress in the American Movement* (New York: Macmillan, 1935); Stubblefield, "Adult Education for Civic Intelligence in the Post World War I Period," pp. 253-257.

<sup>31</sup> This project was inherently exclusionary. As Cartwright recalled in 1935, "such special problems as the education of the Negro, of the Indian, of the mountain white were set aside, perhaps to be picked up later." See Cartwright, *Ten Years of Adult Education*, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> Lyman Bryson, *Adult Education* (New York: American Book Company, 1936), pp. 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> Eduard C. Lindeman, *The Meaning of Adult Education* (New York: New Republic, 1926), p. 55; Eduard C. Lindeman, "Adult Education: A New Means for Liberals," *New Republic* 54 (February 22, 1928), pp. 26-29.

Science Foundation in 1934, believed that “the involved questions of modern civilization are beyond the competence of the common people.” Cherrington earned a doctorate from Teachers’ College for a study that tried to quantify how far his Denver audiences learned from certain pedagogical methods, and he saw enough to doubt the naysayers.<sup>34</sup> “Many of us believe they are wrong,” he said,

but we do not know. That they [people] are incapable of bringing order out of the present confusion if properly informed and instructed is by no means an established fact. At least those who believe in democracy are determined that it shall have its opportunity to prove its capacity.

With adult education, Cherrington concluded, “it is within our power to make the machine our slave and to set men — not some men, but all men — free to live like gods.”<sup>35</sup>

Linked as adult education always was to a particular conception of democracy, its stakes heightened as the international landscape darkened. As adult educators came to believe that fascism and communism preyed on the apathy and ignorance they similarly feared at home, their cause became as much a defensive shield as a positive force. Adult education was “fundamental to the defense of our cherished ideals of democracy,” wrote John W. Studebaker, whose astonishing success founding public discussion forums in Des Moines, Iowa, led to him overseeing a national chain of government-sponsored forums as the New Deal’s Commissioner of Education. “The enemy of democracy is civic ignorance,” he said, which could only be overcome by “full, free, carefully organized, and professionally and impartially managed public discussion of national

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<sup>34</sup> Ben M. Cherrington, *Methods of Education in International Attitudes* (New York: Teachers College, 1934).

<sup>35</sup> Cherrington, “The Meaning of Adult Education in America,” undated speech [1934], Cherrington Papers, Box 3; Ben M. Cherrington, “Fascism or Democracy?” *Adult Education Bulletin* 1 (1937), Cherrington Papers, Box 15.



affairs.”<sup>36</sup> Others recast the fate of democracy as fundamentally a matter of education. “If we continue to attempt to manage an adult, ever-changing civilization with the static education of adolescence, America will probably soon follow Europe into the tyranny of either Fascism or Communism,” wrote Baker’s friend A. Caswell Ellis in 1935. “It seems,” he concluded, “to be truly a race between adult education and disaster, and disaster seems just now to have the lead.”<sup>37</sup>

Adult education offered a way to guarantee democracy because it promised not only to inoculate the public against propaganda, but to mobilize that public with scientific knowledge.<sup>38</sup> But was there a clear line between education and propaganda? If the basic assumption of the researchers producing knowledge at, say, the Foreign Policy Association, was that teaching people studying international relations would inevitably turn them from isolation, where, at the end of the day, was the dividing line? This problem was debated but never resolved. “We shall doubtless never succeed in unmixing education and propaganda,” Cartwright wrote in 1935, not least, he presciently warned, because “commonly the consumer of education is alike a willing consumer of propaganda — of kinds with which he happens to agree.”<sup>39</sup> But adult educators did try. What counted, Lindeman wrote, was making sure that education lay in “arriving, not

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<sup>36</sup> John W. Studebaker and Chester S. Williams, *Education for Democracy: Public Affairs Forums* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935), foreword. On forums, see Robert Kunzman and David Tyack, “Educational Forums of the 1930s: An Experiment in Adult Civic Education,” *American Journal of Education* 111 (2005), pp. 320-340; Keith, *Democracy as Discussion*, pp. 221-329; John W. Studebaker, “Beacon Lights of Democracy,” *New York Times* (April 11, 1937). Most adult educators believed that the processes of adult education should be kept free of government control, precisely because that control had uncomfortable overtones of fascist education projects. But Studebaker was far from the only proponent of government involvement in adult education. See also, for instance, David Riesman, “Government Education for Democracy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 5 (1941), pp. 195-209.

<sup>37</sup> A. Caswell Ellis to General Education Board, undated [1935], Baker Papers, Box 67.

<sup>38</sup> Sproule sees the entire adult education movement as an outdated, anti-propaganda exercise, but this construes the movement too narrowly, in both concept and time. See Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 111-120.

<sup>39</sup> Cartwright, *Ten Years of Adult Education*, p. 55.

concluding.”<sup>40</sup> The process was to be slow, imperfect, diffuse, and leave room for dissent. To Cherrington, adult education’s voluntary quality, its focus on the individual, and its celebration of critical thinking distinguished “democratic” adult education from its “authoritarian” competitors in Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup> Cartwright hoped that educators could at least teach methods, could inculcate the idea that democratic citizens should understand all sides of every question, should take in a diversity of information.<sup>42</sup> What, then, would prevent students choosing inadvisable answers? “If we believe in democracy,” Studebaker wrote in *Plain Talk*,

we believe that truth is the answer to error, that right triumphs eventually in a free market of thoroughgoing discussion and study. It seems to me that we should have faith in the belief that students who are taught how to think clearly and weigh all evidence are more likely to make good citizens, competent to express intelligent choices, than people who are told what to think. It seems to me they are more likely to choose what is ‘right.’<sup>43</sup>

As such, even political adult education was not supposed to entail an uncontested conversion to a particular political view. Even if educators were ultimately propagandizing for democracy, the back and forth of process really did matter. Discussion was not a pretense, but a process.

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<sup>40</sup> Lindeman, *Meaning of Adult Education*, pp. 77, 157, 191.

<sup>41</sup> “Authoritarian adult education,” Cherrington wrote in 1939, “seeks to inculcate unquestioning obedience to the policy and authority of the government,” but “democratic adult education supports a qualified acceptance of the policy and authority of government on the ground that it is temporary and always subject to revision.” See Ben M. Cherrington, “Democratic versus Authoritarian Adult Education,” *Journal of Adult Education* 6 (1939), pp. 242-245.

<sup>42</sup> Cartwright, *Ten Years of Adult Education*, pp. 54-56.

<sup>43</sup> John W. Studebaker, *Plain Talk* (Washington: National Home Library Foundation, 1936), pp. 147, 160.

For Dewey, because the process mattered, the nurturing of democratic publics required “the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion.”<sup>44</sup> Following his cue, adult educators spent an enormous amount of time trying to perfect the art of discussion. They surveyed how particular topics were best served by different methods of discussion, whether by lectures, by institutes, or by open forums.<sup>45</sup> They designed new means of group education, such as the panel discussion, which was invented in 1932. Pride of place went to the discussion group, a small gathering in which, theoretically at least, everyone would speak and everyone would be heard. In that setting, the designated discussion leader was vital; educators theorized his role down to the last detail.<sup>46</sup> Pamphlets and books advised the discussion leader on everything from the comfort of the participants’ chairs to the temperature of the room. The discussion leader was to bring sufficient factual material to the group, while remaining neutral. Leaders were implored not to talk too much, not to take sides, not to allow anybody to dominate the discussion, and not to be afraid of challenging prejudice.<sup>47</sup> Their role was to help participants think about issues in the context of their own views and lives. Their duty, Lindeman wrote, was “not to profess but to evoke.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, p. 142.

<sup>45</sup> Alfred Dwight Sheffield, *Training for Group Experience* (New York: The Inquiry, 1929); Thomas Fansler, *Discussion Methods for Adult Groups: Case Studies of the Forum, the Discussion Group, and the Panel* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1934); Mary L. Ely, *Why Forums?* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1937).

<sup>46</sup> The word “his” is used advisedly, because educators tended to forget their debt to the women’s movement, which pioneered much of this work, if with less explicit academic accoutrements. Cf. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Why Stop Learning?* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927); Bryson, *Adult Education*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>47</sup> Alfred Dwight Sheffield, *Creative Discussion* (New York: Association Press, 1927), pp. 31-46.

<sup>48</sup> Lindeman, *Meaning of Adult Education*, pp. 188-189.

Given that discussion leaders were sometimes subject experts, and occasionally even professors, this was a difficult standard to meet, but it was an imperative one. That was because because discussion theory ultimately promised to resolve the core difficulty of progressive politics — the relationship between expertise and democracy.<sup>49</sup> Ideal discussions would be led by “persons with special experience close to the matters in question,” the Teachers College professor Alfred Sheffield wrote, but preferably by experts who could both encourage “everyday folk to respect their own experience” and seriously value that experience as a contribution to expertise. The whole experiment, Sheffield said, sought “to use ‘authorities’ without succumbing to their prestige,” to set up “thought-conditions by which people will find the right ways for themselves.”<sup>50</sup> It was not enough for people simply to adhere to expert views, Lindeman wrote, for if “the only meanings possible would be those purchasable from experts,” true democracy would end. It would survive only if knowledge could be democratized. Rooting expertise within publics would not just teach those publics, but teach experts to collaborate, to work among the people, not rule over them.<sup>51</sup>

Why did this matter so much? It mattered because discussion theory was not simply discussion theory; it was political theory. Whether at a bar or at a union meeting, at a forum in a public-school gymnasium or in the United States Senate, discussion, Sheffield wrote, pooled thinking from “a little cross-section of the current thought” on a problem through the “face-to-

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<sup>49</sup> Keith, *Democracy as Discussion*, p. 95; Laura M. Westhoff, “The Popularization of Knowledge: John Dewey on Experts and American Democracy,” *History of Education Quarterly* 35 (1995), pp. 27-47; Tom Arnold-Forster, “Democracy and Expertise in the Lippmann-Terman Controversy,” *Modern Intellectual History* (2017) [doi.org/10.1017/S1479244317000385](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244317000385).

<sup>50</sup> Sheffield, *Creative Discussion*, p. 24, 48, 49.

<sup>51</sup> Lindeman, *Meaning of Adult Education*, pp. 133-141.

face experience of an all-participant group.”<sup>52</sup> It taught tolerance; it taught respect for the minority opinion; it taught the need for consensus. As the historian David Goodman has written, “for the Deweyans, there was no clear line between educational and democratic work.”<sup>53</sup> Discussion *was* democracy; for Cherrington, democracy was “government by discussion.”<sup>54</sup> Hence, to talk *about* foreign policy was to participate democratically *in* foreign policy.

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The national foreign policy institutions founded after the war took time to associate themselves formally with the adult education movement. But Newton Baker understood better than most that a deficient public was a time bomb in a Wilsonian world order and through him, the two movements became inseparable. It was not a coincidence that he gravitated towards networks set up by the Carnegie Corporation, with its joint interests in adult education and internationalism, rather than those of the Rockefeller Foundation, which promoted a less public, more scientific worldview.

Baker laid out the connections in a number of speeches. His basic point was that the skeptics were wrong. Baker said in 1927 that his “very great friend” Walter Lippmann had “written a book in which he leaves one with the impression that public opinion does not exist.” In Baker’s considerable experience, that was false. “Public opinion is not always active with us,”

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<sup>52</sup> Sheffield, *Creative Discussion*, pp. 5-6, 20.

<sup>53</sup> Goodman, *Radio’s Civic Ambition*, p. 183.

<sup>54</sup> Cherrington, “Adult Education in Public Affairs,” April 15, 1937, Cherrington Papers, Box 3.

he said, “but in great emergencies it does exist and as time goes on the need for an enlightened public opinion, an educated public opinion, will grow more and more pronounced.”<sup>55</sup> This was a structural fact of politics, particularly in a Wilsonian world. Consider, he asked the American Association of Adult Education in his presidential address of 1931, a humanity fused by instantaneous communications, in which “the world is being governed by the spontaneous responses of the people of the world, simultaneously receiving and reacting to great and crucial ideas.” That world was “like a vast powder magazine, and when the spark of a temperish idea or suggestion is thrown into it, if the people concerned are prejudiced in their point of view or ill-advised in their action, a world conflagration may blaze up.”<sup>56</sup> Had not the League of Nations debacle, he asked in another speech, shown what could happen when “passionate prejudice” decided debate, when the facts of the modern world had been insufficiently taken in? Had it not demonstrated that “the nature of democracy necessitates an educated electorate in order to provide for its own safety?”<sup>57</sup> If that was true, Baker told the World Conference on Adult Education in 1929, then “the world cannot continue to be safe if we do not have an access of

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<sup>55</sup> Baker, “Education and the State,” *School and Society* 26 (1927), p. 642, Baker Papers, Box 247. In a thorough misreading of Baker, David Steigerwald suggests that Baker actually agreed with Lippmann’s book and that his “faith in the public diminished” after 1924. Steigerwald relies here on a letter Baker wrote to Ralph Hayes in March 1924. “I have pretty nearly finished Walter’s book,” Baker wrote. “I do not know what to say about it. I have gone about the country... telling voters that they were the government for forty years, and now Walter says that I have been... misleading them, all of which I am afraid is true.” But Baker was clearly being ironic here, or at least joking. Steigerwald misses this by ignoring Baker’s commitments and actions, collapsing all sorts of differences among progressives to argue that Lippmann was the core of postwar Wilsonianism, rather than, as is argued here, an outlier. Cf. David Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 103-104.

<sup>56</sup> Newton D. Baker, “The Answer is Education,” *Journal of Adult Education* 3 (1931), pp. 261-267.

<sup>57</sup> Baker, “Adult Education,” *Proceedings of the Ohio State Educational Conference*, Eleventh Session, undated [1931], Baker Papers, Box 248.

adult education.”<sup>58</sup> Hence, Baker said, “we must hold a man who abstains from acquainting himself with public affairs, and taking a high stand on public questions, not merely as useless but as dangerous.”<sup>59</sup> Baker spoke, after all, as a man who had sent other men to their deaths.

In Cleveland, Baker was prepared to demonstrate how this more perfect democracy might be achieved. Others had tried. The Foreign Policy Association had had some success in other parts of Ohio, forming branches in Cincinnati and Columbus, but Cleveland proved resistant, even as its internationalists used the services of the Association. McDonald tried, but failed to find the right people; Rich was always frustrated.<sup>60</sup> As elsewhere, women led activism in the city, and they had a pacifist outlook.<sup>61</sup> They had set up a training program so that they could advocate for Liberty Loans during the war, which later turned into an international relations discussion group affiliated with the League of Women Voters. Its format was extraordinary: each Wednesday morning, one or two members of the group presented a paper on a specific problem which they had spent weeks researching, and submitted it for discussion by an audience of up to one hundred other women.<sup>62</sup> From that group emerged a Women’s Council for the Promotion

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<sup>58</sup> Baker, Speech to the World Conference on Adult Education, August 29, 1929, Baker Papers, Box 247.

<sup>59</sup> Baker, “The Answer is Education,” pp. 266-267.

<sup>60</sup> “May 15, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1, in which McDonald lamented that one acquaintance did not “know any of the women with whom we would naturally be associated there”; “November 11, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; “Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board,” December 2, 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “December 12, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; Rich to Ogden, December 14, 1925, FPA, Part II, Box 11; “December 31, 1925,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; “July 16, 1926,” McDonald Diaries, Box 1; Rich to Merriman, October 25, 1926, FPA, Part II, Box 11.

<sup>61</sup> James E. Benjamin, “A Study of the Council on World Affairs, Cleveland, Ohio,” MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1948, pp. 6-10.

<sup>62</sup> David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 639.

of Peace, which, by 1926, coordinated the activities of over one hundred local organizations.<sup>63</sup> The Women's Council brought Carrie Chapman Catt to town in 1923, and organized a mass parade in May 1924 that, while dubbed "unpatriotic" and likely Bolshevist by the Chamber of Commerce, culminated in a rally that was addressed by Herbert Hoover, William Borah, and James Shotwell. (As a mark of respect, the women invited Baker to march in their front ranks.)<sup>64</sup> Even so, having started to cooperate with libraries, schools, and churches, the Women's Council wound itself up in 1929. The Pact of Paris and the imminent accession of the United States to the World Court, argued its president Polly Prescott, meant that a broader strategy of education was now called for, "which could be carried on under the leadership of Newton D. Baker working with men's groups as well as women's groups."<sup>65</sup> In any case, Prescott told the press, the Kellogg-Briand Pact rendered the Women's Council moot, having "definitely outlawed war."<sup>66</sup>

By that point, Cleveland was also a national leader in community adult education. The city hosted a founding conference of the AAAE in 1924, and the civic leaders who ran Western Reserve University set up Cleveland College, a dedicated adult education campus downtown, in 1925. With Carnegie support and under the direction of A. Caswell Ellis, the College quickly

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<sup>63</sup> Frances F. Bushea, "They Would Prevent War," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (December 18, 1923), p. 8; "Cleveland Club Women Plan Varied Programs for Fall and Winter," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (September 12, 1926), p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> "Council for Prevention of War to Bring Mrs. Catt Here for Lecture," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (October 21, 1923), p. 6; "Women to Brave Critics in Parade Today For Peace," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (May 18, 1924), pp. 1, 7; Marion J. Morton, *Women in Cleveland: An Illustrated History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 182-183.

<sup>65</sup> Brooks Emeny, *A History of the Founding of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, 1935-1948* (Cleveland: Council on World Affairs, 1975), p. 49. Most of the Council's correspondence, as well as Emeny's own, is lost. Emeny's privately published book is partly a compilation of trustworthy document facsimiles, for which many of the originals have been lost. Where no page numbers are given, none are cited.

<sup>66</sup> "Peace Council Passes," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (June 14, 1929), p. 14.



became one of the more experimental ventures in the field. By 1930, it was enrolling more than 7,000 students in over 500 formal courses, covering everything from parenting to metaphysics.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, Baker also presided over a local Adult Education Association (AEA), which took responsibility for coordinating local voluntary associations' educational efforts, and for promoting interest in adult education through publicity.<sup>68</sup> "Stimulating in adults the desire for study that will tend toward a more enlightened and unbiased public opinion," as one report put it, became ever more important, as the AEA concentrated on cultivating interest in subjects that were not widely assumed to be relevant to everyday life.<sup>69</sup> Foreign policy was prime among these.

The AEA's Foreign Affairs Committee, into which the Women's Council folded in 1929, tried out public forums, organized lectures by residents returning from travel abroad, and distributed Foreign Policy Association literature, but its centerpiece was an annual institute. Institutes were adult education's equivalent of a blitzkrieg, indispensable, as the AEA put it, for "gaining new recruits to the army of those who 'want to know.'"<sup>70</sup> Reserved principally for political subjects, they provided a focus for the work of co-sponsoring voluntary associations, an occasion to invite major speakers, and an opportunity for publicity. They had the dual purpose of

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<sup>67</sup> Cartwright, *Ten Years of Adult Education*, pp. 15-16, 72; Stubblefield and Keane, *Adult Education in the American Experience*, p. 201; "Cleveland College: Summary of Enrollment by Years," Baker Papers, Box 67; A. Caswell Ellis, "Adults at College," *The Clevelander* (February 1927), pp. 16-29, Baker Papers, Box 65; A. Caswell Ellis, "Cleveland College: An Experiment in Adult Education," *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* 14 (1928), pp. 371-377.

<sup>68</sup> Knowles, *A History of the Adult Education Movement in the United States*, p. 177; Keith, *Democracy as Discussion*, p. 261; "1927-1930 Program of the Adult Education Association," attached to Mildred Chadsey to Baker, October 18, 1927, Baker Papers, Box 17.

<sup>69</sup> "Annual Report of the Adult Education Association of Cleveland," 1927-1928, Baker Papers, Box 17

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*; Sheffield, *Training for Group Experience*, pp. 37-61; Studebaker and Williams, *Education for Democracy*, pp. 60-61.

both being news, and making news. Cleveland's first Foreign Affairs Institute came in February 1927. Attracting 1,500 people, it was an aimless effort with no defined topic. Addressed by the treasurer of the League of Nations, Sir Herbert Ames, it drew on the participation of students, churchgoers, the Women's City Club, the YWCA, the Institute of Banking, and the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions.<sup>71</sup> A second attempt drew fewer attendees for discussions of Pan-American issues, many of them led personally by Baker, but the organizers were pleased that they had "escaped the criticism of presenting our viewpoint" by balancing the "Labor view and Chamber of Commerce view," and they welcomed a vigorous debate on American imperialism that made the front pages of the local press.<sup>72</sup> As the Foreign Affairs Committee continued under Baker's watch, its institutes grew in stature, attracting Walter Lippmann, James Shotwell, and James G. McDonald as speakers.

But just as the Depression threatened to destroy the national infrastructure of foreign policy institutions, so it disrupted Cleveland's nascent program. Cleveland was hit hard by economic turmoil, and the city's philanthropic base contracted as the stock market collapsed, investments plummeted, and manufacturing suffered heavy losses.<sup>73</sup> Cleveland College barely survived the crunch. Residents and local foundations dug deep to avert what one newspaper said would be the "community catastrophe" of its closure.<sup>74</sup> This left little spare change for other

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<sup>71</sup> "Men of Note to Address Institute," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (January 28, 1927), p. 14; "Wizard of Geneva Purse Will Open Institute Tonight," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (February 14, 1927), p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> Frances F. Bushea, "Executive Secretary's Report of Foreign Affairs Institute," March 29, 1928, Baker Papers, Box 17; "U.S. 'Imperialism' Drubbed in Forum," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (March 11, 1928), pp. 1, 15.

<sup>73</sup> Jon C. Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993), pp. 180-186.

<sup>74</sup> A. Caswell Ellis to President and Board of Trustees of Cleveland College, June 1, 1932, Baker Papers, Box 66; "Save Cleveland College," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (April 14, 1932), p. 8.

worthy causes. The AEA duly collapsed in May 1933, but not before it had spun off its Foreign Affairs Committee as an independent Foreign Affairs Council, devoted to “an intelligent and informed public opinion in international affairs by providing opportunities for study and discussion as an effective means of promoting peace through understanding.”<sup>75</sup> Its activities centered on its annual institute, its speakers service, its Wednesday women’s forums, and its biweekly meetings of sixty men who had taken a night course on “Current International Problems” at the College, which Baker had helped to teach.<sup>76</sup> With the revival of neutrality debates and the return of the peace movement, by 1935 its members were pushing “to do something constructive for the preservation of peace,” Baker wrote.<sup>77</sup> Cashless and confused, however, the Council was not a promising concern. Baker persevered. Why? Because four years earlier, in December 1931, he had met a visionary graduate student from Yale.

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Brooks Emeny hailed from Salem, Ohio, a small town on the train tracks from Cleveland to Pittsburgh. His grandfather was Joshua Twing Brooks, an industrialist who was general counsel and vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad when it was the largest private corporation in the world. Joshua’s daughter, Elizabeth Miller Brooks, married the engineer Frederick James

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<sup>75</sup> Benjamin, “A Study of the Council on World Affairs,” p. 11; Harrison B. McGraw to Former Members of the Adult Education Association, November 25, 1933, Baker Papers, Box 98.

<sup>76</sup> “Current International Problems,” undated, Baker Papers, Box 67; “Report of the Executive Secretary for the work of the Foreign Affairs Council, Sept. 1934 to April 15, 1935,” undated, Baker Papers, Box 97.

<sup>77</sup> Baker to Polly Prescott, October 10, 1935, Baker Papers, Box 97; “Cleveland Women Active in Movement Against War,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer Magazine* (November 3, 1935), p. 7.

Emeny, and gave birth to three sons. Brooks was the eldest, born on July 29, 1901. After his mother died in 1915, Brooks was cared for by his extended family, including a cousin, Theodate Pope Riddle, an architect who had survived the sinking of the *Lusitania* to marry John Wallace Riddle. As a former envoy to various Balkan states and, at one point, the U.S. ambassador to Russia, Riddle became a crucial influence on the young Brooks. But, despite being an Eagle Scout and a proficient debater, Brooks was an unengaged student. He was sent to Mercersburg Academy, a boarding school in southern Pennsylvania. As a high school student during the war, Emeny later wrote, he “developed an intensive admiration for Woodrow Wilson.” He resolved to study international politics, and turned down his father’s Cornell to attend Wilson’s Princeton.<sup>78</sup>

Emeny’s career progressed steadily through the infrastructure that internationalists like Baker were building to train and professionalize experts in the scientific study of international relations. In 1922, Emeny started a round table within the university’s International Relations Club, funded by the Carnegie Endowment, and drew notice for working to “disturb undergraduate lethargy toward the affairs of the world,” as *The Daily Princetonian* put it.<sup>79</sup> A year later, Emeny attended the Institute of Public Affairs at Williamstown, that mecca for aspiring international relations thinkers.<sup>80</sup> The following year, he won a scholarship in international law from the Carnegie Endowment, granting him three years of the European travel vital to creating an aura of expertise, and guaranteeing admission into the transnational network of elite

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<sup>78</sup> Emeny, “Autobiography of Brooks Emeny: The International Phase,” April 1975, Brooks Emeny Papers, Public Policy Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 1, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> “On the Threshold,” *The Daily Princetonian* (March 1, 1923), p. 2; “Elections Are Held For Round Table Committee,” *The Daily Princetonian* (May 9, 1923), p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> On the importance of the Williamstown institutes to the international relations infrastructure, see Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, pp. 73-79.

internationalists. Emeny studied at the Sorbonne's Institute des Hautes Etudes Internationales, the London School of Economics, and the Konsular Akademie in Vienna. More important than any academic experience, though, were his experiences at the League of Nations. In Geneva, he hung around the Rockefeller-funded library and snuck his way into sessions of the League, cannily disguising himself as a delegate with the simple costume of a briefcase. Each summer from 1925 to 1927, Emeny made what he called the "pilgrimage" to Geneva with hundreds of other Americans, enrolling in the plethora of institutes and schools that cropped up in the Swiss city to instruct amateur and scholarly travelers alike in the true nature of internationalism.<sup>81</sup>

Emeny's career turned back to the United States in 1927, after he met another young scholar in Geneva, Nicholas Spykman. Spykman was a former journalist and sociologist whose doctorate on Georg Simmel had landed him an assistant professorship in international relations at Yale.<sup>82</sup> In time, Spykman became the driving force behind the Yale Institute of International Studies and a forefather of realist theory, but there was little indication when Emeny met him

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<sup>81</sup> Emeny, "Autobiography," pp. 9-12. Emeny writes that he attended "late afternoon seminars" led by Alfred Zimmern in 1925, a "summer Institute" and "Zimmern Institute of International Affairs" in 1926, and a "Zimmern School of International Relations" in 1927. There is some confusion in the historiography on the names of these institutions, whether a Geneva Institute of International Relations (founded 1925) for a general public and a Graduate Institute of International Studies (founded 1926) for students, as per Warren Kuehl and Lynne Dunn, or a Geneva School of International Studies (founded 1924) and a Geneva Institute for International Affairs (founded 1927), as per Daniel Gorman. See Kuehl and Dunn, *Keeping the Covenant*, p. 82; Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 193-194. Gorman's "Geneva Institute for International Affairs" appears not to have existed, but the other three did; the Graduate Institute of International Studies was a formal, degree-granting institution. Given his scholarly inclinations and the rather heady atmosphere in Geneva at the time, Emeny likely attended both Zimmern's more formal Geneva School of International Studies, which lasted throughout the summer, and the parallel, more public Geneva Institute of International Relations, which took place during the Assembly and was run by the British League of Nations Union in collaboration with the American League of Nations Association. On Zimmern, see Paul Rich, "Alfred Zimmern's Cautious Idealism: The League of Nations, International Education and the Commonwealth," in David Long and Peter Wilson (eds.), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 79-99.

<sup>82</sup> Spykman seems to evade historians, leaving only traces of his activities before the mid-1930s. For more, see Perry Anderson, "Imperium," *New Left Review* 83 (2013), n. 15.

that he would become a transformative figure.<sup>83</sup> He seemed a keen supporter of international institutions, even if he was skeptical of international law and already insistent that the logic of geography was the key factor in world politics. Spykman offered Emeny a position in New Haven as his assistant, as a graduate student, and as a lecturer.<sup>84</sup> In the seven years before Emeny earned the first doctorate that Yale ever bestowed in international relations, he became Spykman's "ardent follower."<sup>85</sup>

A student with Emeny's background might ordinarily have written a thesis on the workings of the League, on the functions of international law, or on colonial administration. What interested Emeny, however, was power. Planning his dissertation at the end of 1932, Emeny imagined his thesis, "Geographic Location as a Factor of American Foreign Policy," as just one aspect of a much broader study, "The United States as a World Power." Legislators, let alone the people they represented, did not understand the sheer reach of the United States, he argued, which had an "influence co-extensive with the furthest range of the World Society in which it operates." So Emeny proposed an ambitious assessment of American power in its totality, and how that power necessitated a new foreign policy. Pre-empting Spykman's later work, Emeny attacked the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan. Emeny insisted that in any analysis of state power, "physical geography" was paramount, for natural resources "form the basis of

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<sup>83</sup> On the later Spykman, see Paulo J. Ramos, "Role of the Yale Institute of International Studies in the construction of the United States National Security Ideology, 1935-1951," PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1993; Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 56-99.

<sup>84</sup> Emeny, "Autobiography," p. 12.

<sup>85</sup> Emeny to "Nick," 1934, qu. in Ramos, "Role of the Yale Institute of International Studies," p. 164; Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, p. 113.

concentrated power as well as defining its extent and possible limits.” Since Mahan’s time, Emeny argued, the position of the United States had been transformed by industrialization, the construction of the Panama Canal, and “the rise of the Pacific in addition to the Atlantic as a center of international commerce and possible conflict.”

With the closure of the frontier, the United States had become a coherent land power precisely when “the day of World Power based predominantly on land mass has arrived” and “World Power based predominantly on control of the sea” was “on the decline.” Now the greatest powers required both maritime strength and immense territory. “Where land mass predominates as a geographic factor it is the most important element of World Power,” Emeny argued, “but if through ideal location it enjoys free access to the sea, its possibilities are thereby enormously enhanced.” In an unassailable strategic position, unconquerable, unmatched in resources, and historically prone to expansion, the United States was “the only Power so situated.” Geography granted it global “predominance.” American global power was a fact, but one that was not sufficiently appreciated by its people.<sup>86</sup>

Emeny’s ambitions outran his abilities, and his completed dissertation dug into only one part of his much wider theme. Published in 1934 by Harvard’s Bureau of International Research as *The Strategy of Raw Materials*, Emeny’s influential work argued that ultimate power was not simply determined by territory, population, or wealth, but by industrial capacity. The unequal

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<sup>86</sup> Brooks Emeny, “An outline of a study on ‘The United States as a World Power’ in which is contained an outline of another study (Division V) on ‘Geographic Location as a Factor of World Power,’” undated [after October 1932], Emeny Papers, Box 1. Emeny’s dissertation prospectus was avowedly materialist, sketching a world of great powers competing for resources, in which economic and military might were the key drivers of history. Slyly, its epigram came from Zimmern: “We must take the world as we find it and adjust ourselves and our programmes of action as best we can to the changing circumstances which result from its infinite motion and variety. See Brooks Emeny, “Geographic Position as a Factor of American Foreign Policy,” undated [1932], Emeny Papers, Box 1.

distribution of raw materials limited the number of possible great powers, and the basis of international relations was how far any given power would be self-sufficient in war. Of the seven imperial powers — the United States, Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and Japan — one clearly stood out. “We enjoy,” Emeny wrote, “a unique superabundance in the foodstuffs and materials essential to the development of national power, in the pursuits of peace and war.” Unlike Britain, moreover, the United States would always have ready access to auxiliary materials because of its imperial hemispheric dominance. “The formidable character of our inherent national strength, derived from our raw material position,” he concluded, “must give pause for thought on the part of any nation contemplating the risk of hostilities with us.”<sup>87</sup> This was not an unchallenged view. Emeny’s advisor, for one, thought that the United States was insecure and needed “a great offensive across the oceans.”<sup>88</sup> While Emeny saw security in America’s position, he saw too that its power was so great that it could not help but be an influence on the world.

Public opinion was not Emeny’s concern in *The Strategy of Raw Materials*, even if in his dissertation planning he saw that it had not kept pace with the revolution in America’s place in the world. Only in *The Great Powers in World Politics*, co-authored in 1935 with the columnist Frank Simonds, did his views on that topic take shape. *The Great Powers* was marked by bleak realism, describing a world of “nation states” jealous of their sovereignty in “international anarchy,” a system of “Haves and “Have-nots” all competing in an unending battle for resources.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Brooks Emeny, *The Strategy of Raw Materials: A Study of America in Peace and War* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 174; Brooks Emeny, “The Distribution and Control of Natural Resources, and America’s World Position,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 218 (1941), pp. 58-65.

<sup>88</sup> Nicholas J. Spykman, *America’s Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942), pp. 477, 457.

<sup>89</sup> For the new “realism,” see Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, pp. 85-90.



Nations had specific policies not because of their wisdom, their language, or their ideology, but because of their geography. “If the Frenchman and the German changed places they would exchange policies,” Emeny and Simonds wrote.

What counts is whether peoples live on islands or continents; whether their countries are situated in Europe, Asia, or America; whether they have natural resources to supply their industry and food supplies to feed their populations. If their title to these advantages is undisputed, they will also have security. Otherwise they will seek that security.

“To know the physical circumstances of a state is therefore to understand its national policy,” the authors concluded. Emeny and Simonds rubbished international organizations, international law, international morality, and much else that the likes of Baker held dear.

Geopolitical or not, the world of Simonds and Emeny was still one in which public opinion, and specifically American public opinion, mattered. The United States was firmly a “Have” power. It had “attained absolute regional and territorial security,” and European and Asian powers were no more likely “to attempt imperialistic adventures in the Americas than in the moon.” But there was a mismatch between capabilities and reality. “Public opinion in the United States,” Emeny and Simonds wrote, “has not kept pace with the physical change in the circumstance of the nation.” While outside observers should have expected the United States to involve itself in European and Asian politics so as to remove even distant threats, America was not playing to form. Americans responded alternately “to the inspiration of Wilson’s Fourteen Points and to the admonition of Washington’s Farewell Address,” but tended to revert to the latter “when the question of assuming foreign responsibilities is raised.” This failure to decide upon a “viable compromise between tradition and actuality” was intolerable, even dangerous. Just like Baker, Emeny therefore thought that an under-educated American public opinion was

inimical to global stability and world peace. The young scholar, however, came to the conclusion from a wholly different perspective.<sup>90</sup>

How, then, could Emeny help put public opinion on a firmer foundation? Writing scholarly books seemed insufficient. Entering the Foreign Service would be boring. But a conversation with another Ohio Republican kept returning to his mind. As a student in Paris, he had met Myron T. Herrick, twice Ambassador to France and a former governor of Emeny's home state. Herrick, Emeny later recalled, "told me that if he had it to do all over again he would go to some community, identify himself there, and become interested in the instruction of public affairs."<sup>91</sup> So Emeny gravitated towards foreign policy institutions, helped by connections forged upon a whirlwind marriage to Winifred Rockefeller in 1928. Emeny's main interest was the Far East. He turned down an offer to teach at Tokyo's Imperial University, but toured Asia under the auspices of the Institute of Pacific Relations early in 1935. He sailed in part to escape family tragedy, having learned that both his mother-in-law and his eldest daughter were terminally ill. They passed away on his return. So too did Winifred's father, Percy A. Rockefeller. Bereft, but now the inheritors of unfathomable Rockefeller riches, the Emenys left Washington for a new home in the Midwest.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Frank Simonds and Brooks Emeny, *The Great Powers in World Politics: International Relations and Economic Nationalism* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), pp. 129-132, 350, 357, 374-375. Emeny continued to promote a predominantly geographical view of the world, even if he stopped genuine research after *The Great Powers*. See Brooks Emeny, *Mainsprings of World Politics* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1943).

<sup>91</sup> "Flunked History, Now He's Expert," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (February 2, 1936), p. 12.

<sup>92</sup> Emeny, "Autobiography," pp. 16-17.

Emeny first outlined his plans for community foreign policy education in 1931, while still lecturing at Yale. "We are in complete agreement," he wrote, having met Baker and Ellis that Christmas, "as to the need which exists in every community for making available education in World Problems particularly as regards their relation to the United States." It was imperative that Americans "be awakened to the *profound* change which has come about in the World Position of the United States bringing in its train a *new* set of interests as well as obligations." Geography meant that the United States "is in the most strategic and in a sense the most vulnerable position of any nation today." Public "instruction" needed to focus on this relationship, yet such education was not meant to "propagandize by means of emotional appeal, high-powered salesmanship or lobby methods." Instead, it would "provide facilities for the presentation and free discussion of the basic factors of the problems involved which will enable the educated public to come to an intelligent and just decision on questions of International Policy."

Emeny proposed a Cleveland Institute of International Relations. It would have an auditorium, seminar rooms, a library, and offices for local representatives of national groups. It would provide lectures, forums, and study groups, while offering speakers to schools, clubs, and associations. It would be funded, like Cherrington's outfit in Denver, by an endowment, supplemented by admission and membership fees. The aim was the "development of interest in World Affairs and the creation of a feeling of *need* for more adequate facilities and organization in public instruction." Before Cleveland's people could be educated, in other words, they would

have to understand that the world and America's response to it was of personal importance to them — and the impetus would have to come from the community.<sup>93</sup>

While Emeny got on with this writing, Baker kept pondering the situation, and delved deeper into it as a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation. The problem was not, he wrote, “a lack of knowledge of the kind which research produces.” That knowledge was being churned out by scholars who were “working in the best research spirit,” whether in universities or in institutions like the Foreign Policy Association. “The thing that neither they nor any of the rest of us have yet discovered,” Baker averred, was the way “to make their knowledge a common and therefore an effective possession in America.” But now that such knowledge was available, it could be put to work. What was required was “popular adult education,” an education

so consecutive, continuous, and disinterested as to make the whole people of Cleveland conscious at the same time of the same set of facts and offer a sufficiently wide factual basis to enable these people, upon the occurrence of a new fact in the international situation, to digest it without hysteria and guide their own emotional responses by this well cultivated background more than by the irritation of the latest isolated fact.

Baker rooted this optimistic vision in his political memory. He recalled the tent meetings of Tom Johnson, his predecessor as Cleveland's mayor, who had set up public forums to discuss and resolve pressing municipal issues. What difference could there be between urban and foreign policy, Baker wondered? He hoped for “a situation in which it could be said that every man, woman, and child in Cleveland understood the large outlines — economic, racial, social and political — of modern international relations.” If that became true, if his project should succeed

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<sup>93</sup> Emeny to Ellis, January 23, 1932, qu. in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, pp. 3-8.

in Cleveland and then nationwide, Baker concluded, “instead of having the life of our nation imperiled by the possibility of emotional response to inflammatory impulses, we would have that ideal of democracy, an informed public opinion.”<sup>94</sup>

To Emeny, Cleveland seemed the perfect place to try this “experiment in democracy.”<sup>95</sup> It was the fifth or sixth largest city in the nation, with a population in its greater metropolitan area of about 1.2 million.<sup>96</sup> Built on a massive influx of semiskilled immigrant labor from Central and Eastern Europe around World War I, as well as the beginnings of northward movement from the South, Cleveland was one of the “big eight” industrial cities that led the United States’ increasing dominance of the global economy.<sup>97</sup> In steel, iron, and coal it had long been a powerhouse, and as the postwar period went on it became dominated by automobile production, electrical appliances, and chemicals. Corporate growth fostered a strong financial sector — a Federal Reserve bank came to town in 1914 — and service communities in accountancy, law, and higher education. To Emeny, its growing professional class therefore had a stake in international politics and trade. And he was impressed by the city’s strong civic spirit, noting its Community Chest, and especially its philanthropic response to the Depression, which, along with local unemployment, unleashed crime waves, homelessness, and migration from the east.<sup>98</sup> Beyond its educational

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<sup>94</sup> Baker to Emeny, January 9, 1934, Emeny Papers, Box 32; Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, pp. 29-32.

<sup>95</sup> “Experiments in Democracy,” *Cleveland Press* (April 12, 1939), in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*.

<sup>96</sup> Van Tassel and Grabowski (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland*, pp. 557-563.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 104-118.

<sup>98</sup> Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, p. 46. For Cleveland’s development to the Depression and its experience during it, see Thomas F. Campbell and Edward M. Miggins (eds.), *The Birth of Modern Cleveland, 1865-1930* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1988); Daniel Kerr, *Derelict Paradise: Homelessness and Urban Development in Cleveland, Ohio* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), esp. pp. 39-70. On local philanthropy, see

ventures, not least Cleveland College, the community had built an enviable cultural life. They had founded the Cleveland Orchestra in 1918 and built it an expensive home, Severance Hall, in 1931. Since 1916 the Cleveland Museum of Art had become widely renowned. The Metropolitan Opera visited every spring. Easy rail connections to the governing centers of New York and Washington, crowned by the Union Terminal completed in 1930, meant the city's citizens might quickly be brought into a closer relationship with policy networks and discussions.<sup>99</sup>

Why Cleveland, rather than a city with stronger historic tendencies towards internationalism, like Boston, or another industrial metropolis connected to global trading networks, such as Pittsburgh?<sup>100</sup> As an Ohioan, Emeny had personal reasons. But, sitting right on the edge of the Midwest, Cleveland potentially made for the most susceptible and attractive beachhead in a fight against a perceived regional preference for "isolation" in world affairs.<sup>101</sup> Emeny was not alone in this belief. For ten years the Foreign Policy Association was urged to spread its influence into the Midwest, not least by Franklin Roosevelt, who believed the area to

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Laura Tuennenman-Kaplan, *Helping Others, Helping Ourselves: Power, Giving, and Community Identity in Cleveland, Ohio, 1880-1930* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2001).

<sup>99</sup> Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, p. x.

<sup>100</sup> On the importance of assessing "regionalism" (or "section") in the history and historiography of American foreign relations see Joseph A. Fry, "Place Matters: Domestic Regionalism and the Formation of American Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 36 (2012), pp. 451-482.

<sup>101</sup> The very idea of a "Midwest" is a fluid construction, one that has changed spatial dimensions over time. Whatever one's definition of the Midwest, Ohio lies within it, at its most eastern boundary. See James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989); James H. Madison, "The States of the Midwest: An Introduction," in James H. Madison (ed.), *Heartland: Comparative Histories of the Midwestern States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 1-8. For the Upper Midwest, a much more coherent proposition, see Peter Russell Simons, "Cultivating a New World: Agrarian Internationalism in the Upper Midwest, 1919-1950," PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2012.

be the pivot of public opinion. Raymond Leslie Buell offered Baker assistance with founding an Association branch in January 1934, but Baker declined.<sup>102</sup> Now, as historians have demonstrated, and as was increasingly known at the time, Midwestern isolationism was as much fiction as fact.<sup>103</sup> It confused the politics of the Senate with public opinion in the field, and relied on tropes of backwardness, ethnicity, ignorance, and insularity. It collapsed urban-rural divides and ignored more pertinent differences between the north and south.<sup>104</sup> It erased disparities in views caused by education and party allegiance, and it obliterated vast differences in policy outlooks, from a William Borah to a Gerald Nye, to a General Robert E. Wood.<sup>105</sup> But “Midwestern isolationism” was a powerful element of the mental map of the foreign policy elite both before and after World War II. It was an element resistant to contradictory evidence. The common stereotype was best put, long into the Cold War, by Selig Adler, who saw the roots of a continuing “midwestern isolationist complex” in populism, in free silver, and in the conspiratorial tendency of western

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<sup>102</sup> Baker to Raymond Leslie Buell, January 23, 1934, Baker Papers, Box 99.

<sup>103</sup> Warren F. Kuehl, “Midwestern Newspapers and Isolationist Sentiment,” *Diplomatic History* 3 (1979), pp. 283-306, which demonstrates that the picture was far from settled. The Midwest was marginally less interventionist than the rest of the country before Pearl Harbor, but not as dramatically as the popularity of the America First Committee in the region would suggest. Regional differences quickly diminished once the war had begun. For contemporary challenges to the idea of Midwestern isolationism, see W. W. Waymack, “The Middle West Looks Abroad,” *Foreign Affairs* 18 (1940), pp. 535-545; “Isolationism is Losing its Hold on the Voters of the Middle West,” *New York Times* (October 19, 1941), p. E7; Robert J. Blakely, “The Midwest and the War,” *Foreign Affairs* 20 (1942), pp. 635-649; George Gallup, “Report of Isolationist Swing In Midwest Disproved By Poll,” *Washington Post* (May 19, 1944), p. 9; “Myth of Midwest Isolationism Exploded in National Survey,” *Washington Post* (April 11, 1945), p. 7 (which calls the idea “one of the great American delusions”); Frederick S. Williams, “Regional Attitudes on International Cooperation,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 9 (1945), pp. 38-50; Ralph H. Smuckler, “The Region of Isolationism,” *American Political Science Review* 47 (1953), pp. 386-401.

<sup>104</sup> During the interwar period in particular, there was considerable cultural confusion as to whether the major regional metropolises — Chicago above all, but Detroit and Cleveland too — could even be classed as Midwestern, given their profound differences in outlook from the rural areas that surrounded them. See Shortridge, *The Middle West*, pp. 39-66.

<sup>105</sup> Justus D. Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939-1941* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Wayne S. Cole, *Roosevelt & The Isolationists, 1932-45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

progressives to attribute wars to banking and armament monopolies. “A certain inner security,” Adler wrote,

came from having thousands of miles of land, in addition to the oceans, act as a buffer to the outside world. In western communities, there were fewer people who had become aware of an Atlantic world united by trade, travel, and cultural contacts. War cries, so it seemed, always came from down east.<sup>106</sup>

Other postwar writers went even further, including Richard Hofstadter, for whom Midwestern isolationism was the uncle of pseudo-conservatism, know-nothingism writ global.<sup>107</sup> Such views were commonplace once “isolationism” had ahistorically been pinpointed as the primary cause of World War II, as during the war policymakers and intellectuals rewrote the past to blame the American people for the rise of Hitler, guiltting them into support for armed world leadership.<sup>108</sup> But similar sentiments existed long before the war, before that founding myth of supremacy came about. Since the fights over the entry into the Great War, and the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, the Midwest’s reputation as what the historian Thomas A. Bailey called “the backbone of American isolationism” had been pervasive among the northeastern policy elite.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Selig Adler, *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957), pp. 43-44. For similar, contemporary expositions and/or revocations of the geographical explanation for “isolationism,” see Ray Allen Billington, “The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism,” *Political Science Quarterly* 60 (1945), pp. 44-64; William G. Carleton, “Isolationism and the Middle West,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 33 (1946), pp. 377-390; Leroy N. Rieselbach, “The Basis of Isolationist Behavior,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24 (1960), pp. 645-657; Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 17-31.

<sup>107</sup> Richard Hofstadter, “The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt –1954,” in Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), p. 48.

<sup>108</sup> Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World,” 2015, pp. 182-270.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 108-109.



Emeny himself rarely talked in these terms, despite his interest in geography. In his grant proposals and his invitations to speakers, he talked about the importance of an informed public opinion, not a crusade against isolationism. But he knew and used the general attitude that he was working with, and the possibilities it offered. Any national effort to replicate the Cleveland model, he told the Carnegie Endowment in 1943, “should be concentrated upon the American industrial Ruhr, located in the area bounded by Buffalo, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Chicago.” The mention of the Ruhr was deliberate: if the fulcrum of world politics had previously been the space around the Rhine, it was now the minds of the American heartland. This, Emeny said, was “not only the most important area in America from the point of view of public opinion, but the success of the project here would guarantee its success elsewhere.”<sup>110</sup>

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Succeed it did, although Baker’s death at the end of 1937 meant that he did not see his pet cause flourish.<sup>111</sup> Given an associate professorship at Cleveland College, Emeny took over the Foreign Affairs Council in October 1935. By 1947, when Emeny left to run the Foreign Policy Association, he had hosted the “Report from the World,” a *Time*-sponsored institute which ended with a mass meeting of 10,000 Clevelanders, was addressed by Secretary of State James

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<sup>110</sup> Emeny to Malcolm W. Davis, April 30, 1943, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Series VI [CEIP, refers to Series VI unless otherwise stated], Box 228.

<sup>111</sup> Emeny deliberately kept Baker’s spirit alive, and constantly referred back to his mentor’s dreams. Notably, he founded a lecture series in Baker’s name, inaugurated by Walter Lippmann, a friend of both men. See “Newton Baker Memorial Put On Firm Basis,” *Cleveland News* (December 4, 1943), in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*.

Byrnes and Senator Arthur Vandenberg, and had an estimated radio audience of 15 million Americans.<sup>112</sup> The Council's membership grew from 440 in October 1935 to 3,588 in 1942-43. Its income increased from \$17,085 in 1936 (\$27,000 or so in 1947 dollars), to over \$60,128 in 1947 (about \$700,000). Total attendance at Council events went from 9,847 in the 1935-36 season to a peak of 74,206 in 1944-45. By the 1946-47 season, Emeny had twelve members of staff overseeing legions of volunteers.<sup>113</sup> Of course, there was a general and dramatic rise in public discussion of foreign policy throughout the war emergency. But that had to be harnessed and guided towards specific institutions. This was a public that was built.

How? Emeny's first task was to assert his authority over foreign policy discussion in town. He quickly found a permanent home for the Council on the ninth floor of the Society for Savings Building, a grand structure overlooking the city's public square. As soon as he arrived, Emeny deployed his expertise, freshly embossed with his doctorate and the national newspaper reviews of *The Great Powers*. He filled his schedule with addresses to women's clubs, men's dinners, and parent-teacher meetings. He taught twice weekly at Cleveland College, and lectured for the public at the Museum of Art. He came armed with maps and statistics, many of them taken from *The Strategy of Raw Materials*.<sup>114</sup> Crowds thronged to hear reports of his travels, particularly his involvement with the Institute of Pacific Relations. He brought friends and acquaintances to Cleveland to speak, drawing from internationalist networks. Developing

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<sup>112</sup> "Report from the World," *Time* (January 20, 1947), pp. 53-60; "We Will Keep Faith With World, Says Secretary Byrnes," *New York Times* (January 12, 1947), pp. 1, 46-47.

<sup>113</sup> Membership statistics, budget, and attendance information in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*; mailing figures in "Statistical Report, June 1935-June 1945," undated, Emeny Papers, Box 32.

<sup>114</sup> "Dr. Emeny, With Maps and Statistics, Dismisses "Yellow Peril"," *Cleveland Press* (February 22, 1936), in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*.

audiences at their speeches meant he could expand the Council's programming, adding dinner meetings, a library, and a revitalized speakers' bureau. Members of the women's discussion group volunteered in a program for settlement houses; members of the men's discussion group started to broadcast lectures over the city's radio station, WHK. All told, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* wrote, Emeny became "quite the rage here." "He speaks language that many women's clubs never heard," the newspaper said, "and he speaks it well."<sup>115</sup> Scholarly, public analysis of foreign affairs was a novelty, and a welcome one at that.

Who did Emeny imagine his public to be, ideally? He often talked as if it had no limits. Emeny gave the Council a motto, "Foreign Affairs Are Your Affairs," that was deliberately inclusive, and Baker was not joking when he had written that he wanted "every" Clevelander to be informed. The Council's formal principles were capacious, too. A statement of purpose issued in 1936 declared it to be a "non-partisan organization of men and women formed to provide information and open discussion," aimed at "a serious and honest understanding of the world position of the U.S., particularly in relation to its national security and economic interest."<sup>116</sup> But while Emeny kept no statistics on his membership and commissioned no surveys of its composition, in practice it was predominantly middle- and upper-middle class. It was certainly very white. The Council wholly ignored the city's growing black community — less than a tenth of the population in 1930 but 16% in 1950 and 34.4% by 1965 — even if the black community

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<sup>115</sup> "Flunked History, Now He's Expert," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (February 2, 1936), p. 12.

<sup>116</sup> "Statement of Purpose," 1936, Cleveland Council on World Affairs Records, Western Reserve Historical Society [CCWA], Box 1.

could not quite ignore the Council.<sup>117</sup> David H. Pierce, a writer for the local black newspaper, the *Call and Post*, was unimpressed by Emeny, dubbing him “Cleveland’s synthetic authority on international problems” and noting that he “furnished information known to every intelligent fifteen year-old child.” Still, the *Call and Post* encouraged black women to join the discussion groups and reported favorably on speakers who promoted anti-colonial positions.<sup>118</sup>

Emeny’s strategy for growth initially relied upon class-based, racialized notions of what a respectable, serious institution should look like. Gendered, too In the early days, the Council’s activities had been dominated by women, who made up 90% of its members in 1935. What press coverage the Council received was to be found in the society pages of the local press, a situation that was also true in Chicago, to Adlai Stevenson’s displeasure.<sup>119</sup> To Emeny, as to his friend Raymond Leslie Buell, the success of his institution, and especially its financial stability,

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<sup>117</sup> For these demographic processes, see Todd Michney, *Surrogate Suburbs: Black Upward Mobility and Neighborhood Change in Cleveland, 1900-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

<sup>118</sup> David H. Pierce, “The Passing Week,” *Cleveland Call and Post* (November 19, 1936), p. 6; David H. Pierce, “The Passing Week,” *Cleveland Call and Post* (February 20, 1936), p. 6; “Nationalism Keynote in World Council Speeches,” *Cleveland Call and Post* (December 16, 1944), p. 11b; “Educational Consultant Guest of Foreign Affairs Council,” *Cleveland Call and Post* (November 22, 1947), p. 13a.

<sup>119</sup> “You see there are many men in Chicago who have been skeptical of the Council because of a suspected social flavor,” Stevenson wrote to Mary Welsh, editor of the society section of the *Chicago Daily News*. “If the newspapers treat us as serious news as well as social news, we may in time be able to attract more of those people who, as you know, need us badly!” Adlai Stevenson to Mary Welsh, October 2, 1936, Adlai E. Stevenson Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 353. Welsh had taken offence to a “quip” Stevenson made during a Council meeting about the Council being “something other than a social gathering.” She told Stevenson that coverage of the Council in the newspaper had vastly increased since society journalists began to cover it, occasionally getting that coverage into the news pages. “Those clippings,” Welsh wrote, “include many faithful advance notices of the time and place of meetings, together with our own light-headed accounts of what went on. Of course, we had to make the stories sound social — we don’t presume to be political reporters. But your Mr. Utley [the Council’s paid director] would be the first to agree that we’ve helped popularize foreign affairs. And why should you or your treasury committee be saddened if your membership grows because we describe hats rather than economic conditions?” Welsh to Stevenson, September 28, 1936, Stevenson Papers, Box 353.

depended on putting male faces on work that relied on and was defined by women.<sup>120</sup> He was trying to plug the Council into a network of institutions that was, by the mid-1930s, increasingly academic, high political, and male. Hence, he later criticized the Association's branches for being the province of "an over-worked, badly-paid lady secretary who in many cases will cause the male population to fight shy of meetings unless dragooned to attend from the social rather than the educational angle." Rather, he conceived of a "man's task — one which should rank with a full professorship in a University or with the secretaryship of the local Chamber of Commerce."<sup>121</sup> In turn, his earliest initiatives in Cleveland were aimed at men of means. While he acknowledged the contribution of women to the Council's progress, and aimed for no more than a gender-balanced membership, he otherwise effaced that contribution.

If Emeny's definition of "every" American turned out to be limited in practice, there was a more difficult paradox at the heart of his Council. By virtue of its history, and as was usual for most voluntary associations, the Council was a membership institution. But membership implied a special status, as opposed to the apparently limitless pretensions to adult education that were the Council's core mission. Membership granted people entry into the world of information and opinion that was circulated in the products of the Foreign Policy Association and the Council on Foreign Relations. It gave a certain class of people access. In part, this was what Emeny, like the vast majority of foreign policy educators, wanted. Not discernably influenced by contemporary

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<sup>120</sup> Buell even offered Emeny the position of secretary at the Foreign Policy Association in 1937, a position that was, otherwise, never even contemplated as suitable for anything but a respected female internationalist. See Buell to Emeny, March 25, 1937, Buell Papers, Box 5; Buell to Chamberlain, March 24, 1937, Buell Papers, Box 3. Buell later recommended that Emeny take over his position as a foreign policy advisor to Wendell Willkie, when Buell fell ill during the 1940 presidential campaign.

<sup>121</sup> Emeny to Gen. Frank R. McCoy, August 20, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

political science, which imagined opinions moving through “opinion leaders” at every level of a public, Emeny sought above all a “leadership of informed opinion,” meaning community leaders, influential citizens in positions of power.<sup>122</sup> He claimed, in a letter to the Carnegie Endowment, to be searching for “leaders from all walks of life” as a way of accessing a wider public, but went little further. Like his counterparts at the Foreign Policy Association, he thought remarkably little about how public opinion operated, or who it was important to reach.<sup>123</sup>

Creating a local foreign policy elite was also the only means available for improving the Council’s finances and standing in the community. Cities of comparable stature such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York all supported Foreign Policy Association branches or affiliates of at least 1,000 members, and through standard organizing techniques such as telephone campaigns, press articles, and circularization of mailing lists, Emeny was able to increase the Council’s membership quickly. What he sought above all were members who would be both active in participation and generous in funds. Deploying traditional internationalist arguments about the global economy’s increasing interconnectedness, Emeny enlisted the leadership of the city’s major banks in the city in January 1937, and cajoled their senior executives into affiliation with a new International Finance Committee, which studied trade patterns in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. Industrial corporations were a much tougher sell. By April 1938, the

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<sup>122</sup> For the theory of “opinion leaders,” see Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People’s Choice* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), esp. pp. 49-51.

<sup>123</sup> Emeny to Malcolm Davis, April 30, 1943.

Council had only 1,443 members, a figure around half that counted by the older but less ambitious Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.<sup>124</sup>

Such a modest increase in membership had eye-watering financial consequences for an institution not yet strong enough to appeal to foundations. “There seems to be a permanent discrepancy,” noted the Council’s annual report in 1938, “between the amount of money which can be raised through memberships and the actual amount necessary to run an educational organization such as the Council.”<sup>125</sup> The Emenys’ vast personal wealth therefore stood in for grant money or an instant outpouring of community support. In their first year, they underwrote a deficit of around \$7,000; in their second, they pumped in \$8,577 to cover expenditures of \$14,065; in their third, their burden was \$9,570 for outgoings of \$21,550, a rise in budget driven by staff increases.<sup>126</sup> Salvation, of a sort, came only from a compromise with a much more exclusive, entirely male vision of what community education in foreign policy should look like.

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<sup>124</sup> “Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, April 15, 1935 to May 1, 1936,” undated [May 1936], CCWA, Box 1; “Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, May 1, 1936 to April 2, 1937,” undated [April 1938], CCWA, Box 1; “Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, April 2, 1937 to April 23, 1938,” undated [May 1938], CCWA, Box 1. The Chicago Council had 2,790 members in 1938 and 3,037 in 1939. See “Annual Meeting of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, May 26, 1939,” CCFR, Box 8.

<sup>125</sup> “Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, April 2, 1937 to April 23, 1938,” p. 4.

<sup>126</sup> Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, pp. 57, 59, 67.

The Council on Foreign Relations had always had non-resident members outside New York, but in 1937 it began to replicate itself in communities across the country.<sup>127</sup> For the most part targeting cities where the Foreign Policy Association did not have a significant presence, the Council founded seven satellite Committees on Foreign Relations in 1938.<sup>128</sup> The idea came from Morse Cartwright and the Carnegie Corporation, rather than the Council itself or the government. Without attempting “any of the dramatic conversion of opinion to particular ends” such as was “indulged in by the dictatorial governments,” Cartwright hoped for a national series of symposia, led by the Council, designed to bring home “the need for American collaboration in the solution of world problems.”<sup>129</sup> Allen Dulles and Whitney Shepardson, the Council’s research directors, were unenthusiastic about this, even as their plans shifted — in consultation with the State Department — towards discussion meetings in “much more highly selected group[s].” But the Corporation insisted.<sup>130</sup>

Walter Mallory, the Council’s executive director, therefore proposed “popular education,” by which he meant the “dissemination more widely in the United States of factual information

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<sup>127</sup> Even scholars specifically of the Council tend to overlook the Committee program, considering it a minor part of the Council’s work overall; this tells us much about the Council’s approach to outside public opinion, even when it came to those involved in its own work. See, e.g., Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>128</sup> The Council’s history of the Committees is Joseph Barber, *These Are the Committees* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1964).

<sup>129</sup> Cartwright to Keppel, September 27, 1939, CC, Box 127; Keppel, Russell C. Leffingwell, and others, Record of Interview, September 3, 1937, CC, Box 127; Keppel and Edward Mead Earle, Record of Interview, September 14, CC, Box 127. The Committees were not (or not simply) a nefarious attempt “to mobilize bias behind a particular conception of America’s role in a new world order,” as Parmar has argued. Cf. Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*, pp. 87-90.

<sup>130</sup> Keppel to Leffingwell, October 12, 1937, CC, Box 127; Arthur Page to Keppel, October 15, 1937, CC, Box 127; Keppel, Leffingwell, Cartwright, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Allen Dulles, Walter Mallory, Whitney Shepardson, Record of Meeting, “Peace Plan,” October 26, 1937, CC, Box 1937



concerning international problems.” Yet he defined the limits of the “popular” with surpassing hauteur. To the Council, “the most effective form of adult education” would come “by working with selected leading individuals and trusting that these will be assisted to right decisions themselves and will in turn, through their influential positions, affect the opinion and action of the masses.”<sup>131</sup> Deliberate elitism here melded with a skeptical assessment of the public’s ability to learn. “All I think you can hope to do is interest small selected groups in the study of foreign affairs,” the J.P. Morgan partner and future Council president Russell C. Leffingwell told Keppel, but it would be valuable, he thought, to have “several (and not merely one) foci of knowledge and understanding among the people of the United States.”<sup>132</sup> Reserving such “knowledge and understanding” to itself, the Council acquiesced to an experimental project, funded with \$37,500 of Carnegie support, and hired Francis Pickens Miller, a former field director of the Foreign Policy Association and chairman of the World Student Christian Federation, to run it.<sup>133</sup>

The Committees were technically autonomous, but were supervised by the Council’s powerful research committee, which supplied an agenda and a list of available speakers. Members were sent subscriptions to *Foreign Affairs* and the *Foreign Policy Reports*.<sup>134</sup> Exclusively white, male, and well-heeled, the Committees of around twenty to thirty chosen notables met for secret dinners at gentlemen’s clubs, between five and ten times a year. Miller found it easy enough to

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<sup>131</sup> “Memorandum from W.H.M. on a Project for Popular Education in International Affairs Proposed by the Carnegie Corporation,” November 1, 1937, Council on Foreign Relations Records, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University [CFR], Series 1, Box 3.

<sup>132</sup> Leffingwell to Keppel, November 3, 1937, CC, Box 127.

<sup>133</sup> Mallory to Keppel, November 26, 1937, CC, Box 127; Grant Appropriation, January 24, 1938, CC, Box 127; Mallory to Francis Pickens Miller, March 22, 1938, CFR, Series 7, Box 592. On Miller, see Mark Edwards, *The Right of the Protestant Left: God’s Totalitarianism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), esp. pp. 33-36, 84-87.

<sup>134</sup> Miller to T.J. Caldwell, July 27, 1938, CFR, Series 7, Box 612.

select interested people “identified with the principal interests of their local community,” and brought to the table members representing business, law, education, church, journalism, local government, farming, and — in places where a “responsible” unionist could be found — labor.<sup>135</sup> These provincials were thought insufficiently elect to be automatically worthy of full Council membership, but the Committees drew internal criticism for being upper-crust social gatherings rather than real discussions.<sup>136</sup> They took occasional votes and wrote reports that were passed along to the State Department, reports which revealed that the members were predominantly internationalists and even interventionists, although plenty dissented from that view even after Pearl Harbor.<sup>137</sup>

The Committees proliferated quickly, numbering thirteen by the winter of 1940-1941, with 403 total members, and twenty by 1944, with 859 members. Dulles thought that they were performing a useful, consensus-building service, and Miller even surmised that “some of the discussions were first class demonstrations of the democratic process of formulating public policy.”<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, even some of the Committees’ own chairmen grumbled that meetings

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<sup>135</sup> “A Committee on Foreign Relations,” April 19, 1938, CFR, Series 1, Box 3; “Notes on Organization of Committees on Foreign Relations, April 1 — July 20, 1938,” undated [July 1938], CFR, Series 7, Box 593; Francis Pickens Miller, *Man From the Valley: Memoirs of a 20th-Century Virginian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 85-87.

<sup>136</sup> Caldwell, Memorandum on Houston Committee, April 3, 1939, CFR, Series 7, Box 612; “Review of Work in 1943-1944 and Plans for 1944-1945,” CFR, Series 7, Box 596.

<sup>137</sup> Untitled notes [relating opinions in each Committee], 1940, CFR, Series 7, Box 595; Percy Bidwell to Miller, May 14, 1940; “American Public Opinion and Postwar Security Commitments: Results of a Poll of Regional Committees on Foreign Relations, Spring 1944,” July 20, 1944, CC, Box 127. The Council was even willing to allow General Robert E. Wood, the key figure in the America First Committee, to chair its Chicago Committee. Chicago’s group, however, quickly collapsed as discussion became rancorous. See Miller to Dulles, January 15, 1942, CFR, Series 7, Box 609.

<sup>138</sup> Dulles to Walter A. Jessup, May 5, 1942, CC, Box 127; “Report to Research Committee on Foreign Relations,” June 22, 1939, CFR, Series 1, Box 3

were stilted and fell short of genuine education. They complained that the New York office was not able to provide experts who were prepared to facilitate opinions without imposing their own views. And even within this minuscule, comfortable elite, interest was hard to maintain.

Attendance was often sporadic.<sup>139</sup> Mallory had no interest in continuing the program for its own sake, and feared it would disintegrate “without central direction and some outside assistance” to maintain momentum.<sup>140</sup> The Carnegie Corporation wondered at the end of the war if its total grants of \$145,730 had done anything to create more than a “superficial” interest, especially as it was paying for the education of those who could afford it for themselves.<sup>141</sup>

Outside the rhetoric of its grant reports, the Council never quite understood what it — or anybody else — gained from its Committees, nor what their purpose was. The aim, Nathaniel Peffer wrote for the Corporation in 1942, was the “filtration [of opinions] down from above or radiation from what used to be called key-men.”<sup>142</sup> Several Committee members were journalists or publishers, and the information and opinions expressed in discussions often informed their editorials. But otherwise, it was not clear how opinions were trickling down. The Council hoped that its Committee members would spread the results of their discussions “in daily contact with

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<sup>139</sup> Caldwell to Miller, April 26, 1940, CFR, Series 7, Box 612; Oliver P. Wheeler to Bidwell, May 20, 1944, CFR, Series 7, Box 625; Material for Discussion, Committees on Foreign Relations, Seventh Annual Meeting, June 22-23, 1945, CFR, Series 7, Box 596; W. Harold Dalgliesh, “Memorandum on Committees on Foreign Relations,” April 1946, CC, Box 529A, esp. pp. 16-20

<sup>140</sup> Mallory to Devereux Josephs, June 11, 1946, CC, Box 127.

<sup>141</sup> Josephs, Mallory, Record of Meeting, November 25, 1946, CC, Box 127; Josephs, Mallory, Record of Meeting, September 6, 1945, CC, Box 127.

<sup>142</sup> Nathaniel Peffer, “Memorandum on Carnegie Corporation Grants in the Field of International Relations,” April 17, 1942, CC, Box 187.

scores of their fellow townsmen,” or through “friendly conversation.”<sup>143</sup> But it refused to allow them to do anything collectively, and without a structure of institutional relations, this was too subtle a process even for most members to notice. The Louisville group’s secretary, for instance, relayed “some twinges of conscience from time to time” that his group was not doing more in the community.<sup>144</sup> Others, particularly in New York, took solace in the fact that the Committees provided a talent pool for government service: several members ended up working for the State Department, or elsewhere in Washington. State, too, valued the insights into elite opinion its officers gained when addressing the Committees, and viewed the Committees as a potentially useful “instrument.”<sup>145</sup> When a Council special committee led by Dulles discussed dropping the venture in 1949, the State Department vouched for it. Dulles, who was once considered for the presidency of the Foreign Policy Association, let the program continue.<sup>146</sup>

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In the Council’s black-tie brand, Emeny saw an opportunity to turn trickle-down diplomacy into a flood. A Committee would appeal to local elites not already in his purview, and he saw a

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<sup>143</sup> Bidwell, “Seven-Year Survey of an Educational Project in International Relations,” attached to Mallory to Josephs, June 11, 1945, CC, Box 127; Dalglish, “Memorandum on Committees on Foreign Relations,” pp. 9-12.

<sup>144</sup> Percy Bidwell, “Report on Work of the Foreign Relations Committees, Season 1941-42,” April 14, 1942, CFR, Series 1, Box 3.

<sup>145</sup> George Messersmith to Breckenridge Long, March 25, 1940, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1940-1944, 811.43 Council on Foreign Relations/199.

<sup>146</sup> Report of Special Committee, March 14, 1949, CFR, Series 7, Box 592.

chance to divert their attentions, through some creative accounting, to his own work.<sup>147</sup> Founded in 1938 as one of the first Committees, the prestigious Cleveland group in its earliest iterations hosted multiple corporate executives, bank presidents, and lawyers. The political leaders involved included the mayor, future Ohio senator, and eventual Supreme Court justice, Harold H. Burton, as well as Chester C. Bolton, the congressman from the city's wealthy university district.<sup>148</sup> The presidents of Oberlin College and Western Reserve University sat in, alongside many of their faculty, as did Thomas L. Sidlo, a law partner of Newton Baker's who served as the Council's president for a time. Emeny also invited the editors of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Cleveland News*, and *Cleveland Press*, which, while drawing no attention to the confidential Committee, led to increased press support of the Council. That press coverage, in turn, improved as the standard of speakers coming through town increased. Emeny convinced those experts who were willing to travel to Cleveland at the behest of the New York Council to add a few other activities, and even to address a full meeting for hundreds of attendees. In the Committee's first year, Arnold Wolfers, Samuel Flagg Bemis, and Jan Masaryk were all dragooned into giving a second speech; before the summer of 1942, so too were Sumner Welles, Raymond Leslie Buell, William Elliott, Clarence Streit, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, Carl Hambro, and even Vera Micheles

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<sup>147</sup> Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, p. 79.

<sup>148</sup> Burton became an important Republican internationalist after his election to the Senate in 1940. He sponsored the B<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub> resolution to commit the United States to international organization in 1943, and served as an ally for President Truman, who then appointed him to the bench in September 1945. See Robert David Johnson, *Congress and the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1-2. Chester C. Bolton, a five-term Congressman, returned to the House in 1939 after defeat in 1937, only to die that October. His wife, Frances P. Bolton, was elected to his seat the following year. An Standard Oil heiress and frequent Council donor, she was assigned a seat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 1942, which she held until 1968, by when she was the ranking member. She voted against Lend-Lease, but converted to internationalism after Pearl Harbor. She served in Congress with her son, Oliver Bolton, who was a three-term congressman and a Council participant. Another son, Kenyon C. Bolton, was the Council's president from 1955 to 1962. See David Goldsmith Loth, *A Long Way Forward: The Biography of Congresswoman Frances P. Bolton* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957).

Dean, an interloper determined, as she put it, to show the men of Cleveland that they need not “share the views of Council House regarding the participation of women in discussions of international affairs.”<sup>149</sup> All these drew unusually large crowds to the Foreign Affairs Council’s events, bolstering general attendances, memberships, and income. Through the elite, Emeny was able to get closer to the mass.

Over time, forming a Committee helped to put the Council on a more settled financial basis. In 1942-1943, the Committee had 75 members, double that of most of its peers. For access to an unusually long season of 13 meetings, the majority of them paid \$100 — twenty times the basic cost of Foreign Affairs Council membership, and several times the dues of Committees elsewhere.<sup>150</sup> As Percy Bidwell noted from New York, the Cleveland Committee’s “high annual dues” ruled out “certain able but impecunious citizens, labor members particularly, who might make its composition more representative.” True enough, but Emeny used the portion of those dues that was not spent on dinners and speakers by the Committee to support the Foreign Affairs Council’s broader programming.<sup>151</sup> From 1942 to 1947, direct income from the Committee totaled 20 to 30 per cent of the Council’s total receipts. Moreover, the businessmen who sat on the Committee — from the American Steel & Wire Company, M. A. Hanna, Standard Oil and more — purchased industrial memberships for their executives and other employees, and made significant corporate and personal donations. By fusing a Council on Foreign Relations initiative with his own Council, Emeny skillfully maintained a monopoly over

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<sup>149</sup> Vera Micheles Dean to Emeny, October 10, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 5.

<sup>150</sup> Bidwell to Mallory, August 2, 1944, CFR, Series 7, Box 610.

<sup>151</sup> Emeny to Members of the Committees on Foreign Relations, March 5, 1942, Emeny Papers, Box 39; Bidwell, “Report on Work,” April 14, 1942.

foreign policy discussion, giving a single focus to public attention. The Cleveland Committee directly, enthusiastically, and consistently supported Emeny's broader efforts, which seemed far too populist and independent from the plush confines of New York's Council House. In 1944, the Council started to consider withdrawing its cooperation from its Cleveland affiliate, and later, in 1947, cut its offshoot loose.<sup>152</sup>

By then, Cleveland was a changed city. World War II rescued the local economy, which had recovered even more slowly than other industrial metropolises under the New Deal. Manufacturing jobs nearly doubled from 191,000 to 340,000, as existing works retooled to produce essential military supplies, and vast new factories sprang up on the city's outskirts, including a General Motors plant that built B-29 bombers. Flush with employment, Cuyahoga County residents bought \$2.5 billion in war bonds, tying themselves to the state and the financing of its global project. But the same pressures for defense production also started to industrialize cheaper, less unionized workforces south and west, setting up conditions that would, in coming years, haunt the city. And as Cleveland welcomed the predominantly black, Southern migrants who powered its wartime boom, city planners took more careful notice of suburbanization. After 1945, with the removal of wartime restrictions on private housing development, the flight of the white middle- and upper-class rapidly intensified.<sup>153</sup> The prospects

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<sup>152</sup> Bidwell to Mallory, August 2, 1944; Dalglish to Shepherd L. Witman, April 25, 1946, CFR, Series 7, Box 610; Witman to Dalglish, May 17, 1946, CFR, Series 7, Box 610; Dalglish to Witman, May 22, 1945, CFR, Series 7, Box 610; Bidwell to Witman, October 31, 1947, Emeny Papers, Box 36,

<sup>153</sup> Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, pp. 186, 205; Kerr, *Derelict Paradise*, pp. 105-129; Miller and Wheeler, *Cleveland*, pp. 146-155.

for an adult education movement that declined to shift its focus away from the wealthy, white population that was leaving the city were unclear to contemporaries, but bleak in retrospect.

It is not clear how the Council partnered with the rash of industrial boards, relief drives, and so on, that connected the city's residents to the war effort. Emeny was certainly involved. In a May 1942 article written for the Ohio Office of Civilian Defense, he repeated that as "geography, industrial might, transportation and modern warfare have sealed forever all avenues of escape from our obligations as the major power among the nations," now "no higher duty exists upon every citizen than to familiarize himself with these realities of America's world position."<sup>154</sup> And the war appeared to drive up interest in foreign policy, mostly through the vigorous discussions of postwar planning that almost predated American entry into the conflict. National foreign policy organizations reached out ever more to the public. In most cities, this meant educational overkill. Nationwide, Emeny alone was able to centralize discussion in a single institution. By the end of the war, his Council was one of eight Carnegie Endowment "centers"; a partner of the Council on Foreign Relations by virtue of its Committee; an outpost of Clark Eichelberger's Commission to Study the Organization of Peace; an affiliate of the Foreign Policy Association; and a division of the Institute of Pacific Relations. It had even moved closer to the state, creating a division for study of hemispheric issues that at the request of Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which claimed to promote "international understanding," but in fact, especially when acting abroad, was a rank

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<sup>154</sup> "All on Civilian Front Must Know U.S. World Position, Emeny Says," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (May 17, 1942), p. 25.



propaganda agency.<sup>155</sup> All of these services were combined in the Council's structure, but they did not really drive public growth. The Council's membership hit 3,588 in the 1942-43 season, and was only 300 stronger in 1944-45. Attendance at luncheon events held steady, except for a 1944-45 season dominated by discussion of the United Nations. A threshold had been reached.<sup>156</sup>

It took another graduate of Yale's doctoral programs to break through, shifting the emphasis to a much more open approach. After Yale, Shepherd Witman combined his teaching in Nebraska and New Jersey with an interest in adult education, and became a national field representative for the Office of Civilian Defense in 1942.<sup>157</sup> As Emeny retreated to a less demanding, emeritus role, he hired Witman to be the Council's director in 1944. Two shifts of emphasis followed. For one, Witman was far more an evangelist than Emeny for the discussion method, in all its Deweyan glory. To Witman, discussion was "the most effective device toward sound democratic action," the "essence of democracy in the intricate, modern world." Indeed, it was the only possible response to a modernity that was taking decision-making away from communities, which led to "the development of citizen lethargy, a sense of personal inadequacy and a consequent sense of political futility."<sup>158</sup> Second, Witman brought to Cleveland a desire to serve the community as well as lead it. When he rewrote the Council's "guiding principles" in 1945, the old progressive urge "to make available without prejudice all facts and evidence needed

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<sup>155</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, p. 29.

<sup>156</sup> "Statistical Report, June 1935 to June 1945," Emeny Papers, Box 32.

<sup>157</sup> "Shepherd L. Witman, Biography," undated [1944], FPA, Part I, Box 26.

<sup>158</sup> Shepherd L. Witman, "Let's Talk Things Over Right," *National Municipal Review* 36 (1947), pp. 310-315; Witman, "Selecting and Phrasing the Discussion Subject," *Library Journal* 72 (1947), pp. 700-705.

for the study and evaluation of world affairs” was still there. But Witman wanted to raise the general level of debate not just in the Council, but in the public sphere more widely. He insisted, therefore, “upon the methods of informal adult education in the belief that some skilled leadership is required to extract the maximum value from public discussion.” That could be done, now, by “directing our energies toward employing our resources to assist study groups and civic organizations.” Ideally, the Council would “assist the community leaders to carry on under their own momentum.”<sup>159</sup>

Witman’s Community Education Program was the result. It was an ambitious affair that began in 1945, running alongside the Council’s usual program of lectures, discussion groups, and radio shows. At the core was a Neighborhood Discussion and Forum Program, in which the Council trained fifteen to twenty community leaders per month, who fanned back out to their libraries, their church groups or their other civic organizations. 7,000 people attended over 100 meetings directly sponsored by the Council in the first season, and far more went to meetings that benefitted from its programs. Witman operated World Affairs Clinics, which were study courses for interested citizens on specific problems, such as the role of the United Nations. Program Planning Clinics offered voluntary organizations assistance in better defining their foreign policy work. 78 such groups asked for help in the first season, including the Cleveland Church Federation, the Knights of Columbus, Crile General Hospital, and multiple Rotary clubs.<sup>160</sup> The Council ran general sessions on the discussion techniques, and sent the best

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<sup>159</sup> Witman to Board of Trustees, May 15, 1945, in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*; Witman to Davis, May 21, 1945, CEIP, Box 228.

<sup>160</sup> For the service club response to the United Nations debate, in particular, see Jeffrey A. Charles, *Service Clubs in American Society: Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 138-140.

students statewide through the speakers' bureau. It was an enormous undertaking. That season, Emeny, Witman, and other members of the Council's staff spoke to a combined audience of more than 30,000 at 157 public meetings.<sup>161</sup> By 1951, Witman's Council was presenting 1,200 programs a year, with training courses, discussion groups, radio shows, film screenings, lectures, high school programs, after-school activities, program planning clinics, weekend institutes, winter institutions, workshops, model United Nations Assemblies, a foreign students' program, and more.<sup>162</sup>

In turn, this expansion bolstered the Council's reputation. Businessmen became more amenable to Council programming. Corporations previously uninterested in matters of foreign policy, or at least claiming to be when asked for donations, now flooded his coffers.<sup>163</sup> Ministers began to gather under Council auspices in 1940 for a Church Discussion Group, which continued throughout the war as a Ministerial Committee designed to help churches understand the problems of peace and coordinate their programs. Although the war disrupted the Council's operations as staff members were drafted and rationing hit gasoline and paper supplies, returning veterans flowed onto the membership rolls. Perhaps most encouraging was the growing interest of high school students and their teachers. From 1939 onwards, the Council held Student Institutes in cooperation with the County Board of Education and the Public Library, usually

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<sup>161</sup> "Report Submitted to the Board of Trustees by Shepherd L. Witman, May 1946: Community Service and Activities," WRHS, Box 1; "The Council's Year," undated, CCWA, Box 1; Emeny to George Finch, January 11, 1946, CEIP, Box 228; Benjamin, "A Study of the Council on World Affairs," pp. 47-50.

<sup>162</sup> "Memorandum on a Projected Program for the Council on World Affairs," attached to Witman to Ray M. Gidney, March 5, 1951, Fund for Adult Education Records, Rockefeller Archives Center, FA716, Reel 4734; "Back World Affairs Council as an Instrument of Peace," *Cleveland Press* (March 30, 1951), p. 22.

<sup>163</sup> "Excerpts taken from the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Friday, Oct. 8, 1938," CCWA, Box 1.

drawing about 800 youngsters. In 1940, it opened up its membership to students, drawing 472 by the 1942-43 season, and founded a Junior Foreign Affairs Council at the request of teachers. Eventually operating with the support of the Cleveland Foundation and a network of teachers trained in Council programs, the Junior Council had chapters in 16 schools in 1941, in 28 by 1948, and in every high school in the city shortly after that. It held conferences and discussion groups, along with special events, such as a model peace conference in 1945. As well as benefitting from the Council's pedagogy at an early age, it was hoped that students would eventually feed into the main Council as adults, and, with luck, bring their parents too.<sup>164</sup>

By the time American troops were advancing through Europe, the Council was operating an enviable array of programs. Sumner Welles, fresh from the State Department, held out the Council as "doing an outstanding piece of work in helping to make democracy work" in a nationally syndicated column.<sup>165</sup> The standard of speakers was maintained despite the pressure of war work, with Welles, John Foster Dulles, Walter Lippmann, Nelson Rockefeller, and Manley Hudson all visiting Cleveland before the enormous spectacle of 1947's "Report from the World," which brought to town Byrnes and Vandenberg, foreign ministers like as Alcide de Gasperi, Jan Masaryk, and Eduardo Larreta, and domestic notables including Francis Cardinal Spellman, Henry Van Dusen, James Forrestal, Omar Bradley, and Henry Luce. The "Report from the World" capped the 1946-47 season, by which point Emeny had built a Council with nearly

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<sup>164</sup> "Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, April 23, 1938 to May 11, 1939," CCWA, Box 1; "Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, May 11, 1939 to June 1, 1940," CCWA, Box 1; Benjamin, "A Study of the Council on World Affairs," pp. 33-36; "Student Conference on International Affairs," program attached to Emeny to George Finch, January 11, 1946, CEIP, Box 228; "Report on the Activities of the Youth Program of the Council on World Affairs, April 1, 1946-April 30, 1947," CCWA, Box 1.

<sup>165</sup> Sumner Welles, "Public Opinion: Information is Vital to Democracy," *Washington Post* (November 29, 1944), p.4.

4,000 members. Well over 60,000 Clevelanders attended Council-sponsored events that year; many more listened in over the radio; still more were the direct beneficiaries of Council programs. Emeny had created an institution that had, unusually for a community group, attracted foundation support, and that ran a surplus on a budget of \$60,000.<sup>166</sup>

Luce's interest and sponsorship was emblematic of Emeny's national reputation. Aware that communities as far afield as Indianapolis, Seattle, and San Francisco were looking to Cleveland as a model of what could be done, Emeny instituted an in-service training program for foreign policy educators, chiefly to host young, potential leaders of Councils elsewhere and to give them the tools to replicate his success.<sup>167</sup> A Carnegie Corporation grant of \$10,000 in March 1947 enabled him to continue training two fellows, one of whom was Howard Cook. Cook was sent from San Francisco to train with Emeny, later became director of the World Affairs Council of Northern California, and ended up the chief of the State Department's Division of Public Liaison.<sup>168</sup> A more permanent program, again funded by the Corporation, had trainees earn an M.A. in international relations or "Citizenship and World Affairs" at Western Reserve University, in order to gain the credentials necessary to speak with authority in a community, while also serving time at the Council to learn the techniques of administration.

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<sup>166</sup> Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, p. 149.

<sup>167</sup> Shepardson, Emeny, Record of Meeting, October 2, 1946, CC, Box 127; John Gardner, Kurt Pantzer, Record of Meeting, August 14, 1946, CC, Box 529A; "Report of the Coordination Survey to the Steering Committee of Seattle International Relations Agencies," undated, Institute of Pacific Relations Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Room, Columbia University [IPR], Box 225; Emeny to Alger Hiss, May 27, 1947, CEIP, Box 48.

<sup>168</sup> Josephs, Shepardson, Emeny, Record of Meeting, February 13, 1947, CC, Box 127; Emeny to Josephs, March 12, 1947, CC, Box 127; Emeny to Josephs, November 26, 1947, CC, Box 127; Gardner, Howard Cook, Record of Meeting, February 7, 1950, CC, Box 374

Several graduates went on to staff projects across the country, forming an advance guard in Emeny's later efforts to take the Cleveland model nationwide.<sup>169</sup>

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What, by 1947, would an engaged member of the Council — most likely a wealthy, white woman — have learned? If she had attended every event in the Council's core program from Emeny's arrival to his departure, what would she have been exposed to? At root, she would have seen the world primarily through a tour of its states and empires, a geography of discussion that implied that there was no part of the world, Africa excepted, about which responsible Americans did not need to be aware. More than anything else, she would have heard her president preach his gospel of American power. The titles of some of Emeny's annual speeches to the Council's public meetings are indicative, a story of power urged, and power taken up: "The Price of Power," "America Faces a New World" (1936); "The Realities of the Present Crisis" (1938); "Now America Must Decide" (1939); "Frontiers of National Defense" (1941); "Winning the War," "Winning the Peace," (1942); "America's New World Position" (1943); "America in the Role of Super Power" (1946). In each of these lectures, Emeny not only asserted the power of the United States, but repeated his concern with what that fact entailed for individual Americans. But while speakers including John Foster Dulles, Nicholas Spykman, Arnold Wolfers, and Sumner Welles gave speeches specifically on American foreign policy, formal

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<sup>169</sup> Witman to Robert M. Lester, May 17, 1949, CC, Box 127; Witman to Gardner, March 6, 1950, CC, Box 127; Witman to Florence Anderson, March 12, 1953, CC, Box 127.

discussion of that topic was surprisingly rare. Rather, the Council put forward a broad agenda for general knowledge, taught by a class of experts who increased their authority simply by appearing on the Council's stage.

Even so, the Council had its priorities. Europe took up only around a quarter of its time from 1935 to 1947, albeit more than that between the Munich crisis and the fall of France. In that pivotal time, Council crowds heard from major personalities on European issues, most notably Bertrand Russell ("The Taming of Power," January 1939), the socialist and future minister for Free France André Philip ("France and the European Crisis," March 1939), and Jan Masaryk ("Democracy in Peril," January 1939), just three months after he resigned to protest the German occupation of the Sudetenland. More often, though, the Council's members were lectured to by scholars, including the Foreign Policy Association's Vera Micheles Dean, and a procession of historians including Bernadotte Schmitt, Frederick Schuman, and Veit Valentin.

Strikingly, both within and without those moments of chaos, European politics tended to be discussed as European politics, its link to specific U.S. foreign policies left implicit. U.S. interests were much more explicitly presented in discussions of Asian politics. Perhaps surprisingly, given Cleveland's role in Atlantic trading networks, Asia was covered almost as much Europe, although the flow events meant that the peak seasons came in 1937-39, 1941-42, and 1944-45. Cleveland's taste for Pacific affairs was the result of Emeny's commitment to the Institute of Pacific Relations.<sup>170</sup> The Institute's promotion of India as a future, independent

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<sup>170</sup> A similar dynamic played out in Denver, where Cherrington, another member of the Institute, made a conscious effort "to help our students and citizens remember that America faces the Pacific as well as the Atlantic" by cooperating with the Institute. See Cherrington, *The Social Science Foundation*, p. 10.

player in the region, for instance, explains why the subcontinent was talked about fairly often.<sup>171</sup> But the battle between Japan and China dominated discussion. Japan was presented largely as a menace, (nationalist) China as a darling.<sup>172</sup> Hu Shih, the noted linguist and diplomat who served as China's ambassador to the United States from 1938 to 1942, paid three visits, speaking on "China's Reconstruction," "China's Struggle for Freedom," and "China Fights for Freedom." Sinologists, notably Owen Lattimore, chimed in on similar themes, presenting China as both an honorable victim and on its way to modernity, while the Council also sponsored performances of Chinese drama and music. Japanese representatives were thin on the ground, and Japanese policy was therefore analyzed, rather than represented. Long before 1941, Japanese policy was discussed as a peril, a direct line drawn by figures such as Upton Close, Nathaniel Peffer, No-Yong Park, Walter Judd, Admiral Harry Yarnell, and the chair of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Edward C. Carter. American interests were at stake here, far more so than in Europe: if a crisis was coming, it was coming from the Far East.

Monroe Doctrine matters persisted even as the United States took up the burden beyond the Western Hemisphere. Discussion of the Soviet Union was remarkably rare, even as late as 1946 and 1947, and the Council's programming betrayed little sense of either an emerging threat or an important ally. World trade and international economics popped up from time to time, but in no sustained way. And, again reflecting Emeny's own concerns, internationalism of the institutional variety was remarkably absent. The League of Nations had almost no reach here,

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<sup>171</sup> Michael R. Anderson, "Pacific Dreams: The Institute of Pacific Relations and the Struggle for the Mind of Asia," PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2009, pp. 69-80.

<sup>172</sup> On Japan's relationship with the Institute, see Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919-45* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 200-239.



despite Baker's commitments. The Council's concentration on the harder sides of power meant that, until the debate over the Dumbarton Oaks accords, only Clarence Streit, speaking on "Union Now," and Manley Hudson's reflections on the World Court received a hearing. Even after the autumn of 1944, the United Nations was approached skeptically, from a power-political perspective, in stark contrast to the national picture. In the following two seasons, not a single major Council meeting was devoted to international institutions. If the foreign policy elite had been interested in a genuine back and forth, one would surely find its elements in the Council's programs, but we do not. What we do find is the relentless presentation of an implicit case for the inescapability of American power.

What the Council put on is one thing, but which of its offerings was popular? The Council's staff kept statistics for its main events only until 1941, and while they show a very gradual uptick in average attendance from 200 or so towards 300 at a set-piece speech, the Council quickly became capable of putting on headline events drawing large crowds of three or four times that. As far as crowds went, fame mattered, and topic did not. Least interesting to Cleveland audiences were the academic experts and journalists who provided the bulk of the Council's programming. In the 1940-41 season, for instance, newspapermen such as Hanson W. Baldwin (*New York Times*), Carroll Binder (*Chicago Daily News*), William Henry Chamberlin (*Christian Science Monitor*), and Rey Scott (*Life*) all drew mediocre attendances. Herbert Bolton, a University of California historian, John McCulloch of the Foreign Policy Association, and even Jacob Viner, the Chicago economist, scarcely performed any better.

What mattered that year, as every other, was notoriety, and in particular proximity to the diplomatic action. Sumner Welles, speaking on "Defense and American Foreign Policy" in

September 1940, drew close to the largest crowd, followed by the Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle, the Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent Edgar Ansel Mowrer, and the former Belgian Prime Minister Paul van Zeeland. All, however, came off second best to a perpetual star of the lecture circuit, immensely popular with the wealthy women who had time to attend Council events: Vera Micheles Dean, the Foreign Policy Association researcher, who discussed “America’s Choice Today” before a thousand Clevelanders.<sup>173</sup> Cleveland’s preference for foreign policy celebrities worked well enough while major figures were available to speak, especially from the State Department. But if expertise of the practical kind became less approachable, trouble was sure to follow.<sup>174</sup>

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Was the Cleveland Council a success? It was seen that way. At a farewell dinner when Emeny left Cleveland for New York and the Foreign Policy Association in September 1947, tributes were read from John Foster Dulles and James Shotwell.<sup>175</sup> Realpolitikers like Allen Dulles and Edward Mead Earle expressed their admiration at one point or another.<sup>176</sup> Even Whitney Shepardson, who was constantly irritated by Emeny when he worked for the Council on Foreign

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<sup>173</sup> “Report of the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Council, May 1, 1940 to May 1, 1941,” CCWA, Box 1.

<sup>174</sup> For lists of speakers, see Emeny, *Cleveland Council*.

<sup>175</sup> John Foster Dulles to Emeny, September 24, 1947, CCWA, Box 4; James Shotwell to Emeny, September 23, 1947, CCWA, Box 4.

<sup>176</sup> Allen Dulles to Emeny, January 28, 1942, Emeny Papers, Box 39; Edward Mead Earle to Emeny, July 29, 1944, CFR, Series 2, Box 33.

Relations, slyly noted in the fall of 1946 that “other people, as well as Emeny himself, feel that the Cleveland Council has developed in a remarkable way.”<sup>177</sup> But on what were such assessments based? There was a good amount of confirmation bias, to be sure. Emeny’s reports to his donors and especially the Carnegie foundations were full of membership and attendance figures, the latter always suspect as statistics because they counted the total attendance at Council activities, eliding the fact that many went to multiple events in a season. Were even those inflated numbers impressive? To an extent, they were. It was one of the paradoxes of adult education that it appealed everywhere to the already educated, particularly people with high school diplomas and college degrees. In the 1940 census, 340,421 of the 755,292 residents of the Cleveland Metropolitan District who were aged over 25 had at least one year of high school under their belts, and just 42,605 had graduated from a four-year college.<sup>178</sup> Membership in the Council, purchased by 2,919 people in the 1940-41 season, was the province of a minority. On the most charitable reading possible, the inflated attendance of 22,771 that year might have represented half of Cleveland’s fully educated audience. By 1947, the proportion of Cleveland’s population being reached was much higher.

But Emeny, Witman, and others associated with the Council never ventured to gauge the educational impact of their program. Adult education as a discipline had few ways to measure its own success, even if anecdotal evidence suggested to the prominent Iowan editor W. W. Waymack that organized discussion had had its role in changing foreign policy views in the

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<sup>177</sup> Shepardson, Emeny, Record of Meeting, October 2, 1946, CC, Box 127.

<sup>178</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume IV, Part 4* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), Table D-48, p. 761.

Midwest.<sup>179</sup> As one theorist put it, adult education had multiple objectives, from “an increase in the individual’s store of knowledge,” to “the stimulation of a desire for further study,” from “the development of critical judgment” to “the critical analysis of self.” But the adult education leader had “to depend almost entirely upon his subjective judgment as to whether a method works or does not work.”<sup>180</sup> Cherrington, in Denver, had tried to apply common tests to his Foundation’s methods, but found them insufficient.<sup>181</sup> All that was left was inference from growing demand, which was analytically impossible to separate from the supply of information about world events. Emeny was impressed by the claims on the Council’s services in the aftermath of World War II, but, in his annual report for 1945-46, he noted honestly that “there is no way to accurately evaluate the ramifications of this influence.”<sup>182</sup>

Whether the Council had expanded because of a growth of interest in foreign policy or because of its institutional skill was hard to say, although its failure to grow its membership beyond a certain level pointed more to the former than the latter. Nobody looked, at this point at least, to opinion polls, or to community surveys. Nor did anybody confidently draw a direct line from educational efforts on the local level to the monumental shift in the United States’ world role, or vice versa: there was a correlation, to be sure, but the causation was unclear. All that could be said was that in the Midwest, apparently against the odds, the Council had prospered. The Council had become a model for how an expert could transform a community’s efforts to

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<sup>179</sup> Waymack, “The Middle West Looks Abroad,” pp. 544-545.

<sup>180</sup> Fansler, *Discussion Methods for Adult Groups*, pp. 141-144.

<sup>181</sup> Cherrington, *Methods of Education*, esp. pp. 12-16.

<sup>182</sup> “The Council’s Year,” undated.

understand its world. It was a model that, in short order, would be replicated with varying success across the country.

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“Outsiders frequently wonder why Cleveland is more international-minded than most Midwest cities,” *TIME* magazine wrote in March 1943. For an answer, it suggested, Clevelanders pointed to the Council, which had brought a “Who’s Who of international affairs” to town. The “slender, dark-haired Brooks Emeny’s restrained manner conceals a burning intensity of purpose,” the writer claimed, and “firmly believes that 40 councils like Cleveland’s could knock isolationism into a cocked hat.” It was, after all, a “powerful educational instrument.”<sup>183</sup> Luce’s writer did not ask what or whom the Council was an instrument of, but, by 1947, the *Chicago Tribune* certainly knew. Upon the festivities of the “Report from the World,” the chosen daily of the America First Committee blasted the “lickspittle members of the Cleveland Council” for “war mongering and America Last.”<sup>184</sup>

Indeed, it is tempting simply to see the Council as a vehicle for a hegemonic elite, using support from the state, and the foundations that served it, to manipulate public consent for globalist ends. It was not, at least not quite. As we have seen, unlike the major national institutions it associated itself with, the Cleveland Council depended not simply on top-down

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<sup>183</sup> “Town Hall,” *TIME* (March 8, 1943), [content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,Qi71.774457.oo.html](http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,Qi71.774457.oo.html).

<sup>184</sup> “The Bill Is Presented At Cleveland,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 6, 1947. See also “One-Worlders Whoop It Up In Far Away Ohio,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, 1947; “Who Champions Hope and Freedom?” January 11, 1947, *Chicago Tribune*; “Global Forum Hears ‘Me-Too’ Duet on Policy,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 12, 1947.

coercion, but on bottom-up energy, too. It relied on volunteers, on donations, on goodwill.

Perhaps those energies were the result of the elite's control of ideas, which filtered down into the population and resulted in action that merely reinforced those same ideas, as Inderjeet Parmar might claim.<sup>185</sup> But this is a narrow view of activism, for one thing. For another, it underestimates the room for disagreement that was deliberately left even by people like Emeny, who, let us recall, was a Yale-trained geopolitical realist, Council on Foreign Relations member, and State Department advisor — and should, by all accounts, have been a rank publicist for intervention.

There can be no doubt that the Cleveland Council's programs had a political direction. The core claims being presented implied a profound shift in American foreign policy, even if Emeny always phrased his policy vision in a conservative language of duties. Receiving information about the world, in this view, would lead Americans to understand that America was in the world, and had responsibilities by virtue of its power. Even so, Emeny protested any suggestions of bias. In one December 1939 radio address, delivered during a "Foreign Affairs Week" that was proclaimed by the city's mayor, Emeny declared that the Council had no "official policy or program of action," and that it was "the very essence of democracy as opposed to a dictatorship that all policies should be based upon the friendly exchange of ideas and convictions leading to workable compromise." Yet, like all social scientists concerned with education, Emeny had conviction in his facts. Every Council member could hold his own views,

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<sup>185</sup> Parmar only addresses national institutions purely from a top-down perspective, so he sees institutions like Foreign Policy Association branches as subservient to a conspiratorial national elite that was controlling opinions. See Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*; Inderjeet Parmar, "The Carnegie Corporation and the Mobilisation of Opinion in the United States' Rise to Globalism, 1939-1945," *Minerva* 37 (2000), pp. 355-378; Inderjeet Parmar, "'To Relate Knowledge and Action': The Impact of the Rockefeller Foundation on Foreign Policy Thinking during America's Rise to Globalism 1939-1945," *Minerva* 40 (2002), pp. 235-363.

he said, although “if he is intellectually honest such views will naturally be altered from time to time under normal processes of education.”<sup>186</sup> But because adult education subjected the fruits of social science to public test, education did not always work out as planned. Sometimes, indeed, the students got ahead of the teachers.

Given Emeny’s trenchant belief in the fact and range of American power, we might expect him to have joined the interventionist cause after the outbreak of European war. Was this not the moment for the United States to realize the destiny of its power, to take up the responsibilities it had declined so painfully two decades prior? For some it was, but Emeny was not so sure. Unlike his teacher, Spykman, Emeny’s scholarship granted him faith in the United States’ ability to ride out general war, a widely-held position as late as 1939 that came under fatal attack from strategists after the fall of France. Emeny believed that the U.S. would be secure even in the event of a Nazi Europe; others, in more powerful positions, redefined U.S. security in the face of that treat.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, Emeny’s understanding of public opinion and, importantly, the authority that his success in Cleveland bestowed to talk about it, cautioned him against a rush even to aid the allied democracies. In his view, the rancorous debate between the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) and the America First Committee obscured the deeper educational task that needed to be done. World leadership would come, he knew, but he was not comfortable with a quick, cursory discussion about how, when, and why.

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<sup>186</sup> “Address by Brooks Emeny – WHK – December 15, 1939,” CCWA, Box 1.

<sup>187</sup> Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World,” pp. 83-181. For a retrospective evaluation of Emeny’s arguments and statistics compared to Spykman’s, see Robert J. Art, “The United States, The Balance of Power, and World War II: Was Spykman Right?” *Security Studies* 14 (April 2005), pp. 364-406.

Like many Americans, Emeny feared involvement in another world war. In 1936, he told Baker that if the Cleveland Council could assist “the concerted efforts of responsible citizens to insure the guidance of reason as opposed to passion,” surely the country might be “saved from the disasters of involvement.”<sup>188</sup> Emeny disparaged the inflexibility of the Neutrality Acts, but in speeches between Munich and Pearl Harbor he made clear that he thought the United States could and should stay out of any future war.<sup>189</sup> In a speech to the Council in October 1939, entitled “Now America Must Decide,” he declared that “consciousness of power’ denotes not only the ability to utilize that power but also the wisdom to know when to withhold its use,” and that “our duty as well as our national interest lies in the preservation of our power and reason in a world gone mad to the end that we may perform effectively our most important future role which lies in the period of reconstruction.” “Economically, strategically and politically,” he concluded, “it is to our interest to remain aloof.”<sup>190</sup> Fear of further war was not unusual among interwar internationalists, and a preference for an America that kept to itself was common even among a new breed of realists. Even William Allen White, the old Midwestern progressive who was the CDAAA’s figurehead for a time, declared that “the Yanks are not coming.”<sup>191</sup> What distinguished Emeny from his peers was the strength and longevity of his convictions.

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<sup>188</sup> Emeny to Baker, October 3, 1936, Baker Papers, Box 98.

<sup>189</sup> “Emeny Says U.S. Can Avoid War,” *Philadelphia Bulletin*, (November 4, 1938), in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*.

<sup>190</sup> Emeny, “Now America Must Decide,” October 27, 1939, in Emeny, *Cleveland Council*.

<sup>191</sup> “White Unit Widens British Aid Stand,” *New York Times* (December 28, 1940), p. 3. This controversial stance led to White’s resignation. On the CDAAA, see Andrew Johnstone, *Against Immediate Evil: American Internationalists and the Four Freedoms on the Eve of World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 73-89.



Emeny's was not simply a strategic argument. He knew that the United States had responsibilities in the world that it was not properly taking up. He knew, too, that if the United States entered the war, as was likely, it would win and win easily. Never a member of the America First Committee, despite invitations and a basic agreement on policy, to call him an "isolationist" would be absurd, and his views show that adopting such binary language obscures far more than it reveals. For Emeny, the question was whether people were ready for what would have to come after the war. Were they ready finally to resolve the tension he had identified in *The Great Powers* between Wilson's Fourteen Points and Washington's Farewell Address? Emeny thought not, and it was precisely for that reason that his Council existed. "Unless it is America's intention to become henceforth a permanent and dominant part of the political systems of Europe and Asia," he said late in 1939, "it is sheer folly to participate in their wars."<sup>192</sup> Even as Paris capitulated, Emeny held strong. On an airplane from Hong Kong to San Francisco, he made a note that he later read to the Council:

While the Atlantic and Pacific provides ready highways for travel and the transport of our naval and military supplies abroad, they have served in the past as an insuperable barrier to our effective participation in the political systems of extra-American regions. The American situation is such as to make us apparently incapable of functioning in time of peace as though we were a part of the European and Asiatic regional political life. The paradox of our position arises thus from the fact that our impulse to achieve goals, realizable only through trans-oceanic crusades, cannot be justified unless we have previously determined to remain after such wars the dominant power in the regions to which we have gone to fight to enforce our views — a policy which geography and tradition have thus far not permitted.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Emeny, "Now America Must Decide."

<sup>193</sup> Brooks Emeny, *Frontiers of National Defense* (Cleveland: Foreign Affairs Council of Cleveland, 1941), pp. 10-11.

Despite his service as a foreign policy advisor to Wendell Willkie in the 1940 campaign, these were words that Emeny invoked repeatedly, including to the American Political Science Association in December. The public, he said, was not yet ready for such commitments.

Emeny held his views so strongly that he testified against the Lend-Lease Bill in January 1941, on the same day as Lindbergh appeared before the House. Congressmen in Emeny's own party used his research against the Roosevelt administration, and Emeny agreed with them that there was nothing "outside of this hemisphere that is so vital to us that we have to go fight for it, in the way of raw materials." But that was not the principal reason for his reluctance. "We waged the last war, and we lost the peace," he told his own congresswoman, Frances P. Bolton, who voted against the bill. "What is so very overwhelming about it," he said, "is that it has to be our peace that has to be waged, and imposed; and I am not so sure that we have made up our minds as to what our peace has to be." Materiel could not be granted to Britain without taking sides in the war, and to take sides in the war was to take sides in a future peace. The smaller issues of aid therefore mattered less than the fundamental stakes of the decision. "We are faced now," he told Karl Mundt,

with the question of whether we are going to extend the periphery of American power across the seas to Europe and to Asia, and maintain them there, not only in time of war but in time of peace. That is the meaning of America as the 'arsenal of democracy.'

If Americans did not understand this, then entry into the war would be an active threat to future world peace.<sup>194</sup> Emeny's views found favor with the editors of the *Chicago Tribune*, but he faced severe disapproval from his friends, and the bill passed regardless.<sup>195</sup>

Even after Lend-Lease became law in March, Emeny still believed that the larger problem had not been solved. It was in May that he lost his audience. In a set-piece speech to the Council, "Frontiers of National Defense," Emeny continued to insist that "if there is to be an Anglo-American 'New Order' as opposed to an Axis 'New Order,' there must not only be full American participation in the machinery of peace, but likewise in the maintenance of peace." And now he accused the president and his interventionist supporters of duplicity. The CDAAA, he said, was launching "continental crusades," and by continuing to say that aid was a means of avoiding war, it was "deceiving the American public by intriguing their acceptance of programs of action whose ultimate consequences would prove entirely different from what was claimed."

Citing six years of history, from the Neutrality Acts to the verge of war, Emeny argued that

a nation which has passed through so many gyrations of opinions and has been so easily swayed emotionally from one side to another, is not a nation which has reached as yet an emotional and rational stability sufficient to enable it to meet with unflinching purpose the problems inherent in commitments already made.

This was dangerous, for "in the long run the most important factor in world relations is not the military power of Germany, is not the naval power of Japan, but the actual and potential power of

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<sup>194</sup> *Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Seventy-Seventh Congress, First Session, on H. R. 1776, January 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 1941* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941), pp. 465-477.

<sup>195</sup> Emeny, "The Defense of America: A Critique of Our Policy," *Chicago Tribune* (January 26, 1941), p. 14. This was a reprint of Emeny's address to the American Political Science Association, but the article had a slight tweak. At APSA, Emeny had said that permanent commitments were "a policy which geography and tradition have thus far not permitted." In print, they were a policy which geography and tradition "do not permit."

the United States.” Roosevelt was not being honest; the paradox of *The Great Powers* was still at play. And the American people, he concluded, “must fast come to the decision that if it is again to fight a war and to win a war, it must this time win the peace.”<sup>196</sup>

The problem was that many of Emeny’s members had become staunch interventionists, even members of the CDAAA itself. Their reaction was visceral. “Has Hitler Done Nothing?” steamed Emeny’s friends on the editorial pages of the *Plain Dealer*. The newspaper assailed him as an appeaser who failed “to take account of the nature of totalitarianism,” who did not understand that “the United States would be committing national suicide if it failed to recognize this threat to the hemisphere.” Emeny’s argument about the inherent security of the United States, in other words, had lost. Contrary to Emeny’s claims that Americans had been duped, or at least not fully informed, the newspaper insisted that

the American people may not at the moment see the full consequences of the course on which they are embarked, but they pretty thoroughly realize the consequences to them of a Hitler victory and their failure to do anything. All Europe stands as a tragic warning.

What Emeny had called “hard-boiled realism” was nothing more than opportunism, as amoral as the foreign policy of the dictators, and in truth the editorial had a point: for Emeny, ideology was never a driving force for policy. “Continued indifference and complacency would be more dangerous to the future of America than the so-called ‘emotionalism’ which Dr. Emeny deplores,” the paper wrote. On that basis, what Emeny wrongly deplored was a valid response to Hitler.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Emeny, *Frontiers of National Defense*.

<sup>197</sup> “Has Hitler Done Nothing?” *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (May 12, 1941), p. 6; “Mrs. Fuldheim Raps Emeny ‘Confusion,’” *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (May 15, 1941), p. 18; “In Support of Emeny,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (May 18, 1941), p. 21.

A letter to the *Plain Dealer*, published a few days later, surely stung still more. Josephine Irwin was a noted local suffragist, a distinguished member of the Council, a leader of its women's discussion group, and a convert to the CDAAA's cause. She was, she wrote, a devoted follower of Emeny's. But she was repulsed by Emeny's claim that the CDAAA was "motivated either by 'ignorance or dishonesty.'" Surely, she wrote, she could not be ignorant. After all, she had learned from a scholar. Of what, then, did her "dishonesty" consist? Listening to Newton Baker? Preferring world organization to world anarchy? Deploring neutrality and isolation? All this she was taught. "My dishonesty," she continued, "is composed further of a belief that where power is, there also is responsibility, and, that until the United States assumes a role in world politics which is commensurate with its vast power, there can be no peace!" And last, she concluded, her deceit was

comprised of a knowledge that until the 'ignorant and dishonest' in America uphold these simple and incontrovertible facts, war is inevitable. Until these facts are accepted, the combined programs of our dearest enemies cannot save America. Our dearest enemies: the America First Committee, the Communists, the Bundists, the Social Action Committee of the Northeast Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Reformed Church, a young man who has become a profound authority on international relations because he had the wind at his back when he flew the Atlantic in 1927, the United Mothers of America who are having such a gloriously exciting time aiding Hitler with their martyrdom, and Dr. Emeny.<sup>198</sup>

Yet still Emeny did not recant.

Emeny was not willing to sacrifice his belief in the need for an informed public in order to secure a policy that he, fundamentally, agreed with. The trade-off was too dangerous. Being the "military, naval, and air 'Arsenal of Democracy,'" he told a Connecticut Foreign Policy

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<sup>198</sup> "Education for What?" *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (June 1, 1941), p. 21.

Association branch as late as October, America “became likewise committed to the task of assuming the role of the world’s economic and political arsenal.” History therefore risked repeating itself, as while Hitler had a plan for world domination, the United States had none. “We don’t know what we are going to do when Hitler is destroyed,” Emeny pointed out. “Unless we free ourselves from the misrule of pressure groups by intelligent study of our problems,” he concluded, “we will again lose the peace, even though we win the war.”<sup>199</sup> The American people were not yet sufficiently informed, sufficiently educated, to take up their burdens, he said. Of course, this was a position that justified the continuing necessity of his Council and the movement he hoped it would lead, and it was one that he continued to hold; others would return to it in time. But if such convictions were quite rare among internationalists like Emeny in 1939, they were vanishingly so by 1941. Sensing their opportunity, internationalists at the Foreign Policy Association and elsewhere weakened their commitment to education in pursuit of the policies and ultimate goals they sought; Emeny shared the goal of a responsible United States, but feared a war that would come all too quickly to make that possible. For a crucial period of time, he dissented; for all he had done to create a public in Cleveland, he feared he had not done enough. It was a fear for which he withstood extreme public criticism.

These were questions that went to the heart of the internationalists’ progressive inheritance. Should the public come first, or the policies? What should happen if experts and the public diverged? What was the duty of the educator to present all sides of a problem, if one side

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<sup>199</sup> “Excerpts from Speech delivered by Brooks Emeny Before the Foreign Policy Association, Hartford, October 29, 1941,” Emeny Papers, Box 39; “Mustn’t Lose Peace Again, Says Emeny,” *Hartford Courier* (October 30, 1941), p. 19; Emeny to Nelson Rockefeller, October 11, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

became widely seen, even morally sanctioned, as right, and the other as wrong? The democratic character of American world leadership would depend on the answers.

Emeny was right about one thing: war came. On December 6, Cleveland hosted the second conference of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations to take place in Ohio. Five Republican members of Congress were there, led by Frances Bolton. So too were a hundred or so other delegates. On the first day, the consensus appeared to be that Japan would continue its “fence sitting” policy as long as possible.<sup>200</sup> Conflict appeared distant. But at lunch on the second day, Emeny was called to the telephone. Quietly, he silenced the Country Club’s radios, gathered the delegates, and asked Edward C. Carter, the secretary-general of the Institute, to tell the audience what had happened. As the *Plain Dealer* reported with a rare clarity of simile, the news dropped “like a bombshell.”<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> “Holds Allies Now At War With Japs,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (December 7, 1941), p. 8.

<sup>201</sup> “Thinks Japs Chose Short Losing War,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (December 7, 1941), p. 11.

## Chapter 3

### The War for a Democratic Foreign Policy

On the first Tuesday in February, 1943, the board members of the Cleveland Foreign Affairs Council gathered for a meeting. News had probably not yet reached them that Red Army troops were accepting the surrender of the German Sixth Army that day, ending the Battle of Stalingrad and setting in train an arduous drive west that would bring the Soviet Union into the heart of Europe. Either way, the trustees were concerned with another, parallel revolution in international politics. America was ascendant, America was in the world, and Brooks Emeny wanted to his Council to reflect that.

Gone was the Foreign Affairs Council of old, founded in a time when the outside world had seemed distant and forbidding. In its place stood the Cleveland Council on World Affairs. What did this rebranding matter? As Emeny wrote to Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation, perhaps it made “no difference what title a local organization might assume, whether it was a Foreign Policy Association, a World Affairs Council, or a Foreign Affairs Institute,” if its programs had similar aims.<sup>1</sup> After all, although the phrase “world affairs” was in wide use to describe America’s relationship with the outside world by this point, “foreign affairs” and “foreign policy” were much more so. But the idea of “world affairs” at least nodded to the burst of global thinking that Americans had embarked upon. While intellectuals debated what a

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<sup>1</sup> Brooks Emeny to Raymond Fosdick, April 3, 1943, CCWA, Box 1.



postwar world could and should look like, ordinary citizens bought maps by the million, maps redrawn by cartographers to make visible the perceived insecurity of the United States.<sup>2</sup> Books on international relations became bestsellers, and *One World*, written by Emeny's idol Wendell Willkie, became the fastest-selling non-fiction book in history. It was a craze that testified, one reviewer wrote, to a feeling "of a world opening up."<sup>3</sup> Radios brought the world into American lives like never before, and if foreign policy was now a matter of hearth and home, a Foreign Policy Association staffer said, "there can be nothing *foreign* about that!"<sup>4</sup> Many Americans, too, came to understand that the power to reshape that world was theirs. As the geographer Matthew Farish has written, "the entire planet became an *American* strategic environment."<sup>5</sup>

Renaming the Cleveland Council acknowledged that. As the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported, the revised title was considered "in keeping with the change which has taken place in the foreign relations of the United States with respect to the world as a whole."<sup>6</sup> But the new name was not only descriptive, but normative. If America held new responsibilities, Americans themselves had to be convinced that they held new responsibilities, too. Gone was the Council's old slogan, "Foreign Affairs are Your Affairs"; now it read "World Affairs are Your Affairs."

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<sup>2</sup> Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Susan Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 204-238; Timothy Barney, *Mapping the Cold War: Cartography and the Framing of America's International Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), pp. 25-60.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Zipp, "When Wendell Willkie Went Visiting: Between Interdependency and Exceptionalism in the Public Feeling for *One World*," *American Literary History* 26 (2014), p. 485; see also John M. Jordan, "A Small World of Little Americans: The \$1 Diplomacy of Wendell Willkie's *One World*," *Indiana Magazine of History* 88 (1992), pp. 173-204; Samuel Zipp, "Dilemmas of World-Wide Thinking: Popular Geographies and the Problem of Empire in Wendell Willkie's Search for *One World*," *Modern American History* 1 (2018), pp. 295-319.

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum from Helen M. Daggett, June 18, 1948, Emeny Papers, Box 40.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> "Foreign Council to Change Name," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (February 3, 1943), p. 15.

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The United States ended World War II as the world's supreme power, its military dominion crowned by an atomic monopoly and clothed in international institutions. It was the only state to fight a genuinely global war, and yet the only power to escape the ravages of destruction at home.<sup>7</sup> Even so, the war tied Americans to the foreign policy exercised in their name in wholly new ways. Millions donned uniform and traveled the world to fight and die. Many left the shores of the United States for the first time, and saw the world afresh when they did. Those who stayed at home necessarily had a certain distance, sensory and emotional, from the conflict.<sup>8</sup> But they were told that their labor on the home front matched the ultimate sacrifices made on fronts faraway, as if America's was the same total war waged to the death elsewhere. It was not. The economy boomed as the United States deployed the colossal productive capacity long feared by its adversaries and trusted in by its friends. The war cost the United States about \$350 billion, or north of \$4 trillion today, but it was able to fund a significant proportion of its borrowing through war bonds, which were bought by almost every family in the nation. Others paid for the fight in income taxes, filing with the Internal Revenue Service for the first time in their lives, or

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<sup>7</sup> Dennis Showalter, "Global Yet Not Total: The U.S. War Effort and Its Consequences," in Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, and Bernd Greiner (eds.), *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 109-133. Of course, this statement ignores the war as fought in America's colonies, but then, many Americans ignored that war, too. Cf. Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Mary L. Dudziak, "You didn't see him lying ... beside the gravel road in France": Death, Distance, and American War Politics," *Diplomatic History* 42 (2018), pp. 1-16; Mary L. Dudziak, "Death and the War Power," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 30 (2018), pp. 25-62.

at much increased rates. The taxpaying citizenry thereby acquired a direct financial stake in the foreign policies of their government, and started to pay the costs of world leadership.<sup>9</sup>

Surely developments like these inculcated what Elizabeth Borgwardt has assumed to be a new “cosmopolitanism” within Americans, who inevitably and actively supported the militarily dominant role in the world that the foreign policy elite had planned and executed since the fall of France?<sup>10</sup> We might assume so, but it is not necessarily the case. Certainly, policymakers at the time made no assumptions, and in fact they were so concerned that, in the absence of serious, future foreign threats, they located the primary threat to their new world order in the minds of the American people. “The real battleground of this war is the field of American opinion,” said Archibald MacLeish, the poet who led the government’s information agencies and became the first assistant secretary of state for public affairs.<sup>11</sup> Franklin Roosevelt learned from Woodrow Wilson’s perceived mistakes, defining war aims early, settling postwar planning during the war, and ensuring bipartisan support. Under wartime conditions and with technologies that Wilson lacked, the administration was able to set the terms of the debate, and to tailor its propaganda to a more precise estimate of public moods.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> James J. Kimble, *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006); James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 114-115, 122-127, 261-264; Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2013), pp. 345-346.

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 76-86.

<sup>11</sup> Qu. in Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War Against Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Michael Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976).

The public already seemed to be supportive of a world role in the months before Pearl Harbor, as Stephen Wertheim has argued; the administration therefore just had to make the public sure of its convictions.<sup>13</sup> Events played a role. So did the unanimity of the mass media and the political parties. Binaries finished off the job. The most important was that between “internationalism,” its meaning vague but tending towards global military predominance, and “isolationism,” cast as an immoral desire to return to the failed policies of a rewritten past.<sup>14</sup> Polling encouraged people to think of the debate in stark terms, and framed the nation’s destiny as a simple, obvious choice:

Which of these two things do you think the United States should try to do when the war is over: stay out of world affairs as much as we can, or take an active part in world affairs?

Albeit a false dichotomy, this question became the standard measurement of public opinion, and a steady three in four respondents answered positively, or thereabouts, between roughly 1940 and 1973, numbers that to pollsters implied unanimous consent.<sup>15</sup> With political opposition muted, the take-it-or-leave-it offers presented to Congress passed easily. “We shall have to take the responsibility for world collaboration,” Roosevelt told Congress on March 1, 1945, “or we shall have to bear the responsibility for another world conflict.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World,” pp. 227-270; Jerome S. Bruner, *Mandate From the People* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1944), pp. 30-63.

<sup>14</sup> Historiographical revisionism was a process that the Foreign Policy Association supported, especially in Thomas A. Bailey, *America’s Foreign Policies: Past and Present* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1943).

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans’ Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 176.

<sup>16</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Address to Congress on the Yalta Conference,” March 1, 1945, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16591](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16591).

The comfort of this apparent consensus worried experts. “Let no one assume,” wrote Jerome Bruner, the deputy chief of Princeton’s Office of Public Opinion Research and a consultant for the Office of War Information, “that because opinion is favorable to internationalism today, there are no worries for the future.”<sup>17</sup> After all, “public opinion frequently abates in the face of a *fait accompli*,” and foreign policy remained “notoriously impersonal to John Citizen.”<sup>18</sup> Even Percy Bidwell, ensconced at the Council on Foreign Relations, worried after the end of the war about a “great gap between the ideal of a public sufficiently well informed to influence foreign policy effectively, as it should in a democracy, and the actuality of a public largely indifferent to critical situations in our foreign policy.”<sup>19</sup> The Office of War Information and the State Department promoted the ideal of an “engaged citizen who advocated internationalism” throughout the war, but while internationalists could be found everywhere, citizens sufficiently engaged to satisfy scholars and statesmen apparently could not.<sup>20</sup>

The policy goals of the Foreign Policy Association appeared to have been achieved. The United States was in the world; the United Nations was a reality. “No people are now as a whole better informed on world affairs than is the case with citizens of the United States,” the *Washington Post* had supposed even a year before war broke out in Europe.<sup>21</sup> Information about

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<sup>17</sup> Bruner, *Mandate from the People*, p. 223.

<sup>18</sup> Jerome S. Bruner, “Public Opinion and America’s Foreign Policy,” *American Sociological Review* 9 (1944), pp. 50-56.

<sup>19</sup> Percy Bidwell, “Introduction,” in W. Harold Dalglish, *Community Education in Foreign Affairs: A Report on Activities in Nineteen American Cities* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1946), pp. vii-viii.

<sup>20</sup> Susan A. Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> “The F.P.A.,” *Washington Post* (December 8, 1938), p. 10.

the world circulated in the public domain as never before, raising the question as to whether there was any need for the Association to exist at all. But the same argument could be made that, as one Rockefeller Foundation official said, it was “harvest time” for the Association, an opportunity to make the democratic foreign policy it had always hoped for a reality.<sup>22</sup> As historians have asked, was the war not just a “triumph of internationalism,” but a triumph of internationalists?<sup>23</sup> Surely the nation’s most esteemed foreign affairs group would prosper? On some levels, indeed, it did. Its membership doubled, to 31,103 in 1945; its subscriptions rose; it sold publications like never before.<sup>24</sup> Superficially, it might look like the war made the Foreign Policy Association, just as it made the Council on Relations. But not all was as it seemed. Crisis streaked through its success, and in that crisis lay trouble for the democratic foreign policy that the Association sought for the first democratic superpower.

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Just two months after the debacle at Munich, the Foreign Policy Association celebrated its twentieth anniversary, an occasion that attracted a chorus of praise, front-page news stories, and editorials in newspapers nationwide. It found “its membership at the highest point in its history

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<sup>22</sup> Joseph H. Willits, “General Frank R. McCoy,” August 28, 1945, RF, Box 334, Folder 3979.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967); Dorothy B. Robins, *Experiment in Democracy: The Story of U.S. Citizen Organizations in Forging the Charter of the United Nations* (New York: Parkside Press, 1971); Andrew Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Internationalism: The American Association for the United Nations and US Foreign Policy* (Farnham: Palgrave, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1945,” Emeny Papers, Box 39, pp. 2-3.

— over 17,000 members in forty-eight states and fifty-five foreign countries.”<sup>25</sup> It had 17 branches, led by men like the future attorney general and Nuremberg judge Francis Biddle, and the future special assistant to the secretary of war, Harvey Bundy. Its National Council counted Carrie Chapman Catt, Manley Hudson, Thomas W. Lamont, Owen D. Young, and William Allen White among its members. It had a staff of 47, including a research department of 11.<sup>26</sup> Its *Reports* and its other publications were listed on syllabi at 76 universities.<sup>27</sup> Its scholars were warmly greeted for private interviews from the halls of 10 Downing Street to the hills of Yen-an.<sup>28</sup> It received birthday greetings from the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and the United States, as well as Henry Wallace, Henry Stimson, and John Foster Dulles. Walter Lippmann sent a telegram; so did John Dewey. “I know of no organization,” the philosopher wrote in perhaps the most revealing praise of all, “which has combined more effectively than the F.P.A. research work and dissemination of the results of its own studies.”

There was no institution quite like the Association anywhere else in the world.<sup>29</sup> “Today all foreigners who travel through the United States are surprised to see how wide the interest is

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<sup>25</sup> “F.P.A. Celebrating 20th Anniversary,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 18 (December 2, 1938), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> “Report on the Work of the Foreign Policy Association, January – September 1938,” October 1938, CC, Box 147.

<sup>27</sup> “Appeal for Renewal Grant for Research Work, 1938,” October 31, 1938, RF, Box 335.

<sup>28</sup> T. A. Bisson’s trip to visit Mao Zedong, which was paid for by the Rockefeller Foundation, informed T. A. Bisson, *Japan in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), and was later documented in T. A. Bisson, *Yenan in June 1937* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1973).

<sup>29</sup> *Twenty Years of the Foreign Policy Association* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1939), pp. 17-31; Sonia Tomara, “Foreign Policy Group Birthday Is Hailed by Hull and Halifax,” *New York Herald Tribune* (December 4, 1938), p. A1. On the Association’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there was much the same outpouring of praise from senior American and overseas officials, and this time the President of United States sent a message, saying that the Association was “performing a high duty in facilitating the lucid presentation of the facts of world problems and their impact upon the United States.” See *Twenty-Five Years of the Foreign Policy Association* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1943).

in international questions,” the war correspondent Sonia Tomara wrote, and it was “newspapers, the radio and the Foreign Policy Association” that were responsible for having made Americans ‘foreign minded’.”<sup>30</sup> Even skeptics of American power had to admire it. Take Charles Beard, who at the time was decrying the “huge vested interest” that had developed in foreign affairs, making “frenetic preoccupation with foreign quarrels” a “heavy industry in this country”:

Hundreds of professors, instructors, and assistants, sustained by endowments, lecture to students, forums, women’s clubs, academies, and dinner parties on their favorite theme—the duty of the United States to set the world aright. Peace societies, associations for the ‘study’ of foreign affairs, councils, leagues, and committees for this and that, with millions of dollars at their disposal, are engaged in the same kind of propaganda, openly or under the guise of contemporary ‘scholarship.’<sup>31</sup>

But Beard was still paying membership dues. He praised the Association for “the exacting care which marks its publications and the catholicity of opinion displayed at its public discussions.”<sup>32</sup>

The Association was not yet a vehicle for internationalism alone. It hosted Nazis and fascists on its stage, as well as those whom its researchers derided as “isolationists.”<sup>33</sup> And that

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<sup>30</sup> “Foreign Policy Group Birthday Is Hailed by Hull and Halifax,” *New York Herald Tribune* (December 4, 1938), p. A1.

<sup>31</sup> Charles A. Beard, “Giddy Minds and Foreign Quarrels,” *Harper’s* (September 1939), p. 338.

<sup>32</sup> *Twenty Years of the Foreign Policy Association*, p. 28. For Beard’s 1936 praise of adult education, specifically in foreign affairs, see Charles A. Beard, “Preface,” in Mary L. Ely, *Adult Education in Action* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1937), pp. vii–x. On the shift in Beard’s political thought from the end of World War I to the start of World War II, see David Milne, *Worldmaking: The Art and Science of American Diplomacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), pp. 123–167; Richard Drake, *Charles Austin Beard: The Return of the Master Historian of American Imperialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 83. In January 1939, the Nazi Colin Ross appeared on the Association’s New York stage alongside a former German diplomat and John deWilde. Ross, who declared that “nothing could shake my faith in this man Hitler, whom I love, whose genius I admire,” was booed and laughed at. Members of the German-American Bund were present, as well as its leader Franz Kuhn, who a month later rallied 20,000 fascists at Madison Square Garden. See “Divergent Views on Germany Given,” *New York Times* (January 15, 1939), p. 30. In terms of American foreign policy, see also a meeting two months later, at which three completely different visions of American power were heard from Lewis Mumford (an interventionist), the



reflected the open nature of the American debate. Not even the Association's own researchers agreed on America's course.<sup>34</sup> Buell was a forceful advocate of cooperation, but his deputy, Stone, was far from convinced. As director of the Washington bureau, Stone was friendly with policymakers of all sorts, but influential only among anti-interventionists. He had assisted the Nye Committee's investigation into role of munitions manufacturers in Wilson's declaration of war in 1917, and had reported so favorably on the findings that DuPont, the armaments giant, threatened to sue for libel.<sup>35</sup> He had mortally offended the Association's most generous donor, Thomas W. Lamont, with a pamphlet, described as "isolationist" by one board member, that excoriated the importance of banks in the slide to intervention. Lamont had almost withdrawn his support entirely.<sup>36</sup> Stone had helped with the drafting of the neutrality legislation that Buell scorned, and had sought permission to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as a representative of the National Peace Conference.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Stone had become so visible in the

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historian Samuel Flagg Bemis (who urged Americans "to look after the United States first"), and John Foster Dulles (who sought the replacement of power politics with a just order representing the "ultimate triumph of the democratic ideals"). See "Conquest of U.S. Seen as Planned," *New York Times* (March 19, 1939), p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> For the sheer breadth of the debate, see Charles O'Donnell, "American Foreign Policy: A Review of Some Recent Literature on Isolation and Collective Security," *Review of Politics* 1 (1939), pp. 333-347.

<sup>35</sup> "Washington Bureau Report," April 11, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 21; "Report of the Washington Bureau," May 8, 1934, FPA, Part II, Box 21; William T. Stone, "The Munitions Industry: An Analysis of the Senate Investigation," *Foreign Policy Reports* 10 (December 5, 1934); "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," January 9, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>36</sup> William T. Stone, *War Tomorrow: Will We Keep Out?* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1935); Seligman to Chamberlain, October 11, 1935, Smith Papers, Box 226; T.W.L. to R.G.W., September 18, 1935, Lamont Papers, Box 29; James G. McDonald to Buell, May 7, 1936, FPA, Part I, Box 68; Lamont to F.C.L., November 4, 1938, Lamont Papers, Box 29; Lamont to Buell, November 23, 1938, Lamont Paper, Box 29. The Lamonts were now the largest individual contributors. See "Partial List of Contributors — 1939," in "Report of Special Committee to the FPA Board," [early 1940], Smith Papers, Box 227.

<sup>37</sup> "Washington Bureau Report," May 8, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 21; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," June 12, 1935, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," February 16, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

peace movement that *The Nation* had named him “quarterback” of “the isolationist team” in March 1938.<sup>38</sup> Stone had protested, but still told the *New Republic* in three months later that he would never advocate loans to the British Empire, as the notion of an alliance of democracies was “disingenuous and illusory.”<sup>39</sup> And Stone was not alone. Other members of the staff had served in the National Peace Conference in their personal capacities, and some of its junior researchers, including the Europeanist John C. de Wilde and the Harvard valedictorian David H. Popper, had held distinctly narrow views of American interests.<sup>40</sup>

Such sentiments did not last long. Although the Association declared that it would continue to with “objectivity” after war broke out in Europe, diversity of opinions narrowed quickly.<sup>41</sup> Vera Micheles Dean had never been a friend of the “fallacy” of neutrality, and told readers that the destruction of Europe would shake “the foundation on which millions of Americans had built their way of life and their hopes for the future.”<sup>42</sup> Stone fell in line, Popper too.<sup>43</sup> As soon as April 1940, Lamont was happily praising the staff for making Americans “acquainted with the facts of life, so to speak,” and for showing that “we may have a peaceful

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<sup>38</sup> James Wechsler, “War in the Peace Movement,” *The Nation* (March 19, 1938), p. 323; Stone, “Meaningless Labels,” *The Nation* (April 23, 1938), p. 488.

<sup>39</sup> “America and the Next War: II,” *The New Republic* (June 21, 1939), p. 176.

<sup>40</sup> John C. de Wilde, David H. Popper, and Eunice Clark, *Handbook of the War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939).

<sup>41</sup> Note in *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 18 (September 15, 1939), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Vera Micheles Dean, “Hitler at Grips with Allies in Low Countries,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 19 (May 17, 1940), p. 2; Dean, “The United States Faces a New World Order,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 19 (May 24, 1940), pp. 1-2.

<sup>43</sup> William T. Stone, *America Rearms: The Citizen’s Guide to National Defense* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1941); David H. Popper, *America Charts Her Course*, (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1939).

world only if we are willing to pay a part of the price for it.” As Lamont was already acting as an intermediary between the White House and interventionist forces, such views carried weight.<sup>44</sup>

At the top of the Association, however, there was a vacuum of intellectual leadership. Buell resigned in April 1939.<sup>45</sup> Three months later, the board replaced him with Frank Ross McCoy, a retired major-general and a soldier-diplomat of considerable repute.<sup>46</sup> A protégé of the former secretary of state and war, Henry Stimson, McCoy had spent his career on the frontiers of America’s empire. Trained as a colonial administrator in the Philippines, he had served as Theodore Roosevelt’s military aide in the White House, and had commanded infantry on the Western front. After another spell in Manila, McCoy had become a troubleshooter, deploying Marines to supervise elections as “the Mussolini of Nicaragua,” and adjudicating a border dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay. He was Stimson’s representative to the Lytton Commission, making sure that the League of Nations’ inquiry into Japan’s invasion of Manchuria reflected American interests, and had served out his military commission on Governor’s Island, becoming a fixture at the clubbable Council on Foreign Relations. A Washington denizen even after his retirement in 1938, during the war McCoy would consult for the Office of the Coordinator of

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<sup>44</sup> Lamont to McCoy, April 1, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 11; Wala, *The Council on Foreign Relations and American Foreign Policy in the Early Cold War*, pp. 173-181; Edward M. Lamont, *The Ambassador from Wall Street: The Story of Thomas W. Lamont, J. P. Morgan’s Chief Executive* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1994).

<sup>45</sup> Buell to Joseph P. Chamberlain, April 2, 1939, Buell Papers, Box 3.

<sup>46</sup> For newspaper praise, see “Gen. McCoy’s New Service,” *New York Herald Tribune* (July 10, 1939), p. 12; “President of the F.P.A.,” *Washington Post* (July 11, 1939), p. 8; “McCoy Heads Group on Foreign Policy,” *New York Times* (July 10, 1939), p. 2; “General McCoy’s New Post,” *New York Times* (July 10, 1939), p. 10.

Information and serve on the Roberts Commission to investigate the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was a personal friend of the Roosevelts.<sup>47</sup>

McCoy was not a man who needed to be convinced of the necessity of using American power. An establishment man, he was trustworthy, responsible, and not smart enough to cause trouble. He never wrote a *Foreign Policy Report*, never opined in the *Bulletin*, indeed never seems to have been inclined to express many thoughts at all. He had neither James G. McDonald's charm, nor Raymond Leslie Buell's creativity. As his biographer Andrew Bacevich has politely put it, McCoy was a man "lacking intellectual originality," to whom "eloquence never came easily." He was a follower, and he followed loyally.<sup>48</sup>

As such, McCoy let the research department off its leash in the debates over neutrality and intervention, and the staff quickly came around to agreement. Stone embraced the cause with the zeal of a convert, first supporting Lend-Lease and, by September 1941, calling for Americans to "prepare to assume a new and responsible role in a world that will not be the familiar, secure world we have known for the past hundred years."<sup>49</sup> Dean wrote much the same, arguing as early as January 1941 that even if American support for the Allies went no further than Lend-Lease, "we shall be called on by the British to guarantee the negotiated peace," for "a

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<sup>47</sup> A. J. Bacevich, *Diplomat in Khaki: Major General Frank Ross McCoy and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1949* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1989), quote at p. 126. Bacevich here also confides that McCoy had the trust of Newton Baker. "I do not know where the white man's burden begins and ends and I have no clear conviction as to whether we have a manifest destiny in the election you are supervising," Baker wrote to McCoy, "but I dismiss all these questions because you are there." See Bacevich, *Diplomat in Khaki*, p. 130.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-213.

<sup>49</sup> William T. Stone, *America Rearms: The Citizen's Guide to National Defense* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1941), pp. 62-63; Stone, "Washington News Letter," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 20 (September 19, 1941), p. 2; Marquis W. Childs and William T. Stone, *Toward a Dynamic America: The Challenge of a Changing World* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1941), p. 7.



*Figure 2. Frank R. McCoy looks up to former Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles at a luncheon on "Today's War — Tomorrow's World," October 16, 1943. FPA, Part II, Box 285.*

great power cannot indefinitely avoid responsibility.”<sup>50</sup> After the Association hosted a nationally-broadcast address by Henry Wallace that April, in which the vice-president urged Americans to take their “second chance to make the world safe for democracy,” Dean said that Americans were faced with the “acceptance of Hitler’s plans for a ‘new order,’” or a “‘newer order,’ with the world-wide aid of all forces opposed to Nazism.” And she left no doubt that America would have to

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<sup>50</sup> Dean, “Is A Negotiated Peace Possible?” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 20 (January 10, 1941), pp. 1-2.

“determine the character of the new world order.” Six months before Pearl Harbor, she published her plans for that new world.<sup>51</sup>

What kind of objectivity was this? The Association had put physical distance between itself and the interventionists of the new Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) by leaving the shared office space of 8 West 40th St, but it left no doubt where it stood. When government officials took the stage, they spoke unchallenged.<sup>52</sup> The branches were told firmly to avoid “violent conflicts,” and the two-speaker rule was weakened to the extent that branches were encouraged to follow a single address with a panel of local discussants, or abandon balance entirely if the speaker was a member of the research department.<sup>53</sup> An objectivity defined as balance would surely mean that members of the America First Committee would be invited speak to branches after its formation in September 1940, but the speakers bureau declined to diversify its roster. When America First asked if the Association’s staff might address its chapters on “purely objective” questions like the balance of raw materials, McCoy refused.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> “U.S. ‘Bill of Duties’ Urged By Wallace,” *New York Times* (April 9, 1941), p. 1; Dean, “America Must Choose,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 20 (May 2, 1941), pp. 1-2; Dean, “Toward a New World Order,” *Foreign Policy Reports* 17 (May 15, 1941), pp. 51, 68.

<sup>52</sup> One example of this came on October 25, 1941, when a New York forum included addresses from Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Rockefeller, and Dean Acheson, who made it clear that he considered a sound public opinion to be one that supported “the efforts which the government is making to define and maintain essential American interest in a world of war and in the shaping of a post-war world.” Franklin Roosevelt sent a message which accused those who “seek to lull us into a false sense of security, to tell us that we are not threatened” of being “Hitler’s agents and Quislings.” Kittredge, “Program of the Foreign Policy Association,” October 29, 1941, RF, Box 334; “Roosevelt Says U.S. Aim is End of Hitler Peril,” *New York Herald Tribune* (October 26, 1941), p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 27, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 22, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Notes on the New England Branch Meeting,” May 2, 1941, FPA, Part I, Box 70.

<sup>54</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 24, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

After all, did the facts not speak for themselves, did right not have little to fear from wrong? A few board members asked for an accommodation with America First, but most involved with the Association had no problem, intellectually, with what they were doing. Dean was trained in the relativism of contemporary historiography, and found it obvious that “every writer of integrity has a point of view toward his material — otherwise he would be merely a well-articulated robot.”<sup>55</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation official Tracy Kittredge thought it inevitable that the Association would make “certain assumptions as to the foreign policy and interest of the United States, both in the choice of the subject of their *Reports*, and in the collection and analysis of the materials available.”<sup>56</sup> As the board concluded the previous October, there was “nothing in the facts presented which would make people form an opinion inimical to a sound foreign policy for the United States.”<sup>57</sup> Needless to say, the entire foreign affairs infrastructure was ultimately premised on the idea that the “facts presented” had a well-known internationalist bias.

None of this was enough, but the opposition to the Association’s strident interventionism came not from American First, as we might expect, but from *more* strident interventionists. They voted with their wallets. As soon as the debate over intervention began, the Association was forced to use its cash reserves to cover increasing competition, as attendance at branch meetings

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<sup>55</sup> Dean, “Writing Contemporary History,” May 10, 1939, Buell Papers, Box 5; Vera Micheles Dean, “Marshall Raises Issue of Supporting Liberals Abroad,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 26 (January 17, 1947), p. 2. On interwar historiography, see Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 159-211; Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 206-319.

<sup>56</sup> Tracy Kittredge, “International Relations Programs in the United States,” September 30, 1941, RF, Box 334.

<sup>57</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 23, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

went down.<sup>58</sup> But in the midst of the most sustained foreign policy debate for years, the Association's membership ticked up barely at all, rising from 17,857 in March 1939 to 18,833 in March 1942, and McCoy actually feared that the numbers would go down.<sup>59</sup> The CDAAA at one point had that many members in New York alone.<sup>60</sup> As one board discussion concluded, "it was much easier to sell the White Committee [the CDAAA] at the moment."<sup>61</sup> While the Association sold its publications to such people, it struggled to convert interventionist pressure group activity into a more sustained internationalism, at least while keeping its tax-exempt status as an educational group.

It took war to break down the constraints for good. By September 1941, the United States was more in the war than not. A special board committee agreed that month that "within our framework of objectivity we can be forward-looking along the line of settled American policy and not add confusion to confusion by useless discussion and re-hash of policies."<sup>62</sup> A few days after Pearl Harbor was hit, the Association constrained open discussion, resolving that "meetings ought to be informative at this time rather than argumentative."<sup>63</sup> What debate, after all, was

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<sup>58</sup> In part, the financial challenges were not a matter of competition, but of wealthier donors cutting back because of tax increases, or diverting gifts to relief charities. See "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," November 19, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 15; note in *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 20 (December 27, 1940), p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> "Membership Chart — 1931-1949," FPA, Part II, Box 21; Tracy Kittredge interview with McCoy and Dean, December 4, 1940, RF, Box 336; Exhibit C, "Informal Report of the President for the Year 1941," attached to Dean to Roger Evans, May 29, 1942, RF, Box 334.

<sup>60</sup> "White Unit Widens British Aid Stand," *New York Times* (December 28, 1940), p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," January 22, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>62</sup> "Report of Special Drafting Committee," September 23, 1941, Smith Papers, Box 227.

<sup>63</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 17, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15.



there to have? The Association declared that it would work in “close cooperation with government and private agencies,” and

endeavor in every way to assist in the task of rebuilding world order which, according to the President’s broadcast of December 9, must be begun ‘by abandoning once and for all the illusion that we can ever again isolate ourselves from the rest of humanity.’<sup>64</sup>

It was now free to promote internationalism in whatever way it chose. Rarely, if ever, again would the Association make sure to give space to those skeptical of U.S. power.

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The Council on Foreign Relations and the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Association’s peers and partners, thrived during the war. Historians have demonstrated how both effectively became instruments of the state, in the Council’s case through its influential War and Peace Studies committees, which took on postwar planning for the State Department, and in the Institute’s case through other forms of research.<sup>65</sup> But the Association was much more vulnerable. As it wrote in the summer of 1941, it had two tasks: “first, objective and careful research into the problems of international relations, especially as they affect the United States; and second, rapid dissemination of the results of research among broad sections of the American public.” Both of

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<sup>64</sup> “The FPA in the War,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 21 (December 26, 1941), pp. 2-3.

<sup>65</sup> Yukata Sasaki, “Foreign Policy Experts as Service Intellectuals: The AIPR, the CFR and Planning the Occupation of Japan during World War Two,” in G. Kurt Piehler and Sidney Pash (eds.), *The United States and the Second World War: New Perspectives on Diplomacy, War, and the Home Front* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 293-332; Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World”; Luke Fletcher, “Confusion and convergence: the Nazi challenge to world order and the CFR response, 1940–1941,” *International Politics* (2018), pp. 888-903.

these roles were at risk, the first by the expansion of the wartime state and the knowledge on which that expansion depended, the second by government propaganda and wartime restrictions on speech.<sup>66</sup>

Take research first. Both the Council and the Institute conducted research, but they mostly relied on outside, academic authors or temporary fellows, rather than research staffs of their own, and their primary function was as forums for the policymaking elite, which extended the capabilities of a small, weak bureaucracy by bringing in outside perspectives and expertise.<sup>67</sup> The Association was not a convening group but, as one internal report put it, a “college faculty.”<sup>68</sup> Its researchers possessed doctorates from top history and government departments. They were used to coming to reliable judgments on the issues of the day, and offering potential policies. They had spent time abroad, benefitting from Rockefeller Foundation fellowships, and they had language skills. And because their work was read by statesmen, by financiers, by lawyers, they were held to high standards. With the State Department small, with government wages low, and with the Association offering a platform, book contracts, and travel, there had been no real pipeline for its researchers to join the government before the war emergency began.

The turning point was a decision taken in Washington in the days after Germany invaded Poland. The State Department wanted to begin postwar planning as soon as possible, but, lacking a planning staff of its own and unable to tip its hand in case forming such a staff upset non-interventionists, it was forced to outsource the work. Here it had a choice, a choice

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<sup>66</sup> “The Foreign Policy Association Looks to the Future,” June 18, 1941, RF, Box 336.

<sup>67</sup> Dayna Barnes, “Think Tanks and a New Order in Asia,” *Journal of American–East Asian Relations* 22 (2015), pp. 89–119.

<sup>68</sup> “Report of Special Committee to the FPA Board,” [March 1940], Smith Papers, Box 227.

that would say a great deal about how democratic and participatory its planning for primacy would be.

On September 3, 1939, Buell wrote to McCoy. Buell understood the stakes of the fight immediately. “As I see it, the problem is not only to defeat Germany,” the former president wrote, “but to see to it that this war will not have been fought in vain, which I am convinced is the task of the United States.” America would end the war the dominant power in the world, Buell knew, for it had “become the world’s greatest power without knowing it,” as he said in a speech a few weeks later.<sup>69</sup> The risk was that it would enter the war, or even just end it, “lacking a program for future world organization.” Buell wanted to learn from the past. Wilson’s Inquiry had been set up too late and with too little expertise, and, as “a government commission financed by government funds,” it gave the public ‘no opportunity to discuss adequately the problems involved in the peace treaty.’ Now there was an opportunity for a private, *public* group “having general government approval” to do the work. It would gather data and bring together groups to “formulate suggestions” on everything from colonies to frontiers to “the necessary changes in American economic and foreign policy.” Especially important would be to avoid “the ultimate shock which would be created if the United States should resume a foreign lending program without assuming the responsibilities of a creditor nation,” as it had before. The Association was the obvious candidate, but McCoy had to move fast. “Time is of the essence,” Buell warned, for “other organizations or universities may get the same idea.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Buell, “The Churches and the World Outside,” October 17, 1939, Buell Papers, Box 32.

<sup>70</sup> Buell to McCoy, September 3, 1939, Buell Papers, Box 10.

On September 10, the Council on Foreign Relations founder and *Foreign Affairs* editor Hamilton Fish Armstrong called the State Department to make much the same argument to Assistant Secretary of State George Messersmith as Buell had to McCoy. On September 12, Armstrong and the Council staffer Walter Mallory earned same-day approval from Messersmith, Sumner Welles, and Leo Pasvolsky to start what became the War and Peace Studies program, which over the next six years churned out nearly 700 memoranda at a cost to the Rockefeller Foundation of \$300,000.<sup>71</sup> On September 14, Stone reported to McCoy that he had failed so far to see Secretary of State Hull alone, but that those to whom he had spoken about a “commission of inquiry” had said that they had “not yet had time to give any serious thought” to the matter, even if they “felt that it would be most useful for competent research bodies like the FPA and the IPR Council to initiate something along this line.” Stone would see “Messersmith and several others tomorrow.” It was too late.<sup>72</sup> The Association missed its opportunity, and quickly lost its place as first among research equals.

Postwar planning became fashionable in the prewar United States, finding a home at everything from the *Time* empire to the Federal Council of Churches, but the decision to do the planning that *really* mattered in secret, rather than in public, was a monumental one. It was more than a quirk of the diary, and less than destiny. Messersmith and Welles were Council men, to be sure, but both were also advocates of the Association.<sup>73</sup> State Department officials still provided

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<sup>71</sup> Wertheim, “Tomorrow, the World,” pp. 65-67.

<sup>72</sup> Stone to McCoy, September 14, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 12. The Association pleaded with the Rockefeller Foundation to insist that the War and Peace Studies be a collaborative effort, but Rockefeller refused, and funded the Council’s work in December. See “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 27, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 15, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>73</sup> Assistant Secretary of State Messersmith not only sent congratulations on the Association’s twentieth birthday, but sent Buell a personal note saying “there is much that I would like to say concerning the really splendid work

confidential information to the research staff, reviewed the *Foreign Policy Reports* before they were published, and took great pains to correct any misunderstandings.<sup>74</sup> Still, the way that Messersmith talked about the planning effort was telling. Proposals beyond that of the Council, he told Rockefeller officers, were not of “quite the same caliber,” and some were “such to cause the Department considerable concern.”<sup>75</sup> The department, he wrote to Hull and Welles after seeing Armstrong and Mallory, would find it valuable to have “confidence that groups of men with the proper background and understanding in the country” were undertaking the task.<sup>76</sup> Best

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which the Association has been doing. More power to you.” See George Messersmith to Buell, November 3, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 11. Messersmith also read Association publications on his days off, writing to praise Dean for a piece on Munich, which “stuck to the facts extraordinarily well.” Messersmith noted that “it is important, of course, that our public should be accurately and adequately informed.” See Messersmith to Dean, January 16, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 11. Undersecretary of State Welles was even closer to the Association, and became more so after he was fired in 1943. Take a speech he gave in New York as early as 1936: “For too long a time, in the United States, the feeling persisted that matters of foreign policy were something mysterious, quite apart from and beyond the comprehension of the average man and woman, determined in great part by the devious machinations of professional diplomats adorned in the proverbial high hat and tail coat, who were presumed to be furthering their own peculiar ambitions or objectives in contemptuous disregard of the valid interests, or even of the lives, of the peoples whose destinies they were supposed to be determining. Needless to say, such a belief is not a healthy state of affairs in any democracy. The questions of foreign policy are of fundamental importance to every man and woman in this country and, in my considered judgment, the more our citizenry knows, debates, and thinks about the foreign policy of their Government, the greater the security of this democracy will be. It is for that reason that I feel so strongly the value of the work which the Foreign Policy Association has been doing.” See “Address of the Honorable Sumner Welles,” October 19, 1936, FPA, Part II, Box 96; “Party Foes Debate Our Foreign Policy,” *New York Times* (October 20, 1936), p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g. Stone to Research Staff, February 18, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 10, which passed on confidential information on Far Eastern policy from Sumner Welles, Stanley Hornbeck, Hugh Wilson, Pierrepont Moffatt, and Harry Dexter White; Stone to Dean, December 1, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 6, forwarding pre-publication comments on a manuscript; Henry F. Grady to Stone, October 11, 1940, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1940-1944, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/107, a three-page letter in which the assistant secretary of state took Stone to task for “a rather hasty jumping to conclusions” in a pamphlet on commercial policy, and appealed to the Association’s “high reputation” to stake the claims of the department’s point of view.

<sup>75</sup> Priscilla Roberts, “‘The Council Has Been Your Creation’: Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Paradigm of the American Foreign Policy Establishment?” *Journal of American Studies* 35 (2001), p. 78.

<sup>76</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, “Proposed activities of the Council on Foreign Relations in the field of research and collaboration with the Department of State,” September 12, 1939, attached to “Memorandum for Under Secretary Stettinius from Mr. Armstrong,” November 24, 1943, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1940-1944, 811.43 Council on Foreign Relations/220.

to avoid anything too radical, best to leave it to men who could be trusted and who would not publish their findings, rather than leave the fate of the world to progressive thinkers debating in open forums — let alone, one might plausibly speculate given Dean's relationship with the Council, to a group whose research director was a woman. Messersmith's decision avoided the messiness of World War I, with its torrent of peace proposals, and left the government, eventually, with a program that could be sold over minimal objections. But it also set a pattern, one in which policies would be made behind gilded doors, rather than in the rough and tumble of public discussion. McCoy and McDonald took part in the Council's discussions, but the Association was otherwise shut out. Kittredge reported two years later that the staff "rather resent being completely ignored in the work which they know to be under way under the auspices of the CFR."<sup>77</sup> Dean was particularly unhappy.<sup>78</sup>

The War and Peace Studies made the Council on Foreign Relations. But while the Association's *Reports* remained in widespread use before the government's research facilities were fully up to speed, its lack of a role in official postwar planning broke it as a serious research organization, especially after Pearl Harbor.<sup>79</sup> Without a special role, the Association simply could

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<sup>77</sup> Tracy Kittredge, "Application For a New Appropriation FPA," September 22, 1941, RF, Box 334.

<sup>78</sup> This was not the end of Dean's deserved unhappiness with the Council, which stemmed from the Council's outright ban on any sort of female participation. When Emeny invited her to speak to the Committee on Foreign Relations in Cleveland in 1941, she told him that "I earnestly hope that I shall be able to meet the high standards of discussion set by your group on foreign relations, so that the Committee may not in future share the views of Council House regarding the participation of women in discussions of international affairs." See Dean to Emeny, October 17, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 5. As Robert Schulzinger notes, Council House invited her to speak in 1946, which caused "uproar" and fears that women, her in particular, might soon become members. Alas, not. Schulzinger does not say whether Dean did, in fact, speak to the Council. See Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 213-214.

<sup>79</sup> Stone told the board in February 1941 that "we seem to be playing the role of an agent of the Government at the moment, since our *Reports* are being used so constantly by the Departments of the Army and Navy and the Department of State." See "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," February 26, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15. The Association also supplied the Department of the Army with pamphlets for use in training camps, selling

not keep its staff, as the state commandeered every last researcher it could, to create the knowledge it needed to fight a global war. Charles A. Thomson had been the first to leave, when the Latin American expert took up a position as Ben Cherrington's deputy in the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations in October 1938. His departure was initially a point of pride, but pride soon turned to worry.<sup>80</sup> Thomson's replacement, Howard Trueblood, left early in 1940, as did Frederick Merrill, a narcotics specialist.<sup>81</sup> An editor, Varian Fry, quit that summer too, rushing heroically to Vichy France to extract thousands of Jewish refugees from the clutches of the Gestapo.<sup>82</sup> "We must work out some way of not being crippled by losing our staff to the government services," McCoy told the board in May 1941, and by October, Stone was warning that the "every government agency is looking for research people and can offer from

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nearly 200,000 of them by January 1942. See "War Department Uses F.P.A. Material," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 21 (January 9, 1942), p. 3; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," April 29, 1942, FPA, Part II, Box 15. Additionally, the Association still undertook certain projects with the State Department in mind. In 1939, for instance, it began a newsletter on hemispheric issues, *Pan American News*, at the government's suggestion. See Joseph P. Chamberlain to Trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation, April 25, 1939, RF, Box 337; Stone to Sydnor Walker, May 24, 1939, RF, Box 337; Grant docket RF 39074, June 9, 1939, RF, Box 337; Stone to Sydnor Walker, March 29, 1940, RF, Box 337; Arthur Hays Sulzberger to Willits, August 5, 1940, RF, Box 337; and copies of newsletter in RF, Box 337. But other ideas fell through, including an emergency research program on Latin America that was mooted in 1940. See Walker, minutes of meetings with Stone, June 20 and June 26, 1940, RF, Box 337; Walker, "Latin-American Program of the Foreign Policy Association," July 15, 1940, RF, Box 337; "Application of the Foreign Policy Association for Support of Emergency Program of Latin American Studies," September 13, 1940, RF, Box 337; Willits to McCoy, December 12, 1940, RF, Box 337.

<sup>80</sup> Buell to Charles A. Thomson, October 11, 1938, Buell Papers, Box 15. Thomson had a distinguished career at the State Department. He was Chief of the Division of Cultural Relations after Cherrington left in 1939, and then an advisor to the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs after 1944. Thomson held a progressive, non-propagandistic view of cultural exchange that went out of fashion in Washington. See Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, pp. 48-61. He found an outlet for that, though. He was a founding father of UNESCO, serving as the executive secretary of the US National Commission for UNESCO from 1946 to 1950, and finished his career as counselor to the embassy in Paris. See "Charles Thomson, Ex-UNESCO Aide, 67," *New York Times* (April 8, 1961), p. 19.

<sup>81</sup> Merrill spent 25 years in the foreign service. See "Frederick Merrill, Diplomat, 69, Dead," *New York Times* (December 2, 1974), p. 36. Trueblood worked under Herbert Feis at the State Department, but it is not clear what he did after the war.

<sup>82</sup> Andy Martino, *A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Sheila Isenberg, *A Hero of Our Own: The Story of Varian Fry* (New York: Random House, 2001).

\$500 to \$1500 more.”<sup>83</sup> James Frederick Green, an expert on Britain trained at the Yale Institute of International Studies, departed in the months before Pearl Harbor, and once the United States declared war, there was no way to stop the exodus.<sup>84</sup> T. A. Bisson, who had been hired by Buell in 1929 and since become “one of the leading American authorities on East Asia,” left immediately for Henry Wallace’s Board of Economic Warfare.<sup>85</sup> So too did John C. de Wilde, who had spent a decade at the Association, and Louis E. Frechtling, a Rhodes scholar who lasted not even a year before joining Green at the Office of Strategic Services.<sup>86</sup> The most devastating

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<sup>83</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 28, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 22, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15. McCoy told the Rockefeller Foundation in March 1942 that the loss of his writers “demonstrates anew that the Foreign Policy Association performs a valuable public service not only through its publications and meetings, but also by offering young men and women of ability an unrivaled opportunity for practical training in the field of international relations.” See McCoy to Willits, March 20, 1942, RF, Box 334.

<sup>84</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee,” September 11, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15. Green went from the OSS to the State Department, where he served the delegations to the Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco conferences, and became an expert on human rights. He retired from the foreign service in 1969. See “James Green, 89, Expert on Human Rights,” *New York Times* (April 15, 2000), p. A13; “Diplomat, Educator, James Green, 89; Headed Peace, Human Rights Efforts,” *Washington Post* (April 12, 2000), p. B6.

<sup>85</sup> Bisson’s politics were leftist, as were those of many scholars of Asia active in the 1930s. Alongside his work for the Association he freelanced pseudonymously for *China Today*, which likely had ties to the United States Communist Party, and he was an editor of, and contributor to, *Amerasia*. He was accused of being a fellow-traveler within days of arriving in Washington and testified before the Dies Committee in April 1943. During a spell at the Institute of Pacific Relations he became an influential analyst of Japan, and argued for radical solutions to the postwar settlement, first as a member of the Strategic Bombing Survey and then on the General Douglas MacArthur’s occupation administration. Amid infighting in Tokyo, he was again accused of being a communist, and of leaving the occupation open to espionage. He left Japan early in 1947. He was interrogated by the McCarren Committee in 1952. Unlike his friend Owen Lattimore, Bisson was not protected by tenure, and was fired by Berkeley in 1953. He lived out his academic life at a small women’s college in Oxford, Ohio. See Howard B. Schonberger, *Aftermath of War: Americans and the Remaking of Japan, 1945–1952* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1989), pp. 90–110. For the Economic Defense Board, which became the Board of Economic Warfare shortly after Pearl Harbor, see Donald G. Stevens, “Organizing for Economic Defense: Henry Wallace and the Board of Economic Warfare’s Foreign Policy Initiatives, 1942,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26 (1996), pp. 1126–1139.

<sup>86</sup> After the war, de Wilde stayed in economics, working at the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. See “John de Wilde, 89, International Economist,” *New York Times* (May 13, 2000), p. A15. Frechtling stayed at OSS throughout the war, then worked in the State Department’s Office of Intelligence Research after 1946.



loss was Stone. The Association's liaison with the government, his departure to work for Wallace in November 1941 left the Washington Office empty and in disrepair.<sup>87</sup>

After Pearl Harbor, it got worse. "It seems impossible to get any young men at the moment," Dean said in the days after America entered the war.<sup>88</sup> "Government agencies have already made such forays into university and journalistic circles that only second and third-rate people are available," she complained the following May, and the pipeline for creating young scholars broke down as men were drafted.<sup>89</sup> David Popper remained until that summer before reporting to Fort Dix.<sup>90</sup> Howard P. Whidden, fresh from a doctorate at Harvard, lasted

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<sup>87</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," November 26, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "FPA Staff in Government Service," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 21 (August 28, 1942), p. 3. Stone's government career started with a series of roles overseeing economic warfare (blockades, assessing enemy assets for bombing, etc.). He was assistant director of the Bureau of Economic Warfare, a special director of the Foreign Economic Administration, and a special assistant in the London embassy. After the war, he served with Thomson in the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs, but was much more open to modern propaganda methods than his colleague. See curriculum vitae attached to Stone to Brooks Emeny, October 16, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 25. But Stone had been close to a number of figures later accused of being communist agents, including Frederick V. Field. He had been an editor of the journal *Amerasia*, the discovery of secret documents in whose offices became a McCarthyite *cause célèbre*. See Harvey Klehr and Ronald Radosh, *The Amerasia Spy Case: Prelude to McCarthyism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). Stone, like Thomson, was assailed by Joseph McCarthy and others, and tried to defend himself in front of Congress. Dean Acheson accepted his resignation while he was under loyalty board review in February 1952, although his patron, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Senator for Connecticut William Benton, testified to Congress that Stone was cleared. See "Raps Acheson for Permitting Stone to Resign," *Chicago Tribune* (March 18, 1952), p. 4; "McCarthy, Benton Exchange Charges," *New York Times* (July 4, 1952), p. 5. Stone became a writer, and a noted yachtsman. See "Longtime Sailing Writer William Stone Dies at 94," *Washington Post* (December 6, 1993), p. B8.

<sup>88</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 17, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>89</sup> Dean to McCoy, "Confidential Memorandum on Future of Research Department," May 12, 1942, Buell Papers, Box 5.

<sup>90</sup> "Report of the Research Department to the Board of Directors," October 21, 1942, FPA, Part II, Box 21. Popper served in Army intelligence during the war, and joined the State Department in 1945, starting his foreign service career in a series of roles relating to the United Nations. Briefly the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, he was Ambassador to Cyprus between 1969 and 1973, Ambassador to Chile from 1974 to 1977, and a special representative for Panama Canal Treaty Affairs until his retirement in 1980. In retirement, he was president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, and wrote the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim's controversial memoirs. See "David H. Popper, Ex-Envoy, Dies at 95," *New York Times* (August 4, 2008), p. A15.

months.<sup>91</sup> William P. Maddox, a distinguished politics professor and Rhodes scholar, was briefly McCoy's assistant until he joined the OSS.<sup>92</sup> A Swiss economist Ernest Hediger, formerly of the International Labour Organisation, left for Mexico in August 1943. Lawrence K. Rosinger, who stayed until 1948, was a decent enough China scholar, but decent enough neither to enter government employ or a university faculty lounge.<sup>93</sup> Rosinger and the few others Dean kept hold of were not the kind of talent to which the Association had become accustomed.

Women held everything together. "We have been able to carry on at least within the framework of the women in our organization," McCoy reported in May 1943.<sup>94</sup> A couple of young women were hired as researchers. The secretary, Dorothy Leet, the *ad hoc* Washington representative, Delia Goetz, and the speakers bureau stalwart Florence Pratt became ever more crucial.<sup>95</sup> Even so, Dean was put in an impossible position personally. She was without question one of the nation's most insightful writers on foreign affairs, of either sex, and she was prominent enough among women to be offered the presidency of her alma mater, Radcliffe College, early in

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<sup>91</sup> Whidden became a journalist and editor. See "Howard Whidden of Business Week," *New York Times* (March 15, 1977), p. 40.

<sup>92</sup> Maddox, who was also a research secretary for the Council's War and Peace Studies territorial group, became director of the Foreign Service Institute in 1946, and retired from the State Department in 1961 with the rank of minister. See "William Maddox, Career Diplomat," *New York Times* (September 29, 1972), p. 46.

<sup>93</sup> Like Stone, Bisson, and others, Rosinger was caught up in the postwar investigations into the Institute of Pacific Relations, which he joined in 1948. He took his Fifth Amendment rights in front of the McCarran Committee, and wound up teaching English at a community college in Detroit. See "L.K. Rosinger, 78, An Expert on China," *New York Times* (September 21, 1994), p. D18.

<sup>94</sup> "Branch Conference, May 7, 1943," FPA, Part I, Box 70.

<sup>95</sup> Delia Goetz was a teacher, and had worked in Central America before joining the Washington Bureau as its secretary at some point before 1936. She wrote several Headline Books, including texts aimed at children, and consulted for the U.S. Office of Education, which she served for fifteen years after leaving the Association in 1946. See "Delia Goetz, 100, Children's Author," *New York Times* (July 14, 1996), an obituary that is inaccurate.

1943.<sup>96</sup> She declined what she called “the best opportunity in the country for the advancement of women’s education,” however, citing her “dominant passion” of writing and her “equally overwhelming desire to participate, in some small way, in the tasks of post-war reconstruction.”<sup>97</sup> That desire was not fulfilled. Much as she hoped that women might play a role in postwar planning, and much as her peers hailed her as particularly qualified to play that role herself, she, like so many other qualified women, was cut out.<sup>98</sup> Her direct policy input was limited to a consulting role for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), one found for her by Philip Jessup, the international lawyer who became an Association board member during the war.<sup>99</sup> Meanwhile, spending more time writing to cover for male departures from the research staff meant that she could spend less time lecturing, which was a lucrative pursuit for Dean on account of her popularity with the educated, wealthy women who made up

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<sup>96</sup> Dean nevertheless barely appears in any historiography whatsoever; part of the reason for that is that much of the scholarship on women in world affairs has concentrated on activists networks, in which Dean, as a scholar and educator, herself played little role. See Valeska Huber, Tamson Pietsch, and Katharina Rietzler, “Women’s International Thought and the New Professions, 1900-1940,” *Modern Intellectual History* (2019), [doi.org/10.1017/S1479244319000131](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244319000131).

<sup>97</sup> Dean to George H. Chase, April 7, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 91.

<sup>98</sup> For Dean’s hopes that women might play a part in postwar planning and reconstruction, see Dean, “Over European Horizons,” *Independent Woman* (February 1940), pp. 41-42, 62-63, reprinted in Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith (eds.), *What Kind of World Do We Want? American Women Plan for Peace* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2000), pp. 37-43. Dean was more than likely named among the 260 women qualified to aid in shaping postwar policies at Eleanor Roosevelt’s White House Conference on “How Women May Share in Post-War Policy Making” in June 1944. Although Dean was not personally at the forefront of any of the activist efforts to include women at Dumbarton Oaks and after, she was repeatedly named as among the ten or so most qualified women, alongside Reps. Edith Nourse Rogers and Mary T. Norton, Florence Jaffray Harriman, Dorothy Thompson, and Anne O’Hare McCormick (who actually served secretly on the State Department’s postwar planning committees). See, e.g., Ann Cottrell, “56 U.S. Women Nominated for Peace Parleys,” *New York Times* (August 31, 1944), p. 6. In fact, in a poll of readers of the Sunday Women’s Page of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Dean came joint first among women who could serve on the U.S. delegation to a peace conference, with O’Hare McCormick (and far ahead of Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins). See Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, “Poll Shows Growing Sentiment For Woman at the Peace Table,” *New York Herald Tribune* (September 10, 1944), p. A4.

<sup>99</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” April 29, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

the bulk of the active world affairs public. A widowed mother of two, Dean could not afford to lose the fees — \$400 in a normal month, \$1000 in a busy one — that made up for her salary.<sup>100</sup>

What, then, to do? Whether the research staff could be rebuilt after the war, when it was assumed that the wartime bureaucracies would be dismantled, remained an open question. To borrow the typology of the historian David Engerman, it was not yet clear whether a tipping point had been reached in how far an institution like the Association could create knowledge “for” American power. What was left was the second of the Association’s two tasks, the creation of knowledge “of” American power.<sup>101</sup> And in truth, this function had been on the rise for some time. As Tracy Kittredge of the Rockefeller Foundation noted before Pearl Harbor, with Dean as the primary intellectual force at the Association, it “looks upon its own work, even in the research field, as part of its program of popular education.”<sup>102</sup>

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The Foreign Policy Association had been part of the same developments in adult education as had the Cleveland Council on Foreign Affairs, but it never went quite so far. Buell came around to a more expansive program in the depths of the depression, just as Adolf Hitler was running for the presidency of Germany.<sup>103</sup> “For me it is very discouraging, after our over ten years of

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<sup>100</sup> This likely would have meant she declined a government post in any case. See speakers’ bureau reports of March 24, 1943, April 29, 1943, and May 26, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>101</sup> David C. Engerman, “American Knowledge and Global Power,” *Diplomatic History* 31 (2007), pp. 599-622.

<sup>102</sup> Kittredge, “International Relations Programs in the United States,” September 30, 1941.

<sup>103</sup> Although international concerns partly drove Buell’s new interest in a broad public, base competition did, too. In 1929, the Columbia University international lawyer Philip Jessup founded a Foreign Affairs Forum, a small but

work, working on people at the top, to see that the public is more irrational,” Buell told the board in February 1932. “That has led me to believe that where we have failed is at the bottom.”<sup>104</sup> Buell might well have wondered whether trickle-down processes were viable at all, but by “bottom” he did not mean the ordinary, let alone poor, citizen, rather only the less educated and less engaged members of the already educated and engaged elite. He therefore joined with the World Peace Foundation and the League of Nations Association to commit to a cooperative program, led by the Carnegie Endowment, in which “primary emphasis should be placed upon a program of adult education.”<sup>105</sup> That foundered, too, so the Association, at the insistence of Stone, struck out on its own.

In May 1935, Buell asked the Rockefeller Foundation to bankroll an experiment. Under Stone’s leadership, the Association created an Education Department parallel to its Research Department. It would convert expert knowledge into “popular form,” aiming to bring home to a wider, reading audience “the significance and complexity of world interrelationships.”<sup>106</sup> Buell asked for \$25,000 a year to hire new editors, writers, and designers.<sup>107</sup> In September, the

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eager New York group that had on its advisory board a number of Foreign Policy Association staff and trustees. Its sympathies were evident in a letter to the Carnegie Corporation, which said that “if the Council of Foreign Relations has a membership of 500, and the Foreign Policy Association has a membership of 15,000, the millions left in New York City are a fertile field for the Foreign affairs Forum, as we know of no other organizations that are popularizing accurate, factual information on international subjects.” See “Report of Foreign Affairs Forum for Carnegie Forum,” undated [May 1932], Philip C. Jessup Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box I.118. But aiming for the less prosperous in society was a hard sell to donors, and the Forum struggled on, with a radio program and a speakers program, until it folded in 1935.

<sup>104</sup> “Verbatim minutes of meeting of the Board,” February 10, 1932, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Buell to Stone, McDonald, Ogden, Moorhead, February 24, 1932, Buell Papers, Box 41.

<sup>105</sup> Fosdick, et al, to the Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 6, 1933, Smith Papers, Box 225.

<sup>106</sup> Buell to Sydnor Walker, May 9, 1935, RF, Box 336.

<sup>107</sup> Grant docket RF 35080, May 17, 1935, RF, Box 336.

Association inaugurated its Headline Books, short works of fewer than a hundred pages, pitched at the 25 cent market. Carefully edited to make sure that the prose was simple, and illustrated with maps, charts, and cartoons, these books, as the name implied, were designed for readers who wanted to learn more about the facts behind the news. In time, five or six Headlines would come out a year, written by members of the research staff, by education department editors like Fry and Goetz, or by outside authors, including Clark Eichelberger and Shepard Stone. In the next ten years, the Association would distribute over 2,500,000 books.<sup>108</sup>

Creating a paperback public for foreign affairs was not easy. The United States was not a nation of bookworms, for one thing. Few Americans had high school diplomas, let alone advanced degrees, and literacy levels were far lower than they would be in just a few years.<sup>109</sup> The Association estimated, accurately, that there were probably only 600 bookstores in the country in 1935, of which 200 were major outlets.<sup>110</sup> Books were not popular possessions but luxury goods, the majority costing \$2 or more. Cheap books had a cheap reputation, and inexpensive formats were reserved for mysteries, comedies, and tales rather racier than the distribution of naval forces in the Far East. There were thousands of public libraries across the country, and library circulation was on the up, but until World War II a nationwide sales network for books simply did not exist.<sup>111</sup> As the *Atlantic Monthly* wrote in a laudatory review of the first Headline Books,

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<sup>108</sup> McCoy, "Informal Report of the President for the Year 1945," [March 1946], RF, Box 334.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph F. Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 370-375.

<sup>110</sup> "Report of the Department of Popular Education," [October 1935], FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>111</sup> Kenneth C. Davis, *Two-Bit Culture: The Paperbacking of America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984); Beth Luey, "Modernity and Print III: The United States 1890-1970," in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 368-382; John B. Hench, *Books as Weapons: Propaganda,*

early sales were slow “principally because the publishers have undertaken a type of book unusual for them, one which their ordinary system of promotion and distribution is not geared to handle.”<sup>112</sup> Even if foreign policy was knowledge that could be taught to the masses, an unproven proposition, the technologies which might make that possible were not available. After a year, 115,000 Headlines had been printed, but only 5,500 sold in shops.<sup>113</sup>

Instead, the Association had to make a paperback public through intermediaries, above all voluntary associations. While the Headlines proved a hit with teachers and libraries, sales to the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, the YMCA, and so on, wildly exceeded expectations.<sup>114</sup> Such groups used the Headlines in their education programs, situating the texts in the back and forth of discussion, a process that the New York office helped by making study kits, reading lists for women’s clubs, and even writing scripts for mock trials, in which participants played judge and jury on the topic, for instance, of “Who is Guilty in Europe?”<sup>115</sup> Rockefeller officers were quite pleased with the half million texts that had been distributed by the end of 1938, although they doubted whether the Headlines were “the type of material really needed by the opinion forming groups in this country.”<sup>116</sup> Their popularity

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*Publishing, and the Battle of Global Markets in the Era of World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. 11-18.

<sup>112</sup> “Report of the Department of Popular Education,” [October 1935], FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>113</sup> “Report on the Experimental Education Program, July 1, 1935 – June 30, 1936,” October 3, 1936, RF, Box 336.

<sup>114</sup> “Experimental Program of Popular Education,” October 21, 1937, RF, Box 336.

<sup>115</sup> “Report to the Rockefeller Foundation on the Program of Popular Education of the Foreign Policy Association for the Year 1938,” March 31, 1939, RF, Box 336.

<sup>116</sup> Grant docket RF 37119, December 1, 1937, RF, Box 336; “Department of Popular Education, Budget for 1939,” attached to Smith to Keppel, October 14, 1939, CC, Box 147; Kittredge to Willits, “Application, Foreign Policy Association,” November 29, 1940, RF, Box 336.

with the Association's members, who received them free and appreciated the readability that the dense *Bulletin* and *Reports* lacked, suggested otherwise. Either way, as Buell told the Carnegie Corporation in 1938, helping "the man or woman in the street" to "form intelligent opinions concerning America's interest in the outside world" was crucial given the likelihood that "during the next few years America will undoubtedly be called upon to make grave decisions affecting its national life."<sup>117</sup>

Was a text of any kind really the best way to reach the masses, though? To Buell, the most important thing was to take the Association back onto the radio waves. Himself a regular if uncomfortable commentator, Buell believed that radio was "literally shriveling up the world," capable of bringing home to Americans how "what happens in the little kingdom of Albania" should interest "housewives in Montana." The trouble was that most radio commentary was too superficial. "The day-by-day reporting of aggressions and revolutions overseas," he told the annual luncheon of the Women's National Radio Committee in April 1939,

gives the American public a series of sensations; but if our public understood the deep-seated historical, psychological and economic reasons for these events, it would be less emotional and more constructive in its attitude toward world affairs.<sup>118</sup>

With Sumner Welles' backing, Buell negotiated with broadcasters throughout 1938 to set up a series that would take the research staff itself onto the airwaves, and finally won a contract with the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company in the fall of 1939.<sup>119</sup> Rotating

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<sup>117</sup> Buell to Frederick P. Keppel, September 30, 1938, CC, Box 147.

<sup>118</sup> Buell, "Radio and Foreign News," April 17, 1939, Buell Papers, Box 32.

<sup>119</sup> Memorandums of meetings with the Carnegie Corporation, NBC, and CBS between June and August 1938, in FPA, Part II, Box 8; Stone to Buell, February 24, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 8. Buell and Stone had constantly tried to return to the radio since James McDonald's departure, but they could not get commercial sponsorship. See Helen Howell Moorhead to Buell and Ogden, FPA, Part II, Box 9; Raymond T. Rich to Buell April 17, 1938, FPA, Part



through their topics of expertise, the research staff spoke for fifteen minutes each Sunday on a program called *America Looks Abroad*.<sup>120</sup> Each broadcast promoted the Association as a nonpartisan organization, and declared that “foreign affairs are your affairs.”<sup>121</sup>

If anything had a chance to prove Brooks Emeny’s motto true, radio seemed to. In the six years since the Association had last been represented regularly on the airwaves, radio had turned into a means of genuine mass communication. 51 million radio receivers were in use by 1940, in nearly 90% of the nation’s households; only 3 million sets had been sold when the Association started to broadcast its luncheons.<sup>122</sup> Although ownership and listening tastes were still stratified by class, education, and geography, radio reinforced the idea of a single, national polity. Suddenly, as the historian Bruce Lenthall has written, “ordinary Americans found the public arena expanding and growing more pervasive in their daily lives.”<sup>123</sup> And if hearing Franklin Roosevelt prompted Americans to rethink their relationship with the federal government, as it surely did, then hearing Edward Murrow’s reporting from the Blitz, for instance, likely did much to force them to confront the world.<sup>124</sup>

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II, Box 9; Stone, “Notes as Basis for Discussion on Proposed Radio Series,” October 11, 1934, Buell Papers, Box 42; Buell to Stone, March 25, 1935, Buell Papers, Box 42; MAS to Buell, July 15, 1937, FPA, Part II, Box 9.

<sup>120</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 27, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 25, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>121</sup> Many of the radio broadcasts are available at [archive.org/details/AmericaLooksAbroad](http://archive.org/details/AmericaLooksAbroad).

<sup>122</sup> Sarah Ellen Graham, *Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936–1953* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 33; Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics: Radio and Political Culture in the United States, 1920–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. xi.

<sup>123</sup> Bruce Lenthall, *Radio’s America: The Great Depression and the Rise of Modern Mass Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> There is no recent book on the effects of radio on foreign affairs in the United States, but see David Holbrook Culbert, *News for Everyman: Radio and Foreign Affairs in Thirties America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976).

The crucial question in the broadcasting industry the world over was whether radio could in fact create a public — or a “two-way instrument of democracy,” as McDonald put it in 1942 — or whether it would create only an audience.<sup>125</sup> None other than John Dewey himself called radio “the most powerful instrument of social education the world has ever seen,” one that might contribute to “the formation of that enlightened and fair-minded public opinion and sentiment that are necessary for the success of democracy.”<sup>126</sup> In that spirit, adult educators rode the airwaves, trying to turn the country into a “Town Meeting of the Air,” as one popular show called itself.<sup>127</sup> They were not content for Americans to listen; they sought to create an active, rational public of listening, democratic citizens. They replicated discussion formats in their programs, as in the *Chicago Round Table*, and they instructed listeners to respond to broadcasts, whether by writing in to engage with the authorities who were now talking “in” their homes, or by forming listening groups in their own front rooms, so that they could discuss what they heard with friends and neighbors.<sup>128</sup> The Association did the same, encouraging listeners at the end of the broadcasts to write letters to the research staff, or request transcripts.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> McDonald, “Radio: A Two-Way Instrument of Democracy,” November 27, 1942, McDonald Papers, Box 14;

<sup>126</sup> Dewey, “Radio’s Influence on the Mind,” qu. in David Goodman, *Radio’s Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 187.

<sup>127</sup> George V. Denny, “Bring Back the Town Meeting!” in Warren C. Seyfert (ed.), *Capitalizing Intelligence: Eight Essays on Adult Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Graduate School of Education, 1937), pp. 101-128; John W. Studebaker, “Promoting the Cause of Education by Radio,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 14 (1941), pp. 325-333.

<sup>128</sup> Goodman, *Radio’s Civic Ambition*, pp. 181-218; David Goodman, “A Transnational History of Radio Listening Groups I: The United Kingdom and United States,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 36 (2016), pp. 436-465; Lenthall, *Radio’s America*, pp. 146-158.

<sup>129</sup> Having the announcer remind listeners that they could do these things made a real difference, and showed that Americans needed encouragement to take an active, rather than passive, role in public opinion. On December 24, 1939, one of the researchers ran long, and there was no closing announcement offering a complimentary copy of the

And Americans responded. By October 1941, 72 stations carried *America Looks Abroad*, reaching every state in the union, and up to 350 listeners a week were responding with letters to New York.<sup>130</sup> As one summary in February 1940 put it,

enthusiastic letters and post cards — from American and Canadian working people, farmers, lawyers, students, men’s and women’s clubs, high school and college teachers, and professional people generally — stress the fact that the Association is reaching a public it has never contacted before and probably never would reach except through the radio.<sup>131</sup>

Cranks aside, most of these letters paid tribute to the idea of a democratic foreign policy. “We live out on the Arizona desert, the radio playing a major part in our daily life,” wrote one correspondent in April 1941; “I listen to all your broadcasts and like them very much.” Another from California wrote that “these programs are of great public interest and serve as the ‘meat’ of the news for those who can’t read the news.”<sup>132</sup> The Association took particular interest in listeners who used the broadcasts to stimulate further discussion, as evidence of their trickle-down effect.<sup>133</sup> “While we receive only about 200 requests weekly for the broadcast copies,” its radio secretary noted in October 1941, “the quality of the comments, and the fact that many of

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*Bulletin* to listeners and stating the Association’s address. The average weekly return to that point had been about 180 letters; that week, only 29 Americans wrote in. See “Radio Report,” January 23, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>130</sup> “Application to the Rockefeller Foundation for Renewal of Existing Grants in Support of the Foreign Policy Association,” attached to McCoy to Fosdick, October 16, 1941, RF, Box 334. On the importance of letter-writing to the culture of the 1930s, see Leila Sussmann, “Mass Political Letter Writing in America: The Growth of an Institution,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 23 (1959), pp. 203–212; Blower, “From Isolation to Neutrality,” pp. 356–363.

<sup>131</sup> “Radio Report,” February 28, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>132</sup> “Radio Report,” April 21, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>133</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld made the same connection in theoretical terms, that “opinion leaders” might listen to the radio and pass on what they had heard. Lazarsfeld’s radio work, Michael Stamm argues, was crucial for the theory of public opinion that was later found in *The People’s Choice*, a vastly important contribution to political and communications theory. See Michael Stamm, “Paul Lazarsfeld’s *Radio and the Printed Page*: A Critical Reappraisal,” *American Journalism* 27 (2010), pp. 37–58.

the requests come from teachers in schools and colleges, would indicate the usefulness of the program.”<sup>134</sup> From Salem, Kentucky, a “pastor of two rural churches” wrote to explain his “keen interest” in the programs, because he tried “to guide the thinking of my people on such matters into current channels.”<sup>135</sup>

Until the broadcasts stopped in July 1942, by when the research staff was too small to produce them, the Association assumed that they were reaching “millions” of Americans.<sup>136</sup> But it had no real way of knowing how successful its shows were. Its only data was the size of the mailbag, and by February 1941, after 64 broadcasts, 11,401 letters had been received in New York. Yet, somehow, only 82 members had been added to the rolls as a direct result of the broadcasts, earning the Association a paltry \$492.<sup>137</sup> McCoy asked Paul F. Lazarsfeld, a political scientist and pioneer in audience research, to analyze the letters to get a better sense of the people that the Association was reaching, but no answers were forthcoming.<sup>138</sup> Lazarsfeld’s research, not that McCoy read it, suggested in any case that radio programs tended to reach only those who were already interested in their subject matter.<sup>139</sup> So it seemed. Evidence grew that

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<sup>134</sup> “Radio Report,” October 17, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>135</sup> “Excerpts from Broadcast Letters,” December 12, 1939, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>136</sup> “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1941.”

<sup>137</sup> “Radio Report,” March 24, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>138</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 26, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>139</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page: An Introduction to the Study of Radio and its Role in the Communication of Ideas* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1940).

even branch members were citing the radio broadcasts as a reason not to attend meetings, preferring to stay at home rather than actively participate in foreign policy discussions.<sup>140</sup>

Even so, the radio experience did not convince the Association that a mass market for foreign affairs was an illusion. Indeed it doubled down. Politically to Buell's left, Dean was even more worried about the reach of social scientists than her mentor had been. Too often, she said in May 1939, social scientists had been content to reach "a pitifully small group of educated men and women, on the theory that leaders would leaven the masses." But modern democracy demanded more, and to avoid handing the nation to demagogues, scholars needed to "abandon their scholarly formulas" and learn to "speak the vernacular" directly to storekeepers, farmers, and housewives.<sup>141</sup> "The FPA and similar institutions should not address themselves to the 4 per cent who, in any case, have other opportunities for obtaining information," she pleaded in 1942, "but to the 96 per cent or so who do not receive college education." Its work "among the 'elite' groups from which we have recruited our audiences in New York and in the Branches has reached saturation point," she said.<sup>142</sup> Others agreed, seeing subscriber-members as, in effect, providing a subsidy that enabled the Association to run programs that went far beyond them.<sup>143</sup> As McCoy put it in April 1942, "our most important work is not significant through national membership, but our radio reaches millions of people and our *Reports*, as well as *Headline Books* in schools

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<sup>140</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," April 29, 1942, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>141</sup> Dean, "Writing Contemporary History," May 10, 1939, Buell Papers, Box 5.

<sup>142</sup> Dean, untitled memorandum, October 21, 1942, attached to Willits to RFE, November 16, 1942, RF, Box 334.

<sup>143</sup> "Report of Special Committee to the FPA Board," [March 1940], Smith Papers, Box 227.

and camps, have a large spread.”<sup>144</sup> Recalling the World War I experience, the old progressives at the Association thought that this would be particularly important during a war, for “the task of educating American public opinion cannot be left to the government alone without inviting regimentation and dangerous restrictions on traditional democratic freedoms.”<sup>145</sup> As Dean put it after Pearl Harbor, Washington thought that the Association “can be the hiatus between the government and public opinion,” separating tyranny from democracy.<sup>146</sup>

During the war, the very act of reading became a symbolic defense of liberal values, and books themselves became weapons of war.<sup>147</sup> Foreign affairs had their place in a booming market. Superficially the Association seemed to be part of that boom. One of its most popular wartime publications was a lavish United Nations discussion guide that Dean wrote jointly for the U.S. Office of Education and the Office of War Information. *Reader's Digest*, *TIME*, and *Newsweek* sent out 300,000 copies for free.<sup>148</sup> The Association distributed 1,645,106 Headline Books from 1941 to 1945. But that figure obscured more than it revealed. 257,000 were bought by the War Department, practically keeping the Association afloat in the early years of the war, before it began to find its instructional literature for troops elsewhere.<sup>149</sup> 544,431 books were sent *gratis* to

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<sup>144</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” April 1, 1942, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>145</sup> “Application to the Rockefeller Foundation for Renewal of Existing Grants in Support of the Foreign Policy Association,” October 16, 1941, pp. 4, 15. For the continuing (heightened, given Goebbels) fear of state propaganda among progressives, see J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 179-217; Brett Gary, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 55-174.

<sup>146</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” January 19, 1942, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>147</sup> Christopher P. Loss, “Reading Between Enemy Lines: Armed Services Editions and World War II,” *Journal of Military History* 67 (2003), pp. 811-834; Hench, *Books as Weapons*.

<sup>148</sup> Vera Micheles Dean, *United Nations Discussion Guide* (New York: Readers' Digest, Time, Newsweek, 1942).

<sup>149</sup> Reports reached the board that the War Department was making its own pamphlets early in 1943. See “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” March 24, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 15. On troop education, see

the membership. The proportion of books distributed beyond the membership plummeted. 292,278 Headlines went to non-members in 1942, but only 101,052 in 1945.<sup>150</sup>

Perhaps the problem was that the Association had printed itself out of a job. Certainly competition for the foreign affairs market vastly increased during the war. News bulletins and commentary became common on the radio for the first time; newspapers reported breathlessly on every aspect of the war; news magazines stationed correspondents across the globe; voluntary associations started to develop their own world affairs programs; propaganda agencies published in every medium. Although the Association argued that its work usefully clarified this flood of information, and successfully for a while at that, its benefactors became skeptical.<sup>151</sup> Joseph Willits of the Rockefeller Foundation wrote in July 1943 that

there are a hundred sources which are engaged today in adult education in international relations in this country for every one there was when FPA started in 1918. The Government, the political parties, the press, the radio, the magazines, the colleges and universities, and the numerous books from scholars and men of affairs such as Willkie and Lippmann, — all testify that the effort in which the FPA pioneered has now permeated the educational media of the country.<sup>152</sup>

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Christopher P. Loss, “‘The Most Wonderful Thing Has Happened to Me in the Army’: Psychology, Citizenship, and American Higher Education in World War II,” *Journal of American History* 92 (2005), pp. 864-89.

<sup>150</sup> Statistics from “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1941”; “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1942,” April 27, 1943, Emeny Papers, Box 39; “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1943,” February 24, 1944, Emeny Papers, Box 39; “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1944,” February 28, 1945, Emeny Papers, Box 39; “Informal Report of the President for the Year 1945,” undated, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

<sup>151</sup> Kittredge, Notes of meeting with Stone and Dean, May 21, 1941, RF, Box 334; Kittredge, “Application for a new appropriation FPA,” September 22, 1941, RF, Box 334; “Application to the Rockefeller Foundation for Renewal of Existing Grants in Support of the Foreign Policy Association,” October 16, 1941; Grant docket RF 41110, December 3, 1941, RF, Box 333.

<sup>152</sup> Willits to Fosdick, “FPA Request for Renewal,” July 27, 1943, RF, Box 334.

The Foundation's staff seriously considered whether it should continue playing "Santa Claus," as one trustee complained.<sup>153</sup> But if the Foundation pulled out, Raymond Blaine Fosdick averred, it would surely be attacked for abandoning the ideals of a democratic foreign policy. "We can't do it in the midst of a war," Fosdick told Willits, privately.<sup>154</sup>

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What the Association could do was what it had always done; grow its own strength. Its membership remained stable between 1938 and 1942, despite the broadening of its program and the immense amount of discussion of foreign affairs taking place, as President Roosevelt put it, "over the cracker-barrel."<sup>155</sup> As the war continued, the Association's membership rolls steadily thickened. With 19,540 members at the end of 1942, the Association numbered 22,296 at the end of 1943, 27,726 in 1944, and 31,103 in 1945. Almost all of that growth came in the branches.<sup>156</sup>

The Association had 17 branches at the start of World War II. The majority were clustered in the old internationalist heartlands, from Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, and Providence in the east, to several small towns in upstate New York, and Philadelphia and Baltimore further south. Twice the Association had hired a field secretary before the war, and

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<sup>153</sup> Willits to Fosdick, August 9, 1943, RF, Box 334; Douglas Freeman to Fosdick, November 2, 1943, RF, Box 334.

<sup>154</sup> Fosdick to Willits, "FPA Request for Renewal," August 6, 1943, RF, Box 334.

<sup>155</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address at the Annual Dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association," March 15, 1941, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16089](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16089).

<sup>156</sup> "Informal Report of the President for the Year 1945," Emeny Papers, Box 39.



they made progress further West, encouraging groups in Columbus, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Detroit, although nothing had been possible further into the heartland than Minneapolis and St. Paul, and the South had proven solidly resistant. The branches that the Association did have, however, were for the most part flimsy. Several lost members in 1939 and 1940, and most reported worsening attendances well into 1943, as tires and gasoline were rationed and local activists turned their attention to civil defense, first aid-training, and relief.<sup>157</sup> They held fewer meetings, because it became harder to find speakers at home and abroad. Several lost their chairmen as they headed to Washington to become policymakers.<sup>158</sup> And war work exhausted all but those excused from it. At the first branch conference for eight years, held in New York in May 1942, representatives from Providence reported that “financially we are broke all the time,” and that their branch was nothing more than a “moribund mutual admiration society of old fogies.”<sup>159</sup> Attempts to rectify this situation, as Brooks Emeny urged whenever he found himself with other members, existed, but failed. Baltimore’s delegates reported in October 1943 that they had found no way reach beyond “the ‘stuffed shirt’ crowd who simply want to come to dinner.”<sup>160</sup>

The White House and the State Department saw none of the weakness that was so apparent to the activists struggling to fill hotel ballrooms, however. When McCoy was in Washington in the summer of 1942, sentencing six saboteurs to death in a military tribunal, he talked with “high government officials” who asked him to “reach the great mass of American

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<sup>157</sup> Florence Pratt to McCoy, May 9, 1940, FPA, Part I, Box 67; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 22, 1940, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Informal Report to the Board for the Year 1943.”

<sup>158</sup> “Foreign Policy Association” [branch statistics], May 7, 1942, FPA, Part I, Box 70.

<sup>159</sup> “Branch Conference,” May 8, 1942, FPA, Part II, Box 70.

<sup>160</sup> “Branch Conference,” October 15, 1943, FPA, Part I, Box 70.

people rather than only the groups which are already aware of international problems.”<sup>161</sup> What both President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull meant by that, it turned out in McCoy’s later meetings with them, was that the Association should set up more branches, especially outside the Northeast.<sup>162</sup> “The more you spread,” Roosevelt told McCoy over dinner before addressing the Association in a nationally broadcast election speech in October 1944, “the better it will be for our general work in foreign affairs.”<sup>163</sup> Although McCoy was prepared to help the government in any way he could, this did not seem wise even to him, in light of the trouble attracting wealthy, heavily-taxed businessmen to charitable causes, and the continuing expense of getting speakers to travel outside the area around Washington and New York.<sup>164</sup> Despite its own doubts, the Rockefeller Foundation put its foot down, one of the very few occasions on which it forced the Association to do its bidding. Rockefeller officials, McCoy told the branch chairmen,

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<sup>161</sup> “Branch Conference,” October 2, 1942, FPA, Part I, Box 70.

<sup>162</sup> No records remain of these meetings, but McCoy recalled his instructions later on. See “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” March 24, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” December 1, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” January 28, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Record of Meeting, Josephs and McCoy, September 6, 1945, CC, Box 147.

<sup>163</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 24, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15. Thomas Dewey declined an invitation to address the Association, but the appearance of partisanship occasioned some complaint. “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 25, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 15, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Radio Address at a Dinner of the Foreign Policy Association,” October 21, 1944, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16456](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16456). The idea of a president using the Association to prove his foreign policy *bona fides* seeped into popular culture with the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *State of the Union*, by Russel Crouse and Howard Lindsey, which had its premiere in November 1945. In the play, a businessman, Grant Matthews, runs as a Republican for the presidency, along Willkie-esque lines. A planned speech to the Association, Matthews says, is “moving into the big time!” See Russel Crouse and Howard Lindsey, *State of the Union* (New York: Random House, 1946), p. 120.

<sup>164</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” December 29, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 15. Two months before Pearl Harbor, McCoy told his board that he wanted to put the entire foreign affairs infrastructure at the government’s disposal, saying that “with these three [the Association, Council on Foreign Relations, and Institute of Pacific Relations] in the field, perhaps we can work together with the government in extending our work, since we have the proper material.” See “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 22, 1941, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

“expressed a wish for more branches, and, in spite of the very fine results of our other policy, which had been effective, we followed their wishes.”<sup>165</sup>

By the end of 1945, the Association had 32 branches. The northeast still dominated, but there had been real progress in the South, Midwest, and even, two thousand miles from home, in the far West. Plenty of places proved resistant to the Association’s efforts, most disappointingly Kansas City, Nashville, and Dallas, but the remaining blank spots on the map were mostly the result of poor transport links or deliberate coordination with other agencies. The Pacific coast was left to the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Association had an informal agreement with the Council on Foreign Relations, too, although there were still ten cities where branches overlapped with Committees on Foreign Relations, for the most part with different audiences, not least in terms of gender. Even so, the Association now covered 18 states, and in 1945 the branches held 188 meetings with a total attendance of 60,743. Branch membership climbed from 8,946 at the end of 1942 to 14,459 at the end of 1945.<sup>166</sup>

This, too, was the work of women. As the Association had no field secretary, the responsibility fell to its secretary, Dorothy Leet. Leet had graduated from Barnard College in 1917, and was close to the College’s dean, Virginia Gildersleeve, who was the only woman on the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco Conference. She made her name as the director of the American University Women’s Club in Paris, an outpost later known as Reid Hall that hosted

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<sup>165</sup> “Branch Conference,” October 15, 1943, FPA, Part I, Box 70. McCoy was so convinced that Rockefeller sought this kind of expansion that he very unusually began his overtures for grant renewal in 1943 with reports on the situation in the branches. See McCoy to Willits, June 14, 1943, RF, Box 334.

<sup>166</sup> “Foreign Policy Association Meetings and Attendance for the Calendar Years 1943-1945,” in “Report of the President, 1945,” Emeny Papers, Box 39.

tourists, students, and lecturers. When the Association hired Leet late in 1937 it gained a secretary at the heart of the internationalist women's movement, one who would later serve as the president of the International Federation of University Women.<sup>167</sup> And for the two years following the spring of 1943, Leet crossed the country trying to find the civic leaders who could be the keystones in a national public for foreign affairs, built one city at a time. She was armed with letters of introduction from board members, and, often following in the wake of a public address by Dean, she used her own contacts among educated women. Lunches, teas, dinners, private interviews, everything was an opportunity to understand a community and its dynamics, to build lists of those who might have the visibility and clout to build a branch that would endure.<sup>168</sup>

The work was intense. Take a successful new branch in New Orleans, a target because of its port and its ties to international trading networks. Dean had given a nationally-reported speech to the National Conference on Social Work there in 1942.<sup>169</sup> During Leet's first visit, in April 1943, she used a letter from McCoy to the president of Tulane University to set up a lunch with faculty. They suggested she see a rabbi. She visited an old Parisian friend, a sculptor who hosted a tea for twenty more women, including the head of the public library. One antiracist female contact was ruled out, "because of the pressure which she is using on the colored

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<sup>167</sup> Helen Howell Moorhead to Dorothy Leet, January 4, 1937, FPA, Part II, Box 11; Joseph P. Chamberlain to Leet, May 29, 1937, FPA, Part II, Box 11; Buell to Leet, October 26, 1937, Buell Papers, Box 42; "AAUW Wins International Top Office," *Washington Post* (August 14, 1953), p. 41; "Dorothy F. Leet, 99, Director of Reid Hall," *New York Times* (March 9, 1994), p. 10

<sup>168</sup> See, e.g., "Memorandum on VMD's Trip to Louisville, St. Louis, Tulsa, Memphis, Nashville, Birmingham, Mobile, and Winston-Salem, March 5-17, 1944," March 23, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 92.

<sup>169</sup> "Gives 7-Point Plan for Allies in Peace," *New York Times* (May 13, 1942), p. 8.

question.” Corporate bigwigs were not keen. A banker, Rudolph Hecht, would only support the venture if a “big business man or important lawyer” were involved, but businessmen already had a foreign trade committee to attend at the Chamber of Commerce. Everyone said that the branch had to be cleared with Edward Rightor, legal counsel to the mayor, who made a point of involving local Catholic leaders at Loyola University. Leet used the bona fides of Dave Hennen Morris, a New Orleans native who was an Association member and Roosevelt’s Ambassador to Belgium, to contact editors at the *Times-Picayune*, who offered support.<sup>170</sup> The Secretary of State got involved, telling a potential branch chairman, the journalist Walter Parker of “my high appreciation of the past achievements of the Association in creating a wide public understanding of international problems.”<sup>171</sup> By April 1944, Leet was introducing William K. Jackson, vice-president of the United Fruit Company and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, at the branch’s first public meeting.<sup>172</sup> With support from women’s groups, a history professor as the program chair, and a local banker as finance chief, by October 1945 the group had about 400 members.<sup>173</sup>

Success in New Orleans was replicated elsewhere, particularly in cities where bankers and businessmen were brought on board, like Houston, Omaha, and St. Louis, and where editors guaranteed favorable press coverage, like Indianapolis. The leadership was often academic, with many committee chairs taken by historians like Julian Park in Buffalo, Arthur O. Lovejoy

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<sup>170</sup> Leet to McCoy, “Memorandum in Regard to Trip to Branches and Prospective Branches, April 7-23,” April 29, 1943, FPA, Part I, Box 71.

<sup>171</sup> Hull to Parker, April 24, 1944, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1940-1944, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/124, Box 3854.

<sup>172</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” April 26, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Parker, “At Home and Abroad,” *The Official Daily Court Record* (March 31, 1944), in FPA, Part I, Box 7

<sup>173</sup> “Branch Conference,” October 19, 1945, FPA, Part I, Box 71.

Baltimore, and Dexter Perkins in Rochester. For the most part the men who served were lawyers, journalists, financiers, businessmen, and clergy, although everywhere women, usually members of the League of Women Voters, did the spadework.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, many of the Association's branches took heart at the vitality they saw elsewhere, and began to innovate. In Detroit they used the support of Senator Homer Ferguson, who bought memberships for 25 high-school students every year, to run competitions to find the most active schoolchildren in contemporary affairs; in Philadelphia, they started a committee involving public, private, and parochial schools that selected students to attend Saturday morning forums.<sup>175</sup>

What bears repeating, however, is just how hard it was to get people to participate actively in foreign affairs, even during a war. One issue that vexed Dean was that "women, labor and the Negroes" were "usually left out and remembered at the last minute"; Southern branches could not invite interested African-American students to meetings that took place in segregated hotels. Branch chairmen often could not afford to travel to New York, a problem that was nowhere near as consequential as the difficulties faced in luring prestigious speakers out of the policy centers of the northeast. Kenneth Holmes, a history professor at Macalester College in St. Paul, told the branch representatives that he had previously been active in the Boston branch. "Now I am out where the Indians are," he said, "I can realize how difficult it is in the East to picture the conditions in the Far West." Speakers had to be found locally, where experts were few. All this before one even considered the content of the public opinion that the branches were

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<sup>174</sup> "Branch Officers and Chairmen of Special Committees," November 1944, FPA, Part I, Box 73.

<sup>175</sup> "Branch Conference," October 6, 1944, FPA, Part I, Box 71.

trying to create. “There are so many present problems where opinion needs to be guided,” Holmes said, “especially when focused on the United States as a world power.”<sup>176</sup>

Therein lay another, world-defining difficulty. At the local level, national foreign affairs institutions competed for the allegiance of the tiny number of Americans who were interested in world affairs activism. And as Leet travelled the country, one competitor loomed large. “We are finding a new difficulty in forming branches at this time,” she told the board in February 1945, “due to the fact that the groups working for United Nations plans are anxious not to have other organizations interested in international affairs established at this time.” Much as it supported the founding of the United Nations, the Association could not make overt alliances with the chapters of the American Association for the United Nations that were cropping up nationwide. “We are trying to develop the idea that the F.P.A. is a long-range organization with an educational program not only for the immediate future,” Leet said, “but for the long continued interest of Americans in the foreign policy of their country.” More people were responding to what seemed to be the more urgent work going on elsewhere.<sup>177</sup>

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What kind of public did President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull want to create? Was it a permanent public, ready to deliberate every aspect of American primacy? Was it a public for a

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<sup>176</sup> “Branch Conference,” October 6, 1944, FPA, Part I, Box 71; “Branch Conference,” October 19, 1945, FPA, Part I, Box 71.

<sup>177</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” February 28, 1945, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

more specific purpose, for the passage of certain plans? Should a public exist to respond to what the state sought to promote? Or should it exist to participate on a more profound level? Only the government could answer that.

The State Department faced a real choice. How would it reconcile diplomacy with democracy? How would it set about involving the public in the primacy it sought? None other than the secretary of state went as far as to define foreign policy in avowedly democratic terms. Foreign policy, Hull said in April 1944, was “the task of focusing and giving effect in the world outside our borders to the will of 135 million people through the constitutional processes which govern our democracy.”<sup>178</sup> Others agreed. “No argument is necessary to support the proposition,” wrote Adlai Stevenson to Archibald MacLeish on the day that the United States unleashed the atom bomb on Hiroshima, “that the Department’s and the Nation’s interest will be best served by a public opinion as well informed as possible about foreign affairs.”<sup>179</sup>

As usual, Dean Acheson went further. “The Department of State believes in the cooperative method of making foreign policy,” the undersecretary of state told a Carnegie Endowment conference in Washington in November 1945, indeed in “two-way communication with the American people,” which was “the essence of the democratic process.” John Dewey might have been proud. But what the department considered to be sound attempts to engage the public, Acheson said, had opened it to criticism.

If we have a program for giving out information, we are propagandizing. If we don't give out information promptly and systematically we are cynically denying your

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<sup>178</sup> Cordell Hull, “Foreign Policy of the United States of America,” April 9, 1944, in *Department of State Bulletin* 10 (April 15, 1944), p. 335.

<sup>179</sup> Stevenson to MacLeish, “The Department and the Press,” August 6, 1945, RG 59, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, 1945-1950, Lot File 587 52-48, Box 11.



right as citizens to know what is going on behind those musty old walls. Servicing the public with facts is apparently a dangerous business. The Department is damned if it does and it's damned if it doesn't.

Which way should it turn?<sup>180</sup>

Part of the problem was that compared to the rest of the New Deal state, which put unprecedented effort into manufacturing popular consent to smooth the expansion of its power, the State Department came late to the cause of public relations.<sup>181</sup> Lacking the need to imprint a particular conception of American foreign relations on the public mind, it had left the cultivation of the international mind to the press, to trusted voluntary associations, and to the good sense of the foundations.<sup>182</sup> When postwar planners settled on their vision of the future, however, the urgency of public support became palpable. As one May 1943 memorandum put it, the people needed to “be convinced, while the lessons of war are still before them, that they have global interests and responsibilities.”<sup>183</sup> After Edward Stettinius, a former U.S. Steel chairman versed in corporate marketing, replaced Sumner Welles as undersecretary of state in October 1943, the

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<sup>180</sup> Dean Acheson, “Government–Citizen Cooperation in the Making of Foreign Policy,” November 27, 1945, *Department of State Bulletin* 13 (December 2, 1945), pp. 893-894.

<sup>181</sup> Several historians have already summarized the State Department's early public affairs programs. See William O. Chittick, “The Domestic Information Activities of the Department of State,” PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1964; Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*; Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, pp. 107-141; Autumn Lass, “Fact Givers or Fact Makers? The Dilemma of Information-Making in the State Department's Office of Public Affairs during the Truman Administration,” in Andrew L. Johns and Mitchell B. Lerner (eds.), *The Cold War at Home and Abroad: Domestic Politics and US Foreign Policy Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), pp. 9-35. On statistics and the New Deal state, see Sparrow, *Warfare State*; Emmanuel Didier, “Counting on Relief: Industrializing the Statistical Interviewer during the New Deal,” *Science in Context* 24 (2011), pp. 281-310.

<sup>182</sup> Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Power and the People: Executive Management of Public Opinion in Foreign Affairs, 1897-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); William B. McAllister, Joshua Botts, Peter Cozzens, and Aaron W. Marrs, *Toward “Thorough, Accurate, and Reliable”: A History of the Foreign Relations of the United States Series* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2015).

<sup>183</sup> Qu. in Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent*, p. 114.

department embarked on a series of administrative reorganizations to sell its peace and to rehabilitate its “aloof,” striped-pants image.<sup>184</sup> By December 1944, MacLeish had moved, not without controversy, from the Office of War Information to become the first assistant secretary of state for public affairs, with responsibility for propaganda foreign and domestic.<sup>185</sup>

MacLeish and his assistants unleashed a vast crusade to gain popular and political consent for the United Nations. Even the staunchly internationalist *New York Herald Tribune* thought it was all a bit much, deriding it as “a first-class publicity campaign, thoroughly streamlined,” borrowed from the selling of “breakfast foods, B-29 bombers, laxatives, war for democracy, automobiles, nail polish, blood banks, dress fabrics and gyro-controlled tank turrets.”<sup>186</sup> Certainly it surpassed anything previously attempted in foreign affairs in size and sophistication. There was an NBC radio show, *Our Foreign Policy*; an Alfred Hitchcock film, *Watchtower Over Tomorrow*; a speaking campaign involving 254 public addresses in six months; and a publications blitz, including the printing of 1.75 million copies of the Dumbarton Oaks agreement and 250,000 wall charts.<sup>187</sup> With the eager assistance of all kinds of voluntary

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<sup>184</sup> John Sloan Dickey, “Observations and Suggestions on State Department’s Public Relations,” November 11, 1943, RG 59, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Office of the Executive Director, Subject Files, 1946-1953, Lot File 60D412.

<sup>185</sup> “Departmental Order 1218 of January 15, 1944,” *Department of State Bulletin* 10 (January 15, 1944), pp. 63-65; “Departmental Order 1229 of February 22, 1944,” *Department of State Bulletin* 10 (February 26, 1944), p. 210; “Departmental Order 1301 of December 20, 1944,” *Department of State Bulletin* 11 (December 17, 1944), pp. 790-795. Characteristically, and following the precedent of other postwar planning efforts, the Council on Foreign Relations was simultaneously asked to investigate how postwar plans could be made acceptable to “Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Citizen.” See “Foreign Policy and Public Opinion,” Study Group Report, February 8, 1944, CFR, Series 3B, Box 135. Chaired by George Gallup, the study group was abandoned in the spring of 1944, and no similar effort was undertaken until 1947. See “Foreign Policy and Public Opinion,” Study Group Report, February 25, 1944, CFR, Series 3B, Box 135; Bidwell to Gallup, May 17, 1944, CFR, Series 3B, Box 135.

<sup>186</sup> “Peace by Propaganda,” *New York Herald Tribune* (April 4, 1945), p. 24.

<sup>187</sup> H. Schuyler Foster, “Domestic Information Activities of the State Department,” Speech to American Political Science Association, March 30, 1946, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Lot File 66D257, Box

associations and media outlets, it appeared to work. Surveys found that 19 out of 20 Americans had heard or read about the San Francisco Conference, and polls showed support for joining the United Nations hovering at 80 or 90 per cent.<sup>188</sup> By then, snarked Vera Micheles Dean, “to say that one believes in international collaboration” was “like saying one believes in the Rockettes.”<sup>189</sup>

Often looked back upon as the glory days of the State Department’s relationship with the public, the United Nations campaign set a pattern, one that historians have shown was followed later in efforts to sell the Marshall Plan, NATO, and NSC-68.<sup>190</sup> And it would be easy to think, as historians have, that given the role of MacLeish and his successor, the marketing pioneer William Benton, and given the way in which President Truman handed the remnants of the domestic branch of the Office of War Information to the State Department at the end of the war, that the pattern was set permanently and inevitably. But that was not the case. All kinds of ideas about how to reconcile diplomacy and democracy were being put into action. And that, in part, was because many of the State Department officials involved had already experienced less pressured ways of promoting foreign affairs.

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1; “Division of Public Liaison, July 1944-June 1945,” November 7, 1945, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Box 3.

<sup>188</sup> Brewer, *Why America Fights*, p. 136; Divine, *Second Chance*, p. 252.

<sup>189</sup> Vera Micheles Dean, *On the Threshold of World Order* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1944), p. 60.

<sup>190</sup> Michael Wala, “Selling the Marshall Plan at Home: The Committee for the Marshall Plan to Aid European Recovery,” *Diplomatic History* 10 (1986), pp. 247-265; Nancy E. Bernhard, “Clearer than Truth: Public Affairs Television and the State Department’s Domestic Information Campaigns, 1947-1952,” *Diplomatic History* 21 (1997), pp. 545-567; Nancy E. Bernhard, *US Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Steven Casey, “Selling NSC-68: The Truman Administration, Public Opinion, and the Politics of Mobilization, 1950-51,” *Diplomatic History* 29 (2005), pp. 655-690; Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Foreign Policy Association members, who were perfectly well aware of the dangers of propaganda, played a significant role. The first man Hull appointed to oversee the domestic campaign was John Sloan Dickey. A lawyer, Dickey was a protégé of Francis Sayre, who, as well as being a former assistant secretary of state and Woodrow Wilson's son-in-law, had been a board member of the Boston branch. Charles A. Thomson, who had been the Association's Latin American researcher, was one of Dickey's advisors.<sup>191</sup> After Dickey left late in 1945, the OPA was led by Francis H. Russell. Russell was an old Wilsonian who recalled hiking two miles to school every day during the Versailles fight, arguing with classmates "of the Lodge persuasion." Head of the Boston branch of the League of Nations Association, and prominent in the highly interventionist American Union for Concerted Peace Efforts, Russell was "a member of other groups interested in foreign policy," according to the *Boston Globe*. Given his affiliations, Russell was almost certainly an Association member.<sup>192</sup> And Russell spent the seven years in which he was in charge of OPA perpetually afraid of what he once called "high-pressuring, button-holing, trick persuasiveness and mere slogan-thinking." He constantly tried to limit the use of unrestricted information warfare against the American people, even as he waged it.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> "Departmental Order 1218 of January 15, 1944," *Department of State Bulletin* 10 (January 15, 1944), pp. 63-65.

<sup>192</sup> "Francis Russell of Boston to Help U.S. Find Out the Facts About Foreign Policy," *Boston Globe* (January 17, 1946), p. 10; Russell's personal history is always missing from the story of the selling of the United Nations, and of OPA/DPL, but it is important to understand how his political commitments before the war translated into action during and after it. See "Oral History Interview with Francis Russell," July 13, 1973, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, [trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/russellf.htm](http://trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/russellf.htm); Francis H. Russell, "Referendum Backs League in Bay State," *Washington Post* (November 19, 1934), p. 9; "Possibility for Peace Is Talked," *Hartford Courant* (May 24, 1936), p. A15; "Great Peace Rally Plans Announced," *Christian Science Monitor* (September 25, 1939), p. 10; "Danger to U.S. Found In Clutching Security," *Christian Science Monitor* (February 6, 1940), p. 9; "Boston Lawyer Urges War on Germany," *Hartford Courant* (July 10, 1940), p. 9. On the highly interventionist American Union for Concerted Peace Efforts, see Johnstone, *Against Immediate Evil*, pp. 36-53.

<sup>193</sup> Russell to Benton, July 18, 1946, RG 59, Recordings Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Box 1. On Russell, but without any mention of his personal history, see Lass, "Fact Givers or Fact Makers?" pp. 13-19.

Inside the State Department, indeed inside its small Division of Public Liaison, differing approaches to engaging the public were reflected in institutions.<sup>194</sup> Closest to taking a traditional, Deweyan approach was the Group Relations Branch. Its leader, and the assistant chief of the division as a whole, was Chester S. Williams, a prominent adult educator who had been John Studebaker's assistant at the U.S. Office of Education in the days of the Federal Forum Project.<sup>195</sup> More comfortable than many to see adult education develop under government auspices, Williams spent part of the war as chief of educational programs for UNRRA. And when he moved to the State Department, Williams tried to apply Deweyan democracy to foreign affairs. He praised the processes developed at San Francisco, for which 187 representatives of 42 voluntary associations were made consultants to the official delegation, as showing how formal diplomacy itself might take on a more democratic air. But his main concern was opinion at home.<sup>196</sup>

In a July 1946 statement of the Group Relations Branch's philosophy, Williams accepted that what he called the "one-way media of communication," such as press, radio, and cinema, "perform an important function in the development of enlightened public opinion and in the

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<sup>194</sup> For the history of the Division of Public Liaison, see Andrew Johnstone, "Creating a 'Democratic Foreign Policy': The State Department's Division of Public Liaison and Public Opinion, 1944-1953," *Diplomatic History* 35 (2011), pp. 483-503. The Division of Public Liaison had four desks, dedicated to group relations, polling, mass media, and writing, including answering the mail. For the mass media desk, see Bernhard, "Clearer Than Truth," and Bernhard, *US Television News and Cold War Propaganda*. Although not developed here, the fact that the State Department answered the mail was enormously important to its self-conception as a democratic agency, and it planted articles to show how responding to letters represented its commitment to democracy. See, e.g., "What Becomes of Queries on Foreign Policy," *Christian Science Monitor* (March 30, 1945), p. 11.

<sup>195</sup> See, e.g., Chester S. Williams, "The Forum: A Challenge to Democratic Leadership," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 21 (1938), pp. 83-87.

<sup>196</sup> Chester S. Williams, "Democratic Process at San Francisco," June 21, 1945, *Department of State Bulletin* 12 (June 24, 1945), pp. 1163-1165.

fashioning of democratic policy.” They provided facts, interpretation, and opinion. “But the strength of a self-governing society,” Williams argued, “depends on more than reading, listening and looking.” To avoid the perils of propaganda, “people must manipulate ideas in their own minds and try them out on their own tongues.” Discussion, after all, was democracy. “The ancient two-way media of communication,” Williams wrote, “is still the dynamic of a free society.” In their “organization meetings, forums and discussion groups,” even in the unique way in which they set up the public platform through lecture tours and speakers bureaus, Americans enacted their freedom, for “the weighing of conflicting opinions, the testing of facts, the questioning of conclusions and the rephrasing of the argument elevates the individual from the position of mere spectator to participant.” And participation was what the State Department should seek — a public, not an audience.

The State Department could serve its aims, in Williams’ view, through “liaison with organizations, institutions of public enlightenment and the public platform.” This should be purely voluntary in every respect, unlike the United Nations process, in which voluntary organizations had essentially been given their orders at the State Department. “We should deal with organizations as separate entities not through leaders attempting to organize them for cooperative activities or pressure propaganda,” Williams wrote, and “our policy should be to help each one on request to do its work of enlightenment in its own way. Crucially, Williams insisted, it was not his “purpose or function to secure public *support* for the Department’s policies.” Instead, a truly democratic State Department would “help the public *understand* what the policies are and why the Department projects them, inviting critical examination of them.” And then it would listen. “In addition to facilitating the flow of information from the

Department to the public,” Williams concluded, “we should actively promote the practical expression of representative opinion to the Department.”<sup>197</sup>

How could the State Department make that work? Williams could think of eleven possible means, many of which reiterated things the department was already doing, such as hosting conferences with voluntary association leaders in Washington, sending liaison officials and speakers around the country, reading the mail, and so on. Williams also wanted to set up formal advisory committees on specific areas of policy, and to stage regional conferences in cooperation with voluntary associations, both of which the State Department did. But the first item on Williams’ list of ways to “bring the views of the public to bear on Department policy,” and indeed on almost every similar list that the department compiled, was opinion polling. And that, ultimately, gave the game away.<sup>198</sup>

Opinion polling was a Trojan horse. Welcomed by some traditionalists and seen by most historians as making public views legible for the first time, it in fact heralded the victory of an understanding of democratic governance as a communications problem rather than a participation problem. At the time, polling was a novel and deeply controversial technology, subject to endless political criticism and beset by methodological attacks, particularly from

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<sup>197</sup> Williams, “Report and Recommendations on Group Relations Section of Division of Public Liaison,” July 16, 1946, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Box 3, emphasis in original. Others even outside Williams’s group relations office urged their superiors not to “fall into the error of thinking solely in terms of what will accrue in substantive terms or in overt acts which will push forward some segment of United States foreign policy.” After all, it would help State in the long run if Americans felt a sense of participation or satisfaction, and the department should not sneer at, say, Girl Scouts sending food to Europe. “The total amount of food sent,” Rowena Rommel argued, “will be insignificant but the generation of personal participation in foreign affairs among the individual girls will be very considerable.” See Rommel to Robert Kaye, “Ways in which the individual citizen can contribute to foreign affairs,” August 24, 1945, RG 59, Bureau of Public Affairs, Public Services Division, Subject Files 1945-1952, Lot 56D33, Box 132.

<sup>198</sup> Williams to Russell, “Various Means of Establishing Closer Public Liaison,” November 2, 1945, Public Services Division, Box 132.

scholars who argued that it misrepresented attitudes by taking a snapshot of public sentiment before deliberation could turn views into opinions.<sup>199</sup> Scholars who dealt with surveys, moreover, could hold completely antithetical views about public opinion and democracy.<sup>200</sup> George Gallup, for instance, believed that polling could allow the public to speak for itself, in a great “town meeting” for the twentieth century that would finally allow for government by the people.<sup>201</sup> Other survey experts agreed that polling would make voters more articulate, increasing their knowledge and interest in policy, making democracy more effective.<sup>202</sup> But for others, especially propaganda specialists, surveys were useful because they exposed public ignorance and gullibility. Polls would improve the efficiency of democracy by moving the balance of power in favor of elites trying to manipulate consent.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> For contemporary methodological critiques of polling, especially those that attacked its removal of social structure and deliberation from “public opinion,” see Lindsay Rogers, “Do the Gallup Polls Measure Opinion?” *Harper’s* (November 1941), pp. 623-632; Lindsay Rogers, *The Pollsters: Public Opinion, Politics and Democratic Leadership* (New York: Knopf, 1949). On the history of polling in the United States, see Sarah E. Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Susan Herbst, *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling Has Shaped American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Amy Fried, *Pathways to Polling: Crisis, Cooperation and the Making of Public Opinion Professions* (New York: Routledge, 2012). On the racist and sexist statistical biases which skewed polling outputs, including the early pollsters’ decision to remove “no opinion” responses from their results, see Adam J. Berinsky, *Silent Voices: Public Opinion and Political Participation in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), and, specifically to foreign affairs, Adam J. Berinsky, *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), esp. Part I. For comparative perspectives, see Laura DuMond Beers, “Whose Opinion?: Changing Attitudes Towards Opinion Polling in British Politics, 1937-1964,” *Twentieth Century British History* 17 (2006), pp. 177-205; Bernhard Fulda, “The Market Place of Political Opinions: Public Opinion Polling and its Publics in Transnational Perspective, 1930-1950,” *Comparativ* 21 (2011), pp. 13-28.

<sup>200</sup> Susan Herbst, “Public Opinion Infrastructures: Meanings, Measures, Media,” *Political Communication* 18 (2001), 451-464.

<sup>201</sup> George Gallup and Saul Forbes Rae, *The Pulse of Democracy: The Public Opinion Poll and How It Works* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1940).

<sup>202</sup> Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 95.

<sup>203</sup> Robert Lynd, “Democracy in Reverse,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 4 (1940), pp. 218-220; Elmo Roper, “So The Blind Shall Not Lead,” *Fortune* (February 1, 1942), p. 102; Edward L. Bernays, “Attitude Polls-Servants or Masters?” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 9 (1945), pp. 264-268b; Gary, *Nervous Liberals*, pp. 71-72.



Surveys gained traction because they were useful to a wide variety of powerful actors, and had the backing of the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>204</sup> But their future was secured because of the rise of the national security state, as the war emergency led to the deployment of what became a cutting-edge tool of public management and propaganda planning. Gallup himself predicted this. If America ended the war needing to recast the world, and if “the nation’s leaders turn to the people for the kind of guidance Woodrow Wilson wanted,” Gallup wrote in *The Pulse of Democracy* in 1940, “the will of the people will be articulated for them.”<sup>205</sup> But policymakers, in practice, would flip this around. Polls, in this view, would not change the minds of experts about policy, but they might be used to change the minds of those in whose name it was made.

This view was most associated with Harold Lasswell. The intellectual father of a strand in progressive thought that celebrated propaganda as a means of democracy that secured expert rule, Lasswell saw opinion data as a tool to manipulate consent through propaganda.<sup>206</sup> Even in his most Deweyan book, Lasswell argued that in a “two-way” democracy the task of communications specialists was not to simulate participation, but “sharing the insight of the few with the many.”<sup>207</sup> At his darkest, Lasswell went much further, painting a “picture of the

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<sup>204</sup> Jean M. Converse, *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence, 1890-1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>205</sup> Gallup and Rae, *The Pulse of Democracy*, p. 209.

<sup>206</sup> Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy*, pp. 62-74; Gary, *Nervous Liberals*, pp. 55-84; Raymond Seidelman, *Disenchanted Realists: Political Science and the American Crisis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), pp. 130-145. Although he does not put it in terms of adult education versus propaganda, Gary also demonstrates specifically how Lasswell’s view came to overrule, though not vanquish, Dewey’s. In his chapter on the Rockefeller Foundation’s “Communications Group,” Gary shows how the adult educator Lyman Bryson and the Foundation official Joseph Willits held back “fascistic,” Lasswellian views as late as the summer of 1940. But as war came, Lasswell’s techniques became much more prevalent. See Gary, *Nervous Liberals*, pp. 85-129.

<sup>207</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Democracy Through Public Opinion* (Menasha: George Banta, 1941), pp. 15, 79.

probable” in his famous 1941 essay, “The Garrison State.” In a future, militarized state, Lasswell wrote, “decisions will be more dictatorial than democratic,” and the masses would be controlled by ruling elites through “a monopoly of opinion in public,” maintained through propaganda. Deferring the garrison state, as Lasswell hoped that “the friend of democracy” would, might involve borrowing some of its methods.<sup>208</sup>

Lasswell became the dominant figure in wartime Washington when it came to information policy, as his students and adherents populated information agencies across the government. Most major polling operations contracted with MacLeish’s Office of Facts and Figures and the Office of War Information. Many were embroiled in morale-monitoring programs at home and abroad, from the Army’s Division of Morale to the Office of Strategic Services, the Department of Agriculture to the Strategic Bombing Survey. Hadley Cantril, the president’s pollster of choice, was working for 22 government and private agencies by 1943, including State.<sup>209</sup> By the end of a war which seemed to prove the utility of social science generally, survey data and administrative government appeared to pollsters and policymakers alike to go hand in hand.<sup>210</sup> One opinion analyst noted that while 63 percent of executive-branch administrators thought polls to be “helpful,” “among the warmest supporters of government participation in polling” were officials from the State Department.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, “The Garrison State,” *American Journal of Sociology* 46 (1941), pp. 455-468.

<sup>209</sup> Parmar, “To Relate Knowledge and Action,” pp. 253-256

<sup>210</sup> David B. Truman, “Public Opinion Research as a Tool of Public Administration,” *Public Administration Review* 5 (1945), pp. 62-72; Dorwin Cartwright, “Public Opinion Polls and Democratic Leadership,” *Journal of Social Issues* 2 (1946), pp. 23-32; Rensis Likert, “Opinion Studies and Government Policy,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 92 (1948), pp. 341-350.

<sup>211</sup> Martin Kriesberg, “What Congressmen and Administrators Think of the Polls,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 9 (1945), pp. 333-37.

Both of these visions of “two-way” democracy existed at the State Department, but as policymakers sought to sell specific policies, that of Lasswell slowly overtook that of Williams. H. Schuyler Foster encapsulated this tension perfectly. On the one hand a propaganda specialist trained as a political scientist by Lasswell at the University of Chicago, on the other Foster had become the chairman of the Foreign Policy Association’s Columbus branch while teaching at Ohio State.<sup>212</sup> Hired at State in 1943, he was the driving force in the Division of Public Liaison’s Public Attitudes Branch, later known as the Office of Public Opinion Studies, which promised, to “bring the ‘common man’ — millions of common men — right into the Department.”<sup>213</sup> Foster and his staff collected opinion data from public sources like the Gallup polls, and it contracted to receive further, confidential data from the Office of Public Opinion Research until 1945, and the National Opinion Research Center thereafter. Additionally, they harvested opinions from their subscriptions to hundreds of newspapers and magazines, from daily transcriptions of radio commentary, from constant scouring of the *Congressional Record*, and from information passed along by hundreds of voluntary associations. All this was filed in a vast repository of information and collated into a torrent of daily summaries, weekly reports, trend

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<sup>212</sup> Foster’s dissertation was a pioneering quantitative and qualitative analysis of war news, particular news as it was reported in Chicago, and was summarized in H. Schuyler Foster, “How America Became Belligerent: A Quantitative Study of War News, 1914-17,” *American Journal of Sociology* 40 (1935), pp. 464-475; H. Schuyler Foster, “Charting America’s News of the World War,” *Foreign Affairs* 15 (1937), pp. 311-319; H. Schuyler Foster and Carl Friedrich, “Letters to the Editor as a Means of Measuring the Effectiveness of Propaganda,” *American Political Science Review* 31 (1937), pp. 71-79; H. Schuyler Foster, “Pressure Groups and Administrative Agencies,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 221 (1942), pp. 21-28. After his retirement, Foster published what was effectively a summary of the three decades of research he had overseen, which he himself declassified. See H. Schuyler Foster, *Activism Replaces Isolationism: U.S. Public Attitudes, 1940-1975* (Washington: Foxhall, 1983). On Foster, see also Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, pp. 116-120.

<sup>213</sup> “Present Program and Immediate Plans,” p. 1, attached to appendices to “Division of Public Liaison, July 1944-June 1945,” November 7, 1945.

analyses, and estimates of information policy effectiveness, as well as special reports on particular matters, like the views of labor or women's groups. Surveys remained the stars.<sup>214</sup>

The State Department kept this data not to influence policy, but to refine publicity. As Dickey later admitted, "we were using the polls to find out the level of information of American public opinion during the war and on post-war planning and the areas of ignorance, in order to help us develop more effective public information programs."<sup>215</sup> Polls "are of value not only as comprehensive, balanced and reasonably prompt evaluations of current American opinion," Foster told the American Political Science Association in March 1946, but they were "of evident utility in the formulation of the Department's information policy," particularly when "it is apparent that there is considerable public confusion or ignorance." After all, why would the department consider opinion polls a useful input into policy itself, when those opinion polls provided plenty of evidence that the public had few useful opinions? "People are not only uninformed about some of our foreign policies," Foster conceded, "but they frankly say that they haven't attempted to follow them."<sup>216</sup> Participation was never truly the aim. "Do you have any evidence," Benton asked Russell, rhetorically, "to indicate that the *policy* officers are really making any use of these "Public Opinion Reports"?"<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Robert E. Elder, "The Public Studies Division of the Department of State: Public Opinion Analysts in the Formulation and Conduct of American Foreign Policy," *Political Research Quarterly* 10 (1957), pp. 783-792.

<sup>215</sup> "Oral History Interview with John S. Dickey," July 19, 1974, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, [trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/dickeyjs.htm](http://trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/dickeyjs.htm).

<sup>216</sup> H. Schuyler Foster, "Domestic Information Activities of the State Department," March 30, 1946, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Box 1.

<sup>217</sup> Benton to Russell, March 10, 1947, RG 59, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, 1947-1950, Lot File 52-202, Box 2, emphasis added.

Polling offered the State Department a means of simulating participation while also pre-empting it, making it less necessary.<sup>218</sup> As the political scientist Benjamin Ginsberg has written, “polls served to pacify or domesticate opinion, in effect helping to make public opinion safer for government.”<sup>219</sup> The State Department demonstrates this not in theory, but in fact. The Office of Public Affairs made the image of opinions so that it could improve the department’s ability to set the national agenda. Polls, as Susan Herbst has noted, help “to shape the contours of the public sphere,” forcing public opinion to dance to a specific tune, set by those in power.<sup>220</sup> “If the American people are to have a will which can be focused and given effect,” Russell said in September 1946, “there must be not only a thorough-going program of providing essential information but, even more important, there must be continuous, purposeful, constructive thinking upon these questions by, as nearly as may be possible, all of the people of the land.” The “will,” in other words, was to be created.<sup>221</sup>

The State Department had made its choice, or at least it would. After the successful passage of the United Nations Charter in the Senate, the Office of Public Affairs found itself with little to do, without a specific foreign policy to promote. “May I say that you stay out from

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<sup>218</sup> James S. Fishkin, *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Herbst, *Numbered Voices*, pp. 164-168.

<sup>219</sup> Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Captive Public: How Mass Opinion Promotes State Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 85.

<sup>220</sup> Susan Herbst, “Surveys in the Public Sphere: Applying Bourdieu's Critique of Opinion Polls,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 4 (1992), p. 223. For more critiques of the way in which polling produces citizens who are required to hold opinions, see James R. Beniger, “The Impact of Polling on Public Opinion: Reconciling Foucault, Habermas, and Bourdieu,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 4 (1992), pp. 204-219; Limor Peer, “The Practice of Opinion Polling as a Disciplinary Mechanism: A Foucauldian Perspective,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 4 (1992), pp. 232-242.

<sup>221</sup> Russell, “Oil for the Lamps of Democracy,” September 4, 1946, *Department of State Bulletin* 15 (September 15, 1946), p. 502

underfoot absolutely wonderfully,” Benton wrote to Russell. Two days later, Truman stood before Congress to talk about a pressing situation in Greece and Turkey.<sup>222</sup>

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The Foreign Policy Association looked at the new State Department, and its apparent responsiveness to public opinion, with great pride.<sup>223</sup> “In many ways,” the Association’s new Washington representative Blair Bolles wrote to Secretary of State Hull in March 1944, “the State Department and the Foreign Policy Association work toward the same goal, and I hope that I, in my new position, will be able to assist the department indirectly in informing the American public of the nature of the problems which confront the conductors of foreign policy in these days.”<sup>224</sup> Dickey met with the Association’s board in December 1944, hoping for its assistance with a “cooperative foreign policy” that required both “a more workable procedure for the democratic review” of its results, and a “different information policy” to create a “sustained public opinion at several stages.”<sup>225</sup> Although the board declined formally to support the United

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<sup>222</sup> Benton to Russell, March 10, 1947.

<sup>223</sup> Like Chester Williams, Vera Micheles Dean offered proposals for how Deweyan principles could be translated into State Department institutions. Dean thought that the State Department needed to do more to help people “indicate their choice between possible courses of action” before a policy was set in stone, including congressmen. Moreover, State ought “to include men and women from all walks of life and all economic levels,” rather than those who had enjoyed “special privileges of money, or family connections, or training in exclusive schools.” See Vera Micheles Dean, “U.S. Foreign Policy and the Voter,” *Foreign Policy Reports* 20 (September 15, 1944).

<sup>224</sup> Blair Bolles to Hull, March 24, 1944, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1940-1944, 811.43 Foreign Policy Association/123, Box 3854.

<sup>225</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” December 13, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

Nations, it more than did its part.<sup>226</sup> McCoy was a consultant to the delegation at San Francisco, and both Dean and Bolles were accredited members of the press pool.<sup>227</sup>

But because the Office of Public Affairs had taken on so many of the duties which the State Department had previously left to the Association, the Association was put in a difficult position. State now wrote its own publications, which could stand in for the *Bulletin* or *Reports*. It liaised with voluntary associations itself. It supplied department handouts and press briefings to editors. It put diplomats on the airwaves. It created its own knowledge. And it even started to distrust the public that foreign affairs institutions had worked to create. As one Public Liaison official wrote,

there is an inertia and an exhausted enthusiasm among people who have worked in the international affairs field for the last twenty-five years that makes it difficult for them to view the world, the community, and themselves with unjaundiced eyes. They have too much scattered knowledge and too little understanding, and the time has come, we believe, for us to plow new fields.

Much as State Department officials would still speak in the branches, its information officers would look elsewhere to innovate.<sup>228</sup>

This new reality was reflected at the foundation level, too. By 1945, the Rockefeller Foundation had moved decidedly away from its older programs, which implied a progressive,

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<sup>226</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," October 20, 1943, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>227</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," April 25, 1945, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>228</sup> Carter to Russell, "Mr. Kennan's Report," September 4, 1946, RG 59, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Office of Public Affairs, Office of the Director, Subject Files of Francis H. Russell, 1944-1952, Lot 54D202, Box 5. It would be wrong to push this too far, however. Carter herself met with Bolles a few months later, to collaborate on publication titles and schedules, and to make sure that a Bolles Headline Book, *Who Makes Our Foreign Policy?*, emphasized "the role of the individual citizen." Bolles also asked for "any suggestions on areas of public interest and concern, particularly those which can be predicated as areas of public interest in the fall of 1947." See Carter, Memorandum of Conversation, December 17, 1946, RG 59, Office of Public Affairs, Division of Public Liaison, Subject Files of the Chief, 1945-1951, Lot 53D387, Box 110.

transnational, popular solution to pacifying international relations, and towards the funding of scholarly, university-based research about the national interest, a shift already presaged by the support of the Yale Institute of International Studies, and intensified by the increasingly powerful vision of university-educated citizenry, capped by the G.I. Bill.<sup>229</sup> Joseph Willits, in other words, ground Raymond Fosdick down. “RF’s first responsibility,” Willits had written in 1943, was not “merely to bring the mass up to a still low level; we need to discover higher levels.” The Foundation would “enter a new period after the war,” and “the general international relations agencies ought to come to be established on their own feet, so that RF can be free to strengthen the centers of advanced, and undergraduate, training.”<sup>230</sup> Willits assumed that groups like the Association *could* stand on their own feet, given that it was thought that discussion of foreign affairs was more widespread than ever, even in the atmosphere of demobilization. After all, the Association’s receipts had increased from \$167,286 in 1941 to \$215,200 in 1944.<sup>231</sup> Willits offered a five-year grant at the Foundation’s usual \$50,000 per year for the first three years, but tapering in the last two towards a permanent termination.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Nichols Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 42-48. On the transformations that saw higher education become seen as part of citizenship, especially through the G.I. Bill, see Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

<sup>230</sup> Willits to Fosdick, August 9, 1943, RF, Box 334.

<sup>231</sup> “Income and Expenses, 1941-1944,” attached to Carolyn Martin to Janet Paine, November 10, 1945, RF, Box 334; Record of Meeting, Willits, McCoy, August 28, 1945, RF, Box 334

<sup>232</sup> Willits to McCoy, October 31, 1945, RF, Box 334.



This was a profound blow to the Association. Having negotiated the terms, McCoy resigned to chair the ill-fated Far Eastern Advisory Commission.<sup>233</sup> He left in March 1946, followed quickly by his assistant, Sherman Hayden, a former lecturer in government at Columbia who had joined the Association in August 1942, departed briefly for the Office of Naval History in 1944, and finally joined the faculty of Clark University.<sup>234</sup> Neither McCoy nor Hayden was immediately replaced, leaving board members temporarily in charge, and weak ones at that. Jessup resigned; McDonald was away, serving on the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, a prelude to his appointment as the first U.S. Ambassador to Israel; Buell was dead, struck down by a brain tumor.<sup>235</sup> John McCloy, scion of the establishment and the assistant secretary of war, agreed to be elected to the board, but never attended a meeting. Instead, the Association was in the hands of its old progressives, including William Lancaster, Florence Lamont, Paul Kellogg, and Herbert May, as well as newer blood such as the *Harpers'* editor Frederick Lewis Allen and a perceptive lawyer, Eustace Seligman, the son of the Columbia University economist and historian E. R. A. Seligman, and a senior partner at Sullivan & Cromwell, the law firm of both John Foster and Allen Dulles. Temporarily, Dean was the Association's *de facto* leader, and her elevation and personality led to a number of staffers leaving.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Bacevich, *Diplomat in Khaki*, pp. 188-208

<sup>234</sup> "Notes on a Meeting of the Board of Directors," March 27, 1946, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Sherman Hayden, 85, Diplomacy Historian," *New York Times* (January 28, 1994), p. B7.

<sup>235</sup> "Raymond Leslie Buell Is Dead; Foreign Affairs Authority, 49," *New York Herald Tribune* (February 21, 1946), p. 16A; "R. L. Buell is Dead; A Foe of Isolation," *New York Times* (February 21, 1946), p. 21.

<sup>236</sup> "Meeting of the F.P.A. Executive Committee," September 17, 1946, FPA, Part II, Box 15; F. L. Allen, "Report on Publications, Etc.," February 20, 1946, Frederick Lewis Allen Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Box 7; James to Planning Committee, February 4, 1946, Allen Papers, Box 7.

The Association dreamed big, wondering whether it might lead the creation of an International Foreign Policy Association, and launching a national membership campaign fronted by James Byrnes, John Foster Dulles, Harold Stassen, Virginia Gildersleeve, Warren Austin, and Herbert Lehman.<sup>237</sup> Eager to make hay while the sun appeared to shine, the Association looked to double or even triple its membership quickly.<sup>238</sup> With demobilization the order of the day, however, the membership rolls only held firm, improving from 29,461 at the end of March 1945, to 32,765 in 1946, and 31,510 in 1947.<sup>239</sup> The board increased its income targets to \$246,500 in 1946, and \$268,000 in 1947, but rampant inflation drove costs higher, the staff union insisted that wages must rise, and publication sales dropped away.<sup>240</sup> By the end of 1946, the Association was using its reserves to pay up to a tenth of its operating costs.<sup>241</sup> Several of the 32 branches were worryingly weak by the start of 1946, with five of them having fewer than 100 members and a further seven not meeting the 200 members mandated by their charters.<sup>242</sup> Moreover, their complicated dues system and failure to raise money made the branches a financial drain overall. "Up to the present time," Lancaster told the branch chairmen late in 1946, "I think our budget has been made up of something like 92% from New York and

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<sup>237</sup> Leet to McCoy, "Rough Draft of Proposal to Form International F.P.A.," September 15, 1944, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Meeting of the Committee for International Plans for the F.P.A.," November 14, 1945, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," February 27, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>238</sup> Leet to McCoy, "FPA in the Postwar Period," December 19, 1945, McCoy Papers, Box 73; Dean, "Memorandum on Suggested Changes in the FPA to Meet Needs of Post-War Period," attached to Lancaster to Executive Committee, January 15, 1946, McCoy Papers, Box 73.

<sup>239</sup> "Membership Chart — 1931-1949," FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>240</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," February 27, 1946, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," February 26, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>241</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 18, 1946, FPA Part II, Box 15.

<sup>242</sup> "Recommendations to the Planning Committee," February 20, 1946, Allen Papers, Box 7.

from the New York area.”<sup>243</sup> As a generation of earlier donors passed away, foundations seemed to be the only recourse. With Rockefeller resources running dry, Carnegie monies were the only alternative, but despite the State Department urging the Corporation to support the Association, it would not grant significant funds while the Association’s presidency was vacant.<sup>244</sup>

The search for a new president was long, tortuous, and unhappy. Different presidents implied different visions for the Association, and for the cultivation of public opinion as a whole. Old networks could not provide a suitable candidate. Secretary of War Henry Stimson, who had proffered McCoy in 1939, suggested several old State Department hands, including Hugh Gibson, Joseph Grew, and Herbert Feis, as well as James Grafton Rogers, a former assistant secretary of state and deputy director of the Office of Strategic Services.<sup>245</sup> Rogers, indeed, served as the Association’s director-in-charge in the autumn of 1946, without success. Allen Dulles was a prime candidate, but not interested.<sup>246</sup> Adlai Stevenson declined two separate offers, just as he also declined overtures for the presidency of the Carnegie Endowment.<sup>247</sup> Alger Hiss, the

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<sup>243</sup> “Branch Conference Minutes, October 17 and 18, 1946,” undated, FPA, Part I, Box 71.

<sup>244</sup> The Office of Public Affairs came up with dozens of ideas to put Carnegie Corporation money to good use in the second half of 1946, but for references to the Association and groups like it, see Carter to Russell, “Carnegie Corporation,” June 17, 1946, RG 59, Russell Subject Files, Box 1; Carter to Russell, “Carnegie Corporation,” October 1, 1946, RG 59, Russell Subject Files, Box 1; S. Sheperd Jones to Russell, “Suggestions for Representatives of the Carnegie Corporation,” October 1, 1946, RG 59, Russell Subject Files, Box 1, which stated that “the number of branches of the Foreign Policy Association and of the regional branches of the Council on Foreign Relations could be increased with great profit to the public.” For the Carnegie Endowment’s pressure on the Rockefeller Foundation and Carnegie Corporation, see Willits to Fosdick, March 13, 1947, RF, Box 334. On the failed negotiations with the Carnegie Corporation in 1946, see “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” November 20, 1946, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Record of Interview, DCJ, Lancaster, Rogers, December 17, 1946, CC, Box 147; Record of Interview, DCJ and William Lancaster, January 31, 1947, CC, Box 147.

<sup>245</sup> Stimson to Lancaster, December 28, 1945, Jessup Papers, Box I.211.

<sup>246</sup> Willits, Record of Meeting with Dean, March 4, 1946, RF, Box 334.

<sup>247</sup> Lancaster to Stevenson, April 12, 1946; Lancaster to Stevenson, May 21, 1946; Lancaster to Stevenson, October 17, 1946; Stevenson to Lancaster, October 26, 1946, all Stevenson Papers, Box 369; Stevenson to John Foster

secretary-general of the San Francisco Conference who was another candidate, took the Endowment post instead, although not before he had given Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson a list of names for the Association that ran from the scholar Edward Mead Earle to the broadcaster Edward Murrow.<sup>248</sup>

These were serious men, names that signaled how important and prestigious a force the Association still was. A younger man was agreed to be the way forward, one with energy, ambition, and administrative ability. Stevenson had fit the bill, as had Hiss. So too did Chester Williams. Each implied different ideas about propaganda, education, and the Association's relationship to the state. Stevenson, though he had spent years at the luncheon banquets of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, promised the use of modern informational techniques; Hiss was an establishment man; Williams was still a warrior for adult education.<sup>249</sup> But there was no agreement among the board on which direction would be best. The situation worsened until the early days of March 1947, by when the staff union was threatening to strike and the finances were darkening. The board scraped the barrel, and, two weeks after the announcement of the Truman Doctrine, met with a candidate Hiss had proposed — an outside shot, a visionary with a reputation for irritating people. It was a decision that the board made “with much trepidation.”<sup>250</sup>

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Dulles, May 31, 1946, John Foster Dulles Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 28.

<sup>248</sup> Alger Hiss to Dean Acheson, April 4, 1946, RG 59, Central Decimal File, 1940-1944, 811.43/Foreign Policy Association 4-446.

<sup>249</sup> “Minutes of the Meeting of the Foreign Policy Association, Executive and Finance Committees,” November 21, 1946, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>250</sup> Lancaster to McCoy, March 26, 1947, McCoy Papers, Box 73.

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Brooks Emeny could have ended the war a Stevenson, or a Hiss, but he spent much of the conflict in Cleveland, frustrated. Like most international relations scholars, he served in the government, but only as an occasional outside expert on the State Department's secret, postwar planning committees.<sup>251</sup> Before Pearl Harbor, Emeny had been offered the post of Director of Education in Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, but, fearful of government opinion management, Emeny turned the role down, thinking that better opportunities would be on offer. They were not.<sup>252</sup>

Emeny instead devoted himself to his vision for a national movement of community World Affairs Councils. Its purest expression came in a plan offered to Nelson Rockefeller two months before Pearl Harbor. "For the first time in history," Emeny wrote, "the preservation of our democratic way of life depends upon the willingness of responsible citizens to take an active part and assume responsibility in the determination of the basic principles of our foreign relations." Either the Coordinator must "establish an elaborate system of Federally financed bureaus of education throughout the country as a means of distributing desired information," or he must work "through efficiently organized private groups in communities throughout the

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<sup>251</sup> While serving at State, Emeny implored Sumner Welles to appoint an assistant secretary "in charge of public relations." "The Department," he wrote, "may in its wisdom arrive at decisions which will be incontrovertibly in the best interests of the nation and the world as a whole. But if the general public is not given a sense of participating in the determination of these policies, if the leaders of public opinion, no matter how difficult they may be, are made to feel that the nation's Foreign Office is truly 'foreign' so far as they are concerned, the struggle for a people's peace may well be lost." Emeny to Welles, March 3, 1943, Emeny Papers, Box 2.

<sup>252</sup> Emeny to Nelson Rockefeller, September 2, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 32; Emeny, *Cleveland Council*, pp. 100-101.

nation, groups which unfortunately, with few exceptions, do not exist at present.” The second path, “the democratic way,” was the only possible one. It required that “in every important community of the country a local Foreign Policy Council organized and supported by the leaders among the citizenry” be built. As the creation of “a sense of private obligation for underwriting the continuance of such work” was the prime aim, an umbrella group, Foreign Policy Councils Associated, would in time “become a self-liquidating institution.” Before that, however, Emeny asked for \$700,000 to spend over a three-year period.<sup>253</sup>

Emeny would spend the next decade trying to gain support for this project, both trying to enlist philanthropists and trying to attach it to an institution. He went about it through a critique of current practice. Shortly before meeting with Nelson Rockefeller in the late summer of 1941, Emeny lambasted the Association’s branches for their dullness and femininity in a letter to McCoy. “The branch work has been a failure,” Emeny wrote, to which the New York Office inevitably took offense, particularly its women.<sup>254</sup> “The Emeny plan seems very elaborate,” McCoy told the board, and so it seemed to the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Carnegie Endowment, each of which turned down Emeny’s overtures in turn. Even foundation trustees who told Emeny they were supportive of his ideas did not, privately, want to be associated with “any such grandiose scheme.”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Emeny to Nelson Rockefeller, October 11, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

<sup>254</sup> Emeny to McCoy, August 20, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 39. Buell shared Emeny’s concerns; see Emeny to Buell, September 9, 1941, Buell Papers, Box 5.

<sup>255</sup> W.W. Waymack to Emeny, December 26, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 39; Record of Interview, Jessup and Waymack, February 11, 1942, CC, Box 147.

So Emeny tried the Council on Foreign Relations, of which he remained an active member. In March 1942, he wrote to every member of the Committees on Foreign Relations nationwide, asking if they would be in favor of instituting “a wider program of public education in American foreign relations in their respective communities.”<sup>256</sup> Nothing could have irritated the Council’s dons more than such an impertinent subversion of its hierarchy. “I have been getting any number of communications from him,” the J. P. Morgan partner, Carnegie Corporation director, and Council grandee R. C. Leffingwell sputtered, for “Mr. Emeny is evidently one of those live-wire people who judge every effort numerically.” Leffingwell, a founder of the Committee program, aristocratically told Walter Mallory that “miscellaneous chatter about foreign affairs is likely to do more harm than good.”<sup>257</sup> In private conversations with the foundations, Council leaders made it clear that more expansive visions of public opinion were improper, if not dangerous.<sup>258</sup>

Emeny held his plans in abeyance until victory was in sight in the summer of 1944. That June, the Council announced that it had received the gift of a lavish permanent home, as well as donations from John D. Rockefeller and others, which it hoped would total \$300,000.<sup>259</sup> Emeny was incensed that money could be raised for the entertainment of Council members in New York, but not to fulfill what he saw as the Council’s real duties. “You mention in your letter,” he fumed to John W. Davis, the former Democratic presidential candidate and Council founder,

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<sup>256</sup> Emeny to Members of the Committees on Foreign Relations, March 5, 1942, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

<sup>257</sup> R. C. Leffingwell to Walter Mallory, March 16, 1942, CC, Box 127.

<sup>258</sup> Record of Interview, Jessup and Mallory, May 7, 1942, CC, Box 127.

<sup>259</sup> John W. Davis and George O. May to Emeny (and all Council members), June 22, 1944, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

“that, with the outbreak of World War II, the Council had ‘come of age,’” that the directors “are conscious of the tremendous responsibilities which the Council should shoulder in helping to prepare the American people for the expanded role which their country must play in the world.” But the Committee program through which these responsibilities were affected was pathetically inadequate. “I recognize,” Emeny snapped,

that the New York Council on Foreign Relations is not intended to be a popularizer of international affairs, nor is it interested in a large and comprehensive membership. But there is a very decided danger that the members, while enjoying their new and luxurious surroundings, may become unmindful of their deep moral obligation to aid in every way possible the extension of general public knowledge and understanding of world affairs.<sup>260</sup>

But what Emeny saw as the complacency of the Council was impregnable.<sup>261</sup> It considered retaliating by removing Emeny’s Cleveland outfit from its association with New York.<sup>262</sup>

When Emeny circulated the letter to Council members, again irritating the hierarchy, he found widespread support. Even if nothing could be done, Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation told John D. Rockefeller, Jr., “what this country needs is more Emenys.”<sup>263</sup> Owen Lattimore, the scholar of Asia, agreed that “however expert an expert may be, he cannot function efficiently unless he represents a society, or community which as a whole is well-informed,” and hoped that Emeny succeeded.<sup>264</sup> Clark Eichelberger of the American Association for the United

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<sup>260</sup> Emeny to John W. Davis, July 21, 1944, Emeny Papers, Box 36.

<sup>261</sup> Davis to Emeny, August 2, 1944, CFR, Series 2, Box 33.

<sup>262</sup> Bidwell to Mallory, “Relation of Council to Cleveland Foreign Relations Committee,” August 2, 1944, CFR, Series 7, Box 610.

<sup>263</sup> Fosdick to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Records, Series Q, Box 4.

<sup>264</sup> Owen Lattimore to Emeny, August 10, 1944, Emeny Papers, Box 36.



Nations thought that the Council was incurable, writing that “I cannot imagine its developing a program for labor, or the average school teacher, or the people who reach the great masses of the American people.”<sup>265</sup> Philip Jessup warned that there was not “the slightest possibility of the Council on Foreign Relations taking that kind of position.” He had “given up hope.”<sup>266</sup>

Emeny had not. In March 1945, he summarized the correspondence he had received, in a letter to the board members of every major foreign affairs group and hundreds of other members of the foreign policy elite. “Communities throughout the land seek guidance and help in the accomplishment of these ends,” he wrote, “which the New York organizations alone can make possible.”<sup>267</sup> Emeny told McCoy that “you and the Board are fast approaching the moment when you will either have to seize upon the opportunity of becoming the great central agency for the advancement of knowledge and understanding,” or “continue under a more limited role as an institution of research with a scattering of a few and generally and ineffective Branches.”<sup>268</sup> McCoy was annoyed, not least because Emeny underestimated the difficulties of founding branches in practice.<sup>269</sup> “But civic leaders in several cities started to get in touch with Emeny, forcing the Association to fight off his ideas as he appealed directly to its branch chairmen.”<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Clark Eichelberger to Emeny, August 7, 1944, CFR, Series 2, Box 33.

<sup>266</sup> Jessup to Emeny, August 2, 1944, CFR, Series 2, Box 33.

<sup>267</sup> Emeny circular, March 28, 1945, Emeny Papers, Box 32.

<sup>268</sup> Emeny to McCoy, March 28, 1945, Emeny Papers, Box 36.

<sup>269</sup> McCoy to Emeny, April 18, 1945, Emeny Papers, Box 36.

<sup>270</sup> “Notes on Branch Trip, April 8-12, 1946, FPA, Part I, Box 71; Record of Interview, John Gardner and Kurt Pantzer, August 14, 1946, CC, Box 529A; Record of Interview, Ray Dennett, Leland Goodrich and PH, April 22, 1946, CC, Box 127; Record of Interview, Whitney Shepardson and Brooks Emeny, October 2, 1946, CC, Box 127.

After the triumphant festivities of Cleveland's "Report from the World," the Association finally caved, probably with a nudge from the Carnegie Corporation. Emeny met with the board on March 18, 1947. They were by now perfectly aware of what he proposed. "Members of the Board of FPA must fully recognize the need of drastic reorganization," the minutes recount Emeny saying. A national foreign policy required a national public, one that needed forward under the steam of local interests.<sup>271</sup> Two days later, the Carnegie Corporation made its views clear with a check for \$20,000, in support of a "thorough-going reorganization."<sup>272</sup> A week later, Emeny was appointed the Association's fourth president.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> "Special Meeting of the Board of Directors," March 18, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>272</sup> Secretary to Lancaster, March 21, 1947, CC, Box 147; Record of Interview, Josephs and Emeny, March 19, 1947, CC, Box 147.

<sup>273</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," March 26, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

## Chapter 4

### World Affairs Are Your Affairs

The secretary of state stepped towards the podium on a sunlit afternoon in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The speech that he gave to members of the Harvard Alumni Association that day was innocuous enough on a first hearing, but to those who knew what to listen for, it heralded a dramatic shift in American foreign policy. The secretary declared that the United States was prepared to fund a plan to rebuild Europe, if Europeans could come up with one for themselves. This was an act of humanitarianism, yes. “Our policy,” the secretary said, “is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.” But it was an early salvo of the cold war, too. Any country that stood in the way faced enmity. “Governments, political parties or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise,” he warned, “will encounter the opposition of the United States.”

What is usually remembered about George Catlett Marshall’s speech that day in June 1947 is what Benn Steil has, tellingly for the in-house historian of the Council on Foreign Relations, called its “substance.”<sup>1</sup> Its purely diplomatic content was indeed momentous. The European Recovery Program would fire up Western Europe and freeze out the Eastern bloc — eventually. In the meantime, State Department policymakers intended Marshall’s speech to rally public opinion from its supposed postwar lethargy.

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<sup>1</sup> Benn Steil, *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), p. 113.

And when it came to public opinion, Marshall in fact had a theory, like so many other policymakers and intellectuals concerned with foreign policy in a democracy. “I need not tell you gentlemen that the world situation is very serious,” he began his speech, for “that must be apparent to all intelligent people.” But the “very mass of facts presented to the public by press and radio” nowadays made it “exceedingly difficult for the man in the street to reach a clear appraisal of the situation.” Americans were “distant from the troubled areas of the earth,” so it was “hard for them to comprehend the plight and consequent reactions of the long-suffering peoples, and the effect of those reactions on their governments in connection with our efforts to promote peace in the world.” And so, Marshall said at the end of his speech, the question of public opinion was, itself, foreign policy. “An essential part of any successful action on the part of the United States,” the general said, “is an understanding on the part of the people of America of the character of the problem and the remedies to be applied.” Americans must “fact up to the vast responsibility which history has clearly placed on our country.”<sup>2</sup>

So read Marshall’s prepared remarks. And after the end of the written speech, he went even further. He ad-libbed, and not about diplomacy, but about the public. He was “sorry,” he told his audience, for giving a political speech on such an occasion. “But to my mind,” he said, “it is of vast importance that our people reach some general understanding of what the complications really are, rather than react from a passion or a prejudice or an emotion of the moment.” He reiterated the problems of distance, something that could not be overcome merely by “reading, or listening, or even seeing photographs or motion pictures.” And yet, Marshall said,

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<sup>2</sup> “Remarks by the Honorable George C. Marshall, Secretary of State, at Harvard University on June 5, 1947,” June 4, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The British Commonwealth; Europe, Volume III* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 237-239.

“the whole world of the future hangs on a proper judgment,” indeed, “to a large extent on the realization of the American people, of just what are the various dominant factors.”<sup>3</sup> Fitting words, from a man who had been offered the presidency of the Foreign Policy Association just a few months earlier.<sup>4</sup>

Clarity, Marshall said Americans needed, for the fate of the world weighed on their shoulders. Over the next few years, policymakers provided plenty of that, just as they had done during World War II. They spoke privately about the need to “shock,” to “electrify,” to “scare the hell out of” the American people.<sup>5</sup> Dean Acheson, Marshall’s deputy and eventually secretary himself, later wrote in his memoirs that “we made our points clearer than truth.” And for Acheson, too, that impulse relied on a theory of public opinion.<sup>6</sup> In April 1951, he revealed himself to be a Lippmannite, asking a meeting of foundation officials at the State Department to guess how much time an “average citizen” spent thinking about foreign affairs.

If you take the time when a man wakes up in the morning and then deduct: he now shaves; he is now taking a shower; he is now getting dressed; he is now having breakfast; he is now on the subway; he is now sitting down — how much time does he think about this? I’ll bet it will be not over five minutes. Now, maybe he will listen to a speech for half an hour. I am talking about thinking about the thing. I

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<sup>3</sup> George C. Marshall Foundation, “The Marshall Plan Speech,” [marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/marshall-plan-speech/](http://marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/marshall-plan-speech/).

<sup>4</sup> In turning down the Association post in December 1946, Marshall cited “the uncertainty of future plans and movements and previous though now uncertain commitments.” See Frank R. McCoy to W. W. Lancaster, October 11, 1946, Frank R. McCoy Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Box 73; McCoy to American Embassy, Nanking, December 6, 1946, McCoy Papers, Box 73; Marshall S. Carter to McCoy, December 10, 1946, McCoy Papers, Box 37.

<sup>5</sup> Respectively, Will Clayton, John Hickerson, and Arthur Vandenberg, most famously, qu. in Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 145-146; Fredrik Logevall and Campbell Craig, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 375.

am not talking about just listening to somebody say something. How much time does he think, discussing it with somebody else or just thinking about it? If it averages five minutes a day I think we are on the long side. And that is dealing with problems which have to do with the survival of our country.<sup>7</sup>

Strong leadership of public opinion, in this view, was necessary not just because of the nature of the Soviet threat, but because of the nature of the American public.

Strong leadership was given. Yet for all policymakers' inclination towards overselling the cold war, towards threat inflation, it would be a mistake to be too cynical about their sincerity when they instructed the American people to start thinking about foreign policy as they never had before. Cold war policymakers drew on a common language that had developed to reconcile diplomacy and democracy. Take Harry Truman. After the war ended in 1945, he told one forum that "there is, in my opinion, no more urgent task before us at this time than the building of an informed public opinion on the problems of foreign policy."<sup>8</sup> The president repeated that view to newspaper editors five years later, telling them that "there never has been a time in our history when there was so great a need for our citizens to be informed and to understand what is happening in the world," even as he was increasing official secrecy and clamping down on leaks.<sup>9</sup> To be sure, when Truman, Marshall, and Acheson urged the public to inform themselves about foreign policy, they had certain publics, certain information, and certain foreign policies in mind.

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<sup>7</sup> "Consultative Conference with Representatives of Foundations on Problems of Information and Education on Foreign Affairs," April 18-19, 1951, pp. 59-60, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration, Bureau of Public Affairs, Public Services Division, Subject Files 1945-1952, Lot File 56D33, Box 133.

<sup>8</sup> Harry S. Truman to McCoy, October 13, 1945, *Department of State Bulletin* 13 (October 28, 1945), p. 678; "World Interests Urged By Truman," *New York Times* (October 21, 1945), p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Truman, "Address on Foreign Policy at a Luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors," April 20, 1950, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-foreign-policy-luncheon-the-american-society-newspaper-editors](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-foreign-policy-luncheon-the-american-society-newspaper-editors).

But they and other policymakers who were “present at the creation” went beyond a simple selling of the cold war. They told the American people that foreign policy was theirs, that it was democratic, that it was now part of their lives as citizens. They sold not just *a* foreign policy, but the very idea *of* foreign policy.

A new kind of global primacy, a democratic primacy, required a new kind of citizen. What did a citizen need to know? What did he need to do? One State Department official offered an answer to the American Political Science Association in 1953. “The citizen needs the general background, he needs to know what the problems are and how to approach the problems,” said Howard A. Cook, so that he could “evaluate the views of his fellow citizens” and “judge the catch-phrases and slogans which so often substitute for hard facts and mature judgment.” The “man in the street” needed to know that “the essence of foreign policy is choice, choice between often unpalatable alternatives,” that there were “limitations on our foreign policy actions.” That was the goal, Cook said. The State Department would leave the question of how actually to “develop such citizens” to others, political scientists above all.<sup>10</sup>

Brooks Emeny was a political scientist, and he had an answer. To Emeny, Americans had to be made ready to lead the new world order, for they yet were not. In the interventionism debates he had drawn ire for warning that Americans were unprepared to take up the burdens that war would create. In the early cold war, he warned against what he called “the educational unpreparedness of America for world leadership,” for a world leadership it had now taken up.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Howard A. Cook, “Keeping the Public Informed on Foreign Policy,” September 11, 1953, FPA, Part II, Box 99.

<sup>11</sup> Brooks Emeny, “America’s Role As Super Power,” September 30, 1946, qu. in Brooks Emeny, *A History of the Founding of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, 1935-1948* (Cleveland: Council on World Affairs, 1975).

The stakes were higher in the atomic age. “The revolutionary impact of the split atom on all phases of life, domestic or international, cannot be escaped,” he wrote in *Vogue* in April 1947, and under its threat “either means must be devised whereby an organization of world peace shall be assured, or we have only to contemplate the inevitable destruction of civilization through World War III.” America, ultimately, was responsible for this, and as America was a democracy, the American people, ultimately, were responsible. “Community education in world relations is the most challenging and important task of the political life of this nation today,” Emeny wrote. “Every town and city should have its International Center at the service of its citizens,” he continued, carrying his progressive into a new age. “Every medium of education through lectures, study groups, and published information should be made available.” The aim? “Every American must learn to analyze international events as a special obligation and privilege of citizenship.”

An editor at the *Kiwanis Magazine* summed up the ideal, and the task, in a headline: “every citizen a statesman.”<sup>12</sup>

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The Foreign Policy Association was still a major institution in American life in 1947. It was a trusted partner of the State Department. It attracted greetings on its thirtieth birthday from Harry Truman, George Marshall, John Foster Dulles, Trygve Lie, Eleanor Roosevelt, Arthur

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<sup>12</sup> Emeny, “‘Freedom from thought’... the immediate danger,” *Vogue* (April 15, 1947), pp. 120-121, 167-169, Emeny Papers, Box 1; Emeny, “Every Citizen a Statesman,” *The Kiwanis Magazine* (November 1946), pp. 7, 30-31, Emeny Papers, Box 1.



Hays Sulzberger, and Walter Lippmann.<sup>13</sup> It had Marshall and Dulles speak from its stage. It was the kind of vehicle through which Emeny might realize his dream of creating a hundred or more World Affairs Councils, the instruments of a democracy fit for a democratic superpower.

Yet at this crucial hinge point in history, at this moment when America's relationship with the rest of the world was being defined and with it the nature of citizenship in a democratic superpower, the Association foundered. By the time Emeny left the Association late in 1952, exhausted and dismayed, its membership had nearly halved. Less than half a dozen new World Affairs Councils had opened their doors, not enough to offset the closure of thirteen branches. Its finances were in a dreadful state.<sup>14</sup>

Why? Why did the leading institution of citizen education in world affairs struggle at this crucial moment? Why did this vision of democratic citizenship seem to peter out even before it got going, despite the support it received?

One reason was that there was not a single vision at all, or at least not a single institution through which to pursue it. Americans who were actively interested in world affairs had created an array of different outlets for their enthusiasm. Detroit, Michigan, was hardly a hotbed of internationalism, for example, but a Council on Foreign Relations survey published in 1946 revealed that its citizens could avail themselves of a Committee on Foreign Relations, an Inter-American Center, the Foreign Affairs Committee of their Board of Commerce, a Foreign Policy Association branch, a Foreign Trade Club, an Institute of Pacific Relations outpost, an

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<sup>13</sup> "National Leaders Write for 30th Anniversary," attached to Emeny to Joseph H. Willits, April 12, 1949, RF, Box 334.

<sup>14</sup> "Foreign Policy Association, Inc.," December 9, 1952, Rockefeller Brothers Fund Records, Rockefeller Archives Center [RBF], Box 344.

International Relations Club, an East and West Association, a Women's International Education Committee, a World Study Council, and a chapter of Americans United for World Organization.<sup>15</sup>

True, this sprawling network of voluntary associations might be (and was) seen as representing the uniquely democratic nature of American foreign policy, even if the Council restricted itself to a narrow definition of what "world affairs" meant and erased non-white engagement.<sup>16</sup> But to Emeny, at the local level this sprawl actually just split a small number of active internationalists into rival factions, weakening the overall effort. To avoid that, the Cleveland Council had formed region- and subject-specific committees within its own structure, each affiliated with like-minded national groups, and acquired a central position over world affairs activities in the city even though it represented a diversity of interests.

So, if the Cleveland model showed that rivalries could be overcome locally, could they be overcome nationally? Foundation officials had tried, in order to promote efficiencies. Citizen educators had tried, too, in part because several of them sat on the boards of two or more groups, and were members of even more. Emeny was among them. Immediately after the war, for instance, he was concurrently the chairman of the Cleveland Council and the treasurer of the Institute of Pacific Relations, while also holding memberships of the Foreign Policy Association

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<sup>15</sup> W. Harold Dalglish, *Community Education in Foreign Affairs: A Report on Activities in Nineteen American Cities* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1946), pp. 19, 24.

<sup>16</sup> For postwar black engagement with world affairs, see Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Jonathan Rosenberg, *How Far the Promised Land? World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World to Vietnam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 131-234; Sean L. Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

and the Council on Foreign Relations and attending the branch meetings of both. And Emeny saw that this was wasteful. No community wanted merely to be an outpost of some New York group, he argued, and no community could tolerate national groups competing for its small number of world affairs devotees. "Manhattan can afford the luxury of multiplicity," Emeny wrote to a friend, "but no other American communities, with the possible exception of Chicago, can do so."<sup>17</sup>

All the better, then, to unite the various national groups into a single institution, call it the Foreign Policy Foundation. With a shared library, staff, and facilities near the United Nations, Emeny hoped that this would be the focal point to which a national network of locally-funded, independent community groups, each with its own special interests, could appeal. \$30 million ought to make it possible, he told those at the philanthropies who were prepared to listen.<sup>18</sup> One Association trustee drily called this "ambitious," but Emeny took steps to test its feasibility throughout 1947.<sup>19</sup> He conspired particularly closely with the Carnegie Endowment, finding a fellow-traveler in its new president, Alger Hiss, but the idea went nowhere.<sup>20</sup>

One avenue that did seem promising was to achieve closer cooperation or even union between the Foreign Policy Association and the Institute of Pacific Relations. These institutions had always been close, swapping researchers, renting office space, and sharing board members.

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<sup>17</sup> Emeny to Alger Hiss, May 27, 1947, CEIP, Series I, Box 48.

<sup>18</sup> Record of Interview, Devereux Josephs, Whitney Shepardson, and Emeny, February 13, 1947, CC, Box 127; "Special Meeting of the Board of Directors," March 18, 1947, Emeny Papers, Box 39; "Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting," April 28, 1947, McCoy Papers, Box 73.

<sup>19</sup> William W. Lancaster to McCoy, April 29, 1947, McCoy Papers, Box 73; Record of Interview, Josephs and Emeny, August 26, 1947, CC, Box 147.

<sup>20</sup> Edward C. Carter to Herbert S. Little, May 6, 1947, Emma McLaughlin Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Carton 4; Hiss to Emeny, May 16, 1947, CEIP, Series 1, Box 48.

They had discussed a merger before the war, and started discussing it again once the war ended.<sup>21</sup> And the idea seemed viable, in part for financial reasons, and in part, too, as a way of responding to what Emeny called “the revolt of the Hinterland against the Manhattan complex.”<sup>22</sup> For while the Institute was most renowned for its research and its international conferences, it also had a number of local affiliates, many of which served similar, or in some cases more expansive, functions to Association branches.<sup>23</sup> Those affiliates, especially those on the West Coast that not unreasonably thought they had a strong claim to setting the priorities of a Pacific-facing group, resented the iron control wielded by the Institute’s New York headquarters. After the war they sought more autonomy.<sup>24</sup>

As Emeny traveled the West coast promoting the World Affairs Council model, Institute officials in San Francisco and Seattle threatened their Eastern bosses with a breakaway.<sup>25</sup> One way to avoid that, those officials said, would be for the Association and the Institute to merge

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<sup>21</sup> Philip C. Jessup to Carter, June 9, 1947, IPR, Box 101.

<sup>22</sup> Emeny to Hiss, May 27, 1947.

<sup>23</sup> For the international aspects of the Institute’s work, see especially Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan, and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919–45* (London: Routledge, 2002); Michael R. Anderson, “Pacific dreams: The Institute of Pacific Relations and the struggle for the mind of Asia,” PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2009; Priscilla Roberts, “The Institute of Pacific Relations: Pan-Pacific and Pan-Asian visions of International Order,” *International Politics* 55 (2018), pp. 836–851.

<sup>24</sup> For regionalism within the American Institute, see John N. Thomas, *The Institute of Pacific Relations: Asian Scholars and American Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), pp. 30–34, 57–61.

<sup>25</sup> For San Francisco, where the process of forming a Council started in March 1946 and was completed by March 1947, see “Progress Report of the Exploratory Committee,” July 30, 1946, IPR, Box 207; “Report of Joint Committee to International Center and Bay Region Institute of Pacific Relations,” April 21, 1947, Ray Lyman Wilbur Papers, Library and Archives, Hoover Institution, Box 37. The situation developed much more slowly in Seattle, but see “Report of the Bureau of International Relations Coordination Survey to the Steering Committee of Seattle International Relations Agencies,” February 1947, World Affairs Council of Seattle Records, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, Box 1; “Memorandum of the Meeting of the World Affairs Council Discussion,” May 21, 1948, World Affairs Council of Seattle Records, Box 1.

into a single, national institution, which would then devolve power to communities.<sup>26</sup> But at an Institute conference in April 1947 in the resort city of Coronado, California, delegates batted away a proposal from San Francisco officials for “organic union.”<sup>27</sup> The Bay Area group left in protest, collaborating with other local activists to form the World Affairs Council of Northern California which was presided over by a former assistant secretary of state, Henry F. Grady.<sup>28</sup> Emeny and Hiss continued to negotiate with the Institute’s New York chairman, Edward C. Carter, up to a summit at the Rockefeller estate at Overhills, North Carolina, early in 1948. The atmosphere was “relaxingly country-house,” the Rockefeller Foundation’s representative at the meeting reported, but a gentlemanly agreement was out of reach. Backing off, Emeny concluded that community education would have to be pursued through the Association alone.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The San Francisco group’s grandest plans were certainly made in dialogue with Emeny’s, but there were some differences. Admiral John W. Greenslade, a Vice Admiral who had helped to formulate plans for Japanese internment during World War II and served as a San Francisco official after his retirement in 1944, had similar ideas for a single national institution, but doubted that local Councils could survive on an autonomous community basis. As he wrote to Emeny, the Cleveland model “does not strike me as one which can be applied to all large communities inasmuch as it requires — or seems to — the leadership of an outstanding individual and the availability of means other than those normally obtainable through gifts and various classes of membership.” In that, Greenslade was proved right. See Admiral John W. Greenslade to Emeny, April 5, 1945, Institute of Pacific Relations, San Francisco Bay Region, Records, Library and Archives, Hoover Institution [IPRSF], Box 3.

<sup>27</sup> Carter to Members of the Board of Trustees of the American Institute of Pacific Relations, April 16, 1947, IPR, Box 101; Thomas, *Institute of Pacific Relations*, pp. 59-61; “Memorandum to Dr. Robert Gordon Sproul,” May 27, 1947, McLaughlin Papers, Carton 3.

<sup>28</sup> “Minutes of First Meeting of Board of Trustees,” June 3, 1947, CEIP, Series 6, Box 266; “Minutes of the Second Meeting of Board of Trustees,” June 19, 1947, CEIP, Series 6, Box 266; “World Affairs Groups Formed in California,” *New York Times* (June 22, 1947), p. 23. For Staley’s research, which contradicted Emeny’s, see Eugene Staley, *Raw Materials in Peace and War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1937); Eugene Staley, “The Myth of the Continents,” *Foreign Affairs* 19 (1941), pp. 481-494.

<sup>29</sup> Bryce Wood, “The Future of FPA,” February 4, 1948, RF, Box 334; Bryce Wood, “Amalgamation of FPA & IPR,” January 13, 1948, RF, Box 334; Carter to Donald Tewksbury *et al*, January 12, 1948, IPR, Box 232; Clarence A. Peters, “Overhills – Inter Organizational Conference, January 29-February 2, 1948,” February 7, 1948, Emeny Papers, Box 29.

What both the Association and the Institute were responding to was a fundamental shift in the ways and whys in which knowledge about world affairs was produced. Adapting to these new structures of knowledge production, and to the broader rise of what Daniel Bessner has called the “military-intellectual complex,” was a profound challenge for the Association.<sup>30</sup> As Bessner and others have argued, the structures built to support the exercise of American power were founded on a profound distrust of democratic politics, one that was out of step with the (more) democratic structures built to support the rise of American power by a previous generation of intellectuals. Emeny understood the threat, and mounted a progressive, Deweyan defense against it. “Hundreds of thousands of dollars are to be put annually in the universities and colleges of the country for the financing of international studies in general and regional research in particular,” he wrote in April 1948, a project that had the side benefit of “providing manpower for Government service, business careers, teaching and advanced research.” But by abandoning public-facing research, Rockefeller was abandoning the responsibilities of social scientists and those who funded them. Expertise without democratic control, as adult educators had worked to guard against, would be lethal. “This is obviously not an age in which international scholars can be permitted to retreat solely to the company of their colleagues,” Emeny wrote. “More and more they must be brought into closer touch with the average citizen and the products of their research made more widely available in understandable terms.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Bessner, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Brooks Emeny to the Board of Trustees, “Tentative Memorandum,” April 1948, McCoy Papers, Box 73. See also a proposal to the Carnegie Corporation later that year, in which Emeny wrote that the Council program was a way of reconciling *both* the rise of “specialized research in universities and other endowed research institutions in the field of world relations” and “the conscious awakening on the part of a large portion of American citizens to their own stake in foreign policy.” As Emeny wrote, “the pouring of money solely into institutions of advanced research and for the training of specialized scholars will prove of little avail in the development of sound democratic thinking

“Academicians do not rule the world,” Emeny had once huffed to Nelson Rockefeller, but Rockefeller Foundation officials were never convinced.<sup>32</sup> Ironically, it was the very official who traveled to Overhills, Bryce Wood, who had redrafted the Foundation’s program and made funding not just adult education, but non-university research unlikely. As Wood noted in August 1947, “support to non-partisan informative agencies in the field of foreign affairs has been a continuing feature of RF policy since the mid-1920s.” But those days were gone. “Informing a world public would probably be a task in which RF’s contribution would be small and unnoticed,” Wood wrote.<sup>33</sup> And although Wood left room for a change of heart if a “less internationalist Administration should take office,” he insisted “that the facilities for adult education in this field are now greater than ever before, and that RF support to these facilities would be unimportant when compared to other activities to which assistance might be provided.”<sup>34</sup> As the Foundation abandoned its forays into adult education and turned to area studies and the servicing of experts to teach in a booming higher education sector, the \$852,000 that it had given the Association over the years would only be added to with a small emergency

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about foreign policy unless the products of such research as well as the trained scholars who are engaged in research activities can be brought into closer touch with the public as a whole. This is essentially the problem of community organization.” See “Foreign Policy Association, Incorporated, to the Carnegie Corporation of New York,” December 31, 1948, CC, Box 147.

<sup>32</sup> Emeny to Nelson Rockefeller, November 28, 1941, Emeny Papers, Box 39.

<sup>33</sup> This shift played out on a global level as the Rockefeller Foundation turned the League of Nations from an intergovernmental organization that sought peace through the power of publicity and public opinion, into a think tank that sought contact among international experts. See Ludovic Tournès, “American membership of the League of Nations: US philanthropy and the transformation of an intergovernmental organisation into a think tank,” *International Politics* 55 (2018), pp. 852-869.

<sup>34</sup> Bryce Wood, “The Program of the Division of the Social Sciences in the Field of International Relations,” August 1947, RF, RG 3, Series 910, Box 8; Nicolas Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 46-48.

donation in 1950.<sup>35</sup> Emeny responded to the Foundation's intractable stance by trying to disband the research staff in 1948, a strategy which the research director, Vera Micheles Dean, saw as "wrecking the accomplishments" of the Association.<sup>36</sup> In the end, only half of the staff left, mostly for the State Department.<sup>37</sup>

These were deep, structural shifts in the relationship between knowledge and power as it related to American foreign relations, and they were shifts that had their roots dating to the war and even before it, not the cold war, and that were reflected the United States' rise to primacy, not its need to contain the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, they were reflected in the very nature of the postwar order. Skepticism about the power of public opinion had helped make the United Nations a much more power-political institution than the League.<sup>39</sup> But these shifts played out in the context of the cold war. For if the war changed how and why knowledge about the world was to be produced in the United States, it was the cold war that policed the content of that

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<sup>35</sup> Emeny's one success came in May 1950, with a supplementary grant of \$20,000. See "Excerpt from Minutes of SS Staff Meeting #73, May 24, 1950," RF, Box 335. For the Association's failure to acquire new grants, see Emeny to Joseph H. Willits, April 12, 1949, RF, Box 334; Willits to Emeny, May 12, 1949, RF, Box 334; Emeny to Charles B. Fahs, February 21, 1950, RF, Box 335; Leland C. DeVinney to Emeny, March 1, 1950, Box 335; Philip E. Mosely, "Thomas Power, Foreign Policy Association," January 19, 1951, RF, Box 335; Willits to Thomas L. Power, January 19, 1951, RF, Box 335; Emeny to Mosely, April 16, 1951, RF, Box 335; Mosely to Emeny, April 25, 1951, RF, Box 335. On the cold war Rockefeller Foundation, see Tim B. Mueller, "The Rockefeller Foundation, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities in the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15 (2013), pp. 103-135.

<sup>36</sup> "Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee in Executive Session," February 24, 1948, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Seligman, "Memorandum for Consideration by Members of the Executive Committee," April 29, 1948, McCoy Papers, Box 73; Vera Micheles Dean to Lancaster, May 3, 1948, McCoy Papers, Box 73.

<sup>37</sup> Emeny to Branch Chairmen and Secretaries, May 18, 1948, Ray Lyman Wilbur Papers, Box 37.

<sup>38</sup> Engerman, "American Knowledge and Global Power"; Andrew Preston, "Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security," *Diplomatic History* 38 (2014), pp. 477-500.

<sup>39</sup> On this transition, see, e.g., Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin, 2012), pp. 191-213; Wertheim, "Tomorrow, the World."



knowledge in a way that had never been true before. Combine institutional pressures with ideological force, and the citizen education infrastructure was put at serious risk.

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As one of the United States' most popular and respected speakers on world affairs, Vera Micheles Dean was the face of the Foreign Policy Association, and she spoke with a Russian accent.<sup>40</sup> Born in 1903 to a Jewish businessman and a mother who translated *Peter Pan*, Vera Micheles spent a prosperous childhood in St. Petersburg. She was schooled at home. Her favorite teacher was a man who, she later wrote, “embodied the most ardent and inspiring qualities of the Russia spirit.” He joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. The Micheles were no friends of the Communist Party, and the five members of the family left Petrograd just before the October revolution for their summer home, thirty miles away in the frontier town of Terijoki, Finland. The revolution came to them all the same. In Terijoki, the Micheles hid as the Red Army scavenged for food and searched for opponents; in Petrograd, looters robbed their home. Still, Vera would come to look back happily on these years. “The Bolshevik revolution left no residue of bitterness or resentment in my life,” she later wrote; in fact, she had “benefited” from it.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> On the new historiography on the international thought of women, see Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (eds.), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics Since 1500* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Patricia Owens, “Women and the History of International Thought,” *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (2018), pp. 467-481; Jan Stöckmann, “Women, wars, and world affairs: Recovering feminist International Relations, 1915-39,” *Review of International Studies* 44 (2018), pp. 215-235.

<sup>41</sup> Vera Micheles Dean, *Russia: Menace or Promise* (New York: Henry Holt, 1947), pp. vii-viii; Nadine Micheles, “My Russia,” Vera Micheles Dean Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Box 1; Dean, “Proud to Live in Our Times,” Dean Papers, Box 1.

As the Micheles family moved to Paris and then London, Vera was sent to New York City. She arrived, alone, aged just 16. She worked as a stenographer and eventually went up to study at Radcliffe College. With profound gifts as a linguist, she embarked on graduate work, first, with the help of a Carnegie Endowment fellowship, at Yale, and then back at Radcliffe. Her doctorate was an intense analysis of the law relating to governments *de facto*, with a special focus on the recognition of the Soviet Union.<sup>42</sup> A few days after she had completed her thesis Buell hired her to his research staff at the Association, primarily as a Russianist.<sup>43</sup> In New York, she met and married an attorney, William Johnson Dean, but he died unexpectedly, and she was left alone with their two children, one of whom was born five weeks after her husband passed away. Her family's breadwinner, Dean earned enough to support her children by embarking on a remarkably successful speaking career, by freelancing for the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and other publications, and by publishing serious works of contemporary history.

As a Russianist, her views of the Soviet Union were rosy, but far from unusually so among her peers. She was prone, for instance, to downplaying political repression and the extent of the police state in the name of praising the dramatic pace of economic development that her former home was achieving.<sup>44</sup> She loved her homeland and her adoptive home alike, writing in 1942 that, "the Russians resemble the Americans more than any other people."<sup>45</sup> She effectively

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<sup>42</sup> Vera Micheles, "Governments de facto with special reference to the Soviet government," PhD thesis, Radcliffe College, 1928.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond Leslie Buell to Dean, April 16, 1928, Buell Papers, Box 5.

<sup>44</sup> David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 150-152. Engerman diminishes Dean's achievements as amateurish on the basis of an incorrect biography, which wrongly suggests she lacked a doctorate.

<sup>45</sup> Vera Micheles Dean, *Russia at War: Twenty Key Questions and Answers* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1942), p. 11.

celebrate the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union, including in pamphlets commissioned for troops by the War Department.<sup>46</sup> “In spite of setbacks and mistakes,” she wrote as late as 1947, “Russia is traveling in a direction that will eventually bring it out on the high road of spiritual and political, as well as material, progress.”<sup>47</sup>

Such views rapidly became the subject of controversy, but it was a controversy that Dean actively courted.<sup>48</sup> She saw little that satisfied her in American foreign policy, in part because she so strongly believed that the Soviet Union was not all bad. “The kind of society the Russians are striving to create in the USSR,” she wrote in a direct critique of Winston Churchill’s “iron curtain” speech at Fulton, Missouri, “is a society to which masses of people in other, even more backward, areas of the world have been aspiring.”<sup>49</sup> She understood quicker than many that the “global conflict of interests between the United States and Russia” was indeed a global one, and that the United States could only hold its own by offering more than its competitor, morally and economically, to the downtrodden of the world, and by embracing the leftward turn she saw in Europe and elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> But her fears that the United States would sully its potential by allying

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<sup>46</sup> American Historical Association, *Our Russian Ally* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1945).

<sup>47</sup> Dean, *Russia: Menace or Promise*, p. viii.

<sup>48</sup> An early example of this came in correspondence between Dean and Buell, who excoriated her portrayal of events in Eastern Europe in 1945 in what he called a “spanking,” and accused her of abandoning “your former belief in collective security in favor of Soviet unilateralism.” Dean responded in kind, but wrote that “the only thing that saddens me is to find how far apart you and I have drifted in our thinking about world affairs,” and later dedicated a book to Buell. (Buell’s wife took this as a personal affront.) See Buell to Dean, January 26, 1945, Buell Papers, Box 5; Dean to Buell, January 30, 1945, Buell Papers, Box 5; Buell to Dean, February 6, 1945, Buell Papers, Box 5.

<sup>49</sup> Dean, “UNO Offers Best Means of Reconciling Big-Three Conflicts,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 25 (March 22, 1946), pp. 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> Dean indeed saw global politics as a whole tending in a leftward direction; see Dean, “U.S. Elections Hearten the Rest of the World,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 28 (November 12, 1948), pp. 1-2. On the failure of U.S. officials fully to back socialism and social democracy, see, e.g., Dean, “Reform U.N. Ineffective Without U.S.-U.S.S.R. Settlement,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* (September 26, 1947), pp. 1-3; Dean, “Realism—Not Hysteria—Needed to Meet Europe’s Problems,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (October 17, 1947), pp. 1-2; Dean, “Democratic Trends Sought In German

itself with colonial powers, expediently endorsing repressive rule, and expanding white supremacy at home were borne out.<sup>51</sup> Even the European Recovery Program, which she admired so much that she wrote a sixteen-page supplement for the *Washington Post* that the Committee for the Marshall Plan reprinted 100,000 times, disappointed her.<sup>52</sup> After all, there was no prospect of it being worked out through the auspices of the United Nations.<sup>53</sup>

Present at San Francisco and a diligent reporter on deliberations at Lake Success, Dean was a committed internationalist as a matter of principle, but a key part of her internationalism was a statement about American power.<sup>54</sup> As she relentlessly argued during the war and after, a genuine internationalism on the part of the United States would guard against the two fatal

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Scene," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 28 (April 15, 1949), pp. 1-2; Dean, "Trade Unions Seek Active Role In German Economy," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 28 (April 22, 1949), pp. 2-3. After 1950, Dean would become a scholar of the Third World. See, e.g., Vera Micheles Dean, *New Patterns of Democracy in India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Vera Micheles Dean, *Builders of Emerging Nations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).

<sup>51</sup> Dean, "Polish Border Issue Highlights State of U.S.-Russian Relations," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 26 (April 18, 1947), pp. 1-2; Dean, "Western Powers Refer Berlin Crisis to U.N. Council," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (October 1, 1948); Dean, "Unflagging Use of UN Needed to Win Asian Minds," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (August 11, 1950), pp. 2-3; Dean, "General Conference Offers Hope of Ending Peace Stalemate," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 25 (May 24, 1946), pp. 1-2; Dean, "Decisive Test Between East and West Looms in Asia," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (January 27, 1950), pp. 2-3.

<sup>52</sup> Dean, "Is U.S. Fully Aware of Implications of Marshall Offer," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* (July 18, 1947), pp. 1-2; "This Generation's Chance for Peace," *Washington Post* (November 13, 1947), pp. CP1-CP16; Anna Caples to Emeny, December 10, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 1. Dean also hailed Point Four, see Dean, "Truman's Global 'Fair Deal' Offers Challenge to U.S.S.R.," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 28 (January 28, 1949), pp. 1-2

<sup>53</sup> Dean, "Marshall Plan Offers Opportunity to Strengthen UN," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 26 (June 27, 1947), pp. 1-2; Dean, "U.N. Establishes 'Little Assembly' Despite Russia's Opposition," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (November 21, 1947), pp. 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Unlike other internationalists, Dean never reconciled herself to the unilateralism of the cold war. Cf. Andrew Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Internationalism: The American Association for the United Nations and US Foreign Policy, 1941-1948* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). Her commitment to internationalism stemmed from her gendered understanding of the world. She frequently compared world society to a family, and argued that family life taught the need for compromise, for understanding human frailty, for community, and, if necessary, for the use of authority and even force. Dean, "Can Allies Reconcile War Policies With War Aims?" *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 22 (December 11, 1942), pp. 2-3; Dean, "Family's Contribution to World Peace," November 19, 1948, FPA, Part II, Box 93.

tendencies of isolationism, on the one hand, and imperialism, on the other.<sup>55</sup> And yet a genuine internationalism was not forthcoming, as the United States started, in her view, to treat the United Nations as just another theater for a cold war. As early as the announcement of the Truman doctrine, Dean warned that American involvement in world affairs might “assume the character of what we once denounced as imperialism.”<sup>56</sup>

It was for that reason that Dean inveighed so strongly against containment. Containment was misconceived in its own right, because the Soviet Union was never going to convert to liberal capitalist democracy. Dean feared that it would be counterproductive, for the Tsars had “sought again and again to break through the containment levees thrown up during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” and Stalin was certain to follow suit if faced with a “hostile bloc.”<sup>57</sup> So he did, in Czechoslovakia and Korea.<sup>58</sup> But to Dean, what containment really did was to underline the hypocrisy and sterility of American foreign policy. Russia undermined the Yalta agreements, but “it would be well to bear in mind that Russia — if perhaps less concerned with the niceties of diplomatic usages — is not essentially different in its great-power manifestations from Britain and the United States.”<sup>59</sup> Russia promoted violence in Eastern Europe, but “we forget that both

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<sup>55</sup> Dean, “U.S. Evolving New Attitudes Toward Britain and Russia,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 24 (November 17, 1944), pp. 1-2; Dean, “Unflagging Use of UN Needed to Win Asian Minds,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (August 11, 1950), pp. 2-3; Dean, “Western Fight Over Germany Shows Need for UN Action,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (September 22, 1950), pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> Dean, “U.S. In New Role Must Do More Than Stop Russia,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 26 (March 21, 1947), pp. 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Dean, “Korean Conflict Tests U.S. Containment Policy,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (July 28, 1950), pp. 1-2; Dean, “End of Comintern Clarifies Russia’s Policy,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 22 (May 28, 1943), pp. 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> Dean, “Czech Coup Tests U.S. ‘Containment’ Policy,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (March 5, 1948), pp. 1-2; Dean, “ERP Gives U.S. New Lever In East-West Struggle,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (April 16, 1948), pp. 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> Dean, “Great Powers Differ On Approach to World Security,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 24 (May 4, 1945), pp. 1-2.

we and the British passed through revolutions and civil wars before we succeeded in establishing stable democratic institutions.”<sup>60</sup> Russia had interfered along its border, but the United States did the same in Latin America, and sought bases worldwide.<sup>61</sup> Russia, Dean insisted, was not solely to blame for the crisis. The world was not black and white.<sup>62</sup>

Predictably, Dean was assailed in the pages of anti-communist bulletins like *Plain Talk* and the *New Leader*, and the zealous Red-baiter Alfred Kohlberg, a textiles exporter who mounted a lurid campaign against the Institute of Pacific Relations, accused her of “treason.”<sup>63</sup> Otherwise, the public criticism of her was rather mild, not least because her views were fairly common among the educated women with whom she was so popular, particularly members of the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women.<sup>64</sup> Even the

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<sup>60</sup> Dean, “Will U.S. Use its Economic Power to Aid Democracy Abroad?” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 24 (August 31, 1945), pp. 2-4.

<sup>61</sup> Dean, *Russia – Menace or Promise?*, pp. 63-70; Vera Micheles Dean, *The United States and Russia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 279.

<sup>62</sup> Dean, “Is Russia Alone to Blame?” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 25 (March 8, 1946), pp. 1-2; Dean, “Long Period of Peacemaking Confronts U.S.,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (June 4, 1948), pp. 1-2; Dean, “U.S. Adjusting Policy to Limits of Its Power,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (January 13, 1950), pp. 2-3; Dean, “‘Co-Existence’ Depends on Long-Term Readjustments,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 30 (April 6, 1951), pp. 2-3; Vera Micheles Dean, *Foreign Policy Without Fear* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953).

<sup>63</sup> Sheppard Marley, “Mrs. Dean’s Foreign Policy Lobby,” *Plain Talk* (November 1946), pp. 16-20; Oscar Schnabel, “Open Letter to the Foreign Policy Association,” *New Leader* (March 15, 1947), p. 15; Fred Porter, “Reorganization of Foreign Policy Association,” *New Leader* (April 19, 1947), p. 4; David J. Dallin, “Russia According to Mrs. Dean,” *New Leader* (May 17, 1947), p. 11; Julius Epstein, “The Case Against Vera Micheles Dean of the Foreign Policy Association,” [September] 1947, RF, Box 335; William Henry Chamberlin, “Apologists’ Chorus,” *New Leader* (February 14, 1948), p. 16; Richard B. Tompkins, “More On Vera M. Dean,” *New Leader* (March 27, 1948), p. 14. For Kohlberg’s resignation from the Association, see Alfred Kohlberg to Emeny, April 5, 1948, FPA, Part I, Box 66; for his attacks on the IPR, see Joseph Keeley, *The China Lobby Man: The Story of Alfred Kohlberg* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969); Joyce Mao, *Asia First: China and the Making of Modern American Conservatism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), ch. 2.

<sup>64</sup> For her critique of Hoover, see Dean, “Would ‘New United Front Lead to New Isolationism,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (May 5, 1950); Dean, “Middle Course Emerging from Foreign Policy Debate,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 30 (January 5, 1951). Although Dean’s domestic political views matched Wallace’s during World War II, she soured on him by the 1948 election. See Dean, “U.S. and U.S.S.R. Reassess Prospects for Negotiations,” *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (May 21, 1948), pp. 2-3; Dean, “U.S. Elections Hearten the Rest of the World.” For the League of Women

Federal Bureau of Investigation did not think much of her, concluding after an investigation as late as 1954 that while she had “been pro-Soviet in her writings and has apparently been an apologist for the USSR,” she had never “engaged in any form of subversive activity in the past.”<sup>65</sup> Her views did not stop her taking up visiting positions at Barnard, Smith, and Harvard. But within a struggling Association, Dean came under increasing attack. One board member feared that the Association “has ceased to be solely an objective fact-finding organization, and has become the vehicle for the expression of a certain point of view upon a controversial issue.”<sup>66</sup> The Milwaukee branch reported in September 1947 that it could not “retain all its members at a time when terms like ‘red-baiters’ and ‘fellow-travelers’ are tossed about so indiscriminately.”<sup>67</sup> A member from Philadelphia, a Mrs. Percy Madeira, spent months working on a 27-page critique of one contrarian pamphlet, *Russia – Menace or Promise?*, declaring it “simply confusing” at a time when Mr. X was warning of an “implacable challenge.”<sup>68</sup> A board member from the Hartford branch told Emeny that Dean was his “office Kerensky,” and that the “curious pinkish aura” of

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Voters and the American Association of University Women, see Helen Lavin, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organizations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 96-129; Susan Levine, *Degrees of Equality: The American Association of University Women and the Challenge of Twentieth-Century Feminism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), pp. 53-82

<sup>65</sup> SAC, New York, to Director, FBI, March 31, 1954, obtained by request for “Vera Micheles Dean” under the Freedom of Information Act from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, received April 2018. Dean was later courted as an informant for the Bureau, on the basis of her close relationship with diplomats, including Russians.

<sup>66</sup> Seligman to Dean, July 25, 1947, Emeny Papers, Box 59; Seligman to Lancaster, May 4, 1948, Emeny Papers, Box 40.

<sup>67</sup> “Excerpt from Milwaukee Branch Report,” attached to “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 25, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>68</sup> Richard L. Davies to Emeny, October 7, 1947, Emeny Papers, Box 59; Mrs. Percy Madeira to Emeny, September 10, 1947, FPA, Part II, Box 92,

the Association made it impossible to raise money.<sup>69</sup> By 1951, several branches were refusing to give Dean a platform to speak.<sup>70</sup>

What made this especially difficult for Dean was that the cold war seemed to threaten the kind of democratic foreign policy that adult educators had worked for. She feared that the uniformity of media opinion and the government's "reiteration of dramatic appeals to stave off impending catastrophes" had created a "wolf, wolf!" attitude" and "a wall between the people and the government."<sup>71</sup> She criticized the "secrecy surrounding top policy decisions," which gave "even well-informed and civic-minded individuals a sense of fatalism which paralyzes the sense of personal responsibility."<sup>72</sup> Americans needed to learn that diplomacy meant "gradual, sometimes imperceptible, adjustments and readjustments, a little progress here and some backing down there," she wrote, but instead they had been taught a cold war, which had "encouraged the erroneous idea that 'our side' must register continuous clear-cut 'victories' — otherwise our opponent will be victorious, and we shall suffer 'defeat'."<sup>73</sup> That had led to McCarthyism, to a search for scapegoats, to threats to civil liberties, to an America left in "grave peril."<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, the cold war chilled all kinds of institutions that had previously promoted open debate, however much that debate had been constrained in practice. Communists, fellow-

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<sup>69</sup> Roger Shaw to Emeny, November 26, 1948, Emeny Papers, Box 59.

<sup>70</sup> "Executive Session of Board of Directors Meeting," May 24, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>71</sup> Dean, "What Are Americans Thinking About Foreign Policy?" *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 28 (October 22, 1948), pp. 1-2.

<sup>72</sup> Dean, "Secrecy on Defense Weakens Civic Responsibility," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (February 10, 1950), pp.2-3.

<sup>73</sup> Dean, "Long View Needed in Assessing Cold War," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (April 7, 1950), pp. 2-3.

<sup>74</sup> Dean, "Do U.S. Terms Offer Basis for Cold War Truce?" *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 29 (March 24, 1950), pp. 1-3



travelers, and mere experts on Mao Zedong left the Institute of Pacific Relations vulnerable to zealotry, and the Institute became the vehicle for a broader attack on internationalist world affairs groups and the foundations that funded them.<sup>75</sup> The Association for the most part avoided the worst, and those of its former staffers who were hauled before loyalty boards and congressional committees were damned mostly for their connections with the Institute, rather than the Association. The FBI looked into the Association all the same in the summer of 1950, despite assuring Association officers that it was not under suspicion.<sup>76</sup> Investigators found nothing to be seriously amiss despite using testimony from the famed informants Louis Budenz and Elizabeth Bentley to level minor accusations against some of the office staff, which went nowhere.<sup>77</sup>

Even so, not falling into line with the cold war was bad for business. The Association's membership plummeted back down to prewar levels, even as inflation drove its costs far higher. Evidence suggested that even those who kept up their subscriptions valued them less, as they acquired their information from elsewhere. A survey taken in 1950 revealed that only one in eight members considered the *Bulletin*, *Reports*, or *Headlines* to be their "most valuable" source of information on foreign affairs; many got what they needed from *Time* or the *New York Times*. It was no surprise that the members were an academic elite, 80% of them being college graduates at

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<sup>75</sup> Thomas, *Institute of Pacific Relations*; Mark Solovey, *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), pp. 120-123.

<sup>76</sup> Bolles to Emeny, June 20, 1949, Emeny Papers, Box 41; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors, December 21, 1950, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>77</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Foreign Policy Association, Inc.," July 6, 1950, case NY 65-11984, from documents published under the Freedom of Information Act, [archive.org/details/foia\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_Assn-HQ-2/page/n211](https://www.archive.org/details/foia_Foreign_Policy_Assn-HQ-2/page/n211).

a time when just 6% of all Americans had degrees.<sup>78</sup> But perhaps most troubling, the average age of a male member was just under 50, of a female member just under 60. One in ten members was over 70.<sup>79</sup>

So as the Korean War broke out, the Association faced a mortal crisis. There was no market for its publications. There was no market for events in New York, as the throngs who had massed even ten years earlier now longer came. Board directors were as hard to attract to younger members, and older trustees turned up at meetings in fewer and fewer numbers, leaving a devoted hard core of aging progressives. Only the Emenys were prepared to donate to any considerable degree. By the winter of 1950, the Association faced insolvency.<sup>80</sup>

Eustace Seligman, the treasurer, offered a way out that would solve both the structural and the ideological problems: the closure of the research department, the shuttering of the Washington bureau, the outsourcing of all publications, and the creation of a committee that would consider “how the F.P.A. can become a more effective medium for the dissemination of objective information in the field of foreign affairs to a wider group of readers.”<sup>81</sup> The committee, which included Alger Hiss’s replacement at the Carnegie Endowment, Joseph E. Johnson, and Thomas S. Matthews, the editor of *Time* magazine, advised that the Association should end the

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<sup>78</sup> United States Census Bureau, “A Half-Century of Learning: Historical Census Statistics on Educational Attainment in the United States, 1940 to 2000,” Table 2, April 2006, [census.gov/library/publications/2010/demo/educational-attainment-1940-2000.html](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2010/demo/educational-attainment-1940-2000.html).

<sup>79</sup> “Results of the FPA Questionnaire,” undated, FPA, Part II, Box 75; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 28, 1950, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>80</sup> “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 28, 1950, FPA, Part II, Box 15; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” October 26, 1950, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>81</sup> Seligman, “Report to the President of F.P.A.,” February 5, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

*Reports*, curtail the *Headlines*, and make the *Bulletin* a forum for outside authors.<sup>82</sup> All involved assumed that Dean would resign, but she did not. Unable to fire her without risking the ire of members who still supported her, the board in May 1951 allowed her to carry on editing an expanded, biweekly *Bulletin*, albeit one dominated by outside authors.<sup>83</sup>

This was the end of an era, if an unceremonious one. While the Association's research program had been undermined during the war, it had not been clear then whether it might recover once the war was over. The Association had its answer. It could not escape through cooperation. It could not escape shifts in philanthropy. It could not escape the cold war. The think tanks that were already taking the Association's place, whether university institutes at MIT, Princeton, and Columbia, or policy shops like the RAND Corporation, had a wholly different ethos. They worked towards the state, rather than out from it; they stood in for public opinion, making no effort to try to cultivate it; they were interested in globalism and in "national security," not in peace and in international cooperation. The building of the cold war state, institutionally and ideologically, involved declaring derelict an institution that most within the foreign policy elite had thought essential only a few years prior.

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<sup>82</sup> "Main Conclusions of Ad Hoc Committee on Publications of the FPA," March 21, 1951, FPA, Part I, Reel 4.

<sup>83</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," April 26, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Meeting of the Special Committee of the Board of Directors," May 8, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Meeting of the Special Committee of the Board of Directors," May 18, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Meeting of the Executive Committee," May 21, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," May 24, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

The only remaining question was whether the Association would be torn down. Unable to stop the slide, Seligman asked the board seriously to consider liquidation in October 1951.<sup>84</sup> The Association needed a savior.

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What was the Ford Foundation going to do with all that cash? For its first twelve years, since its founding in 1936, the Foundation had been little more than a local charity, giving away small amounts of money to causes around Detroit. But shortly after the death of Henry Ford in 1947, the Foundation found itself with stock worth nearly half a billion dollars. Such a sum made it the wealthiest philanthropy in the world, endowed with capital far beyond the wildest dreams of any Rockefeller or Carnegie grant officer. How to spend it was a question left to a small committee led by a Californian lawyer, H. Rowan Gaither, Jr. Gaither's study group interviewed a thousand notable Americans, before reporting to the trustees in November 1949.

The Gaither Report, which was released publicly a year later, promised to make the Ford Foundation an active combatant in the cold war, a soldier on behalf of democracy against the "tide of communism." As history taught that "the position of the United States is crucial," that nations could no longer "retreat into self-sufficiency," the Foundation would help the United States promote a peaceful, prosperous, democratic world order. The best way for a foundation to "make its entrance into human affairs," the committee argued, would be through "a reaffirmation

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<sup>84</sup> Seligman, "Memorandum to the Trustees of the Foreign Policy Association," October 9, 1951," Emeny Papers, Box 42.

of democratic ideals and with the expressed intention of assisting democracy to meet that challenge and to realize its ideals.” That required strengthening democracy at home, not least in the face of those who “imperiled” it by trying to “stamp out dissent and measure loyalty by conformity.” And the committee saw democracy not as a set of “rigid rules,” or as inhering in institutions or values, but as a lived freedom. “When the democratic spirit is deep and strong in a society it animates every phase of living,” they wrote, and the “the real meaning of democracy” for people was therefore “how it is interpreted in action, how it is applied in their daily lives.”<sup>85</sup>

Gaither and his colleagues therefore ended up in the same position as so many of their peers: seeking an informed public to save the world. They feared that “widespread apathy, misunderstanding, and ignorance concerning political issues, personalities, and public needs” posed “a great danger to self-government,” and to peace. Overcoming that apathy was an imperative of American power, to be sure, and even specifically the cold war. Under the Foundation’s Area I programs, which would become its International Affairs division, Gaither wrote that Ford should support “independent and nonpartisan” ways to get the “relevant facts and judgments” to the “electorate at large,” on the understanding that “our Government and the United Nations cannot effectively formulate or execute policy in international affairs without public understanding and support.” But the fight against apathy was not simply instrumental. Under the Foundation’s Area II programs, which sought “the strengthening of democracy,” Gaither wrote that Ford should “encourage people to become better informed about, and to participate in, the solution of the different types of problems they share.” Indeed, one such way

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<sup>85</sup> Ford Foundation, *Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program* (Detroit: Ford Foundation, 1949), pp. 19, 21, 25-26, 28.

might be “the ‘community workshop’ in which scientists or educators act as social engineers, in communities of manageable size, to stimulate and mobilize an interest in public affairs.” Either way, there was a tension to be resolved here, one we have seen before. Simply put, what was this public *for*? Was it to give Americans what they needed just to “support” a foreign policy made by policymaking elites, as implied by the Area I rubric? Or was it to give Americans something more, to give them the power to make that policy for themselves, as implied by Area II?<sup>86</sup>

Of course, there was no bright line between these choices, but for the time being Ford chose the second course.<sup>87</sup> Like the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation before it, the Ford Foundation saw adult education as one way of achieving a more perfect democracy. As soon as Paul G. Hoffman, a cold warrior brought in from the Economic Cooperation Administration, became the Foundation’s president in 1950, he created a quasi-independent Fund for Adult Education (FAE). Over the next decade the FAE would spend \$47 million. Its leader was C. Scott Fletcher, who had little background in adult education, but had worked for Hoffman as the vice-president of sales at Studebaker, and for William Benton, the second assistant secretary of state for public affairs, at both the Encyclopedia Britannica and as executive director of the Committee for Economic Development. Fletcher turned the FAE into what one historian has called “a laboratory for democratic citizenship,” fusing marketing techniques with

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<sup>86</sup> *Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program*, pp. 32, 58-59, 68.

<sup>87</sup> It was not necessarily clear that this would be so. While the Fund for Adult Education was negotiating with the Foreign Policy Association in 1951 and 1952, Ford Foundation officials in the International Affairs division were trying to start the “Conditions of Peace” project, with the encouragement of John J. McCloy. This project sought to “establish a kind and degree of public understanding which would serve as a basis for wise planning and skillful operation by the U.S. government in its continuing effort to move through the current problems toward the goal of peace with freedom and justice,” and, therefore, fit in with the Area I programs. The project did not pan out, but see Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 147-53.

mass media and “face-to-face” group discussion to “improve the public’s opinion-making skills.”<sup>88</sup> As Fletcher put it, he sought to create “mature, wise, and responsible citizens who can participate intelligently in a free society,” who would “bring to bear upon public questions their best understanding and judgment after free study and free discussion.” And he would do it through the community, where “the exercise of mature and responsible citizenship must have its base and its initial point of impact if the free society is to survive and flourish.”<sup>89</sup>

There was no personal connection between the Foundation or the Fund and the Foreign Policy Association. None of the members of the Gaither Committee was yet involved in the movement for citizen education in world affairs. None of the leaders of the Foundation of the Fund had been a key figure, although Hoffman had spoken to World Affairs Councils. But there was a real affinity of aims, and one that Emeny saw immediately. “We believe that the Ford Foundation will have an especial interest in the work of the Association,” Emeny wrote as soon as the Gaither Report came out, “because our aims and purposes so closely parallel the objectives of the Ford Foundation as expressed in its statement of policy.”<sup>90</sup> At one point, Emeny felt the match so close that he asked for \$3 million over ten years.<sup>91</sup> The fact that Ford had come to the conclusion that something like Emeny’s program was in the best interests of the nation was a sign that his was no esoteric, nor unworkable pursuit.

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<sup>88</sup> Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 148-149

<sup>89</sup> Fund for Adult Education, *1951-1961: A Ten Year Report of the Fund for Adult Education* (New York: Fund for Adult Education, 1961), pp. 12, 42; C. Scott Fletcher, “The Program of the Fund for Adult Education,” *Adult Education 2* (1951), p. 60.

<sup>90</sup> Emeny to B. J. Craig, November 13, 1950, FPA, Part II, Box 84.

<sup>91</sup> Emeny to Fletcher, April 25, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 84. This sum seemed astronomical at the time, but the Association actually ended up receiving \$3.4 million between 1952 and 1962 from Ford.

Not that the vision was working out. What Emeny called his National Program, the Association's effort to foster World Affairs Councils on the Cleveland model, had started slowly, operating in a kind of permanent transition. There were early successes in San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Boston, places where internationalists of various commitment saw the benefits of pooling their efforts, and those Councils benefitted not only from Emeny's advice and encouragement, but from graduates of his Ohio training program. But it took time to move the Association as a whole away from what Emeny called "small lectureship societies and the distribution and sale of a limited number of world affairs studies." The shift in vision was dramatic, forcing a recognition that "the knowledge and judgment of a few citizens on foreign policy do not automatically filter down through the mass of the population," requiring primarily lunch groups, appealing above all to wealthy women, to convert into full educational institutions, complete with corps of trained speakers headed out into the community, with total geographical and thematic coverage, and with ample funding.<sup>92</sup> And it therefore raised hackles. The first National Program Director, Clarence Peters, was fired by the board; the second, Thomas Power, made little headway. For all Emeny's enthusiasm, he lacked the managerial skills to build a foreign policy public at scale, meeting by meeting.

Even so, the vision was appealing, and widely regarded as sound. Carnegie certainly thought so, and as well as making special grants to the new Councils, it stepped up its support

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<sup>92</sup> Emeny, "Citizens and Foreign Policy: II, The Problem," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (July 2, 1948), p. 4; Emeny, "Citizens and Foreign Policy: III, Community Organization," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (July 16, 1948), p. 4; Emeny, "Citizens and Foreign Policy: IV, Programs and Services," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (July 30, 1948), p. 4; Emeny, "Citizens and Foreign Policy: V, Membership and Finances," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 27 (August 13, 1948), p. 4.



for Emeny himself.<sup>93</sup> On the basis of tours around the country and apparent expressions of interest from 84 communities in addition to his own branches, Emeny asked Carnegie for \$150,000 to help found a hundred “self-supporting” Councils overseen by trained, paid directors with doctorates in international relations. The funds, he hoped, would go towards the salaries of field men and a flock of trainees, taken straight from graduate school to New York for a few months, swept off for work experience at an established Council, and then dropped into a community as executive directors paid to create a public for themselves.<sup>94</sup> Carnegie officials, including the president Charles Dollard and the former Council on Foreign Relations staffer Whitney Shepardson, were enthused by the idea.<sup>95</sup> Despite their personal distaste for Emeny and their rather loftier vision of the public desirable for foreign affairs, even Shepardson’s former colleagues proved enthusiastic when he asked for their views. They thought that aiming for a hundred community groups was “utterly fantastic,” implying “a gross exaggeration of the degree of latent interest in international affairs in the country generally.” But given that they feared that even the ultra-elite members of their own Committees on Foreign Relations were turning away from world affairs, and that “the government was “getting way out ahead of the people in the obligations which it is taking abroad,” though thought that Emeny ought to be given a shot at a

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<sup>93</sup> “Carnegie Corporation Interest in World Affairs Councils,” April 9, 1952, CC, Box 374. Despite his past work and ongoing support of psychological warfare techniques, the senior Carnegie office John W. Gardner was a real fan, demonstrating that a commitment to reconciling diplomacy and democracy could lead in different technical directions in just one individual, let alone across the foreign policy elite as a whole. See Record of Interview, “FPA,” September 17, 1948, CC, Box 147; cf. Ido Oren, *Our Enemies and US: America’s Rivalries and the Making of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 146.

<sup>94</sup> “A Proposed Program for the Nationwide Development of Self-Supporting Community Centers of International Education,” attached to Emeny to Members of the Board, January 27, 1949, FPA, Part II, Box 15; Record of Interview, Whitney Shepardson, Charles Dollard, and Brooks Emeny, CC, Box 147, in which Emeny made explicit that he would provide a good deal of the required additional funding personally. The grant would primarily have

<sup>95</sup> Record of Interview, Dollard, Shepardson, and Walter Mallory, January 27, 1949, CC, Box 147.

“miracle.”<sup>96</sup> Carnegie agreed early in 1949, although it cut the target to twenty new Councils, and the grant to \$93,000.<sup>97</sup>

That was far beyond the capacity of an Association close to the brink. It could barely spend Carnegie’s money at all.<sup>98</sup> By August 1951, only eight of the Association’s 32 affiliated branches and Councils had paid directors, and only three had more than 1,000 members.<sup>99</sup> The graduate students who applied for the training program tended to lack the necessary charisma, but few cities were able to raise enough money to employ those who passed muster anyway. The National Program’s emphasis on community development sapped the branches of their *esprit de corps*, and the services offered by New York comprised little more than occasional visits from Emeny and his deputy, Thomas Power.<sup>100</sup> Much as the affiliates continued to innovate, as with forums in Pittsburgh, television shows in Milwaukee, and even local opinion polls in Rhode Island, the picture overall was poor.<sup>101</sup> Carnegie lamented late in 1952 that just one new Council

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<sup>96</sup> Joseph Barber to Walter Mallory, January 25, 1949, CC, Box 147; “Comments on F.P.A. Proposal,” undated [January 1949], CC, Box 147. The Council itself was at the same time attempting to gather thoughts on the matter, through a study group chaired by the *New York Times* Sunday editor Lester Markel. For the study group’s results, see Lester Markel (ed.), *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1949).

<sup>97</sup> Emeny had in fact asked for roughly this sum in a first grant, before expanding his vision a few weeks later. See Foreign Policy Association to Carnegie Corporation, December 31, 1948, Emeny Papers, Box 39; Emeny to Dollard, March 1, CC, Box 147; Record of Interview, Shepardson and Power, March 16, 1949, CC, Box 147; Record of Interview, Shepardson and Power, March 24, 1949, CC, Box 147; Record of Interview, Shepardson and Emeny, April 8, 1949, CC, Box 147.

<sup>98</sup> Carnegie’s funding was added to by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to the tune of \$25,000. See John D. Rockefeller III to Emeny, July 28, 1949, RBF, Box 344;

<sup>99</sup> One problem here was that new Councils had the choice as to whether to affiliate with the Association or not, and in some cases, notably San Francisco and Dayton, independence was sufficiently prized that that opportunity was not taken up. See Record of Interview, Florence Anderson and Power, August 16, 1951, CC, Box 147.

<sup>100</sup> “Proceedings of the Council of Branches and Affiliates,” April 21-22, 1950, FPA, Part I, Box 25

<sup>101</sup> “Proceedings of the Council of Associates,” September 21-22, 1951, FPA, Part I, Reel 4.

of any size had opened its doors that year, in Dallas, and even considered asking for its money back.<sup>102</sup> “In looking back over the text of our initial request,” Emeny conceded in his final report, “it is evident that the Foreign Policy Association has not achieved in specific terms much of what it hoped.”<sup>103</sup>

Still, in the chaotic early days of the Ford Foundation, the Association appeared to be the ideal vehicle for a crash program. Even the State Department thought so. At the unprecedented private conference of foundation (including Ford) officials held by the Office of Public Affairs in April 1951, John W. Gardner of the Carnegie spoke about the Corporation’s sponsorship of the World Affairs Council project, and figures such as the former special assistant to the secretary of war and Boston branch chairman Harvey H. Bundy praised Emeny’s turn away from “luncheons for the widows of the founders.”<sup>104</sup> A month later, the assistant secretary of state for public affairs, Edward W. Barrett, told Ford that if it was interested in helping extend the reach of the department’s domestic information programs, the Division of Public Liaison suggested it should fund World Affairs Councils so that they could “bring in sufficient new members to make the community organization a real contributing part of the community as a whole.”<sup>105</sup> The only way to do that at scale, at least without founding an entirely new institutions, was through the Association. State even offered its views on cities suitable for community development, although

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<sup>102</sup> Anderson to Dollard, November 14, 1952, CC, Box 147; Record of Interview, Gardner and Power, October 8, 1952, CC, Box 147; Anderson to Dollard, October 17, 1952, CC, Box 147.

<sup>103</sup> Emeny to Anderson, November 12, 1952, CC, Box 147.

<sup>104</sup> “Consultative Conference with Representatives of Foundations on Problems of Information and Education on Foreign Affairs,” April 18-19, 1951, pp. 7-8, 27-30.

<sup>105</sup> “Notes for Submission to Ford Foundation on Domestic Information Projects,” attached to Edward W. Barrett to James Webb Young, May 18, 1951, RG 59, Russell Files, Box 3.

the Association staffer sent to coordinate with the Office of Public Affairs, a young graduate of the training program named Alexander Allport, was less than impressed with Foggy Bottom's knowledge of, and appreciation for, community life.<sup>106</sup> In any case, in December 1951 the Fund for Adult Education gave \$355,000 over three years to the Association's National Program.<sup>107</sup>

Was the Association, and with it the Ford Foundation, therefore just acting as a kind of front organization for the State Department? After all, the State Department was supporting the World Affairs Councils far more than it had even the old Association branches, as it sent speakers out for their big-ticket dinners, used their pamphlet shops as distribution centers for its publications, and collaborated with them to hold regional conferences at which policymakers appeared before the public. And the fact that the Association hired its new National Program Director, Chester S. Williams, straight from the department makes the argument tempting.<sup>108</sup> As we have seen, Williams, the former assistant to John Studebaker and the architect of the Federal Forum Project, had found a home in the State Department's Division of Public Liaison at the end of the war. But Williams' vision of a foreign policy public built through voluntary associations and adult education left more room for debate and dissent than most policymakers were prepared to countenance. Exiled from Washington to New York, Williams became deputy director of public information at the U.S. Mission to the UN in 1946. As his New Deal work showed, Williams was more willing than many of his peers to implicate adult education in

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<sup>106</sup> Alexander Allport, "Report on Trip to Washington, D.C., for the Community Development Committee," February 14-15, 1952, FPA, Part I, Box 4.

<sup>107</sup> Fletcher to Emeny, February 14, 1952, Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archives Center [FF] FA716, Reel 4737; "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 20, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>108</sup> "Minutes of Meeting of Executive and Finance Committees," March 17, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

government service. Reporting to President Truman, in 1949 Williams organized the World Town Hall Seminar, a three-month tour to thirteen capital cities that saw voluntary association leaders — Emeny included — fly 34,000 miles around the world to promote the conference, roundtable, and town meeting techniques of the “democratic method.” It was propaganda for democracy, to be sure, but propaganda for a participatory, progressive kind of democracy.<sup>109</sup>

In the Foreign Policy Association, Williams seems to have seen a similar opportunity. Aiming to “develop a sense of self-confidence in large numbers of citizens concerning their ability to influence the direction of world affairs,” he set out a bold plan in June 1952, a “fresh start” for the Association.<sup>110</sup> Some places, Williams thought, would be ambitious enough to support a full World Affairs Council. Others might find it better to set up a World Affairs Forum, run by volunteers who would set up public discussions. Others still might only support a World Affairs Committee of about thirty to a hundred interested citizens, who would discuss foreign affairs among themselves. Either way, these groups would send delegates to an annual World Affairs National Assembly, explicitly supported by the White House and the State Department as an “expression of views from the ‘grass roots’ of America.” All would be served with program assistance, speakers, discussion guides, and so on, by an Association operating six regional offices.<sup>111</sup> Translated into a further request for \$491,500 from the FAE, Williams

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<sup>109</sup> “Voice of America Broadcast,” undated [1948], Emeny Papers, Box 42; “Report to the President of the United States from the Members of the World Town Hall Seminar Meeting,” October 18, 1949, FPA, Part I, Box 54.

<sup>110</sup> Chester S. Williams, “Detailed Outline of Report and Recommendations of Acting Director,” April 24, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 87; “Executive Committee Meeting,” June 11, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>111</sup> Williams, “Report on FPA and Community World Affairs Education,” June 12, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 39.

“Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” June 19, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16

envisioned founding “40 to 60 new community organizations” in 1953 alone, helped along by an initial \$250,000 in seed grants to be used to help communities pay for Council directors’ salaries. He would hold a World Affairs National Assembly in January 1954 to announce the success of the project. And Williams made it clear to the FAE that the Association would be back for up to \$2 million to make the project work.<sup>112</sup>

If the Ford Foundation had any doubts, the need for community education was brought home by a surge of McCarthyite nationalism in its own backyard. From its office in the hills of Pasadena, the Foundation watched as the Los Angeles Board of Education became embroiled in a bitter fight over the teaching of international cooperation. Assailed by an alliance of the Knights of Columbus, the American Legion, and a number of conservative women’s groups, the school board spent 1952 debating whether using UNESCO materials in the classroom was a subversive act of unpatriotic internationalism. In August, Hoffman himself took the stand, “interrupted repeatedly by shouts and boos,” to defend “world understanding and peace” from those who would erect an “Iron Curtain within these United States against freedom of inquiry, discussion and debate.” Hoffman’s testimony failed; the internationalists lost.<sup>113</sup> But the debate provided further context for Ford’s commitment to Emeny’s vision. With the help of other local Republican internationalists, including the future Atomic Energy Commission and Central Intelligence Agency director, John McCone, Hoffman set out to found a World Affairs

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<sup>112</sup> Foreign Policy Association to Fund for Adult Education, “Request for Additional Grants,” June 25, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>113</sup> “UNESCO Friends, Foes Clash at Board Meeting,” *Los Angeles Times* (August 26, 1952), pp. 2, 5; Robert H. Cory, *Communicating Information and Ideas About the United Nations to the American People* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1955), pp. 4-8.

Council.<sup>114</sup> And by October, the FAE had given the Association nearly a million dollars in just a few months.<sup>115</sup>

In truth, it was too much for the Association to manage. Williams certainly thought so, and resigned in September. The Association had a commendable reputation, he explained, left over from its publications, its radio shows, and its allure to big names. “Only a few leaders in the field know the inside facts,” Williams wrote. While from the outside the Association might occupy a prestigious position, it was beset by an arcane internal structure, a poor staff, a weak board, a tendency to financial impropriety, an anemic approach to fundraising, and a lingering addiction to an outdated membership. Councils young and old took a “dim view” of the Association, and many chose to remain independent from it. Unless there was dramatic change, Williams wrote, “there is no future for the organization.” Williams wondered if community education should not just be attached to a university, or handed to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, which was stronger than ever under the leadership of Louise Leonard Wright, the wife of the scholar, Quincy. Drastic action could be staved off, Williams concluded, only if the Association found new leadership.<sup>116</sup>

Emeny resigned. He had struggled against structural issues, as we know. But for almost the whole two years that the Ford program had taken to come together, he had struggled personally, too. His wife, Winifred, had depression, and spent months at a time in a sanatorium.

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<sup>114</sup> “Minutes of First Meeting of Board of Directors, Los Angeles World Affairs Council” September 8, 1953, minutes privately held and provided by Los Angeles World Affairs Council.

<sup>115</sup> “Excerpt from Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Board of Directors,” October 13, 1952, FF, FA716, Reel 4737; “Excerpt from Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors,” October 13-14, 1952, FF, FA716, Reel 4737.

<sup>116</sup> Williams to Fletcher, September 16, 1952, FF, FA716, Reel 4737.

One afternoon in March 1951, she took two of their three daughters into the garage of their Greenwich, Connecticut home. She locked the doors; she turned on the engines. The governess, the chauffeur, and the neighbors noticed only when it was too late.<sup>117</sup> The deaths hit Emeny hard. Already a poor manager who found fundraising unpalatable, Emeny was rarely in the office, and left executive responsibilities to his deputy, Power, who was always skeptical about community education. Emeny put on a brave face, so much so that there were acquaintances who were surprised by his departure, thinking that he was handling his grief well. He was not.<sup>118</sup>

Personal tragedy was never far away from Brooks and Winifred, but their tragedy was woven into the fate of the citizen education movement to a remarkable extent. It was the death of Winifred's parents that had given them the wealth that they had used to move to Cleveland. It was that money that had paid off the debts incurred in building the Cleveland Council. It was that wealth, too, that had prevented the bankruptcy of the Association. Together, the Emenys had donated \$120,000 or thereabouts to the Association in five years. Emeny never took a salary; there was always money at hand to quietly set the books right.<sup>119</sup> This, it bears stressing, was a secret. If the extent of the Emenys' personal investment — particularly in Cleveland — had

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<sup>117</sup> "Mrs. Brooks Emeny, 2 Daughters Dead in Locked Garage," *Boston Globe* (March 16, 1951), p. 1; "Emeny Deaths Called Suicide And Homicide," *New York Herald Tribune* (March 17, 1951), p. 11.

<sup>118</sup> Record of Interview, Gardner and Power, October 8, 1952, CC, Box 147; Dana S. Creel to York Allen, Jr., "Foreign Policy Association," October 22, 1952, RBF, Box 344.

<sup>119</sup> The finances of the Association were willfully opaque, in part to hide the serious situation in which it constantly found itself. However, in 1952 the board wrote off \$57,388 in loans from its President's Fund, which was made up of Emeny's untaken salary and sundry contributions. See "Minutes of Meeting of Executive and Finance Committees," March 17, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16. Additionally, the Association told the Cox Committee that the Emenys together had donated \$61,365 since 1947, including from Winifred Rockefeller Emeny's estate. See "Cox Committee Questionnaire," November 14, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 2. It was a mark of the value of the Emenys' centrality to the Association's books that Emeny's resignation required wholesale alterations to the financial structure of the institution. See Seligman to Delbert Clark, October 1, 1952, RBF, Box 344.



become common knowledge, it would, rightly, have threatened the viability of the whole movement. Only they knew the full extent to which they had personally kept citizen education in world affairs going. So, if Emeny's resignation left the Association free to find an executive actually capable of executing his vision, it also left the Association free to find out whether that vision could work in towns and cities where there was not a Rockefeller on hand to bankroll it.

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On a Thursday evening in March 1952, the auditorium of the WHK radio station on Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, held an unusual kind of ceremony. It opened with a processional, the flag of the United Nations parading down the aisle. The Cleveland Heights Little Symphony played; the Case Western Reserve Glee Club sang; there were remarks from local dignitaries. The lights went down, and a show reel clicked on.

The film that those Clevelanders saw that night has been lost, but it can be reconstructed using draft scripts that survive. One version of the film started with the screen showing a family of five, watching television news. "The United States is pursuing a foreign policy whose primary aim is the achievement of an enduring peace," a narrator said, and it was "being felt more and more by every man and woman in the land." A young man told his parents he wanted to be a doctor, but feared being drafted; a factory owner told a sales manager that he could not get hold of aluminum; a farmer told his county agent the army was taking his farmhands. "Although both their every-day lives and the futures are being shaped by the policies and decisions of their

government,” the narrator said, “nationwide public opinion surveys reveal that a large percentage of U.S. citizens are not conversant with the vital issues of the day.”

The film cut to a shot of downtown Cleveland, with Terminal Tower in the background, and panned to the ninth floor of the Society for Savings Building. “In Cleveland, Ohio,” the narrator said, “the Council on World Affairs is but one example of community action which is aiding and encouraging the citizen to make his own decisions about the problems arising in the relationship of the United States to the rest of the world today.” There were shots of a busy office, of the pamphlet shop, of secretaries banking membership renewals. It showed how members of the Fortnightly Club, a group of citizens that gathered in a restaurant, could go to the Council to train themselves in discussion leadership, so that they, in turn, could speak about world affairs in the community. “Are there any set rules to follow” in discussions, asked one of those trainees? “Yes, indeed,” the instructor said; “in fact, they’re the rules of democracy.” A few minutes later, Mrs. Thompson was shown as a panel member on a Council television program, talking about the virtues of foreign aid. As a globe spun and the film concluded, the narrator said that “in the months and years to come decisions will be made on problems of great complexity and appalling importance.” And, he said, “nobody is in greater need of help, nor does help to anyone count more, than to the plain citizen.”<sup>120</sup>

Involving more than 200 Clevelanders, *World Affairs Are Your Affairs!* was produced by Louis de Rochemont, the most famous and certainly the most watched documentary filmmaker

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<sup>120</sup> Louis de Rochemont and Staff, “A Motion Picture Dealing With Cleveland’s Council on World Affairs,” November 27, 1951, FF, FA716, Reel 4734.

of his day.<sup>121</sup> Pioneer of the *March of Time* newsreels, de Rochemont's news films had been seen by tens of millions of Americans since 1935. He had just started working, secretly, on an animated version of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* for the Office of Policy Coordination, the CIA-housed psychological warfare workshop.<sup>122</sup> But *World Affairs Are Your Affairs!* was not meant for mass distribution. Rather, the Fund for Adult Education gave de Rochemont \$65,000 for his movie as part of a campaign to market a democratic foreign policy on the Cleveland model, one that also included a glossy brochure written by the advertisers Fuller & Smith & Ross.<sup>123</sup> The film was used at the end of the Fund's packaged study-discussion program, also called "World Affairs Are Your Affairs," in which participants read short essays, partly prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, and watched films created by *March of Time*, Encyclopedia Britannica, and even British Information Services. People who took part in these discussion groups, it was implied, would find a natural home at a Council.<sup>124</sup> And having stoked demand, the Fund and the Association also used the film to create supply, screening it for civic leaders, the kinds of people who might have the power to help found a Council in their own community.

What did these citizen educators mean by a "community?" In other words, how did they conceive of their target? On one level, a community was a spatial concept, defined by the limits of a town or a city. On another, though, it was a psychological concept, built of the structure of

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<sup>121</sup> "New 'World Affairs' Film by De Rochemont Praised," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (March 14, 1952), p. 14.

<sup>122</sup> Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 72-85.

<sup>123</sup> "Excerpt from Minutes of Meeting of Board Directors," January 18, 1952, FF, FA716, Reel 4734; "Peace Depends On You," undated [1952], FF, FA716, Reel 4737.

<sup>124</sup> Charles R. Acland, "Screen Technology, Mobilization, and Adult Education in the 1950s," in William Buxton (ed.), *Patronizing the Public: American Philanthropy's Transformation of Culture, Communication, and the Humanities* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), p. 269.

social ties and, ultimately, political power.<sup>125</sup> Academics had been writing theories of community since at least the urban activism turn-of-the-century progressivism, theories that were intended to inform choices made in day-to-day community organization, particularly in social work.<sup>126</sup> After the war, community studies took on new urgency as scholars refined ideas about political structure and mass communications. The defining work came from a former social worker, Floyd Hunter, whose *Community Power Structure* was published in 1953. Relying on interviews, Hunter pictured his subject city, Atlanta, as a pyramid, one in which most aspects of life were presided over by a corporate and banking elite, a handful of relatively isolated white men who were “named as influential and consequently able to ‘move things’.”<sup>127</sup> While other social scientists saw voluntary associations and formal institutions as the primary means of local control, Hunter saw them as “subordinate” to a “power group,” one that made policy and outsourced its execution to an “under-structure.” To organize a community effectively, one needed the consent (and cash) of this elite, even if it was unlikely to do any visible organizing itself. Hunter quoted the social worker Arthur Hillman, who noted that even if one understood that “community action in a practical, democratic sense is more than a matter of selling key leaders who in turn will influence the bulk of the people,” it was “somewhat inevitable under urban conditions” that one would

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<sup>125</sup> For a good summary of contemporary definitions, see Roland L. Warren, *The Community in America* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 6-9.

<sup>126</sup> Jean B. Quandt, *From the Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970); Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1978); Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), ch. 1.

<sup>127</sup> This monolithic conception of a community was later taken apart in Raymond E. Wolfinger, “Reputation and Reality in the Study of ‘Community Power,’” *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960), pp. 636-644; Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

need elites all the same.<sup>128</sup> One could therefore hold the view, as Emeny and the Association did, that opinions did not automatically “trickle down” from an elite to the mass, and yet still by necessity hold what Hillman called a “‘trickle down’ theory of community action.” That meant working from the top down in the name of working from the bottom up.<sup>129</sup>

Building a World Affairs Council took more than just elite buy-in, however. Building a donor network, building a board, building a team of volunteers, all this took more than that. As the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations put it in 1953, “finding the people who care enough about world affairs education in the community to undertake responsibility for a segment of it is the key factor in the Council’s growth and future.”<sup>130</sup> Contemporary social science called such people “opinion leaders,” politically-alert and active people who took responsibility for trying “to influence the rest of the community” through “person-to-person influence.” Opinion leaders, in the theories of Paul Lazarsfeld and his team at the Bureau for Applied Social Research at

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<sup>128</sup> Certainly the Council on Foreign Relations did not think of Atlanta as a typical city. Hunter noted that in Atlanta that “national and international policy in its formative stages is discussed only by the representatives of the policy-making group, generally speaking, and the lower-echelon men wait for the cue from the leaders.” Indeed, Hunter wrote, “a professional persona who had a compulsion to discuss world affairs publicly and too often in Regional City would be looked upon with considerable suspicion.” See Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), pp. 212-213. Atlanta had no history of organized world affairs discussion, and had started a Committee on Foreign Relations only in 1950. (Not one of its members qualified for membership of the Council on Foreign Relations proper.) But the director of the Committee program thought that Atlanta was not only the Committee “least familiar or sympathetic to the general idea of the Committee operation,” but completely unrepresentative in the way the community approached it. When it looked like the Committee would need a new secretary in 1958, Roland Barber wrote that “the customary procedure in Atlanta in matters of this kind, as indicated in a book on the power structure of the community, is for one or more of the leaders in the group to designate who shall be Secretary. This is a fixed operating principle in Atlanta, and I have never been able to get anywhere with our customary insistence that we are the ones to select local Secretaries.” So it was that descriptions of a community turned into proscriptions. See Roland Barber to Walter Mallory, March 21, 1958, CFR, Series 7, Box 595.

<sup>129</sup> Hunter, *Community Power Structure*, pp. 65, 73, 82, 231; Arthur Hillman, *Community Organization and Planning* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 192.

<sup>130</sup> “Revised Program, Budget and Organization, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1953-1954,” May 8, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 5.

Columbia University, were thought to be more educated than the norm, and served the crucial communications function of taking ideas from mass media and passing them on to those who were less informed. And opinion leadership was not, Lazarsfeld and his collaborators argued in their pioneering *The People's Choice* in 1944, "identical with the socially prominent people in the community or the richest people or the civic leaders."<sup>131</sup> It was exercised horizontally within social strata. As Lazarsfeld told a meeting of Association branch representatives in 1949, "it is false to assume that opinion percolates down from the banker or other big-wig," and in fact "an active union leader or a loquacious barber are much better spreaders on a horizontal plane." An academic description of how opinions were thought to move thereby became the intended public that activists sought to build on the ground.<sup>132</sup>

If actually identifying opinion leaders was difficult, identifying opinion leaders who held both interest and influence in matters of foreign policy was even harder. Lazarsfeld's partner at Columbia, the sociologist Robert K. Merton, made a distinction between two types of "influentials," the "local" and the "cosmopolitan." Only cosmopolitans, Merton argued, thought in national or international terms; only cosmopolitans joined voluntary groups for anything more than social status; only cosmopolitans read newspapers with foreign news, so that they could form and then pass on opinions.<sup>133</sup> How many of them there were would vary from community

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<sup>131</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), pp. 49-51, 152. For later elaborations, see Elihu Katz and Paul L. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955); Elihu Katz, "The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on an Hypothesis," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 21 (1957), pp. 61-78.

<sup>132</sup> "Meeting of the Council of Branches and Affiliates," October 28-29, 1949, FPA, Part II, Box 21.

<sup>133</sup> Robert K. Merton, "Patterns of Influence: A Study of Interpersonal Influence and of Communications Behavior in a Local Community," in Frank Stanton and Paul F. Lazarsfeld (eds.), *Communications Research, 1948-1949* (New York: Harper, 1949), pp. 180-219.

to community, but there was already evidence that they were few and far between. Only through what one theorist called “detailed person-by-person tracing of influence paths” would anyone find out.<sup>134</sup> Operating on tradition and instinct rather than a close reading of sociology, this was how the Foreign Policy Association had worked in the past to build its branches, and it was how it would scope out communities to build World Affairs Councils. Activists borrowed academic language, without yet situating themselves fully in academic networks and findings.

As the Council effort picked up pace, Allport sketched out the tools of community development as the Association saw them. The first step was to learn about the “market,” for while the “entire population” was the “logical” target, target cities had to be prioritized according to their “potential,” which included their past community activities, the availability of financial support, and their “strategic location.” Then the regional staff had to “discover” the parts of the community leadership that might be interested. It had five main methods for this, to be used in various combinations. A set-piece speech by a prominent outsider was usually involved, as was a series of interviews with citizens assumed to be part of the power structure of a city, from businessmen and politicians to professors and ministers. The local representatives of national organizations might be drafted, especially from the League of Women Voters and other women’s groups. That would be particularly effective if they were brought into a special event, whether a particular local project, or an area conference that would bring together already active or interested citizens. All this should be backed up by national activities, including efforts to involve State Department, UN, and congressional officials, who would “demonstrate [the] effect of

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<sup>134</sup> Frank A. Stewart, “A Sociometric Study of Influence in Southtown,” *Sociometry* 10 (1947), pp. 11-31, at p. 28; Frank A. Stewart, “A Study of Influence in Southtown: II,” *Sociometry* 10 (1947), pp. 273-286.

public opinion on policy decisions.” Meetings would be held, local leaders would decide what kind of world affairs group would best suit them, from a university affiliated service bureau to a full-blown, membership-supported Council.<sup>135</sup>

Although this process played out in myriad ways, in Nason’s final report to the FAE he constructed a composite narrative for an imaginary but representative community, Middletown. Association staffers had picked Middletown as a priority target, and the vice-president of a local bank, coincidentally, had written to New York wondering about the possibility of forming a Council, “about which he had read in a national magazine.” A field representative started a community survey, interviewing editors and broadcasting directors, as well as professors, politicians, businessmen, labor leaders, and so on. It took him six months to present his findings to a small, core group of 14 people. At that meeting, “massive disapproval” was voiced by the treasurer of the Middletown Manufacturing Company, who preferred to back “loftier forums for the intelligentsia,” but was eventually convinced to chair a luncheon for businessmen. It took another five or six months of preparatory work to confirm the support of community leaders, raise money, and hire a director, for which the Association provided a seed grant from the Community Investment Fund (CIF). Once the Council started work, it partnered with the public library to maintain a stock of books, pamphlets, maps, and so on, and obtained State Department and United Nations documents from an older, larger Council a few hundred miles away. It set up a speakers bureau to fill requests for both local and visiting speakers. It supported

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<sup>135</sup> Allport to Rowson, “Memorandum on Ways of Approaching Communities for World Affairs Activity,” January 23, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 78.



discussion series. It got half an hour of public service time from a radio station, and rebroadcast its show to schoolchildren, who participated in an annual Model United Nations.<sup>136</sup>

What was unusual about the fictional Middletown Council was that Middletown was a blank slate. Most communities were not. And if the aim, as the Association later put it, was to develop “a new pattern of American behavior in which more people consciously allot interest and time to preparing themselves for their role in the final determination of foreign policy,” then it made sense first of all to team up with other groups which sought the same.<sup>137</sup> While there were a few places, notably San Francisco and Seattle, where a merger among “objective” educational groups proved possible, more often it involved forging alliances with political “action” groups. Philadelphia, which was formed in 1949 out of an old Association branch and a United Nations Council, was the most immediately successful example of this. Under the leadership of executive directors Elizabeth Hallstrom and Ruth Weir Miller, it made spectacular progress, with its junior education programs, its neighborhood town meetings, its pioneering legislative committee, and its partnership with the State Department on regional conferences.<sup>138</sup> The Council’s sometime president, the Swarthmore College president John W. Nason, was made

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<sup>136</sup> John W. Nason, “Terminal Report to the Fund for Adult Education,” April 15, 1957, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159, pp. 3-6.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> “State Department Confers With Opinion Leaders From Three States,” *World Affairs Councilor* 1 (February 1950), Minnesota World Affairs Center Records, Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota, Box 40; Record of Interview, Anderson and Emeny, September 21, 1950, CC, Box 375; Record of Interview, Anderson, Elizabeth Hallstrom, Lily May Walker, John Nason, December 12, 1950, CC, Box 375; Rowson, “Report on World Affairs Council of Philadelphia Conference on US Foreign Policy in Cooperation with the Department of State, May 8, 1953,” May 19, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 31.

Brooks Emeny's replacement in New York on the back of this performance, and charged with executing the FAE grant.<sup>139</sup>

Elsewhere, the transition was harder. In Baltimore, a World Affairs Council was founded by the board of the local United Nations Association in 1952, but only as a subsidiary which other voluntary associations in the city could join if they preferred not to be associated with an action group. While the United Nations Association itself was strong, the regional director wrote in 1956 that there remained a "difficult and unsolved problem" for broader education initiatives, although one with which New York made its peace.<sup>140</sup> In Boston, the World Affairs Council was initially called the United Council on World Affairs, and despite a large initial membership of 2,500, it struggled in its early years to generate coherence from its origins in the Association, the United Nations, and a Joint Council for International Co-Operation.<sup>141</sup>

The problem was a familiar one, about how far internationalists ought to declare their allegiances. United Nations Day celebrations, municipal United Nations weeks, trips to the United Nations headquarters, United Nations essay contests, Model United Nations Assemblies, all these were the bread and butter of plenty of Councils, ways of catching the interest of people who might then be convinced of the need of a broader or deeper education. Despite exceptions, the kinds of people who could run Councils or volunteer at them tended to see the world less

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<sup>139</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," November 20, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16; "Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 18, 1952, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>140</sup> "Digest of First Meeting of Maryland Council on World Affairs," May 7, 1952, FPA, Part I, Box 8; Richard C. Rowson, "Field Trip To: Baltimore, Maryland Council on World Affairs, October 26, 1954," FPA, Part I, Box 8; Rowson "Field Report: Maryland Council on World Affairs and UN Association, Baltimore, Maryland, June 21, 1956," July 24, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 8.

<sup>141</sup> "3 World Affairs Groups Form United Council," *United Council News Bulletin* 1 (October 1949), Judge Lawrence Brooks Papers, Historical and Special Collections, Harvard Law School, Box 11.

through cold war, power-political terms than more traditionally internationalist ones. They tended to advertise their Councils not by playing up the threat of communism to the United States, but by playing up the threat of the cold war to world peace. With membership of the United Nations a fact of life in a way that membership of the League of Nations had never been, reconciliation with these realities was easier to contemplate. As Nason put it in reflections on the Boston situation, “support of the UN is a less controversial position than the advocacy of some particular proposal or piece of American foreign policy.”<sup>142</sup> As well as moving the Association’s offices into headquarters just across from United Nations Plaza, the board therefore acquiesced in February 1955 to a working agreement with the American Association for the United Nations and the U.S. Committee for the United Nations.<sup>143</sup>

Even without this collaborative background, the Middletown Council would have ranked as relatively strong, had it been real. Note, however, how it had been built. It was a bottom-up group built from the top-down, as the Association accessed the community through its elites, through its leadership, through its wealthy. It was a group that operated primarily through the cooperation of other voluntary associations in town, and that would appeal primarily to the kinds of citizens who joined those voluntary associations. It was a group that, philosophically, understood that to leave adult education to the mass media was insufficient, and yet left the education of those who did not come to meetings or sign up for a discussion group to radio and television. It was a group that, despite the prominence of the politics of race in the city, assumed that its audience was white, assumed that to the point that it never even thought to discuss the

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<sup>142</sup> John W. Nason, “Field Report: Boston, Massachusetts,” March 24, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 9.

<sup>143</sup> “Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors,” February 17, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

matter. It was a group, too, that was part of a national network that was presumed to be thriving. And yet it still had tremendous problems. Its leaders spent more time trying to raise money than anything else, and struggled to get grants from local philanthropy or gain the acceptance of all but the most liberal of businessmen. It depended on the generosity of one or two wealthy enthusiasts, and once the Association withdrew seed money it had to cut back an already paltry budget of just \$14,000. Even if it faced no competition, matched its programs to the community adequately, and maintained excitement among its earliest backers, it remained weak.

By 1957, Nason could correctly claim that “the present ‘network’ of world affairs organizations is larger and stronger than at any time in the past.” Thousands of Americans responded to the call to create a world affairs group in their own community, helped by staff members in new regional offices in New York, Cleveland, St. Louis, San Francisco, and New Orleans. When Brooks Emeny departed New York in November 1952, the list that the central office kept of Association branches, Councils, and similar groups, ran to 29 organizations, half of them in the Northeast.<sup>144</sup> By the time the Association made its final report to the FAE, after a further, brief grant that was designed to tide the Association over before responsibility for it was transferred to the Ford Foundation proper, another 41 Councils had been formed, as well as 106 short-lived, purely informal World Affairs Committees. Across the whole of the Council network, total budgets had doubled from 1952 to 1955, from \$434,300 to \$843,035.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> “Non-Partisan Community Foreign Policy Associations, World Affairs Councils, & Similar Organizations,” November 1, 1952, FPA, Part I, Box 73.

<sup>145</sup> “Three Year Report to the Fund for Adult Education,” September 23, 1955, FF, FA716, Reel 4737.

Few of these new Councils were completely new endeavors. Indeed, a decent part of the \$223,000 handed out in CIF grants, allocated by a committee made up of directors of relatively successful Councils, went towards strengthening old, rebranded Association branches in the Northeast, such as Albany, Poughkeepsie, and Hartford. Much of it, too, was given to subsidiaries of broader adult education institutions that were being revived or directly set up by the FAE in cities like Akron, Chattanooga, and Kansas City. A tenth of the fund went to Los Angeles, a city close to the heart of the Ford Foundation but a city thought to be problematic on account of its sprawl and its strident conservatism.<sup>146</sup> All that left little financial support to be given to truly brand new Councils, which were founded, however tentatively, in Toledo, Syracuse, Cedar Rapids, and elsewhere. Three of the pre-1952 Councils or branches were dead by 1957. Only one of the new Councils could compete with established groups, and eight of them were Councils in name only, running no programs. Six folded completely.<sup>147</sup>

And where there had been success, there were potentially worrying signs. President Eisenhower sent a telegram of congratulations when the Dayton Council on World Affairs received an award at the end of 1954 for its television programs at a gala dinner in New York, one accepted by the local business leader John D. Yeck. The three programs the Council

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<sup>146</sup> The Los Angeles Council, which was founded by progressive Republicans who sought to insulate the party against its right flank, responded to this hostile environment not by expanding its offerings, as the Cleveland Council had done, but by operating a blue-chip lecture society based on massive membership fees and highly prominent speakers, a trickle-down program designed to make world affairs discussion respectable among businessmen and, secondarily, their wives. See Dorothy B. Robins, "Field Report on Los Angeles," March 16, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 1; Mastrude, "Los Angeles," November 8, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 2; Walter Coombs, "Executive Director's Report on Operations of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council for the Council Year 1958-1959," June 15, 1959, FPA, Part I, Box 2; Zygmunt Nagorski, "Visit to Los Angeles World Affairs Council," April 10, 1967, FPA, Part II, Box 224.

<sup>147</sup> Nason, "Terminal Report to the Fund for Adult Education," p. 6.

broadcast over local television were thought to reach 100,000 people, and took 69 volunteers and three staff members to produce.<sup>148</sup> And, relying mostly on the mass media and a thriving network of Junior Councils in the public schools, the Dayton outfit had gained a reputation in its community remarkably quickly since its founding in 1947.<sup>149</sup> 48% of local residents sampled in a community survey conducted in 1953 claimed to have heard of it, even if only 4% of those answering turned out to be members. 79% of respondents said the Council was a good idea if it helped “people in this city get the facts about world affairs,” and a decent 49.5% of respondents agreed that it was “absolutely true” to say that “world affairs are your affairs.” The authors of the survey wrote that “these responses are like being against sin and supporting the virtues,” which at least put citizen education on the side of the gods, but that the Council either way appeared “to have had a very general, if not intense, impact upon people in Dayton.” A series of other questions, however, revealed the limits of that impact. To reach a quarter of the population, even in a passive sense, would be “the Utopian goal for an agency like the Council,” the survey concluded. And utopias, by their nature, are always out of reach.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> “Europe Is Hailed By Van Kleffens,” *New York Times* (December 7, 1954), p. 15; “Dayton Group Wins World Affairs Honor,” *Christian Science Monitor* (December 14, 1954), p. 18.

<sup>149</sup> Henry Citizen, “Dayton in the Cold War: A History of the Dayton Council on World Affairs, 1947-1960,” April 1975, Dayton Council on World Affairs Records, Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University, Box 1.

<sup>150</sup> “A Report of 1953 Community Survey,” Dayton Council on World Affairs Records, Box 10; “Excerpts from ‘A Report of 1953 Community Survey,’” April 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 45.

In May 1954, barely a year after the Foreign Policy Association's Council project had started up in earnest, the president of the San Francisco outfit, Henry Grady, wrote to Fletcher in Pasadena. The World Affairs Council of Northern California was a kind of hybrid, halfway between a Council on the Cleveland model and a gender-balanced Council of Foreign Relations for the West coast. It concentrated on setting up study groups, in which citizens who had the time and energy would study a problem in depth in order to write a report, and it had slowly gained the prestige that had been lost in the controversy over the Institute of Pacific Relations. But Grady, an economist and shipping magnate who had served as an assistant secretary of state and an ambassador to India, Greece, and Iran, had become conscious of "certain restricting facts" that the Council movement was having trouble with. One was that a Council "was almost inevitably the latest comer in communities already over-organized," communities in which there was already far too much for active citizens to do before they got to foreign policy. And when such organizations stepped up their world affairs programming, something that the Council of course applauded, they stepped up their demands on the Council's services while also adding competition for its audience. Another issue was the seeming impossibility of "finding programs which will appeal to new, different sectors of the population" than the "infinitesimal" public that even a council like Grady's served, tiny compared to the population of the city at large.<sup>151</sup>

Grady was not the only citizen educator to see that there were problems inherent in the attempt to promote the Council model at scale, in the effort to create a national foreign policy public through a single organizational technique. Cleveland turned out to be less a model and

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<sup>151</sup> Henry F. Grady to Fletcher, May 26, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 2.

more an outlier. “Experience suggests,” the Association told the FAE in September 1955, “that most cities under 100,000 in population lack the financial and human base for supporting a real Council,” and Councils were “not normally effective in rural areas and small towns where the heart of America still beats.”<sup>152</sup> In response, the Association sometimes stretched the definition of a “community” to cover an entire state. In Vermont, for example, Ambassador to the United Nations Warren Austin played an honorary role in founding a Council, which was eventually housed at the state’s land-grant university and run part-time by a Yale-trained international relations scholar, George Little. Briefly energetic, particularly around an annual Warren Austin Institute, it could neither raise more than a few thousand dollars a year, nor translate the state as a space into a state’s worth of activities.<sup>153</sup>

At the same time, the Association was slow to grapple with the changing makeup of the cities on which it had previously depended. As the regional staffer Richard Rowson told one meeting in February 1955, another main problem — particularly east of Chicago, but elsewhere too — was “to deal largely with a number of metropolitan complexes, where the idea of a community is on the decline.”<sup>154</sup> By this, Rowson meant not simply urban sprawl but the rise of the suburbs, which manifested itself in the flight of several Councils’ wealthy, white audiences away from urban centers and their earlier patterns of living. Several Councils tried to serve outlying towns, most notably the San Francisco group, which in 1953-54 had seven all-volunteer

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<sup>152</sup> “Three Year Report to the Fund for Adult Education,” September 23, 1955.

<sup>153</sup> “Report on the Activities of the Council During the Program Year 1953-54,” June 5, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 36; Rowson to Alport, May 31, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 37; “Field Memo: Vermont Council on World Affairs Annual Meeting,” April 23, 1957, FPA, Part I, Box 36; Nagorski, “Vermont Council on World Affairs, Inc.,” July 22, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 224.

<sup>154</sup> “Conference of FPA Regional Representatives,” February 14-16, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 84.



affiliates putting on monthly speeches and roundtables as far north as Sacramento and as far south as Fresno.<sup>155</sup> The Rhode Island Council received a small CIF grant to try to build on two branches it had started in the environs of Providence, but neither the central Council nor the affiliates were strong enough to maintain the experiment for long.<sup>156</sup> But the Committee on National Program passed on the only proposal it received for an explicitly suburban program, from Boston. “It is clear,” wrote the Boston Council’s director in September 1954, “that most of those actively interested in world affairs education live in the suburbs and desire an active program in their own communities,” particularly commuter towns like Arlington, Lexington, and Concord. Despite support among directors from Chicago and Cleveland, who were already facing similar problems, the request was turned down on the grounds that too much money had already been spent in the Northeast. The problem did not go away.<sup>157</sup>

Nor did the question of regionalism more broadly. Although no Council came close to the accomplishments of the Cleveland Council at its peak, the model worked relatively well in the Northeast, at least in terms of finding the audience that they set for themselves. Beyond that, while the Association claimed that it become a genuinely national agency, that was not exactly the case. Only in December 1954 was a regional office in the South provided for by the FAE,

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<sup>155</sup> “Affiliated Councils Bring World Affairs to Local Communities,” *The Council Spotlight*, undated [1954], p. 4, J. B. Condliffe Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Carton 22.

<sup>156</sup> Allport to Richard H. Blanding, January 5, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 34; Rowson, “Report on Field Trip to Rhode Island,” February 11, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 34; Rowson, “Field Report: World Affairs Council of Rhode Island,” March 1, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 34; John S. Gibson to Rowson, May 13, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 34.

<sup>157</sup> Gibson to Nason, September 21, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 9; “Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program,” September 24–25, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 64; Nason to Committee on National Program, “Boston Grant Request,” November 15, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 9; Rowson to Arthur E. Whittemore, February 25, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 10.

and its regional operative, Charles Bushong, was based in New York and served concurrently as the director of the Association's film programs. By the end of 1955, there were no recognized world affairs groups in South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas or New Mexico. It took a great deal of effort to prop up moribund branches in New Orleans and Shreveport, Louisiana, to provide any base whatsoever for regional work. The one Council in Texas, that in Dallas, vigorously defended its independence so that it could counteract the Association's leftover reputation for subversive activities.<sup>158</sup> In the Western states the situation was hardly better, as Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana remained untapped, although the Council on Foreign Relations had some presence in a couple of major cities. Moreover, as one critic pointed out, the Association's board remained a Yankee affair, with almost all of its members living and working in New York City or nearby.<sup>159</sup> What minimal regional representation there had been on the board thinned out. While its Committee on National Program had initially been made up of half a dozen representatives of successful Councils, by the summer of 1955 not one of those committee members still remained in their local posts.<sup>160</sup> And at the staff level, the Association had tried to put professionals in charge of citizen education in world affairs, but had not made a profession of it. It was hard to keep many staff members for long.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program," September 24-25, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 64; Dorothy B. Robins, "Field Report: Dallas, Texas," March 5-9, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 35; "Notes on Conversations in Texas by John W. Nason," October 4, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 35; Nason to Selected Members of the Board, July 18, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 36.

<sup>159</sup> Gibson to Nason, November 29, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 79.

<sup>160</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program," June 14-15, 1955, FPA, Part I, Reel 4.

<sup>161</sup> "Report on the Foreign Policy Association, Part II," November 29, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 87;

Even though the Association accelerated its Council project at nothing like the rate that Chester Williams or Brooks Emeny had imagined, it started wondering whether it was receiving diminishing returns for its efforts remarkably quickly. So, too, did the Fund for Adult Education, which, despite its continuing faith in the Association and its readiness to recommend that the Ford Foundation itself take over funding, had by the end of 1954 begun to think about moving away from its grant-making model, and towards running its own programs.<sup>162</sup> The Committee on National Program debated whether the Association ought to concentrate on strengthening the network it had built, but decided not.<sup>163</sup> Part of its reasoning was that many of the Councils it had built were too weak to operate through, although even if the Councils were perfect, they would still not necessarily be the most effective way of reaching the public.<sup>164</sup> But part of it, too, was that the whole idea of citizen education in world affairs was being put in doubt.

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<sup>162</sup> "Notes on Conversations with C. Scott Fletcher, John Osman, Ann Spinney," November 16, 1954, FPA, Part II, Box 84; "Memorandum on Conversations with Scott Fletcher, John Osman, and Ann Spinney," January 17, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 84; "Memorandum on Conversation with C. Scott Fletcher, April 11, 1955," May 25, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 84.

<sup>163</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program," June 14-15, 1955, FPA, Part I, Reel 4.

<sup>164</sup> "The World Affairs Councils and FPA," January 27, 1956, FF, FA732G, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; Rowson, "Working Paper: Committee on FPA Relationships to WAC's and Other Organizations," April 17, 1956, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

## Chapter 5

### Who, Me?

David Brinkley looked into the camera. It was an “astonishing” fact, the nation’s foremost newscaster instructed his primetime audience on May 20, 1963, that in only “fifteen years” Americans had gone “through a deep, basic, and profound change of attitudes to the rest of the world.” This was now taken for granted, he said, “but seen in any perspective at all, it is remarkable.” Look to Southeast Asia, Brinkley said, and to the news of developments in Vietnam. Not so long ago, Brinkley said, if anything had happened there, “most Americans would a) not have known where it was, b) cared, or c) had the faintest thought it was up to us to do anything about it.” Today things were different. “We are concerned,” he said, “with what happens everywhere, and not only willing, but anxious to do something.”

Was this really true? Was this vision really rooted in a universal “we”? It was, Brinkley insisted. “Not every RFD [Rural Free Delivery] box-holder is waiting impatiently for the paper to come so he can read Walter Lippmann, and the circulation of *Foreign Affairs* quarterly is not as big as *Capper’s Farmer*,” he admitted. Still, even in “out-of-the-way places” world affairs were a popular concern. “Across the country,” Brinkley said, “there are groups of people who meet regularly in living rooms, union halls, school buildings, and even in laundromats while the clothes are drying, for organized discussions of American foreign policy.”

Take Klamath Falls, Oregon, a place of “duck-hunting, lumbering, and farming,” with a population of 17,000. It was entirely beyond the reach of most foreign policy institutions, even of major newspapers, but within its limits lived Robert ‘Ben’ Kerns, a veteran who had worked for the United Nations in occupied Germany and graduated from Georgetown with a major in international relations.<sup>1</sup> This farm-equipment store owner consciously played the role of the town’s opinion leader. Each morning, he read classified ads over a radio that he had wired into his loft. He ran a local chapter of the Great Books club. And Brinkley’s cameras caught him leading a lively conversation on the United States’ interests in Vietnam.

“Why,” Kerns asked, “is Dean Rusk making statements about these countries halfway around the world?”

Around Kerns was a small group of friends, including the county librarian, a physician, an elementary-school janitor, a junior-high math teacher, and a farmer’s wife. There were lumberjacks — “not the roughnecks they used to be,” said Brinkley — in plaid shirts, and older women wearing pearls.

“I think that if we pull out or are pushed out,” one participant offered, “our prestige as a world leader will suffer immensely, that we will never gain the trust of an Asian, nor probably an African nation for quite some time.”

“We’re in so deeply now,” another said, “and our prestige is so involved, that I’m afraid we’re gonna have to stay there. Personally I think it’s quite unfortunate that we’ve got ourselves in this situation.”

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<sup>1</sup> “Robert Benjamin ‘Ben’ Kerns,” *Herald and News* (October 26, 2007), [legacy.com/obituaries/heraldandnews/obituary.aspx?n=robert-benjamin-kerns-ben&pid=96791852](https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/heraldandnews/obituary.aspx?n=robert-benjamin-kerns-ben&pid=96791852).

“I don’t think that we’ve been allowed to have the information that we need to make decisions ourselves,” a third complained. “We were kept in the dark all the time, and then these things are popped open to us, all of a sudden.”

“I just wonder if our policy in the whole Southeastern Asia has been right,” the second speaker concluded. “From the time of the finish of the French-Indochina war, it seems to me something has been dreadfully wrong, that we didn’t need to be in the mess we are in”

“If you were Dean Rusk, you’d have to make a decision now,” noted a fourth.

“Thank God I’m not,” she laughed.

Brinkley’s cameras were showing the deliberations of a home discussion group, a little ideal of democracy. “There are about 15,000 of them across the country,” Brinkley said, “with a membership of about 300,000 people.” They met once a week for two months each spring to talk about world affairs. All of them came prepared, to whatever extent, having read a fact sheet bought for a buck and a half. Some might have listened to a local radio program dedicated to the question of the week, or seen an article in the local press. This was the Great Decisions program, run by the Foreign Policy Association to bring foreign affairs to the masses. And to Brinkley, it was working. It showed, he claimed, that “very large numbers of people do use their spare time to learn about and argue about the great issues of foreign policy.”

After a brief trip to “cattle and sheep country” in Montrose, Colorado, the broadcast visited a third city. Little Rock, Arkansas, was “trying to forget the notoriety of 1957,” Brinkley said. His cameras filmed an antebellum mansion, a setting of “magnolia, wisteria, and white columns.” The group, as white as the masonry, included a state highway department lawyer, a

Catholic priest, a retired Air Force officer, and the editor of a labor newspaper. As elsewhere, the discussion dealt mostly in first principles, but it was freer, more prone to grandstanding.

Vietnam was at issue again. The hostess, Didi Perry, was a to-the-death anticommunist. “We had better make up our minds that we are going to win,” she said. “It seems to me that we are in a fight to the end with this Russian situation, this communist situation, and we’d better be prepared anywhere that communism raises its head and finds anything desirable, we had better be prepared to get in the game.”

The priest, who taught philosophy, took the view that communism was a “theoretical advance” in Vietnam, as communists were “guaranteeing these people equal rights.” Hence, the North would be defeated only if the poverty that it fed on was overcome. After all, democracy was not necessarily applicable everywhere.

At this, the retired Air Force man could take no more. “I think in South Vietnam we ought to stay there,” he blustered. “In fact I think we ought to extend it. We ought to carry the war to North Vietnam, and land our own guerilla forces up there, maybe throw a few bombs in a Hanoi café. A bomb-of-the-month club or something.” The others in the room murmured, but he kept going. “If we have to go so far as to take ‘em over, I think we should go that far, too. I think we should fight to win. We can win, we should win in South Vietnam. We should stay there, and win.” As the picture faded, it settled on a portrait hanging over the discussion, an oil canvas of one of Perry’s ancestors — a Confederate officer, feted still for valor in a losing cause.

Network television during the cold war was hardly a model of objective, investigative journalism. Brinkley’s reporting followed a line well marked by politicians’ constant assertions of the uniquely democratic nature of America’s power. If he offered a gentle critique by averring

that “people, generally, are better informed and willing to support more advanced policies than the State Department and the government generally think they are,” then the critique was helpful, rather than genuinely challenging.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Policy Association looked on with pleasure. It had had no control over Brinkley’s show, and worried that the discussions he had broadcast were less than theoretically ideal, but it welcomed publicity all the same. It needed it.<sup>3</sup>

Great Decisions was by far the most ambitious, most popular, and most enduring adult education program ever attempted in foreign affairs. It coordinated home discussion groups with saturation mass media coverage and widespread voluntary association collaboration. It was the Association’s — and hence the foreign policy elite’s — bid for the mass. It offered its subscribers a way to learn, a way to create and refine opinions, a way to express policy preferences, a way to participate as political leaders asked — a way to lead the world from their living rooms. By domesticating and simplifying foreign policy, the Association hoped to demonstrate that an intellectually dominant conception of the American public as ignorant, uninformed, and apathetic was wrong. It did so by putting forward a specific, demographically limited vision of citizenship, of engagement. Whether people took it up would finally answer, in the Association’s eyes and that of its supporters, whether it was possible to build a democratic foreign policy fit for a democratic superpower.

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<sup>2</sup> Recording of *David Brinkley’s Journal*, NBC, May 20, 1963, FPA, DC 774.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel P. Hayes to Foundations, “Report on Program Activities of the FPA, July 1, 1962–June 30, 1963,” July 24, 1963, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.



Viewed from the faculty offices of the Ivy League, the prospects of a democratic, participatory foreign policy seemed less promising than they might have done from the kitchens of Oregon. By the time Ben Kerns had brought his neighbors over to chew over Vietnam, academics had concluded that participatory democracy in foreign policy was unwise, impossible, and dangerous. As the United States exerted global supremacy in the name of democracy, that very supremacy seemed to require that the ideas about democracy held by citizens like Kerns be radically recast. “Modern international politics,” wrote the political theorist Robert A. Dahl in 1950, “is a rigorous testing ground for the classic instruments of government in a democratic society.”<sup>4</sup> And those classic instruments, Dahl and his colleagues came to believe, were not up to the test. They sacrificed normative conceptions of democracy, believing that if international politics could not easily be made safe for American democracy, so American democracy would have to be made safe for the world. Whether inside the national security bureaucracy or on its borders at think tanks, new institutions enclosed ever more of their advice behind a fence of secrecy.<sup>5</sup> Their research universities competed for federal research funding and increasingly tried to produce knowledge useful to the state’s imperial vision.<sup>6</sup> They abandoned the ideals of participatory

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<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Congress and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); David C. Engerman, “Rethinking Cold War Universities: Some Recent Histories,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5 (2003), pp. 80-95; Bruce Kuklick, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Soviet Experts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bruce Kuklick, “The Rise of Policy Institutes in the United States, 1943-1971,” *Orbis* 55 (2011), pp. 685-699; David Ekbladh, “Present at the Creation: Edward Mead Earle and the Depression-Era Origins of Security Studies,” *International Security* 36 (2012), pp. 107-141; Joy Rohde, *Armed With Expertise: The Militarization of American Social*

democracy, placing elites at the heart of government, and teaching politics as a limited, procedural system that resolved interest-group tensions.<sup>7</sup> They rapidly recast ideas about the role of the citizen, the duties of the expert, and the function of public opinion. This “elitist theory of democracy,” as one critic called it, was not just exported as part of modernization theory, as historians of American foreign relations have often recognized.<sup>8</sup> American democracy as theorized at home influenced American democracy as practiced at home.

The debate after World War II reprised the debate after World War I — except this time Walter Lippmann won. While *Public Opinion* and *The Phantom Public* were now re-read and taken as fact by most academic observers, Lippmann waded back into the fray with his *Essays in the Public Philosophy*, published in 1955. His earlier books had retained a sympathy for the common man’s plight, but no more. Half a century of violence, in Lippmann’s view, had conclusively demonstrated that the public mortally harmed a rational appraisal of its own

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*Research During the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Mark Solovey, *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013); Lawrence Freedman, “Social Science and the Cold War,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38 (2015), pp. 554-574; Osamah F. Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Michael C. Desch, *Cult of the Irrelevant: The Waning Influence of Social Science on National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Edward A. Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1973); Andrew Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Jack L. Walker, “A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy,” *American Political Science Review* 60 (1966), pp. 285-295. On modernization theory see, e.g., Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele, and Michael E. Latham (eds.), *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). Different ideas of “democracy promotion” came into being after the crisis of the 1970s, centered on human rights and civil society. See, e.g., Barbara J. Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Evan D. McCormick, “Breaking With Statism? U.S. Democracy Promotion in Latin America, 1984-1988,” *Diplomatic History* 42 (2018), pp. 745-771.

interests. “Where mass opinion dominates the government,” he wrote, “there is a morbid derangement of the true functions of power,” bringing about “the enfeeblement, verging on paralysis, of the capacity to govern.” It was an active danger as the “master of decisions when the stakes are life and death.” It required “impassioned nonsense” to rouse it from its apathy, and the truth inevitably suffered “a considerable and often a radical distortion.” As before, Lippmann saw no easy remedy. Although he considered public enlightenment to be a journalist’s duty, the structure of the mass media meant that “the audience, tuning on and tuning off here and there, cannot be counted upon to hear, even in summary form, the essential evidence and the main arguments.” Nor could the executive govern alone, for even the military-industrial state was not strong enough to withstand the irresponsibility of elected representatives. All that was to curtail the very idea of public participation, leaving a hoped-for return to liberal reasons to the few. A citizen could vote or not, Lippmann said, but “a mass cannot govern.”<sup>9</sup>

America’s most celebrated diplomat, George F. Kennan, embraced much of Lippmann’s pessimism about the public, just as he came to agree with Lippmann’s critique of cold war strategy. A member of the venerable school of strategists who believed that diplomacy should be left to the diplomats, Kennan’s *American Diplomacy*, published in 1951, was an unrestrained attack on Wilsonian progressivism. The public had proven “uncomfortably similar to one of those prehistoric monsters with a body as long as this room and a brain the size of a pin.” Like Lippmann, Kennan bewailed the “histrionic” tendencies of the legislator, and decried a mass media churning out the “trivial, superficial, and sensational trash that is permitted daily to flow

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<sup>9</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), pp. 14-15, 20-25, 128-129; Steigerwald, *Wilsonian Idealism in America*, pp. 200-203.

out and to inundate the public attention.” As such, history demonstrated that “people are not always more reasonable than governments; that public opinion, or what passes for public opinion, is not invariably a moderating force in the jungle of politics.” A democratic foreign policy was best conceived as a representative one.

Unlike Lippmann’s cynicism, however, Kennan’s pessimism was balanced by a lingering, if souring, attachment to the fantasy of an America full of trustworthy citizens. He supported early cold war mobilization efforts, including covert ones, in the belief that the American people could be mobilized behind good sense. Even in *American Diplomacy*, Kennan emphasized that he did not “consider public reaction to foreign-policy questions to be erratic and undependable over the long term.” (Indeed, for his career after he left the State Department he depended on the public, to buy his books.) Rather, “what passes for our public opinion in the thinking of official Washington” could be “easily led astray” by special interests, commentators, and “publicity-seekers of all sorts.”<sup>10</sup> This extended to the politically active of all kinds. Kennan had no time whatsoever for the organized world affairs audience that had been built up before the cold war, suspecting it of being too friendly to the Soviet Union. After a tour of world affairs institutions in 1946, he complained to the State Department’s Office of Public Affairs that the

women’s clubs and organizations devoted to the study of international problems have a large percentage of members for whom ‘foreign affairs’ are apparently a form of escape from the boredom, frustration and faintly guilty conscience which seem to afflict many well-to-do and insufficiently occupied people in the country.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 61-62, 66, 93.

<sup>11</sup> Kennan to Francis H. Russell, August 23, 1946, George F. Kennan Papers, Public Policy Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscripts Library, Princeton University, Box 298.

Kennan was frankly irritated by citizens who felt themselves “under an obligation to hold and voice opinions about questions of international affairs,” he said in a speech in 1953, finding them “pontifical and opinionated, inclined to place the utterance before the thought, prone to hold views on inadequate evidence and then to be sensitive and stubborn in the exposition of them.” Not so the “common man,” who rested “under no obligation to act as a spokesman for anyone or to come up with answers at all about public matters.”<sup>12</sup> Yet it was hard to see how that public could ever be reached, if it was valued for its lack of interest in politics.

Kennan, like Lippmann, was therefore seen as one of the most caustic critics of a democratic foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> Nor was it surprising that Kennan, like Lippmann, came quickly to define the national interest against public opinion, rather than as a product of it.<sup>14</sup> As historians have noted, Lippmann and Kennan inspired a generation of experts, supported by the major

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<sup>12</sup> Kennan, “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” October 23, 1953, at Conference of Leaders of Institutes of World Affairs, October 20-31, 1953, FPA, Part II, Box 230.

<sup>13</sup> Despite the immense amount of historiographical attention paid to him, Hans Morgenthau is not discussed here. World affairs educators almost never mentioned him; his work never appeared on their bibliographies; he had a limited public profile. Moreover, the early edition of *Politics Among Nations* that dominated campus teaching of international relations after 1949 barely mentioned public opinion, and then mostly in the context of the evils of the “crusading spirit.” The second edition deliberately dwelled on it much more, but as a result of Morgenthau’s reading of Kennan. See Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1954); and, in general, James T. Sparrow, “Morgenthau’s Dilemma: Rethinking the Democratic Leviathan in the Atomic Age,” *The Tocqueville Review* 36 (2015), pp. 93-133. In any case, while Morgenthau warned about the democratic hindrances on policymaking, as historians have noted, he hinted, too, at an abiding, romantic faith not unlike that of Kennan. While public opinion in its communicated forms “may roughly indicate the American mind’s lack of imagination, they give only a dim inkling of its native intelligence and moral reserves,” Morgenthau wrote. These were reserves Morgenthau had come to admire during World War II. See Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Knopf, 1951), p. 231. Morgenthau’s faith was amply rewarded during the crisis over Vietnam. See Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 211-249.

<sup>14</sup> George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954); George F. Kennan, *Russia, the Atom, and the West* (New York: Harper’s, 1958); George F. Kennan, *The Cloud of Danger: Current Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

philanthropies and by federal funding, who attempted to run American foreign policy with as little reference to the public as possible. They founded a postwar generation of think tanks — RAND, MIT’s Center for International Studies, and a host of others — that were of value because of their service to the state through classified research, not, as had been the case in the interwar period, because of their influence with the public.<sup>15</sup>

Yet it is crucial to remember that while these new structures of knowledge creation were undeniably influential and constituted drastically altered understandings of the uses of research, the roots of authority, and the role of the people, Lippmann, Kennan, and their followers by no means killed off more traditional views of democracy. It was precisely because their views were so drastic, so far outside the political mainstream, that they had to deploy such polemical force in advocating them. And as thirty years earlier, plenty of their readers mounted a counter-attack on what seemed to be anti-democratic views. While none had the intellectual swagger of a Dewey, nor the prestige of a Baker, the critics’ critics marshalled understandings of democracy that were much more commonly held in political life.

That State Department officials rubbished such critiques, however much they agreed in private, was indicative of this. “Foreign policy isn’t just something that’s conducted by secretaries of state and by ambassadors in different parts of the world,” said John Foster Dulles in a televised address six days after taking office; “every one of you has got a part in making a successful foreign

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<sup>15</sup> Bessner, *Democracy in Exile*; Donald E. Abelson, *American Think-Tanks and Their Role in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); Priscilla Roberts, “A Century of International Affairs Think Tanks in Historical Perspective,” *International Journal* 70 (2015), pp. 535-555.

policy for the United States.”<sup>16</sup> The department’s publications explained in detail how public opinion made a positive contribution to foreign policy, and how certain forms of participation were beneficial.<sup>17</sup> Two assistant secretaries of state for public affairs, Edward Barrett and Andrew Berding, wrote books after they left the department that urged readers to inform themselves, making explicit that it was possible and valuable to understand and contribute to foreign affairs.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most sensitive rebuttal from former diplomatic officials came from Dorothy Fosdick, a political theorist who ended up working for Kennan on the department’s Policy Planning Staff. In *Common Sense and World Affairs*, Fosdick insisted that “foreign policy is the business of every American,” and she provided a number of handy aphorisms to help her readers understand it. But Fosdick feared that even those who were already interested in foreign affairs might all too easily fall prey to disillusion. “Wanting to contribute to a sensible foreign policy, many of us are at a loss what to do about it,” she wrote, for “with big decisions made in Washington, D.C., what can a mere individual in Oshkosh achieve?” Fosdick urged her readers to refuse to ignore foreign affairs, to have empathy for officials and their dilemmas, and to recognize that everyone had limited knowledge and understanding — even policymakers.<sup>19</sup>

There was plenty of dissent to Lippmann and Kennan’s views elsewhere in the foreign policy elite, too, even among higher-ups at the Council on Foreign Relations. In *Diplomacy in a*

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<sup>16</sup> John Foster Dulles, “A Survey of Foreign Policy Problems,” January 27, 1953, *Department of State Bulletin* (February 9, 1953), p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Department of State, *How Foreign Policy is Made* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1954).

<sup>18</sup> Edward W. Barrett, *Truth is Our Weapon* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1953); Andrew H. Berding, *Foreign Affairs and You! How American Foreign Policy is Made and What it Means to You* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962).

<sup>19</sup> Dorothy Fosdick, *Common Sense and World Affairs* (Boston: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), pp. vii-viii, 181-190.

*Democracy*, the Council president and former Brown University chief Henry Wriston complained that “the discussion has led many to feel that we are a nation, if not of morons, at least with moronic tendencies.” If the public’s “ignorance, disinterest, and incompetence” was simply assumed, he wrote, “we arrive at a dim outlook upon democracy in general and our governmental procedures in particular.” As an educator Wriston naturally believed that education could bridge the gap, archly admitting that it “may seem not only inadequate but pitifully so” to a “time-weary columnist” or a “professional diplomat.” But if the public needed only to “respond to situations in clear and simple terms,” rather than “deal in nuances, in procedures, in techniques,” it could be trusted. Trying to work outside of these channels was in any case ridiculous. “Schemes for the elimination of political forces in diplomacy are simply efforts to evade the facts of life,” Wriston wrote, obviously thinking of Kennan, Lippmann, and others. “It is absurd to find men arguing for such a utopian program while pretending to deal realistically with world problems.”<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, intellectuals who did not have the critics’ animus towards the broad trajectory of American foreign policy tried to dismantle their arguments in detail. The most prominent was Dexter Perkins, the president of the American Historical Association in 1956 and, importantly, a Council member, Association branch chairman and board director, and State Department planner and historian.<sup>21</sup> Perkins spent a good deal of the 1950s fending off Lippmann and Kennan’s writings, and, rather like Dewey three decades earlier, he granted the critics their terms.<sup>22</sup> Like Lippmann, he accepted that “the mass of men are unschooled in the

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<sup>20</sup> Henry M. Wriston, *Diplomacy in a Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1956), pp. 63-65, 90, 106-110.

<sup>21</sup> Perkins’ rival in diplomatic history, Thomas A. Bailey, was much less sanguine. See Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

<sup>22</sup> Dexter Perkins, *The American Approach to Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952).



details of foreign policy; they have neither the time, the inclination, the special knowledge to study these questions in detail.”<sup>23</sup> Like Kennan, he knew that “bold and sweeping assertions of general principle are likely to be characteristic of American foreign policy.”<sup>24</sup> After all, he wrote, “a diplomacy that rests upon the people must speak to the people.”<sup>25</sup> But Perkins refused to accept that the public had really done so badly. If public opinion controlled government policy, had it not actually achieved quite a lot? “Foreign policy under popular government is by no means *more* susceptible to error than foreign policy under different types of regimes,” he said in a lecture given for the Fund for Adult Education, and “the record of the United States over the last few decades is not one to blush for, and certainly not one which need diminish our faith in popular government itself.”<sup>26</sup> In a review of Kennan’s *American Diplomacy*, Perkins noted that it was “easy to be captious, and hypercritical, with regard to the American record,” and a “mistake to go to extremes.”<sup>27</sup> Even if it were not, the solutions on offer were no better. After all, “folly is not confined to a democratic electorate,” and no elite community had a monopoly on wisdom.<sup>28</sup>

As after World War I, after World War II adult educators initially took the critique as a challenge, not a defeat. On the ground, the Foreign Policy Association made short work of it.

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<sup>23</sup> Dexter Perkins, “Open Diplomacy and Its Critics,” in Dexter Perkins, *Foreign Policy and the American Spirit* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> Dexter Perkins, “Diplomacy and Popular Government,” in Perkins, *Foreign Policy and the American Spirit*, p. 208.

<sup>25</sup> Dexter Perkins, “What is Distinctively American about the Foreign Policy of the United States?” in Perkins, *Foreign Policy and the American Spirit*, p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> Dexter Perkins, *Popular Government and Foreign Policy* (Pasadena: Fund for Adult Education, 1956), p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Dexter Perkins, “American Foreign Policy and its Critics” in Alfred Hinsey Kelly (ed.), *American Foreign Policy and American Democracy* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1954), p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> Perkins, *Popular Government and Foreign Policy*, pp. 8, 63.

Bill Cowan, an Association regional representative in the Midwest, found that local voluntary association leaders responded winningly to calls to “prove the Hamiltons, the de Tocquevilles, and the Lippmanns wrong!”<sup>29</sup> The Association’s whole task, one staffer wrote, was that of “demonstrating the workability of the democratic process in the world affairs field,” in “contradiction to Mr. Lippmann’s ‘public philosophy’.”<sup>30</sup> Like previous adult educators, however, they took useful parts of the critique on board. Lippmann’s “‘public be damned’ approach,” said Nason, was incorrect, but there was enough truth in it to prove that a competing idea, an “intuitive theory of democracy” in which people “automatically” responded to issues “without prodding, encouragement or help,” was wrong too. Nason’s Association was as needed as ever, to train them in “the frame of reference within which specific policies are then determined.”<sup>31</sup>

So precisely because this argument was a reprise of the debates that had taken place after World War I, it was easy enough in public to deploy old arguments in defense of the traditional order. It was less easy, even impossible, in academia, where Lippmann had finally eclipsed Dewey. A small number of leading political thinkers started questioning the basis of participatory democracy during the depression. The president of the American Political Science Association called in 1934 for “the ignorant, the uninformed, and the anti-social” to be stripped

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<sup>29</sup> Bill Cowan to John W. Nason et al, “Preliminary Comments on the ‘Decisions’ program, based on the Organizational Stages of the Michigan Program,” February 29, 1956, FPA, Part II, Box 233. Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* came back into fashion at the start of the cold war, providing a language of exceptionalism, a praise of voluntarism, and, usefully for intellectuals, a profoundly skeptical assessment of whether American democracy could survive contact with world affairs. See Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, p. 50; Sheryl Gordon, “In the Shade of Tocqueville,” PhD thesis, City University of New York, 2011; Matthew Mancini, *Alexis de Tocqueville and American Intellectuals: From His Times to Ours* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Richard C. Rowson, “Whither FPA?” August 25, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 64.

<sup>31</sup> Nason, “Report on the speech delivered by Dr. John W. Nason on June 21, 1955,” John W. Nason Papers, Library and Archives, Hoover Institution, Box 6; Nason, “The Public and United States Foreign Policy,” September 17, 1959, Nason Papers, Box 7.

of their franchise; his successor called for the overthrow of prevailing ideas about popular government.<sup>32</sup> While most political scientists tempered their criticism as war threatened democracy's end, their undermining of its traditional assumptions continued unabated. Joseph Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, for instance, branded the "typical citizen" as a "primitive," indeed "infantile" in politics, and wondered how it was "possible that a doctrine so patently contrary to fact should have survived to this day," when its "theoretical basis, utilitarian rationalism, is dead." People, Schumpeter argued, would never feel "immediate responsibility" for problems beyond their daily lives, so they could not "be carried up the ladder" even by "the meritorious efforts that are being made to go beyond presenting information and to teach the use of it by means of lectures, classes, discussion groups."<sup>33</sup> And attacks on normative democratic theory inevitably led to attacks on those trying to bring democracy up to scratch.

"It is hard for people like ourselves, in the educated upper middle class, to imagine the extent of the willingness of people to forget, to fail to register, to distort, and to overlook," the Harvard University sociologist David Riesman wrote in 1959.<sup>34</sup> What had made it easier was a relentless accumulation of statistical evidence about just how far most Americans were from what Lippmann had called the "omnicompetent" ideal of democratic theory. And although various fields contributed to this, including intelligence testing, it was opinion polling that gave the critique real force. While polling had been promoted by George Gallup and others as the final step towards true democracy, postwar social scientists used the sample survey to show how ill-

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<sup>32</sup> Qu. in Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory*, p. 109.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper's, 1942), pp. 262-265, 271.

<sup>34</sup> David Riesman, "Private People and Public Policy," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (1959) 15, pp. 203-208.

equipped the populace was to govern. Polling was, to be sure, still a controversial technology, certainly in politics, but also in academia. John Ranney charged pollsters with taking snapshots on issues before discussion and participation could turn inklings into opinions.<sup>35</sup> Herbert Blumer saw that surveys made no distinction between respondents active on an issue or not, and ripped opinions out of their social context.<sup>36</sup> But as survey specialists steadily became more respected in psychology, sociology, and political science, it became impossible for other scholars to avoid the weight and consistency of the data they produced.

This was particularly true when it came to public opinion and foreign affairs, over which pollsters had peculiar authority because of early alliances they made with first the Rockefeller Foundation, then the wartime information agencies, then the cold war national security state.<sup>37</sup> The National Opinion Research Center (NORC), for instance, could not have operated without its secret contracts with the State Department from 1944 to 1957; the Survey Research Center (SRC) took 99% of its funding from the federal government in its first year of existence at the University of Michigan in 1946-47, and more than 50% after that.<sup>38</sup> Academic surveyors needed money as they moved out of the wartime propaganda apparatus and attached themselves to universities; the state still needed knowledge about publics foreign and domestic, to cement its new position abroad and at home. The relationship was more than financial, however, but

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<sup>35</sup> John C. Ranney, "Do the Polls Serve Democracy?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 10 (1946), pp. 349-360.

<sup>36</sup> Herbert Blumer, "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling," *American Sociological Review* 13 (1948), pp. 542-549

<sup>37</sup> Jean M. Converse, *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence, 1890-1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 305-378.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 54.

intellectual. Inside and outside government, communications specialists, as psychological warriors called themselves, shared assumptions, shared data, and shared conclusions. Their intellectual heritage and their institution position meant that their aim was not to empower the people they studied, but rather to affect behavior from the top down in the name of strategy.<sup>39</sup> However much ordinary Americans had the opportunity to contest what surveys told them about their buying habits, their sex lives, their racism, or their faiths, the nature of knowledge about world affairs and the ways in which surveys were used meant that public opinion on foreign policy was now partly constructed by experts who set the questions, who provided answers through an information apparatus with extraordinary influence over the mass media, and who set the definitions as to what citizen statesmanship looked like.<sup>40</sup>

Surveys, in other words, made certain forms of participation in public policy legible and appropriate — and others not. Pollsters set extraordinarily high standards, noted David Riesman and Nathan Glazer in 1948, treating all their subjects as if they were a “responsible citizen” who

considers the world in terms of ‘issues’ and considers these issues in the terms in which they are discussed in the press and on the radio, holds a position in a political spectrum which runs in such single dimensions as left-right, or Republican-Democrat-Progressive, and feels it his duty to take sides on public issues both when polled and when called upon to vote.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Amy Fried, *Pathways to Polling: Crisis, Cooperation and the Making of Public Opinion Professions* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 69-133.

<sup>40</sup> For this point as it relates to business and sex, see Igo, *The Averaged American*; on religion, see Robert Wuthnow, *Inventing American Religion: Polls, Surveys, and the Tenuous Quest for a Nation's Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); on civil rights and in general, see Bernhard Fulda, “The Market Place of Political Opinions: Public Opinion Polling and its Publics in Transnational Perspective, 1930-1950,” *Comparativ* 21 (2011), pp. 13-28.

<sup>41</sup> David Riesman and Nathan Glazer, “The Meaning of Opinion,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12 (1948), p. 635.

It was a shock to most academic observers that so few Americans had the capacity, or at least the willingness, to think this way. A majority of Americans, one 1948 report discovered, did not know who the secretary of state was; a third could not give “even the simplest answer” when asked what the United Nations was for.<sup>42</sup> An Office of Naval Research-funded study of Minnesota found that three-quarters of rural people, two-thirds of those who lived in small cities and half of big-city folk could not name George Marshall. Far fewer had any recognition of his Soviet counterpart.<sup>43</sup> Even those able to answer poll questions, the SRC reported, tended not to “understand the issues well enough to know exactly why” they approved a given policy.<sup>44</sup> So although foreign policy opinions might have some structure, George Belknap and Angus Campbell wrote in 1951, “relatively few people have a logic of foreign affairs so well organized and so inclusive as to permit one to predict any specific attitude.” Americans knew so little about foreign affairs that to think of them as “isolationists” or “internationalists” missed the point.<sup>45</sup>

Instead, survey experts constructed hierarchies that, while facially neutral, could all too easily come to define who among the public mattered, and who did not.<sup>46</sup> Reducing the value of an attitude to the extent to which it was supported by pertinent information, surveyors made

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<sup>42</sup> Leonard S. Cottrell and Sylvia Eberhart, *American Opinion on World Affairs in the Atomic Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 13, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Ralph O. Nafziger, Warren C. Engstrom, and Malcolm S. Maclean, “The Mass Media and an Informed Public,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15 (1951), pp. 107-108.

<sup>44</sup> Survey Research Center, *Public Attitudes Toward American Foreign Policy: A Nationwide Survey* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1947), pp. iii, 3.

<sup>45</sup> George Belknap and Angus Campbell, “Political Party Identification and Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15 (1951), p. 603.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Lazarsfeld noted that this dated to Bryce’s pre-World War I *American Commonwealth*. Bryce, Lazarsfeld wrote, distinguished “those who make political decisions” from “those who seriously discuss them and influence the decision makers,” and the “politically inert and uninterested masses” — but “he had no evidence.” Pollsters now did. See Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 21 (1957), p. 48.

factual recall the basic measurement of a citizen's worth, an approach that the State Department favored. In one representative report, the SRC gave a rating of "low" to those who seemed unfamiliar with the United Nations or the atomic bomb; a "high" rating to respondents to those who could give "places where recent events of importance have occurred," name "persons prominent in world affairs," or describe issues like the Baruch plan; and left everyone else in the middle. A third of Americans was assigned to each group. Rating adequacy in this pop-quiz way naturally effaced other forms of engagement, privileging the political forms of those who looked and talked most like the surveyors themselves. And although the constructions of the public were essentially arbitrary, they inevitably showed correlations with the power structures that correlated with information intake. Men were more likely to be better-informed than women. 62% of professionals were well-informed, but just 28% of semi- or unskilled workers. 24% of those earning \$5,000 qualified, while just 1% of those earning under \$500 counted. Education, circularly, was always regarded as the best guide. 62% of those respondents who went to college proved to be highly informed, but only 13% of those who did not complete grade school.<sup>47</sup>

Foreign affairs, it appeared in cross-tabulation after cross-tabulation, was the preserve of an educated elite. For some, like the SRC's consultant to the Council on Foreign Relations study group on public opinion in 1947, this meant that a massive propaganda campaign was in order, to "bring light into the areas of ignorance" and make foreign policy "democratic in concept and effective in action."<sup>48</sup> For others, the tiny number of Americans — perhaps only a tenth — who

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<sup>47</sup> Survey Research Center, *Public Reaction to the Atomic Bomb and World Affairs* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1949), pp. 138-140.

<sup>48</sup> Martin Kreisberg, "Dark Areas of Ignorance," in Lester Markel (ed.), *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1949), pp. 49-63.

engaged in “active” citizenship put inherent limits on any such program.<sup>49</sup> As many as five in six Americans opened a newspaper, but far fewer read the news pages and a minuscule number read any foreign news.<sup>50</sup> Plenty of Americans were members of voluntary associations that fostered discussion of world affairs as part of their broader programs, but only a few actually recognized them as such. 47% of Cincinnati adults were members of at least one voluntary association (defined to include unions and church groups) in 1947, but only 15% said they belonged to “any groups or organizations or attend any meetings where they talk about world affairs.”<sup>51</sup> (National surveys put this number anywhere between 10% and 16%.)<sup>52</sup> As it was not the case that such groups lacked world affairs programming, one academic surmised, “most people simply do not participate in the world affairs discussions of any of the groups to which they belong.”<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, the very ideal of democratic participation was held strictly by a few, at least as applied to foreign policy. A confidential report from the SRC to the State Department in 1948 found that “relatively few people are politically active” among even the best-informed third of the nation, with voting their only real political activity.<sup>54</sup> The SRC found that only 43% of

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<sup>49</sup> SRC, *Public Reaction*, pp. 110-114; Benjamin Shimberg, “Information and Attitudes Toward World Affairs,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 40 (1949), pp. 206-222; Julian L. Woodward and Elmo Roper, “Political Activity of American Citizens,” *American Political Science Review* 44 (1950), pp. 872-885.

<sup>50</sup> Kreisberg, “Dark Areas of Ignorance,” pp. 60-62.

<sup>51</sup> National Opinion Research Center, *Cincinnati Looks at the United Nations*, (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 1948), pp. 27-28.

<sup>52</sup> David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion* (New York: Knopf, 1951), p. 221.

<sup>53</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *Citizen Education in World Affairs* (Princeton: Center for International Studies, 1953), pp. 37-38.

<sup>54</sup> Survey Research Center, “Citizen Participation in Problems of World Affairs,” Study No. 18-III, February 1948, in RG 59, Bureau of Public Affairs, Miscellaneous Records, Lot 53D350, Box 40.



respondents to an Albany survey believed that the government ought to pay attention to public opinion, while 41% said it should just do whatever it pleased. 31% of respondents said that there was “nothing a citizen can do” to influence foreign policy, while 40% thought that there might be something, but they had not bothered to do it. Whereas commercial pollsters promoted the idea that opinion polls were inherently and usefully democratic, academic surveyors therefore saw stark implications in their work. “A democratic society,” the SRC researchers concluded in 1949, “implies an informed and active electorate, but studies in the field of foreign affairs have revealed large numbers of people who have little information and few opinions about international events.”<sup>55</sup>

What kind of democracy would be possible when it came to foreign affairs, then? Classical assumptions were now untenable. “If we accept the Greek’s definition of an idiot as a privatized man,” wrote the sociologist C. Wright Mills, meaning men without concern for public affairs, “then we must conclude that the U.S. citizenry is now largely composed of idiots.”<sup>56</sup> What this meant, Mills concluded in *The Power Elite* in 1956, was that “the images of the public of classic democracy which are still used as the working justifications of power in American society” were no more than a “fairy tale,” for “the public of public opinion is recognized by all those who have considered it carefully as something less than it once was.”<sup>57</sup> Mills may have been an intellectual radical in some ways, but in this regard his views were wholly mainstream. It

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<sup>55</sup> Survey Research Center, *Interest, Information, and Attitudes in the Field of World Affairs* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1949), pp. 6, 82-84. This research was elaborated for the State Department before publication. See Survey Research Center, “Public Interest in World Affairs: A Memorandum for Information Officers,” December 1949, RG 59, Bureau of Public Affairs, Miscellaneous Records, Box 40.

<sup>56</sup> C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 328.

<sup>57</sup> C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 300.

would be better, many therefore agreed, not to pretend that the public could or should have the all-conquering role that traditional theory assigned it. McCarthyism seemed anyway to hint that the United States might not escape the fate of other mass societies, which were prone to totalitarianism, as émigrés like Hannah Arendt, Theodore Adorno, and Erich Fromm taught.<sup>58</sup> If surveys showed that the people were not up to the task of democracy, and if mass politics was anyway to be feared, why should political scientists keep telling the fairy tale?

Claiming to describe American democracy as it truly was, postwar behavioralists stripped away the normative concerns of their predecessors. After all, democracy worked, even in the absence of properly informed, reasoning publics.<sup>59</sup> Political indifference became not a danger to the system, but that system's guarantor. Indifferent citizens could be left to their own devices, for they had no power in a centralized, administrative system anyway. Social scientists, who had the expertise that the public lacked, would stand in for the people, advising elites who could and should be trusted to lead.<sup>60</sup> Political theorists may have differed on how society was actually structured and on how influence and power were distributed within it, but they came slowly to agree that ordinary citizens had, and should have, a limited role in their democracy.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> David Paul Haney, *The Americanization of Social Science: Intellectuals and Public Responsibility in the Postwar United States* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), pp. 88-121.

<sup>59</sup> This is usually attributed to Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), but it was common.

<sup>60</sup> Purcell, *Crisis of Democratic Theory*, pp. 107-110, 216-261; Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University*, pp. 340-364; Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, pp. 40-55.

<sup>61</sup> Several theorists continued to argue that citizen competence could and should be brought up to the level expected by traditional theory. See, e.g., Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley, "The Current Status of American Public Opinion," in National Council for the Social Sciences, *Yearbook* (Arlington: National Council for the Social Sciences, 1950), pp. 11-34; Bernard Berelson, "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 16 (1952), pp. 313-330. Leading pluralists continued to claim that they thought the state of the public was

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Visions of democracy that warned against the wisdom of popular participation found a natural welcome among students of international politics. This was not true just of a new breed of international relations theorists, cultivated by the Rockefeller Foundation, but of scholars who tackled the problem of public opinion directly.<sup>62</sup> Ironically enough, a diminished place for the public emerged principally from the Yale Institute of International Studies, where Brooks Emeny had studied and taught. Three scholars there did the most damage to Emeny's project, the most sympathetic of whom was Robert A. Dahl.

In *Congress and Foreign Policy*, Dahl found himself stuck between prewar Deweyanism and postwar pluralism. "How," Dahl asked, "can the ordinary citizen — or even the highly educated citizen who is not a specialist — hope to possess an intelligent judgment on techniques for atomic energy control?" He obviously could not, and so it was no surprise that so many Americans rejected any such responsibility. The problem was how to prevent authoritarianism, including "expert authoritarianism," to "enable the citizen to discard some of his burden and yet render meaningful his power to determine the basic preferences pursued by the nation."

Although Dahl thought that traditional remedies might work to reconcile these competing imperatives, he concluded, too, that foreign affairs groups reached "too restricted a clientele to be

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deplorable, even as they built their theories on continued non-participation. See, e.g., Robert A. Dahl, "Further Reflections on 'The Elitist Theory of Democracy,'" *American Political Science Review* 60 (1966), pp. 296-305.

<sup>62</sup> Nicholas Guilhot (ed.), *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

more than pitifully inadequate.” With no personal history as a communications specialist, and no faith in the idea of expert rule in an age of total war, Dahl was stuck.<sup>63</sup>

The future of theory belonged instead to the psychological warriors. Drawing on wartime assumptions, datasets, and service, they militarized democratic theory for the purposes of a cold war. The line between what was acceptable in war and what was not in peace, so bitterly fought over after World War I, was obliterated after World War II. Postwar textbooks and anthologies with names like *Process and Effects of Mass Communications* and *Public Opinion and Propaganda* ignored distinctions between civilian and military techniques, domestic and foreign audiences, democratic and totalitarian methods.<sup>64</sup> Social scientists freely applied insights from the study of Nazism, indeed the Soviet Union, to their theories about the people at home. Wartime emergency measures bled into peacetime democracy. And, just as in a war, the public was to be managed in such a way that it would serve strategic aims. When in government, psychological warriors saw public opinion primarily as a resource for policymakers; when out of government, psychological warriors theorized public participation as if it related and could only ever relate to policy. Public opinion, as the head of the Council on Foreign Relations study group on the topic put it in 1949, was merely an “instrument.”<sup>65</sup>

Gabriel Almond was the crucial figure who turned the theory of public opinion from one of public deliberation to one of policy processes. A doctoral student of Harold Lasswell’s at the

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<sup>63</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Congress and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), pp. 3, 74, 78, 88-94, 239.

<sup>64</sup> Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>65</sup> Lester Markel, “Opportunity or Disaster?” in Markel (ed.), *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, p. 213. The study group was not influential; Markel’s attempt to reprise it in 1955 failed through lack of interest. See Committee on Studies, “Proposed Study of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” January 3, 1955, CFR, Series 1, Box 6.

University of Chicago, Almond had been a wartime propaganda analyst at the Office of Facts and Figures and the Office of War Information, and a member of the Morale Division of the Strategic Bombing Survey. He moved to Yale in 1947, where he was Dahl's colleague until a blockbuster, front-page defection to Princeton in 1951. Fully minded that social scientists could and should serve the state, Almond consulted throughout the national security bureaucracy, including the State Department, the Office of Naval Research, the Psychological Strategy Board, RAND, and the Air Force. A protégé of John Gardner, another wartime psychological warrior who took up a perch at the Carnegie Corporation and used his grants to promote a Lasswellian view of the world, Almond's work was also supported, as Lasswell's had been, by Rockefeller. Almond had the experience, contacts, and intellectual firepower to make his research stick.<sup>66</sup>

After its publication in 1950, Almond's *The American People and Foreign Policy* became the textbook treatment of the topic. Almond's aim was to assess the "psychological potential" of American people in a cold war, and on these grounds, it took him just a few introductory pages to shred classical theory. Mass democracy, he wrote, "obviously" made impossible "a direct and literal control of public policy by public opinion. To think otherwise, to believe that "any people in the mass and in the modern era" could make foreign policy reflected assumptions that were "inherently unrealizable," and which were a distraction from "the kind of popular control over public policy which is possible today." If anything, those who took the democratic "myth" literally, those who put forward "moralistic exhortations to the public to inform itself and to play an active role in policy-making" were anti-democratic. The layman "in most cases and in good

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<sup>66</sup> Ido Oren, *Our Enemies and US: America's Rivalries and the Making of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 134-147. For another reading of Almond, see Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, pp. 51-55.

sense” rejected such a role, responding to foreign policy with “indifference.” It was therefore pointless to try to make statesmen out of citizens. The nature of foreign policy was far too complex, let alone military or security policy.<sup>67</sup> Intellectually unwise, the idea was practically impossible. Experiments had demonstrated that, outside a laboratory setting in which it was feasible to alter opinions, in the general public there was a “mass immunity to information on foreign policy problems.”<sup>68</sup> The same advertising techniques that sold household goods had failed time and again to sell foreign policies. “The point seems to be,” Almond argued, “that the masses are already predisposed to want automobiles, refrigerators, and toothpaste, but they are not

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<sup>67</sup> On these points, see Gabriel A. Almond, “Public Opinion and National Security Policy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 (1956), pp. 371-378.

<sup>68</sup> Widespread immunity to political information — except the highly interested and partisan — was a crucial finding of Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), pp. 124-125. This was backed up during the war, after which scholars reported their pessimism that the general public could easily be reached and its opinions changed. See Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Sheatsley, “Some Reasons Why Information Campaigns Fail,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 11 (1946), pp. 412-423; Dorwin Cartwright, “Some Principles of Mass Persuasion,” *Human Relations* 2 (1949), pp. 253-267; Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, “Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action,” in Lyman Bryson (ed.), *The Communication of Ideas* (New York: Harper, 1948), pp. 95-118; Helen J. Kaufmann, “Implications of Domestic Research for International Communications Research,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 16 (1952), pp. 552-560. The most consequential and worrisome evidence for foreign affairs groups, and what Almond was likely referring to specifically here, was a unique United Nations crash campaign in Cincinnati in the winter of 1947-48. A deluge of publicity failed to improve interest, information levels, or opinions. It indicated, the NORC reported, “the enormous difficulty of reaching an audience unless there is already positive motivation present.” National Opinion Research Center, *Cincinnati Looks at the United Nations* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 1948); National Opinion Research Center, *Cincinnati Looks Again* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 1948); Shirley A. Star and Helen MacGill Hughes, “Report on an Educational Campaign: The Cincinnati Plan for the United Nations,” *American Journal of Sociology* 55 (1950), pp. 389-400. Corporate advertisers who were tasked with inculcating an “American Way,” and with selling foreign policy did not believe any of this, of course. See Daniel L. Lykins, *From Total War to Total Diplomacy: The Advertising Council and the Construction of the Cold War Consensus* (Westport: Praeger, 2003); Inger L. Stole, *Advertising at War: Business, Consumers, and Government in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Andrew Johnstone, “Spinning War and Peace: Foreign Relations and Public Relations on the Eve of World War II,” *Journal of American Studies* 53 (2019), pp. 223-251.

predisposed to want information about the United Nations or the control of atomic energy.” Such information, he concluded with the SRC, “has no immediate utility or meaning.”<sup>69</sup>

A new vision of what it meant to craft a democratic foreign policy was therefore in order. Almond erected a hierarchy of control in the wreckage of the participatory polity. Making up a vast majority of the citizenry was a mass, little more than a dormant mob. Its attitudes ranged from “unstructured moods in periods of equilibrium to simplification in periods of crisis.” Its constituents had not opinions but attitudes, lacking “intellectual structure and factual content.” They looked to their leaders for cues and listened for tone and emotion rather than facts. They were ripe, in other words, for manipulation by those trained in the ways of mental warfare. As Almond put it, the “superficiality and instability of public concern places enormous power in the hands of the policy and opinion elites.” The masses had, in their wisdom, simply accepted a division of labor, in which “mass inattention to problems of public policy” had been balanced by the “accentuation of elite attention.” Elites would debate policies “before” — in front of, not among — a public comprised of the “college-trained, upper-income, ‘mental-worker’ stratum of the population,” to which there was a standing, open invitation to others “ready to make the essential sacrifices of time and energy.” The policies that won out would then be sold, with difficulty, to the volatile, ignorant mass. Unlike more radical social scientists who hoped to seal off the public as much as possible, Almond understood the need for a minimally participatory foreign policy, for if there was no real policy competition, or if elites chose to exclude the public entirely, “elite biases will obscure significant security interests.” He simply feared that the general

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<sup>69</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), pp. 3-8, 53, 232.

public's incompetence meant there was "no corrective available in matters calling for immediate action if serious miscalculations are made at the elite level."<sup>70</sup> This, experts would discover in short order.

Almond's theory at once restricted the foreign policy public, then, and left room for those who still believed that it needed educating. Yet his was a propagandist's construction of the public, designed to make clear the need for the techniques he himself had mastered. He had a personal and professional stake in finding acceptance for his view of the polity, and his means of managing it, competing as he was for foundation funding and government contracts. For that reason, he specifically addressed his book to "those responsible for the formulation and execution of public information programs in the foreign policy field" and launched a slashing attack on those who adhered to outdated models.

The Foreign Policy Association offered an easy target. There were, Almond insisted, definite limits on the kinds and numbers of people who would likely be interested in foreign affairs, imposed by wealth and education. He lambasted those who would "make experts and specialists of laymen." More cuttingly, he preached that "little more than self-intoxication results from a grass roots campaign in Middletown, Ohio, 'to relate Middletowners to the world in which we live.'" (The choice of Ohio was surely not a coincidence.) There was no point in trying to create a "democracy of participation and opportunity" where it was neither wanted nor viable, among the "poor and ignorant of the cities and the countryside." While slower processes of formal education worked their way through the social structure, foreign affairs groups could help

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<sup>70</sup> Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, pp. 56, 69, 85, 127, 231-233.



to build “audience depth,” taking a “selective and qualitative” approach to “enlarging the attentive public and training the elite cadres,” while confronting “the common man continually with opportunities to be informed and involved in foreign policy decisions.” But they should be under no illusions. “If we shout at the wall,” Almond wrote, “we can take a certain satisfaction in a ringing echo.” Better, Almond, said, to “come up closer,” to “find openings through which a quiet word might reach a listening ear.”<sup>71</sup>

While Almond was widely read by practitioners and in universities, he was not as influential on grass-roots activism as a student he shared with Dahl, Bernard C. Cohen. An Army veteran, Cohen received his doctorate from Yale in 1952, by which point he had already been lured to Princeton with Almond, as a lecturer at the Center for International Studies. Funded by a special grant from the Carnegie Endowment and indirectly by the Rockefeller Foundation, Cohen explicitly applied the latest research on public opinion to the foreign affairs infrastructure, combining it with interviews and data provided by the Endowment, the Association, the World Peace Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and five World Affairs Councils or equivalents.<sup>72</sup> First submitted as a brutal confidential report to the Endowment in December 1951, even before the Association had received its full grant from the Fund for Adult Education, Cohen’s made vivid what many of its participants already feared when it was published in 1953. It remained a defining analysis.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, pp. 6, 10, 150, 233, 240.

<sup>72</sup> For the funding, see Paulo J. Ramos, “Role of the Yale Institute of International Studies in the construction of the United States National Security Ideology, 1935—1951,” PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1993, p. 195.

<sup>73</sup> Ruth A. Morton to Bette Knapp, April 10, 1958, FPA, Part I, Box 4; Robert A. Wiener to Howard H. Cammack, June 9, 1958, FPA, Part I, Box 19; Stanley T. Gordon to Sutton, “F.P.A. Program Shifts,” July 21, 1971, FF, FA732C, Grant 72-134, Reel 2362.

Cohen's basic insight was that a fundamental clash of democratic theories was now at work, one normative, the other based on a statistical construction of reality. The world affairs groups adhered to a classical view. "The objective," he wrote in his 1951 report,

of an informed and alert citizenry dispatching with acumen the complex problems of foreign policy has its roots in a traditional democratic theory, a theory which implies that democracy functions only through the motive participation of all citizens, and that political apathy is one of the worst sins against democracy.

And yet it was clear to Cohen as it was to Almond and others that "in the world in which we live today, a functioning democracy operates without the active participation of large numbers of politically apathetic citizens." Polls had revealed "with the utmost clarity and consistency" that much of the population was "totally without interest in the subject matter of foreign affairs and foreign policy, and has no opinion on any aspect of it." This situation, Cohen argued, was likely to endure, "short of sweeping social and psychological changes in the population at large." Mass education would always fail, for foreign policy groups "confront a population that accepts political apathy as the prerogative of any citizen." Democracy as traditionally conceived would endure, but only among the interested and articulate.

What then would this mean for institutions dedicated to the vague if lofty ideal of a democratic foreign policy, institutions at once failing to expand their audience and to have much influence on policy? "It is not to be expected," Cohen admitted, "that organizations having a solidly-rooted democratic tradition as well as a lively faith in democracy would give up the democratic aspects of their goals and concentrate only on the instrumental." They would be disturbed, as well as inconvenienced, "to discover that reality does not conform with time-hallowed theory." And yet, Cohen believed as did a generation of his peers, "it is far easier to

change theory so that it conforms to reality than the other way around.”<sup>74</sup> It was not necessarily easier, however, to do so in practice, and Cohen knew that changing the underlying aspirations of the foreign affairs groups to bring them more in line with the expert-led, elitist democracy that scholars now constructed would be hard. Their leaders “dare not talk in terms that may be construed as ‘undemocratic,’” in the old-fashioned sense of the term, Cohen wrote, but unless they did, their objectives would remain unfulfilled.<sup>75</sup>

The Councils already appealed to an elite, but the wrong one. Their audiences were highly educated, probably older, certainly wealthy, usually made up of professional men and politically active housewives, and likely, at a good guess, to be internationalist Republicans. Attendance from lower income groups, or from labor, agriculture, and “ethnic and racial minorities” was slim, if not completely absent. Even if “sparse representation is not due to a widespread conspiracy or even desire to exclude,” Cohen noted, the forms in which the groups sought participation presumed a certain kind of person would get involved. Lectures were delivered at luncheons, which had to be paid for if attendance was possible; seminars took time, preparation, and access to literature; study groups required commitment. Not only was this a forbidding, costly routine to many, it also meant that, even among actual members of the groups, energetic participation was limited.

This would not necessarily have mattered if the foreign affairs groups were reaching particularly influential citizens, Cohen thought, or if they were bringing into their fold the

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<sup>74</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *Private Organizations and Public Education in World Affairs* (Princeton: Center for International Studies, 1951), pp. 201-206.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *Citizen Education in World Affairs* (Princeton: Center for International Studies, 1953), p. 73.

mystical “opinion leaders” that Lazarsfeld and others had shown operated horizontally across all levels society, rather than solely from an elite vertically down. But now almost nobody needed to join a World Affairs Council, either to express their interest in foreign policy or to get information about it. It might be true that the Association and its brethren had “fostered both the increased popular interest and the availability of information,” Cohen wrote, but “the very argument itself bears witness to the fact that their original function has been realized to a degree far exceeding the wildest hopes of even fifteen years ago.” At the same time, the Councils’ audiences were inherently limited. Even if “the facilities at their disposal were of the first magnitude,” Cohen argued, Councils and their like “could still reach only *some* of the people, since all the people are not attentive to foreign policy communications.” If they went through the mass media, only the interested would listen; if they went through other voluntary associations, only a few were eager to talk about foreign policy even there; if they took a direct approach, they would be wasting their time.<sup>76</sup>

Cohen’s insistence that foreign affairs groups necessarily had a small audience, let alone an active public, dictated the kinds of things he thought that they should do. “The prospect is not one of replacing an educational, social and financial elite with a policy and opinion elite,” he wrote, knowing that the groups could not afford to alienate their existing members, “but only of supplementing the former with the latter.” Councils should try to reach individuals with specific, demonstrable influence on policymaking, or, if they could find them, opinion leaders on various

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<sup>76</sup> Cohen, *Citizen Education in World Affairs*, pp. 73-99.

issues. Whereas they had once worked to set the public's agenda for discussion of foreign affairs, now they should follow the lead of the state, for

so long as organizations continue to discuss 'foreign affairs' that may be unrelated to problems facing American policy-makers, or to discuss American policy after unknown alternatives have been discarded by official policy-makers, this kind of effective contribution is made more difficult.

Even Cohen, like his advisors, did not go so far as to belittle the absolute need for such institutions. They were useful as a way of reinforcing the mass media, as a physical invitation to the foreign-policy world, as places for the training of public officials, as non-partisan sites for policy statements, as an outlet for women. But these activities were to be restricted to those few Americans properly interested in foreign policy already. Councils could do an important job by helping to "develop among the foreign policy public a capacity to approach and understand problems of foreign policy with the casual expertise that many Americans now apply to labor policy, inflation control, or even baseball." Even that, Cohen understood, was a severe restriction of activists' wildest hopes.<sup>77</sup>

The thinking of most world affairs organizations bore "the stamp of the years when social science research had neither insights nor methods that could be brought effectively to bear on questions involving this measurable behavior," Cohen wrote in 1951, but when his report was published in 1953 this changed.<sup>78</sup> It set off a lasting engagement between social scientists and practitioners that had serious, lasting consequences. Cohen's final text came out on October 1, 1953. By the end of that month, he, Almond, and Hadley Cantril had promoted its results at a

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<sup>77</sup> Cohen, *Citizen Education in World Affairs*, pp. 127-143.

<sup>78</sup> Cohen, *Private Organizations and Public Education in World Affairs*, p. 50.

global Conference of Leaders of Institutes of World Affairs held at Princeton.<sup>79</sup> The Association's board received Cohen's report in November 1953. The staff, later that month, unsuccessfully asked the Fund for Adult Education for \$50,000 a year to "be spent in study to find some of the answers to what determines public opinion in a democracy."<sup>80</sup> By June 1954, the Association was holding a conference called "Reaching the Wider American Audience," and featuring as speakers the pollsters Elmo Roper, William Scott, and William Lydgate, a Gallup associate who joined that Association's board that year.<sup>81</sup> The conference's bibliography included not only the usual books on community organizing and adult education, but texts on propaganda techniques, sociology, group dynamics, and advertising.<sup>82</sup>

Intellectual history is not often a simple translation of theory into practice, however. Just as there was room for policymakers not to listen to experts, so too was there room for activists to listen creatively.<sup>83</sup> The results of this engagement were not preordained, particularly as the social scientists were challenging not just the educators' methods, but their fundamental assumptions, their entire way of being. Those educators who read the research could choose simply to ignore it. Brooks Emeny, for instance, invited Almond to serve on the Association committee that

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<sup>79</sup> Richard Rowson, "Field Report: Conference at Princeton University for Leaders of Institutes of World Affairs, October 23rd, 1953," December 22, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 16; "Conference of Leaders of Institutes of World Affairs, October 20-31, 1953," FPA, Part II, Box 230.

<sup>80</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors," November 19, 1953, FPA, Part II, Box 16; "Memorandum for the Fund for Adult Education," November 24, 1953, FPA, Part II, Box 84.

<sup>81</sup> William A. Lydgate, *What America Thinks* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1954).

<sup>82</sup> Nason, "Bibliography," June 3, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 78.

<sup>83</sup> On the limits of the relationship between research and the state, see Engerman, *Know Your Enemy*, pp. 1-10.

curtailed its publication program in 1951, and he praised Cohen's report.<sup>84</sup> In a speech in 1955, however, he argued that their work simply showed that "only a beginning had been made toward the broader public of the land." Cohen had not sufficiently taken note of the Councils that had seen success, so the creation of still more Councils was easy to justify.<sup>85</sup>

Emeny's successors at the Association took Cohen's challenge much more seriously. Nason's rapidly expanding staff read voraciously, grappling with social scientific critiques, compiling bibliographies. In April 1954, they invited Cohen and his boss, the Center of International Studies chief Frederick Dunn, to address the National Program Committee at Emeny's Princeton home. Cohen made a poor personal impression, and was found to be too pessimistic, "operating in the abstract with obvious weaknesses."<sup>86</sup> Even so, Eustace Seligman, John Foster Dulles's law partner and the chairman of the board, told Nason that while Cohen's "whole approach is unduly theoretical, nevertheless some of his other ideas are constructive."<sup>87</sup> At a board meeting in May 1954, Cohen's work was greeted as a welcome chance to clarify the Association's policies, to once again question the balance between serving the interested and interesting those who needed better to be served. While the board agreed with Cohen that too few Americans were being reached, they did not agree with Cohen that few Americans could be reached at all. Anna Lord Strauss, a powerful figure on the boards of the Association and the Fund for Adult Education who had been the president of the League of Women Voters and a

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<sup>84</sup> "Main Conclusions of Ad Hoc Committee on Publications of the FPA," March 21, 1951, FPA, Part II, Box 15.

<sup>85</sup> Brooks Emeny, "Non-Governmental Organizations in International Affairs," *Social Science* 30 (1955), pp. 239-243.

<sup>86</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program," April 2-3, 1954, FPA, Part I, Reel 4.

<sup>87</sup> Eustace Seligman to Nason, May 24, 1954, FPA, Part II, Box 25.

delegate to the United Nations, thought that the Association had barely tried. If Cohen had demonstrated foreign affairs groups were only appealing to an already converted elite, she said, they could now afford to start working “from the bottom up.”<sup>88</sup>

The fact that there was no such thing as “the” American public was perhaps the most obvious and consequential lesson that the Association, and Nason in particular, learned from this new class of experts. Before engaging this literature, Nason had, like his predecessors, thought primarily of the “American people” as a whole, or at least as rooted in their communities. The aim, he wrote in a reflection on the Association’s program in October 1952, remained to extend knowledge and understanding to “the great majority of the American people who have not by custom and circumstance been accustomed to think in international terms.” In his early speeches, he displayed no sense of targeting a particular audience, nor how to reach them except through particular technologies.<sup>89</sup> After reading Cohen, however, Nason started constructing hierarchies that reframed theory to match his vision, at once using it to cut out of operational discussion tens of millions of Americans, and to reject the academic conclusion that tens of millions more were probably beyond reach.

At a conference of world affairs educators in December 1953, Nason split Americans into three groups, the categories for which he actually took not from Cohen or Almond, but a report that he received around the same time from consultants at McKinsey & Company.<sup>90</sup> At the top,

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<sup>88</sup> “Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors,” May 20, 1954, FPA, Part II, Box 16; Nason to MLB, June 3, 1954, Nason Papers, Box 6.

<sup>89</sup> Nason, “Some Reflections on Program relating to the Foreign Policy Association,” October 28, 1952, Nason Papers, Box 34.

<sup>90</sup> Various models were available to split the population. The Survey Research Center set the tone with its equal, tripartite division, as seen above. The Michigan survey Martin Kreisberg altered the numbers, but not the structure: 25% of the populace, to him, was “informed,” 45% was “aware,” and 30% was unaware. See Kreisberg, “Dark Areas



there was the 15% of the population at the top who were well-informed and probably influential. Foreign affairs groups, despite their small memberships, had long reached people from this group, Almond's elite and "attentive public" wrapped into one. But Nason did not cast aside the rest as a moody mass. At the bottom, he thought there was a 35% who likely did not vote, who were "politically inert," who were completely unaware of foreign affairs even in crises, and could be written off as "beyond the pale," as he once put it elsewhere. In the middle was a 50% who were marginally informed, "intermittently interested," and "capable of casual exposure and comment." Nason's audience of educators split over whether this group was capable of "learning enough for sound judgments," and how best to reach them. And Nason, too, understood that a shallow education was probably the best that could be hoped for. "All we can hope to do," he said in 1955, "is to increase the amount of exposure that they get to these issues and then trust in the best democratic sense that with a better exposure they will come to the right decision."<sup>91</sup>

Even the Ford Foundation was willing to go along with the Association's creative reading. The Foundation took over the Association's funding from the Fund in 1956, placing it alongside the Council on Foreign Relations within its International Affairs program. The Association's first grant proposal reflected the influence of social science, but rejected its most pessimistic conclusions. It made clear that it thought it had already "converted" the ten to fifteen percent of the population who it believed were "actively interested in foreign affairs and

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of Ignorance," p. 51. Bernard Berelson put forward an unusual, four-part system, with 20% who were "active and regular political discussants," 25% who engaged occasionally, another 25% who engaged only if there were "dramatic political events," and a "residual group" of 30% that did not engage at all. See Berelson, "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion," p. 323. All this shows just how arbitrarily constructed were ideas about the public at this point.

<sup>91</sup> "Regional Conference on World Affairs Education, Asilomar, December 4-6, 1953," FPA, Part I, Box 1; McKinsey & Company, "Evaluation of the Foreign Policy Association Program," December 1953, FPA, Part II, Box 2; Nason, "Foreign Policy and the American Citizen," November 2, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 20.

reasonably well informed on the major issues.” At least a third of the people were “completely apathetic,” “for all practical purposes unreachable, and all preaching to them is a waste of breath.” In the middle were found “citizens who may not be eager to learn about international affairs, but who are capable of taking an interest and forming judgments of their own.” These were the people whose attitudes structured the boundaries of the politically possible, and although they primarily thought in attitudinal terms, they were far more competent, rational, and promising than Almond and others were prepared to allow. The minimum that should be accepted from this “largest circle of potential audience” was

the broadest possible awareness, not necessarily verbalized, about the fundamental changes in the nature and cause of war and peace; of the organic bonds by which our fortunes are united willy-nilly with the fortunes of our fellowmen all over the world; and of the democratic principles which are the true sinews of our national power both to produce and to persuade.

This, the Association admitted, was “an uncomfortably large group for an educational venture,” but the “crucial group in our democracy.”<sup>92</sup> It believed that they could be won *en masse* even with the calming of the cold war.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> “Proposal to the Ford Foundation from the Foreign Policy Association,” January 23, 1956, FF, FA732G, Reel 4159, Grant 56-117; “Some Points on FPA Proposal to the Ford Foundation,” February 20, 1956, FF, FA732G, Reel 4159, Grant 56-117.

<sup>93</sup> A perceived reduction in threat did not *cause* this bid for the mass. Instead, threat was mostly used as a justification, invoked in grant proposals as a framing device. Even so, a few months before the Association sent off its proposal to the Foundation, the National Program Committee talked through the relationship between its activities and the world situation, noting that atomic weapons made war less likely and that the threat from the Soviet Union appeared to be dimming. But, as Nason summarized, “despite some improvement in the climate of public opinion between 1952 and 1955, and some lessening of war psychology, the work of the Foreign Policy Association in interesting people and maintaining their interest in the study of world affairs is made more difficult by the lack of crises and fear, by lack of recognition of the fundamental issues, by areas like Texas which have been relatively untouched even in periods of crisis.” See “Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program,” September 12-13, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 87. Roger Mastrude, meanwhile, feared a transformation of international politics would happen without people even noticing. At a conference in Idaho in December 1954, Mastrude warned that “the balance of world power could be permanently tipped against the U.S., and for the communist orbit in the years ahead, without a single shot being fired by the Red Army,” because of decolonization.

Ford's outside consultants remained somewhat skeptical, including those who were part of the citizen education movement. Howard Cook, the former World Affairs Council of Northern California director who had just left the State Department's Public Services Division, thought that any bid for the mass would only function marginally to expand the already-interested elite.<sup>94</sup> Most of the people that the Ford staff talked to, including officials at the State Department and the United Nations, thought the Association served a useful, necessary role and that it had made a marked improvement since the Emeny years.<sup>95</sup> Ford's own staffers agreed, calling the Association's activities "central to the interest of the Foundation in the field of public education in international affairs." Even so, their own doubts resulted in a much smaller grant than the Association had hoped for. Nason had asked for \$10.75 million over ten years, projecting that at the mid-point of the grant, Ford would be responsible for over two-thirds of his budget.<sup>96</sup> This was "out of this world," the Ford International Affairs head and former *New York Times* journalist Shepard Stone told an officer at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.<sup>97</sup> (The

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"Coexistence" meant a series of "gradual pressures and shifts which will change the world without making headlines in the press. The problem of informing, and keeping informed, our citizenry, is therefore likely to be even more difficult than in the years of open struggle the world has been passing through." See "Idaho Leadership Conference on World Affairs Education," December 3-5, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 77.

<sup>94</sup> Stanley T. Gordon to Shepard Stone, "FPA — Views of Howard Cook," January 30, 1956, FF, FA732G, Reel 4159, Grant 56-117.

<sup>95</sup> Gordon to Stone, "FPA — Views of Mr. Hartley," February 1, 1956, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; Gordon to Stone, "FPA — Views of Porter McKeever," February 2, 1956, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; Gordon to Stone, "FPA — Views of Mr. Lowry," February 1, 1956, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>96</sup> "Proposal to the Ford Foundation from the Foreign Policy Association," January 23, 1956, FF, FA732G, Reel 4159, Grant 56-117, esp. p. 52 for financial details.

<sup>97</sup> Charles F. Noyes to General Files, "Foreign Policy Association (Service Bureau for World Affairs)," February 10, 1956, RBF, Box 345.

Council on Foreign Relations, for comparison, was given \$1.5 million over ten years in 1954.)<sup>98</sup>  
Reflecting its own ambivalence, Ford granted \$1.5 million for core projects over five years.<sup>99</sup>

How, then, could a mass public be reached? For an answer, the Association struck West.

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Roger Mastrude arrived in San Francisco in November 1952. Born a month after America's entry into World War I, the director of the Association's new outpost was a Westerner, a Quaker by inheritance and a graduate of a small liberal arts college in Tacoma, Washington. Fluent in multiple languages, he had served as an Army intelligence officer on General Patton's staff, and had overseen sixty refugee camps as UNRRA's regional director in Bavaria. He spent four years in New York in charge of education at International House, before moving West — and it was really “the West” to which he moved.<sup>100</sup> As the head of the Association's Region IV, Mastrude, his deputy, and one secretary had responsibility for a third of the continental United States, an area covering the entire Pacific coast, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, Utah and Arizona. Mastrude traveled 25,000 miles in his first year on the job, scouting the territory for prospects for World Affairs Councils. They did not seem strong, and indeed revealed the stark regional limits that had constrained world affairs education to that point. “The Western States,”

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<sup>98</sup> Docket Excerpt, “Council on Foreign Relations,” February 19-20, 1954, FF, FA732B, Reel 1344, Grant 54-27.

<sup>99</sup> “Foreign Policy Association,” Docket Excerpt, International Affairs, March 9-10, 1956, FF, FA732G, Reel 4159, Grant 56-117.

<sup>100</sup> “General Officers and Department Heads,” December 28, 1956, FPA, Part II, Box 1; Roger G. Mastrude, “Resume of Professional Experience,” [October] 1970, Nason Papers, Box 34; “‘One World’ Under One Roof,” *New York Times* (May 8, 1949), p. SM22.



*Figure 3. Roger Mastrude, Foreign Policy Association staff member. FPA, Part II, Box 289.*

Mastrude wrote in one early report to the Fund, “have very few cities the size traditionally thought of in terms of a world affairs council.” As Mastrude drove around the West, fruitlessly towing a trailer so weighed down with world affairs literature that his small car’s clutch often gave out, he wondered if there was anywhere at all that might give him enough of a success story to make the

idea of world affairs catch on. “We must find our way experimentally as we go,” he said, “in terms of techniques, organizational framework, and even educational materials.”<sup>101</sup>

Mastrude did find some sprouts at the grass roots. In Portland, Oregon, a city of just less than 400,000, they had germinated slowly. The city was one of the first to create a Committee on Foreign Relations in 1938, and its roster in 1945 included the editors of both major newspapers, as well as local academics, ministers, and other civic leaders.<sup>102</sup> Reed College had staged a Northwest Institute of International Relations annually since 1935, with co-sponsorship by the University of Oregon and the city’s public schools. By 1948 it lasted two weeks, replete

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<sup>101</sup> Roger Mastrude, “Summary Regional Report, Region IV, Western States,” December 28, 1953, attached to “Report to the Fund for Adult Education,” December 28, 1953, FF, FA732G, Reel 4159, Grant 56-117.

<sup>102</sup> Portland Committee on Foreign Relations to Council on Foreign Relations, “Annual Report 1944-45,” May 29, 1945, CFR, Series 7, Box 620.

with lectures, forums, and roundtables. After visits by Brooks Emeny and Thomas Power, the directors of the Institute incorporated the World Affairs Council of Oregon in late 1950.<sup>103</sup>

The Oregon Council's first president and dominant figure was Frank Munk, a rare émigré scholar who declared to see a cautionary tale about public opinion in the rise of totalitarianism. A leader of the Czechoslovak League of Nations Association, delegate to the League, and friend of the former president Edvard Benes, Munk fled Prague in May 1939. He taught at Berkeley until 1944, before spending two years back in Central Europe working for UNRRA. He settled in Oregon, and, in Mastrude's words, was "taken up by Portland society and lionized as their special intellectual garlic," rather like Emeny in Cleveland a decade and a half earlier.

As in Cleveland, the Oregon Council's driving organizational force came from the women's movement. Louise Grondahl, whose husband was the *Oregonian's* classical music critic, had been president of the League of Women Voters of Portland, and served as the Council's secretary and, for a time, its executive director. "Never in the history of our country," she wrote in the *Oregonian* shortly after the Council's founding, "has it been so important for everybody to take an active interest in our foreign policy, since it will determine whether or not we are to be involved in global war." Information on foreign affairs was still comparatively scarce in Portland, so Grondahl and the Council's other leaders filled the gap with the usual lectures and seminars,

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<sup>103</sup> "Economic, Social, Political Problems Will Be Talked at Institute at Reed," *The Oregonian* (May 18, 1948), p. 24; "Portland Federation Urged For Foreign Affairs Study," *The Oregonian* (April 16, 1947), p. 22; "Foreign Policy Facets Topic," *The Oregonian* (March 12, 1950), p. 13; "Group to Center on World Affairs," *The Oregonian* (January 22, 1951), p. 3.

as well as a project that linked “World Affairs,” a radio show on the local station KOIN, to neighborhood listening and discussion groups.<sup>104</sup>

Even so, by the time Mastrude made his first visit to Portland, in January 1953, the Council remained a very small affair, with a part-time director and a “completely unacceptable” budget.<sup>105</sup> Its planning of a meeting of community leaders and State Department officials in June 1953 had been embarrassingly poor. The city, Mastrude thought, had little history of community education or even community organizing on which to build, and he had only small a base of progressive activists to tap into. While the Council made good use of the local university faculties, it was too puny, and too far from Washington and New York, to attract the policymakers or celebrities who might validate and promote the cause.<sup>106</sup> Only an intervention by the corporate titan J. D. Zellerbach, an Association trustee, saved the Council. Zellerbach, the chairman of the World Affairs Council of Northern California and the former Marshall Plan administrator for Italy, opened a paper plant in the area, drawing local businessmen to support his pet cause of world affairs.<sup>107</sup> Shortly after Zellerbach addressed a benefit dinner, making the case that businessmen ought to inform themselves about world affairs as their taxes were funding foreign policy, the Council doubled its membership and started a television program, “World

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<sup>104</sup> Louise Grondahl, “Local World Affairs Council,” *The Oregonian* (April 3, 1951), p. 18.

<sup>105</sup> Mastrude, “Portland, Oregon, January 6-9, 1953,” January 26, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 77; Mastrude, “Portland Report, March 10-11, 1953,” April 13, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 77.

<sup>106</sup> Mastrude to Nason, September 9, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 77; Mastrude to Alexander W. Allport, September 11, 1953, FPA, Part I, Box 77.

<sup>107</sup> Mastrude, “Oregon, January 19-21, 1954,” FPA, Part I, Box 29; Allport, “Field Report: Portland, Oregon, February 16 & 18, 1954,” FPA, Part I, Box 29; “Talk by Mr. J. D. Zellerbach,” *Council News Letter* 1 (March 1954), FPA, Part I, Box 29. Zellerbach’s talk brought in \$2251 from 22 corporations, a fifth of the Council’s receipts that year. See “Financial Report,” [October] 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 29.

Affairs in the H-Age,” using its connections to executives at the *Oregonian* and the stations it owned. While the Council was still a precarious venture, Mastrude advised that it had “many opportunities, especially in terms of reaching the great ‘50% group’,” and, by August 1954, thought that it deserved further support from the Community Investment Fund.<sup>108</sup>

To find a distinctive, innovative program that would take world affairs education beyond the Council model, Mastrude looked to developments in adult education and social science. Even as political theorists moved away from seeing democracy as discussion writ large, a polity made up of “little circles of people talking with one another” as Mills neatly put it, adult educators and psychologists renewed their faith in small group discussion.<sup>109</sup> The first reason for this was theoretical. Social scientists dismantled Deweyan democracy on the basis that the publics that comprised it were uninformed, but in the process, they also demonstrated that small, face-to-face discussion actually worked. In *The People’s Choice*, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet had found that personal contacts were the most effective way of spreading opinions beyond a dedicated mass-media audience.<sup>110</sup> During and after the war scholars like Kurt Lewin, Dorwin Cartwright, and Joseph Klapper confirmed that discussion among a few people was a powerful vehicle to change attitudes and increase information,

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<sup>108</sup> “Regional Conference on World Affairs Education, Asilomar, December 4-6, 1953,” FPA, Part I, Box 1; Mastrude to Committee on National Program, August 23, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 29.

<sup>109</sup> Mills, *The Power Elite*, p. 299. Adult education theory after World War II for the most part recapitulated prewar theory, and its two major statements made no advances. See Bruno Lasker, *Democracy Through Discussion* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1949); Paul L. Essert, *Creative Leadership of Adult Education* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1951). Lasker was associated with the Institute of Pacific Relations during the interwar period, and an editor at Paul Kellogg’s *Survey*.

<sup>110</sup> Lazarsfeld, *The People’s Choice*, pp. 150-158.



certainly more so than lectures.<sup>111</sup> Public discussion was found to be a necessary condition for a successful propaganda or educational campaign, as opinion leaders took in information from the mass media and passed it along to others. This article of communications-theory faith made its way to the Association through research and personal networks, and particularly through Cohen, who urged world affairs educators to expand “the use of techniques which capitalize on personal and intimate contact between the source of knowledge and its intended recipients.”<sup>112</sup> Perhaps, Cohen once wrote, “discussions might even be held on back porches on a summer’s night.”<sup>113</sup>

The second spur to the rediscovery of discussion was institutional. One of the forces behind the Fund for Adult Education was the Ford Foundation’s assistant director, Robert Maynard Hutchins. A former president of the University of Chicago, Hutchins had recast that institution’s core curriculum around a syllabus of “Great Books,” and taken that idea to a reading public by founding the Great Books Foundation in 1947. The “study-discussion” format it pioneered, in which peers led small groups in discussion of a common curriculum using packaged materials, became the Fund’s preferred means of liberal adult education.<sup>114</sup> Of course, discussion materials had long been produced and used, but the Fund reconceived them for a mass market,

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<sup>111</sup> Kurt Lewin, “Group Decision and Social Change,” in Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley (eds.), *Readings in Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1947), pp. 197-211; Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Media: A Report to the Director of the Public Library Inquiry* (New York: Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1949); Otto Klineberg, *Tensions Affecting International Understanding: A Survey of Research* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1950). On the fetish for “small groups,” see Joel Isaac, “Epistemic Design: Theory and Data in Harvard’s Department of Social Relations,” in Mark Solovey and Hamilton Cravens (eds.), *Cold War Social Science: Knowledge Production, Liberal Democracy, and Human Nature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 79-98.

<sup>112</sup> Cohen, *Citizen Education in World Affairs*, p. 136.

<sup>113</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, “What Voluntary Groups Can Do,” *Adult Leadership* (July-August 1953), p. 12.

<sup>114</sup> C. Scott Fletcher, Preface to Glen Bruch, *Accent On Learning: An Analytical History of the Fund for Adult Education’s Experimental Discussion Project, 1951-1959* (Pasadena: Fund for Adult Education, 1960), pp. iii-iv.

at once teaching their content and promoting ideal methods of learning, participation, and individual citizenship.<sup>115</sup>

As well as supporting outside initiatives like Great Books and those run by the American Foundation for Political Education (AFPE), after 1951 the Fund's Experimental Discussion Project spent \$2.1 million in five years on the creation of textual and visual study materials that small groups could share, and on further research on training lay discussion leaders. One of its programs was the "World Affairs Are Your Affairs!" package, which ended with the viewing of *World Affairs Are Your Affairs*, the film made about the Cleveland Council. The Association repurposed Headline Books for similar purposes, building its own packaged discussion series. The Council on Foreign Relations used individual articles from *Foreign Affairs* in *Let's Talk About*, a series that involved 641 discussion groups in 1952 and more than 1,200 by 1954.<sup>116</sup> As the World Affairs Council of Seattle hoped in 1952, discussion groups fostered the presentation of views and resulted in the "formulation of public opinion on the basis of ideas which have been subjected to questioning and testing in open discussion."<sup>117</sup> The St. Louis World Affairs Council was running five separate packaged discussion programs by the fall of 1952, although they were taken up by very few members.<sup>118</sup> The Oregon Council offered several programs by 1954, but its

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<sup>115</sup> Paul J. Edelson, "Socrates on the Assembly Line: The Ford Foundation's Mass Marketing of Liberal Adult Education," presented at the Annual Conference of the Midwest History of Education Society (October 18-19, 1991), [eric.ed.gov/?id=ED340885](http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED340885).

<sup>116</sup> Alexander W. Allport, "Integration of Community Discussion Program," August 12, 1952, FPA, Part I, Box 74; "Memo for Mr. Armstrong," December 18, 1952, FF, FA732B, Grant 54-27, Reel 1344; Bryon Dexter, *Let's Talk About: John Foster Dulles, 'Policy For Security And Peace'* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1954), p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> World Affairs Council of Seattle, "Statement of Policy," 1952, Records of the World Affairs Council of Seattle, University of Washington Libraries, Box 7.

<sup>118</sup> William H. Curran to Member of the Council, June 20, 1952, FPA, Part I, Box 14; "Report on World Politics Program, December 1951 – March 1952," attached to Leo C. Fuller to Friends, July 23, 1952, FPA, Part I, Box 14.

AFPE series, costing an extraordinary \$12 per person (well over \$100 today), reached fewer than 200 participants.<sup>119</sup>

The Fund followed the Experimental Discussion Project with its Test Cities program, which aimed to make adult education a going community concern that could continue without subsidy. Just like Carnegie Corporation's interwar councils, the Test Cities were eventually seen to have failed, but in the meantime they were platforms for experimentation, most importantly in the work of Eugene I. Johnson, who directed the Community Education Project in the Test City of San Bernardino, California.<sup>120</sup> Johnson's insight was to shift the dynamics of discussion groups by relating research to the community's needs. Like other adult educators, he specifically framed adult education as "an effort to strike directly through the complexity of modern life in a bid to overcome civic apathy and draw local people into increased participation in community life." And as most of his early methods had been tried before, he quickly came to understand their limits. As the mass media and voluntary associations did not "reach all, nor even a majority, of the people," Johnson wrote in 1958, "the dissemination and utilization of knowledge by the people needs to be related more directly to the natural forms of social organization which people create for themselves — neighborhood units, groups of friends, work teams and others." So, while Johnson, like the radio pioneers of two decades earlier, was aware of the need to embed the mass media in organized discussion, he shifted how communications would be received in order to reach a wider audience. Gone was the formal discussion group, one that tended to gather

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<sup>119</sup> "Discussion Groups," [October] 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 29.

<sup>120</sup> Fund for Adult Education, *1951-1961: A Ten Year Report of the Fund for Adult Education* (New York: Fund for Adult Education, 1961), p. 45; Edelson, "Socrates on the Assembly Line."

strangers or a few, committed voluntary association members under a trained leader. Now discussions would take place in “natural friendship groups,” attracted by geography, background, profession, hobbies, and so on. They could meet wherever they felt most comfortable, above all in their own homes.<sup>121</sup>

What was crucial about this work, for Mastrude and others, was its attempt to make sense of an abundance of information in an *absence* of experts. Foreign policy experts, with their attention turned towards the state and to their students, were ever less eager or indeed able to interact with the public. Home discussion groups meant they could be dispensed with. They maintained the Deweyan ideal of democracy as discussion but tore off the equally Deweyan concern — so important to the foreign policy experts of the 1930s — with physically situating expertise within the public. The payoff was that discussion groups could be replicated on a much wider scale, increasing the chance that those not already interested in foreign affairs might be reached. Media institutions could be brought on board under the pressure of their public service responsibilities, providing publicity. Mastrude became a fan, expressing his “extreme interest” in the potential importance of the technique, “particularly here in the West.”<sup>122</sup> While he explored the social scientific literature to which Cohen opened the door, Mastrude started trying to apply Johnson’s communications methods.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Eugene I. Johnson, “Groups with a Future — in a New Communication System,” *Journal of Communication* 5 (1955), p. 89; Eugene I. Johnson, *The Community Education Project: A Four-year Report, 1952-1956* (San Bernadino: San Bernadino College, 1958), p. 63.

<sup>122</sup> Allport, “Field Report: Portland, Oregon, February 16 & 18, 1954,” FPA, Part I, Box 29; Mastrude to Dorothy Robins, March 4, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 77.

<sup>123</sup> Mastrude acknowledged Johnson’s inspiration repeatedly. See, e.g., Roger Mastrude, “Bringing World Affairs to the People,” *Adult Leadership* 4 (March 1956), p. 16.

But apply them to what? Here the national and the local converged. Back in New York, Nason and Allport sought a program that would provide a focus to the Association's work and image, one that would move away from purely "organizational" efforts towards "substantive" concerns, and direct their work to the supposed middle 50% of the public. They settled on an attempt to narrow foreign policy down to a series of "basic issues" comprehensible to the mass.<sup>124</sup> What was a basic issue? To Allport, it meant a topic that was "active," "on which the American people will have or should have an opportunity for expressing their opinion," on which "enough information is available to the public to allow them to come to an intelligent opinion on it" — and one which "fundamentally affects the majority of American population."<sup>125</sup> Such topics would have to be willfully unspecific, as broad as possible. It made no sense, Mastrude wrote, to teach arcane matters like the technical composition of SEATO, but it made more to help people think through whether Southeast Asia was important enough to American interests to justify an alliance or an aid program.<sup>126</sup> Even so, as Rowson pointed out, it would be difficult to translate the "basically emotional attitudes toward world affairs held by [the] average person FPA hopes to reach" into "definable, understandable questions which would strike a responsive chord among a large audience," and at the same time mean something for the Association's patrons in government, academia, and the media.<sup>127</sup> Perhaps the questions could be decided by polling the

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<sup>124</sup> Allport, "FPA Basic Issues Program," December 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 85.

<sup>125</sup> Allport, "Re: Definition of a 'Basic Issue'," January 25, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 85.

<sup>126</sup> Mastrude, "Bringing World Affairs to the People," p. 15.

<sup>127</sup> The Association consulted with Dorothy Fosdick on how to convert specific issues of foreign policy into attitudinal questions, an approach she found "valid and somehow very much in keeping with the ideas expressed in her recently published book." See Dorothy Robins to Basic Issues Committee, "Conversation re: Basic Issues with Dorothy Fosdick," February 3, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 85.

memberships of World Affairs Councils, or by a committee representing academic expertise and voluntary association leadership.<sup>128</sup> Once the issues were decided, Nason wrote, they would “become focal points around which we would build much of the substantive program which emanated from the FPA headquarters or which was recommended to local groups.”<sup>129</sup>

Defining the issues had always been one of the Association’s roles, in association with the State Department. The more difficult question was how to make people pay attention. As Mastrude once wrote, to “reach the average member of the great American public,” an educator had to “attract his attention”; “show him there is some good reason for *him* to learn about the subject”; “convince him the problems are not too ‘deep’ for him to understand”; “give him the essential knowledge on his level of language, without condescension”; “offer him education that suits his likes and habits”; and “find some way to involve large numbers of people as participants in a learning process” — all on a small budget.<sup>130</sup>

The two most pressing problems revolved around apathy. Allport had taken care of what Mastrude thought was one basic cause of uninterest, the idea that foreign policy was too complex to be understood by the layman. The more difficult issue was to convince the citizens that her opinion mattered, that she could make a difference. Unless it was solved, nobody would bother to join the discussion groups that were at the center of Mastrude’s educational vision.<sup>131</sup> As

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<sup>128</sup> Rowson to Allport, “Points for Discussion on ‘Basic Issues’ Program,” December 29, 1954, FPA, Part I, Box 85; “Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors,” September 22, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>129</sup> Nason to Executive Committee, January 13, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>130</sup> Mastrude, “Bringing World Affairs to the People,” p. 15.

<sup>131</sup> “The Basic Issues in U.S. Foreign Policy: A New Program for Community Education, Developed by the Foreign Policy Association, Incorporated,” [early] 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 85.

“World Affairs Are Your Affairs” appeared not to have worked well, another slogan was chosen, stolen from a State Department pamphlet — “Your Opinion Counts.”<sup>132</sup>

Mastrude put these ideas into practice in Great Decisions.<sup>133</sup> It was tested in Portland, under the guidance of the World Affairs Council, which was chosen because it was more open than most to “making some initial experimental efforts to reach a broader public than the traditional one.”<sup>134</sup> The program ran from February 20 to April 17, 1955, and concentrated on eight basic but bland issues, each being the chosen topic of conversation for one week so that the time commitment was limited and intense:

1. Does U.S. security, prosperity, and freedom depend on the rest of the world?
2. How shall we deal with the U.S.S.R.?
3. Do we have a ‘stake’ in Asia?
4. Do we have a ‘stake’ in Europe?
5. Do we have a ‘stake’ in colonial Africa?
6. How should we defend ourselves?
7. Do we need friends and allies?
8. Is there an American way in foreign policy?

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<sup>132</sup> Department of State, *Your Opinion Counts* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954). Privileging his and the Association’s independence, Mastrude never directly credited the State Department with this slogan. But Munk did, in Frank Munk, “Great Decisions No. 9 — How Do You Influence Our Foreign Relations,” *The Oregonian* (April 17, 1955), p. 45.

<sup>133</sup> The name of Mastrude’s program, Great Decisions, needs some unpacking in the light of recent scholarly interest in the rise of “decisionism,” rational choice, and the place of the public in cold war social science. Were Mastrude’s initiatives directly related to the growing intellectual focus on “decision-making” processes, then one might argue that they complicate the idea that “decision-making” was inherently anti-democratic, dependent on distrust of public opinion. While the concept of Great Decisions reflected a tendency to think about public opinion in terms of policy options and the policy process, what is notable is the amount of room that Great Decisions left for publics to *decline* to come to a “decision” — and how few chose to. Cf. Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot (eds.), *The Decisionist Imagination: Sovereignty, Social Science and Democracy in the 20th Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2018).

<sup>134</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Basic Issues’ Test Program in Oregon, Locally Called the ‘Great Decisions’ Program,” [May] 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 28.

Most of these questions were focused only secondarily on the cold war, dealing with American power first and foremost; most were phrased, too, far from neutrally in terms of the familiar polarity of internationalism and isolationism. But their content, in this test run, was less important than their means of broadcast.

The Council's first concern was to set up a communications network for its program, broadly following the San Bernardino model. Borrowing from commercial advertising techniques, Mastrude understood that public attention was best created by using multiple means of communications — a “coordinated campaign,” as PR experts would call it. The Council therefore brought the *Oregonian* on board, and acquired the cooperation of KOIN's radio and television facilities. KOIN-AM, which had a potential reach of over half a million radio sets, presented a half-hour panel show after Sunday church, using local academics. KOIN-TV donated a half-hour program on Wednesday nights, using its own production budget to create films and projections to support professors who “introduced the basic facts, discussed problems and presented alternative policies the United States might follow.” Meanwhile the *Oregonian*, with its circulation of nearly 300,000, supplied over thirty basic stories, contributed favorable commentary, and devoted half the page opposite its Sunday editorials to the program. This included articles by Munk, examining the pertinent questions that went into an assessment of each issue, as well as three or four comments from local leaders. As in San Bernardino, this media bombardment was designed to create enough community interest to drive the formation of home discussion groups, and to service those groups once the discussion period began. Mass media programs, which were arranged to blanket an area with information from as many



different stimuli as possible, had the added, if limited, benefit of reaching those who happened only incidentally to pay attention to any one medium.<sup>135</sup>

Putting Great Decisions together on short notice, the Council essentially outsourced the formation of home discussion groups, asking its members to invite their friends and neighbors. “Forming a discussion group in your home may sound formidable,” the co-chairwoman of the Council’s organizing committee told the *Oregonian*, but “if you have a group of friends you haven’t seen in a while, use this as an opportunity to invite them in for an evening of conversation.”<sup>136</sup> One third of groups, or thereabouts, came about because discussion leaders responded to media announcements; the rest were put together by members of participating local voluntary associations.<sup>137</sup> As the *Oregonian* reported, many of these had a longstanding interest in foreign affairs, including the American Association of University Women, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and various churches. But many had been beyond the movement’s reach, not least veterans’ groups, the American Federation of Labor, and Parent-Teacher Associations. Teachers, too, signed up their high school classes.<sup>138</sup>

In all, 81 adult discussion groups were formed, all but three of which met one evening per week in a private home, for about three to four hours, often taking in KOIN’s television program as part of the night. 1215 adults took part, in groups of between eight and sixteen people, and the discussion leaders who administered the groups estimated (very roughly) that about two

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid, pp. 7-8, 13-14.

<sup>136</sup> “‘Decisions’ on American Foreign Policy Aimed to Reach Into Portland Homes,” *The Oregonian* (February 2, 1955), p. 12.

<sup>137</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Basic Issues’ Test Program in Oregon,” pp. 15-16.

<sup>138</sup> “Groups Plan Study Units for ‘Great Decision’ Series,” *The Oregonian* (February 18, 1955), p. 6.

thirds were “new to active discussion of world affairs.” Between a third and a half of the groups met in neighborhoods where the average income was less than the national, and because they were relatively homogeneous, made up predominantly of “friends and acquaintances,” it seemed as if a genuinely new audience might be being reached. Mastrude, who had a professional interest in “race relations,” excitedly noted that a solitary “all-Negro group in a low-income neighborhood” was proof that “the program did specifically reach community levels distinctly outside the traditional audience.”<sup>139</sup>

What did these participants do? While experts were not present, many of those who led discussions were already experienced members of the League of Women Voters, or had volunteered to attend sessions run by the speech theorists of the state university’s extension division. At the very least, tips on discussion technique were made available to them in a pamphlet for group leaders.<sup>140</sup> But even if a discussion leader lacked training, each participant was supposed to buy a set of fact sheets, priced at \$1.50 for eight, which would allow her access to a common set of facts, “the basic minimum necessary for an intelligent consideration of the possible alternative policies.”<sup>141</sup> The fact sheets, 22 by 26 inches and folded into four columns, were freely illustrated with cartoons, and they doubled as discussion outlines, complete with background information.<sup>142</sup> They were written clearly and simply, and, when they were used as classroom material, children in the ninth grade had no trouble understanding them. Indeed, the

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<sup>139</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Basic Issues’ Test Program in Oregon,” pp. 1, 5-6, 12, 15.

<sup>140</sup> “Four Experts in Discussion,” *The Oregonian* (January 30, 1955), p. 24.

<sup>141</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Basic Issues’ Test Program in Oregon,” p. 5.

<sup>142</sup> “The Basic Issues Program: Leader’s Guide,” FF, FA716, Reel 4737.

simplicity at times bordered on caricature, although not one outside the cold war mainstream. In one fact sheet, for instance, the United States was said to have three objectives in international politics, all defensive — “to keep [the] U.S. secure and safe from attack,” “to have high and rising standard[s] of living,” and “to maintain our free democratic society.” The Soviets, who likewise sought “security and prosperity,” would rather “destroy capitalism” and “weaken U.S. and free world power and strengthen her own.” From this presentation of basic information, the sheets moved to discussion questions that might be answered by extrapolating from general principles. “Should we participate in a conference on Formosa outside the U.N., as proposed by Russia,” a fact sheet on alliances and world trade asked? “Should we encourage trade between the Communist world and our allies in non-strategic materials?” If so, “would such trade be more likely to promote world peace or war?”

The centerpiece of the fact sheets, however, was Mastrude’s attempt to impart value to the entire enterprise. If participants were to be told that “Your Opinion Counts,” then it followed that they had to be offered some way of making their mark. Each fact sheet — and the weekly spreads in the *Oregonian* — came with an “opinion ballot,” which offered a series of policy options to readers, and space to write in other ideas. Should the USA, one ballot asked, “try to defend its own shores?” Should it “build treaties and alliances for a world-wide security system?” Should it “work for economic self-sufficiency?” Should it “maintain freedom by working with other free countries,” or “oppose the Soviet Union alone?” The ballot asked readers how their opinions had been made, that is, whether they had joined a discussion group, or had just watched the television program, or heard the radio show. It instructed readers to send the ballot

in to the World Affairs Council, which would tabulate the results.<sup>143</sup> Opinion ballots were not, Mastrude said, “an attempt to deal with detailed issues in the manner of public opinion polls,” nor an effort to “delude people that they can make the detailed policy choices nor assume the responsibility of trying to clarify all the subtle, complex, contradictory, and domestic-political questions which go into decisions on specific policy acts.”<sup>144</sup> Indeed, they were in part a response to a common critique of opinion polls, that they took a snapshot of opinion before a necessary period of discussion could allow the public to come to a rounded view. Instead, Mastrude’s opinion ballots primarily served an educational function, “to focus thought and discussion, provide a tangible ‘result,’” and “record generally where people stood at the end of a process of discussion and study.” It was made clear that summaries of the ballot results would be sent to the State Department, connecting the discussions to policymaking institutions in Washington.<sup>145</sup>

The opinion ballots were the physical manifestation of the stakes that all involved placed on Great Decisions, a means of proving that the public was capable of holding its own in a democratic foreign policy. Organizers received a note in the name of John Foster Dulles, who vouched for the State Department’s interest in the experiment and confided that “I have long held the conviction that our nation’s foreign affairs should be discussed in every American home, that every one of us has a task in making a successful foreign policy for the United States.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> “Background to Remember,” *The Oregonian* (February 20, 1955), p. 45.

<sup>144</sup> Mastrude to Allport and Nason, April 14, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 28.

<sup>145</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Basic Issues’ Test Program in Oregon,” p. 23.

<sup>146</sup> Qu. in Frank Munk, “Oregon Makes Great Decisions,” *Adult Leadership* 4 (March 1956), p. 20. For further State support, see “Decisions Influencing Foreign Policy to Mark Public Participation Session,” *The Oregonian* (January 2, 1955), p. 43; “Nine-Week Pilot Forum on World Issues Set in Portland,” *The Oregonian* (January 9, 1955), p. 26.

Assistant Secretary of State George V. Allen lauded the program during an unrelated speech in town.<sup>147</sup> But Great Decisions was always as much about proving that democracy could work in foreign policy as contributing to policy itself. Munk portrayed Great Decisions as an attempt to disprove Walter Lippmann. Lippmann, whose *Essays* came out just as Great Decisions was starting, could be responded to in three ways, Munk wrote in the *Oregonian*: by leaving foreign policy “to the experts”; by resignation to “having decisions made by an uninformed public whipped into occasional frenzy by publicity-seeking demagogues playing on prejudice and emotion”; or by “a supreme effort to educate the public by the use of modern media of mass communication giving us, for the first time, access to the voter’s living room and mental horizon.”<sup>148</sup> The *Oregonian* noted in a February editorial that “columnists like Mr. Lippmann have no hesitation in advancing their opinions”; Great Decisions was to show that “theirs are not the only opinions that count.”<sup>149</sup>

Portlanders, and the few participants that the program incidentally reached in smaller towns like Salem and Corvallis, seemed to respond. Three quarters of group leaders, who were perhaps more likely to adhere to participatory ideals than other participants, “regarded the idea of forwarding opinions to the State Department as important.” Plenty of people sent in long letters with their ballots, explaining their views. A Mrs. Gilbert Reeves, for instance, wrote that the “FINAL BALLOT” really awakened me!” and explained over five handwritten pages that while she had only “an average housewife’s viewpoint,” she now knew “what I’d like to do if I had any

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<sup>147</sup> “Dulles’ Aide Airs Concern Over Trend in Yugoslavia,” *The Oregonian* (May 7, 1955), p. 7.

<sup>148</sup> Munk, “Great Decisions No. 9,” *The Oregonian* (April 17, 1955), p. 45.

<sup>149</sup> “Every Opinion Counts,” *The Oregonian* (February 15, 1955).

influence or power.”<sup>150</sup> And internationalists could take solace in the tabulations that a political science student at Reed College made of the results. Only 2% of respondents thought that the United States should “go it alone”; 95% agreed that the nation had a “stake” in Asia, and the same number that it had a “stake” in Europe. Only 4% believed in a withdrawal of forces from Europe, and 25% “felt the U.S. should concentrate on liberating the [Soviet] satellite countries.” These participants were not militarists, and they did not particularly want an increase in defense spending or a sterner military posture. 86% of ballots reported that American policy “should be guided by an ‘ideal of international cooperation and the United Nations,’” and 83% thought that principles of morality and justice should guide the national interest. Whether these results showed that people would naturally understand American policy if given time to think about it, or whether they showed that Great Decisions appealed to an already educated public was not yet clear.<sup>151</sup>

The problem was that the opinion ballots, the centerpiece of participation and a promissory note for a democratic foreign policy, were a charade. “Having opinions actually reported to the State Department, the seat of policy-making,” Mastrude wrote in an internal report, had only “symbolic value.”<sup>152</sup> Warren Rovetch, Mastrude’s deputy, went rather further, writing to New York that the “balloting is a major problem,” and “comes too close to snake oil.”<sup>153</sup> This remained an experimental program at this stage, and when Allport went to explain it

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<sup>150</sup> “Excerpts From a Few Letters Received With Ballots,” [July] 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 244.

<sup>151</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Basic Issues’ Test Program in Oregon,” pp. 23-27.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>153</sup> Warren Rovetch, “Report on the Great Decisions Program,” April 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 40.

properly to a skeptical Public Services staff, he thought he was able to convince them that it showed how the Association “was really breaking through the sound barrier and reaching new, unconverted audiences every day.” Foggy Bottom bureaucrats, he reported, had been more impressed with the opinion ballots they had received than they had anticipated. Either way, this was a crucial issue to solve, for if participants came to believe that policymakers were not listening, then the program would fail. Whether it depended on the State Department paying attention, or merely seeming as if it were paying attention, was another matter.<sup>154</sup>

Such problems were, however, barely a blot on what was thought to be a successful innovation. “This program as a whole entity is ‘special’ enough so that it should be tried out in any other regions on a carefully controlled basis,” Mastrude reported to Nason and Allport, for with its “exceptionally wide involvement” it offered “a rather large opening wedge for subsequent world affairs activity.”<sup>155</sup> Rovetch noted that Great Decisions had, remarkably, “become a topic of social conversation,” something that people he met while traveling, or checking out of his hotel, had heard of and felt a duty to be involved with. It had made a “substantial sector of the community aware of a world affairs study program” and expanded the core audience for world affairs generally, rather than appealing only to a limited group. Indeed, outside of Portland itself, it had “in fact created a core where none previously existed,” as spontaneous groups popped up outside the city. “People who know this community cold,” Rovetch concluded, “say there has never been anything ever in Portland to equal this.”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Allport to Mastrude and Nason, May 20, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 85.

<sup>155</sup> Mastrude to Allport and Nason, April 14, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 28; Mastrude to Nason and Allport, May 20, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 28.

<sup>156</sup> Rovetch, “Report on the Great Decisions Program.”

While there were regional directors who wondered whether Great Decisions could work in areas where organized world affairs education was not so novel, in September the board made it the Association's major program going forward.<sup>157</sup> The government lent its support during a Conference of World Affairs Organizations in Washington that December, as Assistant Secretary Allen presented Munk and Grondahl with an innovation award, judged by a panel that included Ralph Bunche and Eleanor Roosevelt. President Eisenhower, Adlai Stevenson, and Henry Cabot Lodge sent congratulatory telegrams, and Wayne Morse, Oregon's senator, praised the Council as "an example of democracy at work."<sup>158</sup> Troublingly, the World Affairs Council chiefs in the audience resented the whole project, and lambasted Nason for failing adequately to support the existing, struggling councils.<sup>159</sup>

Editors at *Adult Leadership*, however, gave over an entire issue of the magazine in March 1956 to a program that had rapidly become a star in the Fund's firmament. Mastrude extrapolated wildly from these early results — "it worked!" — and claimed that just one season of Great Decisions showed how "people are educable" even in "complicated choices." He did not, notably, make any suggestion that the reporting of opinions had had any effect on policy.<sup>160</sup> Munk, who wrote that Great Decisions was explicitly an attempt to "preserve the democratic

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<sup>157</sup> "Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors," September 22, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>158</sup> Frank Munk, *My Century and My Many Lives* (Portland: privately published, 1993), p. 122; Dwight Eisenhower to Nason, December 1, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 230; Wayne Morse, "Award to Oregon Council on World Affairs," December 2, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 29.

<sup>159</sup> Don Dennis, Memorandum to the Record, December 13, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 72; H. C. Johnson to Shepard Stone, "Foreign Policy Association Conference," December 2-4, 1955, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; John S. Gibson to Nason, November 29, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 79; Alfred O. Hero to Nason, December 12, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 79.

<sup>160</sup> Mastrude, "Bringing World Affairs to the People," p. 17.



process” in the face of those who believed that “only a small minority of experts can take part in foreign policy decisions,” reported that 60% of participants said they would more “closely follow foreign policy problems,” that far more than half were prepared to take part in similar discussions in future, and that nearly two-thirds “reported they had changed opinions on at least one major issue.” While there was ample evidence that Great Decisions, through its novel use of the mass media, had pierced “the ‘sound barrier’ that normally limits education in international affairs to the League of Women Voters type circuit,” it was still clear, however, that “the majority of the participants came from the middle-middle and upper-middle classes.”<sup>161</sup>

And perhaps that was no surprise. For all Great Decisions’ innovation, particularly in its saturation approach to the mass media, it still fundamentally relied on a particular model of citizenship, information intake, opinion creation, and, ultimately democracy itself. It was a vision of citizenship that theorists thought was realistically applicable only to a few Americans. Could they be proven wrong?

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Great Decisions grew dramatically, much faster than its architects ever expected. By early 1958, Nason was assigning up to 90% of his regional staff’s time and effort to the program.<sup>162</sup> A year after the test run in Oregon, the Association told the Ford Foundation that 33 communities in

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<sup>161</sup> Munk, “Oregon Makes Great Decisions,” pp. 18-21.

<sup>162</sup> Nason to FPA and Center Staff, “Program Priorities for the Period January through June, 1956,” February 3, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 226.

six states had set up similar programs, although other internal estimates put the number at 54 communities in seven states, involving up to 6,500 adults in discussion groups.<sup>163</sup> The following year, the regional directors were forced to start estimating the number of participants — based on sketchy reports from local organizing committees, inferences from the number of fact sheet kits bought, and other metrics — because they had to concentrate on creating the necessary communications networks for programs to succeed, leaving the formation of actual discussion groups to others. Even so, in 1957 it was thought that more than 1,300 groups were meeting in 233 communities in 33 states, as part of programs that used Great Decisions material in everything from full-spectrum, municipal efforts on the Portland model, to traditional packaged series in chapters of the League of Women Voters and Junior Chambers of Commerce.<sup>164</sup> If 20,000 adults participated that year, at least double that were involved in 1958, and double that again in 1959, by which point there were programs in 509 communities, spread across 43 states. 120 radio and television stations were involved, with 199 newspapers running advertising, full articles, or news coverage.<sup>165</sup>

Under the pressure of grant deadlines, the Association became much less reliable in its statistical reporting from 1960 onwards, for while “fully documented” internal figures compiled for that year by the regional offices suggested that just over 70,000 adults were actively talking

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<sup>163</sup> “Report to the Ford Foundation from the Foreign Policy Association, 1956-57,” November 22, 1957, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; “Decisions... USA,” June 18, 1956, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>164</sup> Philip Van Slyck, “Decisions’ Evaluation Trips March-May 1957,” June 1957, and “Statistics on Decisions,” June 5, 1957, attached to “Executive Committee,” June 4, 1957, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>165</sup> “Report for Calendar Year 1958,” attached to Nason to Gordon, April 28, 1959, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; “Minutes of Regional Meeting,” February 13-14, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 230; “Board of Directors Meeting,” May 27, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 16.



Figure 4. Billboard for the Great Decisions program in New Orleans, 1958. FPA, Part II, Box 286.

through their decisions, a number of 110,000 was quoted to the board, and as many as 200,000 to Ford.<sup>166</sup> Local reports, it was thought, chronically underestimated total participation, and so the Association felt free to claim that between 250,000 and 300,000 people participated annually in the program up to 1964.<sup>167</sup> But “the figures we have publicly used on Great Decisions participation have always puzzled me,” the Association’s president wrote in 1964, and rightly so.<sup>168</sup> Robert Tucker, the Princeton political scientist who evaluated the program for Ford in 1965, thought that it was “doubtful” that it

reached even 100,000 adults per year.<sup>169</sup> Less rosy Association estimates showed that the

<sup>166</sup> Regional Operations, “Statistical Report on ‘Great Decisions – 1960,’” July 29, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 206; “Board of Directors Meeting,” May 4, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 16;

<sup>167</sup> “Response to Questions from the Ford Foundation,” June 1, 1964, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>168</sup> Samuel P. Hayes to Mastrude, “Statistics on Great Decisions,” October 22, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 205.

<sup>169</sup> Robert C. Tucker, “Memorandum on FPA’s ‘Great Decisions’ Program,” undated [1965], FF, FA 592, Box 9.

program plateaued at around 40,000-50,000 adults nationally from about 1962 to 1968, before dropping off precipitously.<sup>170</sup>

There were successes, particularly in areas where other world affairs programming was limited. Oregon remained a demonstration project, so successful that it outgrew the Council, which handed control of the program to an unprecedented committee of statewide agencies, including the public school system, the state libraries, the extension division of the state's land grant university, and — most important for breaking out of Portland and into rural Oregon — the local office of the Federal Cooperative Extension Service, whose agricultural and home-economics agents were employed by the Department of Agriculture. In 1957, all seven of the state's television stations cooperated, along with 40 radio stations and 45 newspapers. 32 of the state's 36 counties had active discussion groups, more than 300 of them in total, encompassing over 4,000 people. In some counties, over 5% of the adult population was involved in discussion groups; in one small town, 25%. The numbers were thought to be impressive, and became more so in 1958 when increased cooperation with the AFL-CIO and the Farm Bureau drove the creation of up to 600 groups, but the regional directors constantly tried to tell non-quantitative stories, ones that aimed to show the normative, educational value of the process itself. "No counting of groups," Charles O'Brien and Warren Rovetch wrote from the San Francisco office,

can set forth the gas station operator who had never before talked about his concerns for the world because he felt it would identify him as queer; the Methodist minister who 'rediscovered' his congregation; the woman from the small mountain community who 'saw the world whole' for the first time.

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<sup>170</sup> "Great Decisions – 1962 and 1964: Reported and Estimated Kit Sales and Participation," undated, FPA, Part II, Box 59; "Adult Participation in 'Great Decisions... 1965,' by States," March 16, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 59; C. Dale Fuller, "Program Review and Evaluation: Great Decisions," undated [early 1968], FPA, Part II, Box 55.

There were, after all, parts of Oregon which had only had access to electricity for a decade; now, as residents met in discussion, “world affairs and foreign policy were no longer matters a few ‘thinkers’ talked about.”<sup>171</sup>

Much the same was true in other predominantly rural areas, where new infrastructures of communications were developed with a burst of Great Decisions activity at their core. In Wyoming, for instance, federal agricultural extension services combined with the adult education division of the state’s university to create nearly a hundred discussion groups in 1958 and 1959, even though there were no statewide television stations, radio shows, or newspapers.<sup>172</sup> Outside of major cities, Junior Chambers of Commerce often took responsibility, as young businessmen tried to make a name for themselves in local politics. Such cooperation was sporadic, however. Elsewhere, it took immense work to create successful programs, particularly in areas where the Association had had little previous experience. With the exception of cities like Atlanta and New Orleans, it refused to deal with fraught racial politics of the South. Even a promising test project in the calm city of Macon, Georgia, remained segregated at the request of white local leaders, and attracted only two black discussion groups out of 63 in 1959.<sup>173</sup>

While Great Decisions seemed particularly effective in mid-sized cities like Indianapolis and St. Louis, where suburbanization was still in its early stages, it still had notable success in four major cities. Each of these operated on a different pattern, and with a different relationship

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<sup>171</sup> Charles O’Brien and Warren Rovetch, “Report on Oregon ‘Decisions... 1957’ Program,” November 1957, FPA, Part I, Box 28; “Roundup from Field Reports,” March 15, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 39.

<sup>172</sup> “Minutes of Regional Meeting,” May 19-20, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 230; Program Committee, “Subcommittee on Regional Operations and Cooperation with Other Organizations,” May 20, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 40.

<sup>173</sup> “Great Decisions 1959 in Macon, Georgia,” September 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 55.

to pre-existing foreign affairs institutions. Many World Affairs Councils remained skeptical about world affairs programs that went beyond attempts to grow their own membership.<sup>174</sup> The most actively hostile was the World Affairs Council of Northern California, whose executive director, Calvin Nichols, saw Councils — especially on the west coast — as serving the scholars and expert elite who might be directly influential on policy processes. To Nason, Nichols was the most extreme of Council directors, interested basically in “outdoing even the Council on Foreign Relations.”<sup>175</sup> Great Decisions, in Nichols’ view, had “no value whatever,” for it was “really a delusion and unfair to the participants to give the impression that they were getting something significant out of such a brief exposure.” As there was little evidence that Great Decisions converted participation into Council members, Nichols refused to get involved.<sup>176</sup> San Francisco’s Great Decisions, nonetheless, became one of the strongest in the nation when it began in 1958, on the initiative of “a volunteer housewife in San Mateo.” With over a hundred cooperating groups — including schools, parent-teacher associations, churches, and the Junior Chamber — and coverage from the *Chronicle’s* media empire, by 1960 the program was so popular that people were being turned away from forty open, public discussion groups set up across the city. Even prisoners at San Quentin made up one of the 600 or so Bay Area groups.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Mastrude memorandum, December 2, 1957, FPA, Part II, Box 226.

<sup>175</sup> “A JWN Report on West Coast Conference of World Affairs Councils, May 4, 1959,” May 7, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 232; “Minutes: Joint Meeting – World Affairs Councils in the West: Foreign Policy Association,” May 4, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 79

<sup>176</sup> Hayes, “Memo of Conversation with Cal Nichols, of the World Affairs Council of Northern Calif., at dinner on November 28, 1962,” FPA, Part II, Box 79.

<sup>177</sup> “Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors,” March 5, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 16; “Some Local ‘Great Decisions’ Programs,” [1958], FPA, Part II, Box 180; “San Francisco,” February 16, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 260.

Other Councils, or their equivalents, were much more willing to embrace the idea, not least because it was cheap, prestigious, and had the potential to create stronger links to other local voluntary associations. The first was the Boston Council, the successor to the Association's early Boston branch and now presided over by Christian A. Herter, Jr., a Republican politician and the son of Christian A. Herter, Eisenhower's second secretary of state. The support of Senators John F. Kennedy and Leverett Saltonstall, as well as the *Christian Science Monitor*, helped its initiative to reach 1,600 people in 110 discussion groups in 1957. The Boston Council made particular use of the abundance of local academics, including Max F. Millikan and Henry Kissinger, in a WGBH phone-in television show that won a Peabody Award in 1960.<sup>178</sup> In the Midwest, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations briefly dallied with a program, helping to create about 300 discussion groups in 1958, but its financial difficulties quickly forced it shrink its offerings, and it retreated to a minor sponsorship role behind the *Chicago Daily News*.<sup>179</sup> The female leaders of the United Nations Association's local chapter were the original driving force in Baltimore, which had "perhaps the most 'solid' 'Great Decisions' program" in the northeast." Even among internationalist activists there, however, the program's populism split opinion. "Some of the old-timers," the Association's regional director Ruth Morton reported, "feel that the 'common lot' have muddied their hands." In short order, the relatively successful program

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<sup>178</sup> John S. Gibson, "Report on the Decisions-1957 Program," August 20, 1957, FPA, Part I, Box 10; "Decisions at the 'Half,'" *World Affairs Councilor* (March 1958), FPA, Part I, Box 10; Robert S. Huffman to Mastrude, "Trip of RSH with Stan Gordon, March 29-31, 1960," April 4, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 242; "Board of Directors Meeting," May 4, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>179</sup> "Field Report on Chicago, Illinois, by Dorothy B. Robins - April 11-12, 1957," May 8, 1957, FPA, Part I, Box 6; "Some Local 'Great Decisions' Programs," [1958]; Program Committee, "Subcommittee on Regional Operations and Cooperation with Other Organizations," May 20, 1959.

was taken over by a large, standalone committee, as was also the case elsewhere.<sup>180</sup> In smaller cities, the weak remnants of the Association's old branch system mustered creditable programs, as in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and occasionally strong ones, like in Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>181</sup>

As the program grew, politicians began to take notice, although their interest stopped well short of anything more than superficial cooperation. President Eisenhower, whose public remarks often noted the importance of citizen involvement in foreign policy, wrote in support of the Association's program, but otherwise kept his distance.<sup>182</sup> John Foster Dulles declined to ask the White House's help with the Association's budget, but he repeatedly endorsed Great Decisions, and instructed the State Department's public services staff to write letters to community leaders.<sup>183</sup> President Kennedy, who called the program an "eminently worthwhile effort" based on his own experience in Massachusetts, ceremonially received a Great Decisions fact sheet from members of the Association's board in February 1962.<sup>184</sup> Locally, programs often sought and received the backing of a city's mayor, and the offices of many congressmen were happy to acknowledge letters and opinion ballots from their constituents. In 1963, the Association began to help arrange "Issues Conferences" at which delegates from discussion

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<sup>180</sup> Ruth A. Morton, "Summary Baltimore 'Great Decisions' Program 1958," May 15, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 207.

<sup>181</sup> Robert A. Wiener, "Summary Report on Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 'Great Decisions... 1958,'" May 15, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 207; Wiener, Summary Report on Hartford, Connecticut, "Great Decisions... 1958," May 15, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 207.

<sup>182</sup> Eisenhower to Seligman, October 31, 1957, reprinted in "Foreign Policy Association: Annual Report, 1957," FF, FA716, Reel 4737.

<sup>183</sup> Dulles to Harry Wingate, August 26, 1957, FPA, Part II, Box 25; "Public To Get Aid On Policy Studies," *New York Times* (February 10, 1956), p. 2; William W. Cowan, "Memo to Chairmen of Local 'Great Decisions' Program Committees," January 30, 1956, FPA, Part II, Box 233.

<sup>184</sup> Kennedy to Nason, qu. in Nason, "Answer to the Attack by the Waldo M. Slaton Post of the American Legion on the Foreign Policy Association," October 13, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 16; "Kennedy Gets Kit," *New York Times* (February 2, 1962), p. 3.



groups met with their representatives, including, in that first year, a forum in Corvallis, Oregon, attended by Wayne Morse. 43 of these had been held by the end of the 1968 season.<sup>185</sup> And by 1974, as policymakers struggled to reconcile post-Vietnam public opinion with the nation's diplomatic posture, leading participants testified in dedicated hearings before both the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.<sup>186</sup>

If political support from the top down was somewhat limited, a more complicated story about the willingness of communities to participate ran from the bottom up. Mastrude's central theoretical problem had been apathy, which the Association attacked through constant invocation of the citizen's duty to participate. On the cover of the most popular promotional leaflet for Great Decisions, a carpenter sawing, a father mowing, a secretary typing, and a mother cooking all looked out, saying "Who me?" Inside, a housewife shopping asked, "Do I really have anything to say about U.S. foreign policy?" "You bet you do!" answered the text, which reiterated that people were not expected to know "the day-to-day details (such as the exact size of a foreign aid appropriation voted by Congress)," but should take part in "the important, underlying decisions about which direction our foreign policy should follow." A man leaning on a globe asked, "But isn't foreign policy too difficult to understand?" "Not at all!" answered the Association. "You know you want peace, security, a better world for your children," and any effort to learn the facts and "think through the great decisions" would represent "a constructive

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<sup>185</sup> "Report to the Board of Directors on FPA's 1962-63 Program Activities," May 17, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 69; C. Dale Fuller, "Program Review and Evaluation: Great Decisions," undated [early 1968], FPA, Part II, Box 55

<sup>186</sup> *Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, April 24, 1974: Twentieth Anniversary of the Great Decisions Program* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974); *Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, April 25, 1974: Great Decisions Program* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974). This experiment was repeated in 1975.



*Figure 5. Great Decisions participants testify to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1974. FPA, Part II, Box 285.*

contribution to U.S. foreign policy.” In a democracy, after all, opinions counted whether they were informed or uninformed. And, the leaflet stated, if you filled out an opinion ballot, your views would be “tabulated in your own community and the results direct to the State Department and Congress.” Every citizen who took part, who sent in their ballot, would “play a democratic role in the shaping of America’s foreign policy.”<sup>187</sup>

Few communities actually did send their views to Washington, however. As Philip Van Slyck, the New York director of program materials, put it in 1959, the ballots “dramatize, as no other device can, the basic philosophy of the program that informed opinions do count in the

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<sup>187</sup> *Who Me?* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1958), FPA, Part II, Box 180.

democratic process.”<sup>188</sup> But, as Van Slyck’s choice of verb implied, the ballots remained curiously performative. The Association left the details of tabulating ballot results to communities, which could choose whether and how to pass them along to policymakers. It took until 1959 for the Association to begin collating community tabulations on a national level in order to stoke press attention, and even then many communities were not interested.<sup>189</sup> As H. Schuyler Foster of the State Department’s public opinion staff recalled, perhaps only ten or twelve sent in a report each season, a number that declined year on year, which mean that “most groups have not felt it worthwhile to send their conclusions to the State Department.”<sup>190</sup>

Did this mean that the Association’s effort to convince Great Decisions participants that the government was listening, that their opinions mattered, had failed? Perhaps. Van Slyck repeatedly noted that some skepticism surrounded the ballots, and surmised in 1959 that “a few users and sponsors are cynical about the value of communicating opinions to Washington,” and thought the ballot a “gimmick.”<sup>191</sup> Plenty, however, did not. Tens of thousands of participants regularly filled out the ballots and sent them to their local Great Decisions sponsors. Even so, the proportion of participants who did so varied wildly. Three quarters of surveyed participants in the initial Oregon test thought that the ballots were important, but Carnegie Endowment research on the Portland program a year later found that of the 35% of 220 surveyed community

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<sup>188</sup> Van Slyck to Nason, “Opinion Ballots for ‘Great Decisions... 1959,’” May 22, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

<sup>189</sup> See, e.g., “Latin Policy Assayed,” *New York Times* (March 22, 1959), p. 6.

<sup>190</sup> H. Schuyler Foster to Hayes, January 8, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 60.

<sup>191</sup> Van Slyck to Nason, April 23, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 16.

leaders who took part, only 16% used one or more opinion ballot.<sup>192</sup> A World Affairs Council of Boston report on the 1957 program relayed that about 30% of participants returned ballots to the council, but discussants in Macon filled out up to 1,200 ballots each week in 1959.<sup>193</sup> There seemed to be no single pattern to explain such variations. One field report from Buffalo in March 1957, for instance, relayed that one luncheon group of men refused to fill out any ballot at all, that another group still “felt that they were really not qualified to form an opinion which would be of any value,” and that a third had talked for so long that they had run out of time.<sup>194</sup> Even if some groups remained hesitant, remarkably few ever gave up completely and dissolved.

It did not help that the State Department remained deeply ambivalent about the enterprise, caught between the competing imperatives of paying due attention to the public on the one hand, and bolstering its claims to sole expertise on the other. Perhaps more importantly to eager communities far from Washington, the department’s institutional capability to interact with the public had by this point severely diminished. If communities sent their tabulations in, they often did not receive the courtesy of a reply, let alone the assurance that their views were being heeded by policymakers. In 1958, Van Slyck met with the chief of State’s public services division, who admitted he had no familiarity with the domestic landscape at all, having just returned from ten years abroad. Van Slyck relayed the story of a lady from Medford, Massachusetts, who had gotten so caught up in democratic participation that she had written to

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<sup>192</sup> Mastrude to Regional Representatives, November 8, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 73.

<sup>193</sup> Gibson, “Report on the Decisions-1957 Program”; “Great Decisions 1959 in Macon, Georgia,” September 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 55.

<sup>194</sup> Mary E. Crawford, “Evaluation of the Decisions Program 1957, Sponsored by the Buffalo Council on World Affairs,” March 1957, FPA, Part II, Box 230.

Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, her congressmen, and the State Department. All but the latter replied.<sup>195</sup> Faced with such incompetence, Foster said in 1963, “some senders-in may unhappily conclude that the Department ‘doesn’t give a damn’ about what they think.” But even Foster never considered the ballots to have more than “quite marginal” value, though, because they were neither a random sample nor clearly an expression of views from a particular interest group. Although information about Great Decisions occasionally reached policymakers, Foster never used the ballots in his formal opinion reports.<sup>196</sup>

It seems unlikely that most Great Decisions participants thought themselves inherently unqualified to express their opinions, not just because expression was obviously a requirement of the program, but because they put pressure on the Association to make the program not less but more demanding, more detailed, more concretely illustrative of policymaking dilemmas, more relevant to institutional processes. Mastrude’s plan had always been to keep the program at the broadly attitudinal level, in keeping with his intended audience, although he quickly understood that repeated iterations of the program in the same place would probably entail “becoming more current and specific.” Even so, in April 1955 he still thought that “we would not try to get them to say whether we should defend Quemoy,” but rather “whether we should fight, compete, cooperate with or woo China.” He neither wanted to “delude people” that they could make “detailed policy choices,” nor ask them to “clarify all the subtle, complex, contradictory, and domestic-political questions which go into decisions on specific policy acts.”<sup>197</sup> And the most

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<sup>195</sup> Van Slyck to Nason, Policy Planning Group and Regional Directors, February 28, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 40.

<sup>196</sup> H. Schuyler Foster to Hayes, January 8, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 60; Foster to Hayes, February 27, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 51.

<sup>197</sup> Mastrude to Allport and Nason, April 14, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 28.

difficult of questions, indeed, usually faltered in the field. Staffers emphasized that people seemed to like “‘person-place’ questions” on controversial issues, and that “abstract questions like nuclear strategy,” whatever their importance, “had the least popular appeal.”<sup>198</sup>

But by 1958, as the Association noticed how many Great Decisions participants were repeating the program year after year, the topics and fact sheets went into greater depth. “People who have already been involved,” one policy planning group noted, “want something with more of an intellectual approach,” even if that might frighten newcomers.<sup>199</sup> As such, the early, single-page fact sheets, with their elementary information, discussion questions, and pocket-sized accessibility, were quickly abandoned in favor of texts with more heft. By 1962, a fact sheet on Vietnam spilled to 12 pages of dense prose, filled with population statistics, trade figures, and arcane diplomatic history. At the same time, and in response to demand, the Association abandoned the idea of the opinion ballots as prompts for discussion, and confined them to “issues of policy on which action could be taken rather than on questions of attitude.”<sup>200</sup> Those discussing Vietnam in 1962 were offered nine policy choices to deal with “indirect Communist aggression against South Vietnam,” and twelve means of limiting or expanding their involvement in “South Vietnam’s internal problems of economic, social and political development.”<sup>201</sup> As Councils became more enthusiastic about Great Decisions, so Great Decisions seemed to appeal more to the kinds of people who might be enthusiastic about World Affairs Councils.

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<sup>198</sup> “Minutes of Regional Meeting – June 11-13, 1957,” FPA, Part II, Box 230.

<sup>199</sup> “Minutes of Policy Planning Group Meeting, December 18, 1958,” January 6, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 69.

<sup>200</sup> “Meeting of Regional Directors, May 19-21,” FPA, Part II, Box 230.

<sup>201</sup> Great Decisions Packet, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 111.

What kind of audience drove this escalation? Was the mass that Mastrude had thought he could reach more intelligent than even he had hoped? No. There is no doubt that Great Decisions was a more effective program than any other that the foreign policy elite had previously come up with at stoking organized discussion of world affairs. There is no doubt, too, that it reached people who had never previously thought in depth about the subject. But Great Decisions was that rare program that had specific, quantitative aims in mind, and as much as its developers enjoyed singling out relatively intangible, individual stories about education's power, the program was designed to be susceptible to quantitative assessment. As soon as the program began to spread, staffers started to think how to evaluate it at scale.<sup>202</sup> As a community endeavor, it was assessed at the community level, making it hard to put together a national picture. But as the Association's first Ford grant came to its end, in 1959 it commissioned surveys in Boston, Macon, Denver, and Oregon, as it sought to prove that its "demonstration that 'the people' are neither apathetic nor beyond communication" had worked.<sup>203</sup>

It had not. Great Decisions reached a markedly similar audience to most other world affairs programs, just in greater numbers. "We feel reasonably secure in stating," Alfred Hero of the World Peace Foundation reported from Boston, "that most of the participants in these sessions are among the better-informed, better-read, the more active and highly-motivated two or three percent of the population so far as international relations is concerned." Even though

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<sup>202</sup> Van Slyck, "Suggestions for Evaluating a Community-Wide 'Great Decisions... 1956' Program," February 5, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 87; Morton to Van Slyck and Mastrude, February 14, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 87.

<sup>203</sup> Mastrude to Nason, Fuller, Rowson, April 20, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 242. Prior to 1959, the Association assessed the program's reach anecdotally, although some evidence was available on audience from the more sophisticated local reports. See, e.g., Mastrude to Regional Representatives, November 8, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 73; Gibson, "Report on the Decisions-1957 Program," August 20, 1957, FPA, Part I, Box 10.

Boston's program was deliberately aimed at the suburbs, on the racist assumption that black inner-city residents had no interest in world affairs, its demographic results were still woeful. 93% of male participants, and 87% of female, had been to college; 46% of the men had graduate degrees. (According to the 1960 census, 8% of Americans nationwide had completed four or more years of college.)<sup>204</sup> Half of respondents to the survey had family incomes of over \$7,500, with the median for males being around \$11,000. (Around 12% of American families earned more than \$10,000 in 1959.)<sup>205</sup> Only 2% of the women and 8% of the men responding were members of no "clubs, civic groups, churches, labor unions, or other organizations," and the typical participant was one of the approximately 10-13% of Americans who belonged to four or more such groups. When at home, most Great Decisions participants were "very far above average in their self-exposure to world affairs in the more realistic and responsible mass media."

Overall, the picture was "generally one of an upper-middle class group with considerable privilege in education, means and social status," even if the discussion groups were probably more varied in reality than the statistical surveys implied. Did this make it a total failure? Not quite, for the program was quite good at encouraging people who already had some interest and exposure to world affairs to get more involved. Less than half of even these participants, for instance, said they had taken part in any organized discussions about world affairs over the past few years. Even so, Hero wrote, the failure of Great Decisions to break out beyond a traditional world affairs audience — in which the median participant was a white, older, educated housewife

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<sup>204</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *1960 Census: Population, Supplementary Reports: Educational Attainment of the Population of the United States*, [census.gov/library/publications/1962/dec/population-pc-s1-37.html](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1962/dec/population-pc-s1-37.html).

<sup>205</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1960*, [census.gov/library/publications/1962/demo/p60-037.html](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1962/demo/p60-037.html).





*Figure 6. The Great Decisions group of the Mile High Senior Citizens meets at the Y.M.C.A. in Denver, 1962. FPA, Part II, Box 286,*

— was proof that it was “unrealistic” to try to reach a wider audience. If the “common man” did not care, he concluded, “communication with a few of their more thoughtful and active associates seems to us one area where limited, gradual improvement may be practicable.”<sup>206</sup>

Every survey conducted on Great Decisions participants distilled these results into an essence. Boston’s program, despite its suburban focus, was actually relatively progressive. In Denver, fully 28% of participants had graduate degrees, while in two selected counties in Oregon, it was 46%. Across the board, approximately 20-30% of participants had not been to

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<sup>206</sup> Alfred O. Hero, “Participation in ‘Great Decisions’ Discussions in Greater Boston,” May 1959, FPA, Part I, Box 10; “A Joint Report on ‘Great Decisions: 1959’ in Boston,” August 25, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 55.

college. Almost half of all respondents were housewives; most of the men were professionals, academics, lawyers and the like.<sup>207</sup> In Macon, 14% of participants were estimated to earn less than \$5,000 before tax, but 24% over \$10,000; the local Chamber of Commerce thought that about 53% of local families had an income of less than \$4,000, after tax, and just 5.4% over \$10,000.<sup>208</sup> Moreover, it was increasingly clear that Great Decisions participants were not just likely already to be interested and active in world affairs, but actually were already involved. Universities and popular presses pumped out whole libraries of books on foreign affairs by the late 1950s, but the best estimates were that less than 1% of all Americans had ever read one outside a classroom.<sup>209</sup> 49% of Great Decisions participants claimed to read “not more than one” foreign affairs book during any given year, but 30% read two to four, and 20% read five or more. 64% of respondents attended two or more “lectures or meetings on foreign affairs” per year.<sup>210</sup>

To be sure, Great Decisions seemed to reach deeper than other programs into marginally interested, politically active communities, and perhaps to increase the activity of those who joined in. 67% of group members in 1959, for instance, relayed that they were reading more foreign news, and nearly half increased their intake of pertinent radio or television programs, although there was no real way to measure whether such improvements were temporary or permanent.<sup>211</sup> However, statistical metrics based in theory showed that it was impossible to claim

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<sup>207</sup> “Great Decisions... 1959: A Report to Colorado,” undated, FPA, Part II, Box 40, Appendix C.

<sup>208</sup> “Great Decisions 1959 in Macon, Georgia,” September 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 55.

<sup>209</sup> “Working Paper on FPA’s Role in Citizen Education in World Affairs,” June 25, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 242.

<sup>210</sup> “Response to Questions from the Ford Foundation,” June 1, 1964, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159, p. 80.

<sup>211</sup> “Highlights of Surveys of Great Decisions... 1959,” undated, Appendix B, FPA, Part II, Box 55.

that Great Decisions was achieving the task that Mastrude had set for it in 1955.<sup>212</sup> Whatever the program's normative value, the Association had a target audience, which it could either reach or not; it could either disprove Lippmann, or not. Comparable to the Great Books program, which had 42,000 participants in 1,100 communities by the end of 1960, Great Decisions was by far the most popular adult education program ever conceived for world affairs.<sup>213</sup> The 1959 surveys revealed that perhaps only 32% of participants were not habitual lecture-goers, that 25% of participants had not been educated beyond high school, that 39% of participants earned the national median family income or less.<sup>214</sup>

It was something. It was not enough.

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The failure of Great Decisions to meet its intended audience provided a practical case in point for the theoretical assault on classical, progressive ideals of citizenship, participation, and

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<sup>212</sup> For further studies of Great Decisions, see Jules J. Wanderer, "Great Decisions 1961: Colorado Survey," 1961, FPA, Part II, Box 55; Robert W. Hattery, "*Great Decisions... 1962: A Survey of Kit Buyers in Two Wisconsin Communities* (Milwaukee: Institute for World Affairs Education, 1964), which said Great Decisions "reached predominantly those residents of Milwaukee and Racine whom one would expect to reach through any quality world affairs educational program," which reflected poorly on local world affairs programs. See J. Michael Blum and Robert Fitzpatrick, "Conditions of Participation in a Public Affairs Adult Education Program: A Developmental Study," July 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 55; "The Great Decisions Program – A Survey of Participants," 1967, FPA, Part II, Box 55; Carol Edler Baumann and Kay Wahner, *Great Decisions – 1968: A Survey of Participants in Milwaukee County* (Milwaukee: Institute for World Affairs Education, 1969); Joan D. Davis and Stanely E. Spangler, "Great Decisions 1973: A Survey of North Carolina Participants," July 1973, FPA, Part II, Box 86; Earl L. Backman and William J. McCoy, "A Study of Metrolina's 1973 Great Decisions Program," March 1974, FPA, Part II, Box 55.

<sup>213</sup> Fund for Adult Education, *1951-1961: A Ten Year Report of the Fund for Adult Education*, p. 30.

<sup>214</sup> "Request to the Ford Foundation from the Foreign Policy Association – World Affairs Center," May 2, 1960, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

education waged by political scientists. The academics, it seemed, were right. And the Association was not alone. Numerical measurements of adult education programs' success and failure steadily replaced normative appreciations of their purpose, and statistical techniques revealed the profoundly limited nature of the endeavor. The Fund's own studies revealed that the audience for civic, political, or simply non-vocational adult education was puny.<sup>215</sup> Whatever the content of a program, from Socrates to SEATO, study-discussion programs in the liberal arts attracted a white, wealthy, professional, active, educated, mostly female, and politically uninfluential base. Reporting on a nationwide study of the Great Books program in 1960, for instance, NORC found that 84% of participants had been to college, whereas 86% of the population had not.<sup>216</sup>

With hopes for an educated mass democracy dashed, there was a wholesale movement in institutions associated with Ford towards the elite. The American Foundation for Political Education, for instance, gave up on its attempt to reach into local communities in 1958 and switched to executive education.<sup>217</sup> The following year, the Fund itself declared that the most

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<sup>215</sup> Fund for Adult Education, *1951-1961: A Ten Year Report of the Fund for Adult Education*; Bruch, *Accent on Learning*; Abbott Kaplan, *Study-Discussion in the Liberal Arts* (White Plains: Fund for Adult Education, 1960); Alan Knox, *The Audience for Liberal Adult Education* (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1962). See also, John W. C. Johnston and Ramon J. Rivera, *Volunteers for Learning: A Study of the Educational Pursuits of American Adults* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).

<sup>216</sup> James A. Davis, *A Study of Participants in the Great Books Program, 1957* (White Plains: Fund for Adult Education, 1960), p. 11.

<sup>217</sup> The AFPE's programs reached an even more elite audience than Great Decisions. A 1956 dissertation by a University of Chicago political scientist, Kenneth P. Adler, revealed that probably 80% of discussion group participants in a community AFPE program were already part of Almond's "attentive public." Although Adler noted that part of the problem was a failure to show citizens that they could effectively influence foreign policy, he crucially extrapolated that "the best — perhaps the only — way of increasing the social effectiveness of a world affairs program is to make it more attractive to more members of the foreign-policy elites." Kenneth P. Adler, "A Study of the Potential Influence of a 'World Affairs' Program in a Selected Community," PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1956, p. 142; see also Kenneth P. Adler and Davis Bobrow, "Interest and Influence in Foreign Affairs," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 (1956), pp. 89-101.

urgent task of adult education was to “improve and expand educational opportunities for those who bear public responsibilities,” meaning leaders, present and future.<sup>218</sup> The Ford Foundation cut the Fund loose in 1961, with the recognition that even such an extraordinarily well-funded endeavor would never sustain itself absent continual subsidy. If elites wanted to educate themselves, they could pay their own way.<sup>219</sup> Under the protection of Ford proper, the Association survived. But the momentum behind its chosen model of education — indeed this last remnant of Deweyan democracy, with all it entailed in terms of participation and expertise — was dissipating, this time for good.

Great Decisions survived as the Association’s main program, and still does today. Its ambitions were, however, drastically scaled back. By the end of the 1960s, the Association saw Great Decisions not as a tool to reach the “middle 50%,” but a much more limited group. As the Association’s vice president wrote in 1968, the audience it found “is essentially the one we seek”: “middle and upper class,” with “at least some college education,” “active as communicators,” but “not already highly attentive to foreign affairs.” With a narrowed theory of the public, Great Decisions came close “to being a theoretically ideal citizen education program.” The attack on the mass was forced into a retreat.<sup>220</sup>

Roger Mastrude almost capitulated, too. “We must be honest in facing the fact,” he wrote in October 1959, “that the total efforts of the adult educators of this country have probably never made a perceptible difference in the public understanding of any crucial issue.” Perhaps a

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<sup>218</sup> Fund for Adult Education, *Education for Public Responsibility* (White Plains: Fund for Adult Education, 1959), p. 11.

<sup>219</sup> Fund for Adult Education, *1951-1961: A Ten Year Report of the Fund for Adult Education*, pp. 32-33, 49-51.

<sup>220</sup> Fuller, “Evaluation and Planning of ‘Great Decisions,’” January 31, 1969, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

nuclear world was just too bewildering, even for experts, he wondered. And yet he did not give up, indeed he did not think that anyone *could* give up. “To deny the capacity of the people to think and choose well for their society is to assume that democracy is a preposterous sham,” he wrote. “Unless we can educate the public to reasonable understanding of the great international issues,” he concluded, “we are left with no rational grounds for continuing to believe democracy to be viable.” Educators would have to do better, but if they could not, they would be forced to “admit that they have failed their civic responsibility.”<sup>221</sup> And soon enough, they would.

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<sup>221</sup> Mastrude, “The ‘Plebs’ And World Affairs,” October 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 226.

## Chapter 6

### The Diplomatic 1%

The Foreign Policy Association's fiftieth birthday party made the front pages, as had its birthday parties before. A thousand of its supporters gathered for dinner at the Manhattan Hilton, between 53rd and 54th Streets, on November 14, 1967. Secretary of State Dean Rusk was the guest of honor, a former member of the Association like his predecessor before him, and his predecessor's predecessor before that. Entitled "The Political Future of the Family of Man," Rusk's speech was a plea for people to see the benevolence of American primacy, to understand its burdens, to support its exercise. The problems of a complicated world "have to be approached on our knees," the secretary said, deploring the "impatience" of those who sought simple answers. Rusk urged his audience, in their "occasional quiet moments," to try to understand the "responsibilities" of a president "thinking about the full use of the unbelievable power of the United States to get something over a little more quickly than it otherwise might."<sup>1</sup>

Rusk wanted to talk about the whole breadth of American foreign policy, and not to reduce it to the war in Southeast Asia, but he found it impossible not to comment on the escalating war in Vietnam. It was those comments that made headlines. Vietnam was inescapable for the Foreign Policy Association, too. As the *New York Times* wrote in an editorial, while the

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Rusk, "The Political Future of the Family of Man," November 14, 1967, *Department of State Bulletin* 57 (1967), pp. 735-741.

Association “spent its early years resisting the disastrous American retreat into isolationism,” now perhaps “some of its supporters could be usefully employed for the rest of the twentieth century in studying the dangers of American overinvolvement and overcommitment.” Like Rusk, though, the *Times* still thought that the Association’s most basic purpose was sound. “Its contribution to public enlightenment on foreign problems,” the editorial board wrote, “cannot be measured but is surely substantial.”<sup>2</sup> The Association was right, as a *Times* reporter put it, to believe that “most Americans are poorly informed and apathetic about foreign affairs.”<sup>3</sup>

The apathy was riotous outside the ballroom that night. Three weeks after students had laid siege to the Pentagon, now 3,000 antiwar protestors assailed Rusk’s presence at a rally turned violent. The thousand police guarding the hotel were pelted with stones, bottles, and eggs. Some were covered in what looked like red paint, but turned out to be steers’ blood, seventeen gallons of it, a symbol of blood spilled far away. The police returned fire, corralling the protestors on horseback, charging their lines on scooters. “You want to be treated like animals,” one officer yelled, “we’ll treat you like animals.”

A “roaring mob,” the Associated Press called it, split off from the main picket and headed south, roaming around Midtown. Parts of the crowd locked arms and marched down Sixth Avenue “like an inept chorus line,” singing “Hey, hey, LBJ, how many children were killed today?” Others headed for Times Square, marauding towards the armed forces’ recruiting booth on 43rd Street. “You’re a bunch of Communists,” one old man heckled, “take a bath!” Another

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<sup>2</sup> “The F.P.A. at Fifty,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1967, p. 46; “50 Years of the FPA,” *Washington Post*, November 26, 1967, p. B6.

<sup>3</sup> “Rusk, Here, Renews Offer to Talk With Hanoi,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1967, p. 2.



bystander beat a demonstrator over the head with a newspaper. The protestors cheered when the tickers on the skyscrapers reported their actions as news; they booed when the name of Lyndon Johnson appeared. Members of Students for a Democratic Society then headed east, reaching Bryant Park. “We’re not demonstrating against Rusk,” one young man told two hundred more through a bullhorn. “We’re demonstrating against the Foreign Policy Association. We’re demonstrating against the American establishment, against the liberal fascists.”<sup>4</sup>

Forty-six protestors were taken into custody that night, for resisting arrest, for harassment, and for incitement to riot. Five police were injured. A few days later, the *Times* reported that the protest was not just a random event, but the start of a new, more violent period in the antiwar movement, in which even nonviolent pacifists were prepared to form alliances with students organized into an active “resistance” undertaking direct, provocative action.<sup>5</sup>

Scenes like these played out repeatedly as 1967 turned into 1968. A few weeks later, Rusk delivered another dinner speech, this time to the World Affairs Council of Northern California at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Again, protestors spilled a symbol of blood; again, fifty or so people were arrested; again, there were injuries everywhere.<sup>6</sup> And, predictably, the foreign-policy old guard was unimpressed with this display. The executive committee of the Association

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<sup>4</sup> “War Foes Clash With Police Here As Rusk Speaks,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1967, p. 1; “Pickets Besiege Hotel As Rusk Talks in N.Y.,” *Washington Post*, November 15, 1967, p. A1; “Roaring Antiwar Mob Pickets Rusk in New York,” *Hartford Courant*, November 15, 1967, p. 8A; “Anti-Viet Pickets Fight City Cops,” *Newsday*, November 15, 1967, p. 1; “Portrait of an anti-Viet war outburst—New York style,” *Christian Science Monitor*, November 17, 1967, p. 9; Tom Wells, *The War Within: America’s Battle Over Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 212-214.

<sup>5</sup> “Leaders of Rusk Demonstration Cite New Techniques of Protest,” *New York Times*, November 16, 1967, p. 4; “Debasing Dissent,” *New York Times*, November 16, 1967, p. 46; Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), pp. 149-180.

<sup>6</sup> “500 Battle Policemen as Rusk Speaks at San Francisco Hotel,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 12, 1968, p. 1.

met the day after Rusk's gala speech, and noted that there had been "wide newspaper, TV and other news media coverage" of the dinner. "Unfortunately," the minutes continued, "most reports focused on the demonstrations outside."<sup>7</sup>

A couple of weeks later, the Association's vice-president, C. Dale Fuller, gave an interview to the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, to promote the seventh season of that city's Great Decisions program. He held firm to the view that discussion offered Kentucky's citizens a "more meaningful" way to influence foreign policy than rage, but even Fuller now openly wondered if that was, in fact, true. It may have been, he said, that "demonstrations on such foreign policy issues as Vietnam may have sprung up around the country because individuals believe they have no other way to change America's stance."<sup>8</sup> And Fuller was not alone in lamenting the decline of a democratic foreign policy. "If we had had something like that *really* going on, a large part of the grief over Vietnam might have been alleviated," the principal State Department architect of the cold war, Francis H. Russell, told an interviewer in retirement in 1973.<sup>9</sup> Riots now ran where talk had faltered.

As Russell hinted, the Vietnam War revealed a broader failure, without quite causing it. What was at stake here was not just public revulsion about a misguided intervention in the jungles of Southeast Asia, but the whole domestic basis of the first age of American global primacy. As Charles Maier has put it, what was going on in the late 1960s and the early 1970s was "the unraveling of the prior structures of American leadership." This was true of the balance

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<sup>7</sup> "Meeting of the Executive Committee," November 15, 1967, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>8</sup> "Policy Association Favors Concern, Not Disorder," *Courier-Journal*, November 29, 1967, p. A15.

<sup>9</sup> "Oral History Interview with Francis H. Russell," July 13, 1973, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, [trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/russellf.htm](http://trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/russellf.htm).

of power, true of the global economy, true of ideas and rhetoric, true even, as Maier wrote, of the “established channels of political representation.”<sup>10</sup> And it was true, too, of the instruments that the American foreign policy elite had devised for securing their project at home. In truth, it had been true for some time.

Why? Why did even citizen educators lose faith, let alone those who had always been more skeptical of their work, years before Vietnam made clear the extent of their failure? After all, it was *their* failure. While participatory politics flourished, whether as protests or as teach-ins or as community organizing, elite internationalism wilted under pressure. In too many places to ignore, World Affairs Councils had foundered soon after they were founded. In places like Cleveland, white flight to the suburbs proved ruinous for urban institutions that relied upon a white, wealthy public. In places like Los Angeles, voluntary-association models patterned on the small northeastern cities of the progressive era simply did not fit the geography of a sprawling, modern metropolis. And even in places where Councils had some success, like Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Chicago, fewer and fewer Americans seemed interested enough in foreign policy problems to engage on the terms that foreign policy institutions sought.

The precarity of the citizen education movement reflected an increasing ambivalence about democracy on the part of the foreign policy elite. Presidents and secretaries of state still insisted on the democratic nature of their diplomacy, still implored Americans to inform themselves and play their part, and indeed stepped up their funding for basic education in the name of the cold war. But the institutions that they had built to make their rhetoric a reality

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<sup>10</sup> Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy And Its Predecessors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 241.

were left to rot. The State Department's public affairs staff was short on expertise, short on staff, and short on cash. Graduates of top-flight universities flocked to join the sprawling, secretive national-security state, and they took with them notably reserved views about the nature of the democracy they endeavored to protect. Behavioral political scientists had finally erected pluralist theories that downplayed the importance and even the possibility of widespread participation — even as their students united under the banner of participatory democracy afresh.<sup>11</sup> This, as it had been earlier in the cold war, was not merely a theoretical project, but one that was worked out hand in hand with practice on the ground.

Even more than before, the mediator of many of these processes was philanthropy. The citizen education movement had been one of the central projects of American philanthropy for the fifty years after World War I. Name a major foundation, and it had supported the movement, from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to the Carnegie Corporation and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Given that the reach of the state in this area was always limited, it was primarily through foundations that the foreign policy elite expressed its political, spiritual, and financial concern for a democratic foreign policy. And it was through foundations that the balance of the foreign policy elite finally gave up on that concern.

Having conceived of citizen education in world affairs as a core project from its founding, the Ford Foundation had held a direct and powerful position over the citizen education movement since 1953. After 1960 that power became ultimate. At the same time as various parts

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<sup>11</sup> See, esp., Francesca Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

of the sprawling foundation were promoting the social-scientific research that was doing so much to undermine the basic philosophical assumptions of the citizen education movement, its International Affairs division continued to extend its influence over the movement itself, and indeed briefly took something approaching direct management of it.

Maintaining Ford grants became the first priority of the Foreign Policy Association; acquiring them became the first priority of the leading World Affairs Councils. Programs were reshaped around the tempers of Ford officials. Offhand comments were pored over as possible hints of what the opaque policymaking processes of a diffuse and often confused foundation might lead to. Even among the small number of people at Ford who controlled the dollars on which the movement relied, whether low-ranking grant officers or the lofty board of trustees, there was no consensus as to its value, aims, or progress. But everyone understood that if the Foundation vacated the citizen education field, the movement would cease to be a vital concern. For that reason, the story of the citizen education movement is told here primarily as the story of the Ford Foundation — not as a monolith, but as a contingent, contradictory actor wielding immense power over a subject that, as it admitted, it barely understood.

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When Gabriel Almond sat down to write a foreword for the second edition of his wildly successful *The American People and Foreign Policy* in 1960, he was more optimistic than he had been a decade before. Back in 1950, the political scientist wrote, “it was necessary to conclude that American mass opinion in foreign affairs was a ‘mood’ reaction, shifting radically in response

to events.” No more. Since then, awareness of and attention to foreign policy had steadied.

Higher education had grown the “attentive public.” Opinions were now more uniform, as a result of closing class divisions, declining immigration rates, and the “floor of information and communication” provided by a national mass media. Almond did not go so far as to say that a proper public had been built for American foreign policy, but did say that the public could no longer easily be blamed for the faults of American foreign policy, as he saw them.<sup>12</sup>

By the time Almond returned to his work on public opinion and foreign policy in 1960, the assumptions of traditional democratic theory that his research had helped to weaken in 1950 had been fatally undermined. Take three areas of research that were particularly important to the citizen education movement. First, voluntary associations. The idea that America was uniquely a “nation of joiners,” as the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., had put it in 1944, gave the citizen education movement faith that Americans would participate in foreign policy either by joining world affairs groups or by increasing the amount of world affairs discussion that they engaged in elsewhere, whether their Rotaries, their unions, or their churches.<sup>13</sup> And citizen educators took hope from research that showed that voluntary association membership was rising with affluence and education.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1960), pp. xi-xxviii. Almond had started seeing signs of improvement in Gabriel A. Almond, “Public Opinion and National Security Policy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 20 (1956), pp. 371-378. For further evidence of improvement, see James N. Rosenau, *The Attentive Public and Foreign Policy: A Theory of Growth and Some New Evidence* (Princeton: Center of International Studies, 1968).

<sup>13</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., “Biography of a Nation of Joiners,” *American Historical Review* 50 (1944), pp. 1-25.

<sup>14</sup> Herbert H. Hyman and Charles R. Wright, “Trends in Voluntary Association Membership of American Adults: Replication Based on Secondary Analysis of National Sample Surveys,” *American Sociological Review* 36 (1971), pp. 191-206; Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 16.

But the overall intellectual tenor was downbeat, and by 1962 the leading expert on the subject, the sociologist Murray Hausknecht, could write in *The Joiners* that the voluntary association had “played its part,” and shortly would “not be a significant factor in American life.”<sup>15</sup> The latest research showed that perhaps only a third of citizens were members of a voluntary association, and between just a fifth and a sixth were members of more than one voluntary association, and hence more likely to be involved in civic or political groups. Even if a person was a member of a voluntary association, the likelihood that she actively participated in that association’s activities was slim, new research found. Charles Wright and Herbert Hyman, the leading experts on the subject, concluded in 1958 that “these findings hardly warrant the impression that Americans are a nation of joiners.”<sup>16</sup>

Second, communications theorists had sharply curtailed their understanding of the efficacy of information. By this point, nobody seriously believed that insufficient information about politics was available to citizens. “A fair flow of information is *accessible* to almost everyone in the society,” wrote the University of Michigan sociologist Philip Converse in 1962, and “the fact that little attention is paid to it even though it is almost hard to avoid is a fair measure of lack of public interest.”<sup>17</sup> But whereas scholars working in the immediate postwar period took solace from wartime studies that showed that attitudes could be shifted under laboratory conditions, psychologists now located the root of opinions unreachably deep within the

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<sup>15</sup> Murray Hausknecht, *The Joiners* (New York: Bedminster, 1962), pp. 124-125.

<sup>16</sup> Charles R. Wright and Herbert H. Hyman, “Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Evidence from National Sample Surveys,” *American Sociological Review* 23 (1958), p. 286; John C. Scott, “Membership and Participation in Voluntary Associations,” *American Sociological Review* 22 (1957), pp. 315-326.

<sup>17</sup> Philip E. Converse, “Information Flow and the Stability of Partisan Attitudes,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 26 (1962), pp. 592-593.

subconscious, and communications experts additionally emphasized the social, psychological, and technical barriers to effective communications in the real world.<sup>18</sup> As Robert A. Dahl put it in 1961, “the average citizen is remarkably deaf and blind to everything not of vital interest to him,” so much so that “a great flood of propaganda channeled through the mass media diminishes to a thin trickle when it encounters the desert of political indifference in which most citizens live out their lives.” Converse and his Survey Research Center (SRC) team showed in *The American Voter*, the summit of behavioral research on democracy, that the most alert Americans were also the most partisan and resistant to facts. “Political indifference,” Dahl concluded, surrounded everyone else “like impenetrable armor plate.”<sup>19</sup>

Third, and relatedly, sociologists had now abandoned the idea that anything connected the rare active citizen to the typical “passive citizen.”<sup>20</sup> Whether in terms of “ideological patterns of belief” or “abstract conceptual frames of references,” Philip Converse wrote in a seminal 1964 article, elite and mass worldviews were now thought to be so distinct as to be incommensurate. “Opinion leaders,” those mythical citizens who were thought in the postwar research to connect

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<sup>18</sup> The definitive postwar statement of the possibility of attitudinal change was Carl I. Hovland, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, and Fred D. Sheffield, *Experiments on Mass Communication* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), which was severely undermined by Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960); Raymond A. Bauer, “The Obstinate Audience: The Influence Process from the Point of View of Social Communication,” *American Psychologist* 19 (1964), pp. 319-328. On opinions, childhood experiences, and personality types, see T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper’s, 1950); David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950); M. Brewster Smith, Jerome S. Bruner, and Robert W. White, *Opinions and Personality* (New York: Wiley, 1956); Bjørn Christiansen, *Attitudes Toward Foreign Affairs as a Function of Personality* (Oslo: Oslo University Press, 1959).

<sup>19</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 264; Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley, 1960).

<sup>20</sup> Angus Campbell, “The Passive Citizen,” *Acta Sociologica* 6 (1962), pp. 9-21.



the elite to the mass, probably did not exist at all, and if they did, they were unlikely to be effective outside very tight-knit social groups.<sup>21</sup> “Very little information ‘trickles down’ very far,” Converse wrote, because very few people had enough intellectual structure to be able to process it, certainly not enough to qualify as “internationalist” or “isolationist,” even “liberal” or “conservative.”<sup>22</sup> “Of any direct participation in this history of ideas and the behavior it shapes,” Converse concluded, “the mass is remarkably innocent.”<sup>23</sup>

The theoretical basis of the citizen education movement had been torn apart. There was a more basic problem, too, in that political science as a discipline was increasingly premised on the assumption that the people could not govern. As Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot have argued, “between 1940 and 1960, decision-making had migrated from the margins to the center of political science,” in part because of the prevalence of nuclear weapons, but mostly because the public seemed incapable of taking decisions.<sup>24</sup> This was above all true in international relations theory, as Judith Shklar saw in 1964, where realists placed hope in a rational, non-ideological elite capable of discerning the national interest, as against an irrational, ideological public incapable of doing the same.<sup>25</sup> The very foundation of cutting-edge thinking about politics

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<sup>21</sup> As two citizen educators in the Midwest found in 1959, “Our Foreign Policy Opinion Makers [i.e. opinion leaders] are an extremely small group. We surveyed an area in which over a million and a half people live and yet we turned up only a dozen people, or fifty at most.” See William C. Rogers and Barney Uhlig, “Small Town and Rural Midwest Foreign Policy Opinion Makers,” *International Studies Quarterly* 13 (1969), pp. 306-325.

<sup>22</sup> This had been a Survey Research Center argument since George Belknap and Angus Campbell, “Political Party Identification and Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15 (1951), pp. 601-623.

<sup>23</sup> Philip E. Converse, “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” *Critical Review* 18 (2006), pp. 1-74, at pp. 10, 34, 66.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot, “Who Decides?” in Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot (eds.), *The Decisionist Imagination: Sovereignty, Social Science, and Democracy in the 20th Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2019), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Judith Shklar, “Decisionism,” in Carl J. Friedrich (ed.), *Rational Decision* (New York: Atherton, 1964), pp. 3-17.

therefore assumed a lesser role for the people. And scholars of public opinion followed suit, privileging the needs of the policymaker over the rights of the public.

The problem with this was that scholars found it almost impossible to pin down *how* public opinion worked in this new “process.” Bernard Cohen tried. As we have seen, in his early work on the citizen education movement he had already underlined the importance of citizens being educated in ways legible to policymakers. In later work on public opinion, he moved even further in that direction. “The aim of research in this area is to improve the nation’s policy product,” Cohen bluntly wrote in 1957.<sup>26</sup> But once Cohen started to look at the policy process itself, it turned out that few involved thought about public opinion in a satisfactory or coherent way. “Officials simply do not think about public opinion very much or very explicitly,” Cohen wrote in 1972, even if the scholar thought that policy still followed public opinion in the end. The paradox was that “a policymaking system which has mastered all the modes of resistance to outside opinion,” he concluded, “nevertheless seems, from a long-run perspective, to accommodate it.”<sup>27</sup> And once the component parts of a participatory public had been abandoned, Cohen was not alone in struggling to work out what public opinion was for. The political scientist V. O. Key, for instance, wrote in 1961 that “to speak with precision of public opinion is a task not unlike coming to grips with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>28</sup> Ernest R. May, the historian, wrote

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<sup>26</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *The Political Process and Foreign Policy: The Making of the Japanese Peace Settlement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 4. See also Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), which even argued that “the requirements for ‘news’ about foreign affairs are established not by any philosophical conception of limitless need, but rather by the nature of the particular process that makes foreign policy decisions at any period in history,” at p. 6,

<sup>27</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public’s Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), pp. 33-34, 205.

<sup>28</sup> V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 8.

three years later that public opinion was less a spiritual matter than a literary one. “The fact is that there is almost no evidence to support the proposition that officeholders have to heed public opinion when deciding issues of foreign policy,” May wrote much as Cohen later would. Yet “American statesmen have traditionally thought themselves responsible to, and supported or constrained by, some sort of general will.” May resolved that “public opinion” was merely an invention, one needed “in order to cope with the chaos that is reality.”<sup>29</sup>

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Foundation officials were not much interested in funding fiction, but nor were they ever completely in hock to the conclusions of academics. It took time to translate the new academic knowledge that foundations themselves funded into practical recommendations and grass-roots programs, a delay that was unsurprising considering that theorists were asking practitioners to overthrow basic and widely-held conceptions of how their polity worked.<sup>30</sup> It helped that grass-roots programs based on earlier theories seemed not to be working out. In the process, just as communities abroad became testing sites for modernization doctrines that relied on the elitist theory of democracy, so communities at home became testing sites for that same theory.

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<sup>29</sup> Ernest R. May, “An American Tradition in Foreign Policy: The Role of Public Opinion,” in William H. Nelson and Francis L. Loewenheim (eds.), *Theory and Practice in American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 117-118, 121-122.

<sup>30</sup> Note that just as one branch of the Rockefeller Foundation funded Harold Lasswell’s propaganda research, to the eventual detriment of a citizen education movement funded by another branch of the Rockefeller Foundation. For the Ford Foundation’s role in the rise of the behavioral science, see Emily Hauptmann, “The Ford Foundation and the Rise of Behavioralism in Political Science,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 48 (2012), pp. 154-73; Mark Solovey, *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), pp. 103-47.

This process of adaptation was mediated through philanthropy, and the Carnegie Endowment led the way. Led after the Alger Hiss debacle by the historian and former State Department official Joseph E. Johnson, the Endowment spent much of the mid-1950s on a massive project that assessed public attitudes towards the United Nations in more than a dozen countries. In the United States the project turned into a crucial site for discussions about how to apply contemporary social science to practice. The first of its two parts was a study group that met from the fall of 1953 to the spring of 1954, and was chaired by the former assistant secretary of state for public affairs, Edward W. Barrett. It brought representatives of State, the United Nations, and UNESCO together with foundation officers, voluntary association leaders, and academic specialists including Gabriel Almond, Bernard Cohen, and Paul Lazarsfeld. Supplied with précis of the latest research, the group concluded that “mass participation on a level of formal discussion seems an impossibly ambitious goal,” and that there was “no royal road to converting Americans to a deep interest in international affairs.”<sup>31</sup>

The reading group then morphed into a three-year study called “The U.S. Public and the UN.” Chaired by the former Ford Foundation president, Marshall Plan administrator, and Los Angeles World Affairs Council founder Paul G. Hoffman, it involved two former assistant secretaries for public affairs (Barrett and William Benton), the Sunday editor of the *New York Times* (Lester Markel), the presidents of Columbia (Grayson Kirk) and Stanford (J. E. Wallace

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<sup>31</sup> Robert H. Cory, *Communicating Information and Ideas about the United Nations to the American People* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1955), pp. 45-52. Cory, the study group’s secretary, was a leading expert on United Nations information campaigns, and eventually concluded that they were a waste of time and resources as long as Americans continued to declare their support for the United Nations in the abstract. See Robert H. Cory, “Uniting Nationals in Support of the United Nations,” PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1951; Robert H. Cory, “Forging a Public Information Policy for the United Nations,” *International Organization* 7 (1953), pp. 229-242; Robert H. Cory, “The Role of Public Opinion in United States Policies Toward the United Nations,” *International Organization* 11 (1957), pp. 220-227.

Sterling), and the former head of the domestic branch of the Office of War Information (E. Palmer Hoyt). Directed for a time by the New School political scientist Saul Padover, the project comprised repeated interviews of municipal elites in six cities, further elite interviews in seven cities, local sample surveys, national Survey Research Center polls, analysis of historical data, and experimental information programs. Sprawling to the extent that most of the research was never published, the effort grew so much that the Endowment could not afford to run it alone, relying on Ford to the tune of \$148,000.<sup>32</sup>

The Endowment's project started from the study group's conclusion that the public as a whole was too much to bother with. It would be unrealistic, "indeed fatuous," to advocate mass programs because "public opinion,' as such, is just too much to cope with," Benton's assistant told Padover.<sup>33</sup> And Padover, reading the research to date, agreed. "Whence do people derive their information on which to base their vote on issues or give support to steps relating to foreign affairs," he asked? "The answer is that they don't."<sup>34</sup>

So, the Endowment asked whether "community leaders" could be convinced to act differently. It seemed not. The community leaders interviewed in cities across the country did fit the imagined template of the ideal citizen-statesmen: they were middle-aged, college-educated, politically-active "joiners." And yet, the Endowment concluded, they were not remotely

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<sup>32</sup> *Ford Foundation Annual Report: October 1, 1954 to September 30, 1955* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1956), p. 79. For publications, see Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The United States Public and the United Nations* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1958); Saul K. Padover, *U.S. Foreign Policy and Public Opinion* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1958); William A. Scott and Stephen B. Withey, *The United States and the United Nations: The Public View 1945-1955* (New York: Manhattan, 1958).

<sup>33</sup> John Howe to Padover, August 13, 1957, William Benton Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago, Box 436.

<sup>34</sup> Padover, *U.S. Foreign Policy and Public Opinion*, p. 44.

“prepared to cope with the challenges required of Americans in the field of foreign affairs.” The typical community leader did not take in much information about the world. He was not likely to be a member of his local World Affairs Council, which he saw as too left-wing, too feminine, too full of “do-gooders.” He might read a book about international relations once in a while, or enjoy a speech at the Chamber of Commerce, but probably not. If he did, even he did not feel like he had any power over foreign affairs. He was for the UN, for internationalism, and for anti-communism, but he was “not particularly foreign policy conscious.” As the average citizen was “bored by the whole subject” of foreign affairs, Padover concluded, leaders needed to step up. But they were not stepping up, and for that reason, they ought to be the target of all citizen education efforts.<sup>35</sup>

A second assessment from within the core of the citizen education network concluded similarly. The World Peace Foundation, based in Boston, had converted itself from a pacifist group to a think tank after World War II, and a prestigious one, chaired by the MIT scholar Max Millikan and including on its board two former Boston branch chairs of the Foreign Policy Association, Harvey H. Bundy and the serving secretary of state, Christian A. Herter. Its secretary was Alfred O. Hero, an international relations scholar who had served in the military occupation of Germany. An experienced citizen educator who served as the secretary of the Boston World Affairs Council, Hero sought to find academic justification for his elitist outlook, and oversaw the production of seven “Studies in Citizen Participation in International

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<sup>35</sup> Padover, “Chapter XVII: General Summary and Recommendations,” June 6, 1957, FPA, Part II, Box 41, pp. 12-18, 41-42.

Relations,” dense books intended to outline the relevant social-scientific research for practitioners. Hero himself wrote four.

Even more than his peers, Hero set outlandishly high standards for the public. While the minimum expected of any citizen “should be to consider the international views of candidates as one major determinant of their voting choices,” Hero wrote, there was a further continuum on which everyone should be measured. Ideal citizens would show interest; they would possess information; they would be active; and they would assess the issues “in a logical or rational way.” If the ideal citizen displayed all four traits, he would be sympathetic to other cultures, understand interdependence, know that sovereignty was relative, support alliances and international organizations, eschew militarism, and not be seduced by easy solutions. But Hero thought such citizens were rare. 3% of Americans might be interested, informed, and active, although many even of these Americans were crippled by a “feeling of helpless inability to take effective action.” Only 1% of Americans, at best, were interested, informed, active, and rational. Even this diplomatic 1% would still equate to a foreign policy public of about a million people, a number considerably larger than the memberships of World Affairs Councils or the readership of *Foreign Affairs* would imply.<sup>36</sup>

What, then, to do? How to act upon these constructions of the public? The Endowment concluded that the citizen education movement should just preach to the converted, for “a preacher who neglected his parishioners would soon find himself without a congregation.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Alfred O. Hero, *Americans in World Affairs* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1959), pp. 2-11, 14, 21, 24, 44, 56, 61, 65, 106; Alfred O. Hero, *Mass Media and World Affairs* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1959), p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> Carnegie Endowment, *The United States Public and the United Nations*, pp. 42-44

Cohen agreed that the task at hand was to make the most of the “present structure of public interest and participation, which meant aiming “toward the upper socio-economic level and toward the occupational ‘aristocracy,’” advice that he knew was “uncomfortably regressive.”<sup>38</sup> Practitioners at the Minnesota World Affairs Center, doing similar research, concluded that “the fully informed man in the street who takes an active interest in world affairs is clearly a fiction,” and that the mass should be left alone, not “held up to scorn or ridicule.”<sup>39</sup>

Hero himself argued strongly against anything but a concentration on a tiny elite. It would be difficult to “modify significantly the views of most Americans who already have formulated attitudes on world affairs,” Hero wrote, but it would be even harder to create opinions among the vast majority of Americans who lacked them in the first place. After all, communications theory taught that information was “mediated by the predispositions of the audience and their products — selective exposure, selective perception, selective learning, selective retention, and selective forgetting.” And even if information did by some miracle get through, most people did not, in Hero’s view, have the mental tools to understand it.<sup>40</sup> As such, “the effects of even the most competent single ‘campaign’ will frequently be so small as to be

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<sup>38</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, “Citizen Interest and Education in World Affairs: Some Further Thoughts,” May 10, 1957, FPA, Part II, Box 41; Bernard C. Cohen, *The Influence of Non-Governmental Groups on Foreign Policy-Making* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1959), p. 21.

<sup>39</sup> Robert W. Hattery, Carolyn P. Hattery, William C. Rogers, and Barbara Stuhler, *A Midwest World Affairs Audience: Interest in World Affairs and Its Origins* (Madison: Bureau of Government, University of Wisconsin, 1959), pp. 30-31.

<sup>40</sup> Alfred O. Hero, *Mass Media and World Affairs* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1959), pp. 21-22.



unmeasurable by even the more sophisticated social scientific techniques.”<sup>41</sup> The only viable option was to focus on the “atypical Americans” who were already interested in world affairs.<sup>42</sup>

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The Foreign Policy Association had tried to work around the first wave of public opinion research, with *Great Decisions* being the result. But as much as one of its regional officials, Hilton Power, took issue with what he called “the fallacy of the one percent,” this second wave of research was far too powerful to wish away.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the second wave of scholarship was read and enacted by a citizen education movement already shifting away from mass approaches, in part because of its own involvement in the creation of that scholarship, but in part, too, for other reasons.

One of these was that the Association recovered its national position after the Emeny calamity. With the Association’s old ally John D. Rockefeller III briefly holding its vice-chairmanship, and with the prestige of its Ford grants, it regained access to the policymaking class. During the Eisenhower administration, George Perkins left the board to become permanent representative to NATO, and James D. Zellerbach quit for the embassy in Italy. Arthur Goldberg became John F. Kennedy’s secretary of labor, and Roswell Gilpatric his deputy

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<sup>41</sup> Alfred O. Hero, *Opinion Leaders in American Communities* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1959), p. 48.

<sup>42</sup> Alfred O. Hero, *Voluntary Organizations in World-Affairs Communication* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1960), p. 106.

<sup>43</sup> Hilton Power, “Let’s Stop Talking About It,” in Leonard Freedman and Hilton Power, *The Few and the Many: Two Views on Public Affairs Education* (Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1963), p. 16.

secretary of defense. Moving the other way came Dillon Anderson, who had been Eisenhower's national security advisor, and Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., the former ambassador to the United Nations, future vice-presidential candidate, and ambassador to South Vietnam.<sup>44</sup>

While the names of such board members give a sense of the increased standing of the Association, however, the sociology of a non-profit board should not be confused with the way it is actually governed.<sup>45</sup> Rockefeller aside, only a few luminaries actively involved themselves in the Association's work, and those who did initially found their influence limited. James B. Conant, the erstwhile president of Harvard and retired ambassador to West Germany, chaired the program committee for a while, but did little.<sup>46</sup> Far more effective was his replacement on that committee, Robert R. Bowie. Bowie was an acolyte of John J. McCloy who had served in the occupying government of Germany and risen to become the director of policy planning at the State Department. A legal scholar, Bowie left State in 1957 to found Harvard's Center for International Affairs with Henry Kissinger, and while the two of them sought to further knowledge and create the "men" who would make it there, they also committed their Center to a "well-informed and mature public opinion," if only as "an instrument of foreign policy and a

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<sup>44</sup> "Executive Committee," March 18, 1955, FPA, Part II, Box 16; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 13, 1956, FPA, Part II, Box 16; "Foreign Policy Association-World Affairs Center 1960-1961 Annual Report," September 1961, Nason Papers, Box 7.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the approach taken to identifying the elite nature of foundation boards, and the consequent assumption of their inherent elitism, in Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*, pp. 47-58.

<sup>46</sup> "FPA Program Committee: Summary of Meeting December 3, 1957," FPA, Part II, Box 40; "FPA Program Committee: Summary of Meeting December 9, 1957," FPA, Part II, Box 40.

limitation upon it.” In line with that belief, Bowie took a notably active, voluntary role at the Association, drawing on his policymaking experience and pushing it to aim for elites.<sup>47</sup>

Under the influence of Bowie and others, the Association slowly moved away from its more progressive goals. When it applied for new Ford funding in May 1960, it projected a move towards “the education of the leaders of selected communities (as contrasted with the education of as many persons as possible within selected communities which is the continuing goal of ‘Great Decisions’).”<sup>48</sup> Roger Mastrude, the staff’s most committed populist, stopped working on Great Decisions and concentrated on programs for management at companies like the Sandia Corporation, voluntary association staffs members including at the National Council of Catholic Women and the National Council of Churches, and even labor union leaders at the United Auto Workers.<sup>49</sup> So certain that political science could be proven wrong just a few years earlier, that the “middle 50%” of the people could be reached, in 1961 John Nason wrote in *Adult Leadership* that the movement was now once again “fumbling for an adequate conceptual scheme or

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<sup>47</sup> Center for International Affairs, *The Program of the Center For International Affairs* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, 1958), p. 2, On Bowie, see Andrew McFadzean, “The Bigger Picture: Biography and/or History? Robert Bowie,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 22 (2003), pp. 41-63; Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped and Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>48</sup> “Notes on Future Program Activities of the FPA-WAC,” May 20, 1960, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; “Request to the Ford Foundation from the Foreign Policy Association–World Affairs Center,” May 2, 1960, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>49</sup> Note that Mastrude remained highly doubtful that “leaders” could be found in the wild; hence his focus on “intensive work” through specific institutions. Roger G. Mastrude, “Comments on Leadership Groups for World Affairs Education,” April 13, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 224; Mastrude, “Planning Paper, Field Services,” April 8, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 28.

framework within which to pursue our objectives.” If the “end target” was the “average citizen,” as Nason still hoped, he was pursued with increasing defensiveness.<sup>50</sup>

It took a change of leadership to force the issue, and to bring social science to bear on this broad, grass-roots trend. Although Ford had long plotted to remove Nason, he left only in January 1962, for the presidency of his alma mater, Carleton College.<sup>51</sup> It took until August for the Association to find a replacement. And when it did, its selection represented the final triumph of the new political science, and all it taught, over progressive idealism.

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Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., was the representative of everything the Association had been grappling with for two decades. After finishing a doctorate in psychology on voting patterns in the 1932 presidential election at Yale in 1934, he spent a postdoctoral year at Harold Lasswell’s University of Chicago, taught psychology at Mount Holyoke and economics at Sarah Lawrence, and eventually worked at a New York advertising agency under George Gallup.<sup>52</sup> An avowed

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<sup>50</sup> John W. Nason, “Foreign Policy and the National Consensus,” *Adult Leadership*, February 1961, pp. 234-236, 257.

<sup>51</sup> “Minutes of Annual Meeting of Members,” January 9, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 16. Ford pondered making its grant renewal in 1960 contingent on the resignation of Nason. See Stone to Hill, “FPA–World Affairs Center,” June 28, 1960, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>52</sup> Hayes’s dissertation was published in several journal articles. Based on a questionnaire distributed by the League of Women Voters during the 1932 presidential election, the research was framed even then as a query about whether rational voters really existed. See Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., “Voters’ Attitudes toward Men and Issues,” *Journal of Social Psychology* 7 (1936), pp. 164-182; Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., “The Predictive Ability of Voters,” *Journal of Social Psychology* 7 (1936), pp. 183-191; Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., “The Inter-Relations of Political Attitudes: I. Toward Candidates and Specific Policies,” *Journal of Social Psychology* 8 (1937), pp. 459-482; Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., “The Inter-Relations of Political Attitudes: II. Consistency in Voters’ Attitudes,” *Journal of Social Psychology* 10 (1939), pp.

advocate of the use of surveys in public policy, and of the uses of social science (and social scientists) more generally, he headed into the government during the war, working mostly in the Foreign Economic Administration.<sup>53</sup> Turning down the RAND Corporation, he joined the State Department, and helped to implement the Marshall Plan, Point Four, and the Mutual Security Agency.<sup>54</sup> Later, he would write a blueprint for the Peace Corps and help to found USAID.<sup>55</sup> But, crucially, in between his service in the Truman and the Kennedy administrations, Hayes had moved to Ann Arbor. An untenured professor at the University of Michigan, Hayes taught in the economics department and was the founding director of both the Foundation for Research on Human Behavior and the Center for Research on Economic Development, models for the application of social science to specific social problems. Both of those research units lived under the umbrella of the Institute for Social Research, a pioneering facility which was headed by the social psychologist Rensis Likert. Hayes and Likert hit it off, becoming co-authors and friends.<sup>56</sup> And Likert was not only a guiding light of the behavioral revolution in social science, but headed the institution whose statistical surveys had done so much to undermine traditional, progressive conceptions of democracy, the Survey Research Center.<sup>57</sup>

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359-378; Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., "The Inter-Relations of Political Attitudes: III. General Factors in Political Attitudes," *Journal of Social Psychology* 10 (1939), pp. 379-398.

<sup>53</sup> Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., "Commercial Surveys as an Aid in the Determination of Public Policy: A Case Study," *Journal of Marketing* 13 (1948), pp. 475-482.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., "Point Four in United States Foreign Policy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 268 (1950), pp. 27-35; "Oral History Interview with Samuel P. Hayes," July 16, 1975, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, [trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/hayessp.htm](http://trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/hayessp.htm).

<sup>55</sup> Samuel P. Hayes, *An International Peace Corps: The Promise and Problems* (Washington: Public Affairs Institute, 1961).

<sup>56</sup> Rensis Likert and Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., *Some Applications of Behavioural Research* (Paris: UNESCO, 1957).

<sup>57</sup> On Hayes at the Michigan, see Ethan Schrum, *The Instrumental University: Education in Service of the National Agenda after World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), pp. 164-182. David Hollinger argues that

As soon as he arrived in New York, Hayes started interrogating the Association's programs in light of behavioral science, far more thoroughly than his predecessors ever had.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, Hayes reconceived the Association's entire purpose in those terms, using the fighting words of decisionism and academic realism. As his first redraft of the Association's principles stated, the Association would aim

to advance the national interest of the United States by improving the quality and increasing the influence of its foreign policy decisions thru heightened popular understanding of foreign policy and thru wider and more effective participation in the making of national decisions on foreign policy.

It would concentrate on "major problem areas and underlying issues of foreign policy," not "world affairs activities in general," like cultural exchanges or public diplomacy.<sup>59</sup> It would do more to ensure that opinions were not only based on knowledge, but expressed to the relevant policymakers.<sup>60</sup> It would concentrate on "high-leverage groups" that were able to transmit opinions to officials or to the public. And that would mean that the "general public" was the least important of all its targets.<sup>61</sup>

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Michigan was *the* generic, exemplary university, and that even behavioral research was "more commandingly practiced and exemplified at Michigan than it was vindicated theoretically or subjected to sustained criticism." Perhaps that helps explain what it was so easy to translate into practical courses of action. See "Academic Culture at the University of Michigan," in David A. Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 121-154, at p. 133.

<sup>58</sup> "Board of Directors Meeting," September 25, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 16; "Some References," April 4, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 57.

<sup>59</sup> Hayes, "Draft Statement of Purposes and Principles of FPA," March 27, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>60</sup> Hayes, "Citizen Education and Participation in World Affairs," speech to the American Textbook Publishers Institute," March 21, 1963, Emeny Papers, Box 51; Hayes, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," speech to Oregon Great Decisions Council, January 11, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>61</sup> "Meeting of Special Committee," April 4, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

Such plans gained approval from a group of foundation officers, organization leaders, and social scientists that Hayes convened in April 1963, including Alfred Hero and Angus Campbell.<sup>62</sup> “General education of ‘attentive public’ was recognized as tremendous task,” Hayes noted, and questions were raised about the Association setting itself the “hardest task” of reaching “non-habituals” who were not used to active citizenship. “Considerable doubt was expressed,” moreover, about the “feasibility or desirability of general public reaching ‘decisions’ on specific foreign policy issues.” Campbell, Hayes’ old friend from Ann Arbor, pointed out that it was hard to prove how even the leaders who ought to be the Association’s main target might influence decision-making, let alone anyone else.<sup>63</sup> In discussions through late 1963 and early 1964, the Association’s board came to think likewise, as much for practical as for theoretical reasons. “While all present agreed that it would be desirable to educate the ‘masses’ on foreign policy,” the minutes of the executive committee revealed in October 1963, “it was generally recognized that ‘operationally’ this posed insurmountable problems.”<sup>64</sup>

By April 1964, Hayes had finally brought together behavioral political science and citizen education, and on the terms of the former, not the latter. In a strategy document that cited Gabriel Almond, Bernard Cohen, Alfred Hero, V. O. Key, and more of their peers, Hayes accepted an understanding of public opinion that privileged the state, defining it, following Key,

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<sup>62</sup> “List of Participants,” April 3, 1963, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159; “Basic Assumptions Underlying FPA’s Current Programs,” April 1963, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>63</sup> “Summary of April 5-6, 1963, Meeting with Social Scientists,” April 23, 1963, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 6307.

<sup>64</sup> “Joint Meeting of the Executive & Special Committees,” October 1, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

as “those opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed.”<sup>65</sup> It followed that efforts to improve the quality of public opinion had therefore to be related to policymaking processes, which in turn dictated a focus on the Americans who were most active and influential within them. As such, Hayes thought it was folly to waste resources on the 90% of Americans who were politically passive, or on the 80% of Americans who paid little attention to politics. Instead, the Association would make its primary target those 6 or 7 million politically-active Americans who were not already interested in foreign policy, and its secondary target those 4 or 5 million Americans both already active and already interested in foreign policy. It would subsidize programs for the former, and expect the latter to pay.

For Hayes, trying to reach Almond’s “attentive public” more broadly would be inefficient, because reaching those who paid attention but were not active would not have much utility. Nor would it be feasible or even desirable to bring about a “better informed and analytical mass public opinion, for

the size of the ‘inattentive inactive’ majority is so great, the interest and attention aroused in it by foreign affairs treatment in the media so low, the competition of other stimuli and interests so strong, and the possibility of reaching the majority of the electorate through voluntary organizations so limited, that it would be far beyond FPA’s financial capabilities.

Gone completely was the Newton Baker’s hope that every man, woman, and child might be in reach. Gone, too, was John Nason’s faith in the “middle 50%.” Hayes believed that only a sliver

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<sup>65</sup> Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, p. 14.



of Americans could now possibly be brought into a democratic foreign policy. One hundred million Americans would be left on their own.<sup>66</sup>

What this meant in practical terms was a new concentration on leadership groups, balanced by continuing budgetary limitations. Take the 1963-64 season, the first over which Hayes had any real sway. Great Decisions remained the largest program, although it was now targeted not at the broad public it had initially been intended for, but at a much more exclusive public, the Association's primary target of "inattentive actives." It boasted programs developed by National Educational Television, and more of an effort was being made to set up conferences for participants and their congressional representatives. But the rest of the Association's activities concentrated on those prepared to pay their own way, including a revival of the New York luncheons, the continuation of a speakers' series for women, and the founding of Associates of FPA, a fundraising initiative which provided speakers like undersecretary of defense Roswell Gilpatric, Peace Corps director Sargent Shriver, and Pitney-Bowes chairman Walter H. Wheeler to a wealthy coterie of benefactors.

Several programs were remnants of the World Affairs Center, a quasi-independent effort to lend some measure of coordination to the citizen education movements that the Association had organized in 1957 at the behest of several foundations. Operating from Carnegie Endowment facilities just across the road from the United Nations, the Center had a bookshop, an auditorium, and conference rooms, and it served as a clearinghouse for content and programming for voluntary associations. Its work was cut back in 1961, but a few of its programs

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<sup>66</sup> "The Purpose, Priorities and Operating Principles of FPA," April 15, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 49.

still operated. The most important of these took advantage of the tourist traffic passing through the halls of the United Nations via a Community Leaders Program held every Friday when the Assembly was in session. Clutching invitations issued by the U.S. ambassador, fifty or so local notables at a time heard briefing from members of the U.S. mission, had lunch at the Association, and visited the UN to witness its proceedings. Hailing mostly from business and industry, many of the participants came from the northeast but plenty came from further afield. If unambitious educationally, programs like these at least helped the Association raise increasing funds from corporate interests, which now contributed 16% of a million-dollar income propped up by foundations to the tune of 50%.<sup>67</sup>

There were, however, several problems with this program. Set aside, for the moment, normative concerns about target audiences, and the troubling social limits of a program designed for an educated white elite in the midst of the civil rights movement. Set aside, too, the fact that the Association remained financially precarious, as, after the failure of its fortieth birthday celebrations to raise a significant endowment, it faced mortal risks from foundation cuts or any kind of economic instability. Viewed only on its own terms, the Association's reoriented vision for the citizen education movement faced two significant challenges. One was that it had lost faith in, and practically abandoned, a World Affairs Council network crumbling in the face of critical funding pressures. But more crucially, its new focus on the impact of public opinion on the policymaking process depended on convincing the public that its opinions mattered. It

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<sup>67</sup> Hayes to Foundations, "Report on Program Activities of FPA, July 1, 1963-June 30, 1964," August 7, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 84.

depended on that policymaking process being *open* to public opinion, being formalized in some way. But the structures that would have made that so were derelict.

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On February 1, 1962, three members of the Foreign Policy Association's board, and one of its staff, walked into the Oval Office. President Kennedy welcomed them with his usual warmth. He posed for photos. He flicked through a Great Decisions kit, and, if he was paying attention, might have seen articles on Berlin, Iran, and Vietnam. As the Association's representatives told the *New York Times*, the president gave them "great encouragement" in their mission.<sup>68</sup>

It seemed like a vote of confidence, one that recalled a time when the leaders of the Association had enjoyed easy access to the very top of the government. But it was just a photo call, no more. And if it meant anything at all, it meant crisis, not confidence.

The idea came from Chester Bowles. After Kennedy fired Bowles as undersecretary of state late in 1961, he had been demoted to ambassador-at-large and tasked as a troubleshooter. And trouble this former public relations pioneer found. Forget the "bomber gap" or the "missile gap," Bowles was much more concerned about the "information gap." There was, Bowles told the president in January 1962, a "dangerous" mismatch between the "harsh, complex realities

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<sup>68</sup> "Kennedy Gets Kit," *New York Times* (February 2, 1962), p. 3.



*Figure 7. President John F. Kennedy meets with three board members of the Foreign Policy Association, February 1, 1962. FPA, Part II, Box 286.*

with which Washington policymakers must grapple and the generally limited understanding of these realities by most Americans, including the press and Congress.”<sup>69</sup>

After consultations with staff at the Association and elsewhere, Bowles submitted an eighteen-page critique of administration information policies.<sup>70</sup> “I have been struck,” the

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<sup>69</sup> Chester Bowles to the President, “Need for Improving Public Understanding of American Foreign Policy and World Affairs,” January 17, 1962, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, President’s Office Files, Staff Memoranda, Box 62, [jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/062/JFKPOF-062-012](https://jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/062/JFKPOF-062-012).

<sup>70</sup> C. Dale Fuller to Mastrude, Richard S. Winslow, Jeanne Singer, January 19, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 42; Fuller to Bowles, January 22, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 42; Winslow to Lucius Battle, “Preliminary Suggestions for Improving Public Information and Education in U.S. Foreign Policy,” February 5, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 60.

ambassador wrote, “by the immensity of the problem and the tremendous effort that will be needed to do anything meaningful about it.” A “positive effort to reach the average citizen where he lives” was needed, but secretary of state Dean Rusk had inherited a Bureau of Public Affairs wholly unfit for purpose. The Bureau had a budget of \$1.4 million, a minuscule appropriation compared to the \$35 million that the Defense Department dedicated to public relations. \$31,000 was available for publications. Nothing was available to provide material for television and radio. The departments of defense, agriculture, interior, even the Bureau of Reclamation had film programs, but State had not one reel available for distribution. The Pentagon assigned four officers to liaise with Hollywood; State, none.<sup>71</sup> State’s speakers bureau was “essentially a one-woman operation,” and she came nowhere close to fulfilling public demand. Unqualified foreign service officers were put out to pasture where public relations professionals once thrived. This was a desperate situation. Bowles urged Kennedy to help State recover the glory days of its campaigns for the United Nations and the Marshall Plan.<sup>72</sup>

How far the State Department had fallen, and how fast. Despite the temptations of outright propaganda, at the end of World War II the department had committed itself to dealing with the public in what Dean Acheson had called a “two-way” relationship through the Office of Public Affairs and the Division of Public Liaison. That rather open commitment quickly gave way to purer forms of public relations, however, as policymakers sought to build support for the

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<sup>71</sup> Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

<sup>72</sup> Bowles to the President, “The Government’s Information Program in Foreign Affairs,” March 27, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 60. The incoming assistant secretary of state for public affairs, Robert Manning, was given a similar story by his deputies, who were working in partnership with Association staffers. See Temple Wanamaker to Robert Manning, April 3, 1962, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Box 7; Winslow and Wanamaker, “Proposal for Improving Public Information and Education Concerning Foreign Policy Matters,” July 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 60.

cold war and blurred the line between the information campaigns they ran at home and the propagandistic psychological warfare they waged abroad.<sup>73</sup> But the line still existed, both in the minds of the information specialists themselves, which meant they tried not to oversell the cold war, and in the minds of the congressmen who oversaw them.<sup>74</sup> Republican majorities placed strict limits on State's domestic powers in the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, compounding worries about progressive-era laws that banned the use of appropriated funds being spent to influence Congress, and they threatened to dismantle the Division of Public Liaison and even the harmless *Bulletin*.<sup>75</sup> The Office's funding therefore always remained limited. While the government spent \$115 million on overseas information programs in 1952, its appropriation for the Division of Public Liaison was just \$250,000.<sup>76</sup>

State Department operatives therefore turned to mediate their work through compliant state-private networks, making it seem more spontaneous, voluntary, and democratic than full-

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<sup>73</sup> Nancy E. Bernhard, "Clearer than Truth: Public Affairs Television and the State Department's Domestic Information Campaigns, 1947–1952," *Diplomatic History* 21 (1997), pp. 545–567. Generally, see Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006); Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> For the State Department's reluctance to oversell the cold war, see Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950–1953* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). For the continuation of traditional progressive fears of propaganda, despite the innovations of Harold Lasswell *et al*, see Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Sarah Ellen Graham, *Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936–1953* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015). For a discussion of where the line really was, see the failed trial merger of State's domestic and overseas programs in 1949, in Autumn Lass, "Fact Givers or Fact Makers? The Dilemma of Information-Making in the State Department's Office of Public Affairs during the Truman Administration," in Andrew L. Johns and Mitchell B. Lerner (eds.), *The Cold War at Home and Abroad: Domestic Politics and US Foreign Policy Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), pp. 15–18.

<sup>75</sup> Andrew Johnstone, "Creating a 'Democratic Foreign Policy': The State Department's Division of Public Liaison and Public Opinion, 1944–1953," *Diplomatic History* 35 (2011), pp. 500–501.

<sup>76</sup> "Division of Public Liaison," May 2, 1952, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs, Box 1; Osgood, *Total Cold War*, p. 43.

on propaganda.<sup>77</sup> Just as they had with the United Nations, they outsourced their campaigns to promote the Marshall Plan and NSC-68 to nominally independent groups led by trusted former officials.<sup>78</sup> Mass media cooperation was easily acquired as networks sought cheap ways to fulfil their public service missions, and the shows that resulted — like CBS’s *World Briefing* and *Diplomatic Pouch* — gave the impression of accountability while remaining tightly controlled by policymakers.<sup>79</sup> Journalists eagerly swung behind official views, primed as they were by their shared boys’ club culture, their pack reporting methods, and the uncompetitive structure of the newspaper industry.<sup>80</sup> Information was walled off from the public through secrecy classification, a “more palatable method of securing secrets than the antidemocratic censorship of speech or publication,” as Sam Lebovic has written.<sup>81</sup> What was shared, and in what ways, was a process guided by assumptions brought over from advertising and psychological warfare, by the research of social scientists, and by the polling information that State created and collated.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The importance of state-private networks runs through all the literature on public diplomacy, propaganda, and related topics, and particularly that about the CIA, but see esp. Helen Laville and Hugh Wilford (eds.), *The US Government, Citizen Groups and the Cold War: The State-Private Network* (London: Routledge, 2006); Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How The CIA Played America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> Michael Wala, “Selling the Marshall Plan at Home: The Committee for the Marshall Plan to Aid European Recovery,” *Diplomatic History* 10 (1986), pp. 247-265; Steven Casey, “Selling NSC-68: The Truman Administration, Public Opinion, and the Politics of Mobilization, 1950–51,” *Diplomatic History* 29 (2005), pp. 655-690. Francis H. Russell, the director of the Office of Public Affairs, even considered creating a permanent citizens’ committee on this basis. See Francis H. Russell to Howland Sargeant, “Citizens’ Committee,” June 9, 1952, RG 59, Records of the Public Services Division, Box 134.

<sup>79</sup> Nancy E. Bernhard, *US Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>80</sup> Kathryn McGarr, “‘We’re All in This Thing Together’: Cold War Consensus in the Exclusive Social World of Washington Reporters,” in Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (eds.), *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 77-95.

<sup>81</sup> Sam Lebovic, *Free Speech and Unfree News: The Paradox of Press Freedom in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 165.

<sup>82</sup> H. Schuyler Foster to Russell, “Major Points Bearing on Willingness of the American Public to Support An Expanded Program,” October 16, 1950, RG 59, Office of Public Opinion Studies, Box 20; Foster, “Some Notes on

Even so, the question of how far the public would participate in foreign policy remained contested and unresolved throughout the Truman administration. State's Division of Public Liaison continued to promote more participatory means of interaction. Starting in 1947, it expanded its wartime conferences for voluntary associations into multi-day, off-the-record National Conferences on U.S. Foreign Policy featuring speeches by the secretary and roundtables with assistant secretaries and bureau chiefs.<sup>83</sup> It held regional conferences in partnership with local groups, including World Affairs Councils, at which senior policymakers addressed audiences of activists, businessmen, and academics, on the trickle-down assumption that, as one memo put it, they "returned to their communities after first-hand contact with Department officers to continue to work of explaining and stimulating interest in the Government's and the Department's conduct of foreign policy."<sup>84</sup> In 1952, the Division kept close ties to about 400 outside organizations, and looser contacts with 800 more. It ran 66 special meetings for voluntary associations, and State officers gave five outside speeches per day. A small army

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Popular Knowledge Concerning Current Foreign Affairs," January 22, 1951, RG 59, Office of Public Opinion Studies, Box 20; Casey, "Selling NSC-68," p. 662.

<sup>83</sup> In 1952, for instance, the National Conference on U.S. Foreign Policy lasted three days and was addressed by Dean Acheson, Averell Harriman, Eleanor Roosevelt, four assistant secretaries, and the heads of the Technical Cooperation Administration, the International Information Administration, and the Office of European Regional Affairs. See Program, "National Conference on U.S. Foreign Policy," May 6-8, 1952, RG 59, Office of Public Affairs, Division of Public Liaison, Subject Files of the Chief, 1945-1951, Lot 53D387, Box 121. The off-the-record nature of the conferences caused controversy, e.g. Vermont Royster, "Pin on a Badge, Take Vow of Silence—Learn Our Foreign Policy," *Wall Street Journal* (June 9, 1947), p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> "Need for Raising Public Confidence in Conduct of Foreign Affairs," November 9, 1950, RG 59, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Records Relating to the Public Relations Working Group, 1950-1952, Lot 54D202, Box 1. Although these conferences were primarily intended to get the department's views across, they were secondarily opportunities to get feedback from more interested, informed audiences. See David H. Popper to Mrs. Wilson, "Trip to St. Louis in Connection with St. Louis Council on World Affairs Meeting," February 19, 1951, Margaret T. Carter, "Report on St. Louis Conference (February 16-17, 1951)," undated, and "Regional Conference on American Foreign Policy, Detroit, Michigan," April 10, 1951, RG 59, Records of the Bureau of Public Affairs, Public Services Division, Subject Files 1945-1952 (Lot File 56D33), Box 132.



answered mail addressed to the department and the White House, which together received 145,000 “personally signed, intelligent communications from the public.”<sup>85</sup>

Institutionally, however, neither the Office of Public Affairs nor the Division of Public Liaison was ever secure in the Truman administration. Public affairs officials barely had access to the assistant secretaries of state who oversaw them, let alone other policymakers. William Benton, George V. Allen, Edward Barrett, and Howland Sargeant each in turn concentrated his time and money on overseas propaganda. The Hoover Commission of 1949 warned that “neither the ‘top command’ level nor the Public Affairs units are presently organized to deal with public opinion in an adequate manner,” and criticized the failure to link public affairs products and staff to leading officials.<sup>86</sup> Office of Public Affairs director Francis H. Russell repeatedly complained that his office was being sidelined, that it was underfunded and understaffed, and that “ignorance within the Department about PA’s function” had made it “ineffective.”<sup>87</sup> Howard A. Cook, the former director of the World Affairs Council of Northern California and Russell’s successor at State, wrote in October 1952 that there remained “a lack of appreciation and understanding of PA’s function within the Department and methods by which it achieves its purposes.”<sup>88</sup> A few

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<sup>85</sup> “Division of Public Liaison,” October 30, 1952, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs, Box 1.

<sup>86</sup> “Hoover Commission Foreign Affairs Task Force Report on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Affairs (Excerpts Relating Particularly to the Work of PA),” undated, Russell Files, Box 8.

<sup>87</sup> Russell to Edward Barrett, October 22, 1951, RG 59, Office of the Executive Director, Box 21; Russell to Barrett, “Selected Information About PA and Its Problems,” January 18, 1950, RG 59, Office of the Executive Director, Box 21; “The Domestic Public Affairs Program,” attached to Winthrop M. Southworth, Jr., to George Harris, June 20, 1952, RG 59, Office of the Executive Director, Box 21.

<sup>88</sup> Howard A. Cook to John French, “Comments on your Confidential Memorandum on the Operations of the Office of Public Affairs,” October 16, 1952, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs Activities, Box 1.

years later, the marketing maven and psychological warrior C. D. Jackson told a potential recruit that explaining foreign policy to the American people was “the zeroest of zero jobs.”<sup>89</sup>

Nobody doubted that foreign policy was formulated with public opinion in mind. The problem was, as one State Department officer told Russell, that “PA plays a relatively modest role in this process which *goes on anyway*.”<sup>90</sup> It was therefore easily set aside. Despite the verbal support that Eisenhower and Dulles gave to the citizen education movement, they and their Republican congressional majority that supported it were intent on budget cuts. The administration’s first assistant secretary for public affairs, Carl McCardle, slashed \$430,000 and 53 staff from the Office of Public Affairs in his first budget, halving its personnel from 1951 levels. Although McCardle, a journalist for the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, had served on the board of the Association’s Philadelphia branch, he abolished the Division of Public Liaison and, in the process of forming a new Public Services Division, radically downsized the conference, publication, and speaking programs.<sup>91</sup> Cook responded by giving the public a less capacious impression of the role of private citizens and voluntary associations in foreign policy than Russell ever had, but he still complained about the decline in State’s capabilities.<sup>92</sup> In September 1955, he told McCardle that “valuable platforms and forums have been wasted because the

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<sup>89</sup> Qu. in Bernhard, “Clearer than Truth,” pp. 548-49.

<sup>90</sup> James W. Swihart to Russell, “Our Meeting with Schuyler Foster,” January 25, 1950, RG 59, Office of the Executive Director, Box 21.

<sup>91</sup> William O. Chittick, “The domestic information activities of the Department of State,” PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1964, pp. 59-68.

<sup>92</sup> Howard A. Cook, “Keeping the Public Informed on Foreign Policy,” Paper for American Political Science Association, September 11, 1953, FPA, Part II, Box 99; Cook to John Meagher, “Overall briefing memorandum on SEV,” September 26, 1955, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs, Box 1.

Department as a whole does not fully understand the value of presenting Department officers to the American public.”<sup>93</sup>

At the same time as McCardle curtailed the State Department’s ability to speak, he also covered its ears. McCardle halved the staff of H. Schuyler Foster’s public studies office in 1953, and his successor, Andrew Berding, stripped the political scientist of his ability to commission opinion polls from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) during a very minor scandal in 1957. Having accidentally discovered that State had been illegally funding its own polls since 1944, through an appropriation for “emergencies in the diplomatic and consular service,” Congressmen were predictably angry. But the real story was just how little the State Department cared. Berding capitulated immediately; John Foster Dulles did not trust polls in any case. Clyde Hart, who ran the operation at NORC, told the House that the classified polls were “entirely too niggardly an operation,” an impoverished exercise that had cost barely half a million dollars in thirteen years. Nobody read them; nobody needed them; nobody missed them.<sup>94</sup> And while the loss of the polls made little difference to the State Department’s operations, the loss of a primary technology through which the public was represented at Foggy Bottom was a sign that the department was abandoning its public affairs functions. The public studies staff was halved again

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<sup>93</sup> Cook to Assistant Secretary McCardle, September 30, 1955, RG 59, Records Relating to Public Affairs, Box 1.

<sup>94</sup> MacAlister Brown, “The Demise of State Department Public Opinion Polls: A Study in Legislative Oversight,” *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 5 (1961), pp. 1-17.

in 1961. It ceased its regular public opinion reports in 1963, and the reports it wrote on request were reduced in scope.<sup>95</sup> By 1965, it comprised Foster alone.<sup>96</sup>

At the heart of all this were policymakers who held increasingly transactional views about the public. The tone was set from the top. John Foster Dulles, once a keen supporter of the citizen education movement and a longstanding member of the Foreign Policy Association, sought to rescue the State Department's dreadful public reputation by centering attention on himself, and saw public relations mostly as media relations. His assistant secretaries of state for public affairs were little more than press aides.<sup>97</sup> Dwight Eisenhower, who as a private citizen played a major role in the Crusade for Freedom and whose presidential campaign relied on advertising executives, thought about the public primarily in commercial terms, as the consumers of foreign policy products sold by his administration.<sup>98</sup> This idea inspired a series of initiatives, either in partnership with private industry or put together by psychological warriors at the new United States Information Agency, which specialized in disguising schemes to market international affairs for domestic audiences as cultural diplomacy.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Foster to Hayes, September 27, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 51. For the scope of Foster's resources, compare "Opinion Resources of the Public Studies Division," reprinted in *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, State Department Public Opinion Polls*: (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 165, and "Opinion Resources of the Public Opinion Studies Staff," January 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 51.

<sup>96</sup> Cohen, *Public's Impact on Foreign Policy*, p. 45.

<sup>97</sup> Oral History of Andrew H. Berding, John Foster Dulles Oral History Collection, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, [findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC017/c0021](https://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC017/c0021), pp. 3-4.

<sup>98</sup> Mara Oliva, *Eisenhower and American Public Opinion on China* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 50-58; Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), pp. 93-104; Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 149-155; David Haven Blake, *Liking Ike: Eisenhower, Advertising and the Rise of the Celebrity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>99</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*; Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 49-57.

Crucially, programs like the Atoms for Peace and People-to-People campaigns did not just embody denatured visions of popular participation as branding, as spectacle, as consumption; they actively diverted the attention of the citizen education movement at the same time as the State Department left it to fend for itself. Brooks Emeny, for instance, chaired the foreign affairs committee of the People-to-People campaign, and travelled around the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa on USIA-funded tours in the late 1950s.<sup>100</sup> World Affairs Council volunteers loved to host and house foreign visitors, whether through government initiatives, informal collaboration with Washington, or their own programs. The Dallas Council hosted 200 visitors per year through the State Department's Foreign Leader Program; the Cleveland Council aided an estimated 5,000 visitors and international students in the decade after 1947.<sup>101</sup>

Cultural activities like these, though popular and important, took up scarce resources and pushed aside older ideas about participation. Obvious on the ground, this was clear, too, in books on democracy and foreign policy. Compare Dorothy Fosdick's *Common Sense and World Affairs* (1955), perhaps the last such book from the progressive tradition, with Andrew Berding's *Foreign Affairs And You!* (1962), and the difference is stark. Like Fosdick, Berding instructed his readers to read the *New York Times* and even to join a World Affairs Council, but his book ended with a paean to other, less direct means of participation. Citizens could contribute most, he wrote, by welcoming an exchange student, by helping civic leaders find a sister city abroad, by

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<sup>100</sup> John Nason declined this role. See Brooks Emeny, "Autobiography of Brooks Emeny: 'The International Phase,'" April 1975, Emeny Papers, Box 1.

<sup>101</sup> Alexander Allport, "Report on Selected World Affairs Councils and the People-to-People Program," April 10, 1959, Emeny Papers, Box 34; On State's programs, see Giles Scott-Smith, *Networks of Empire: The US State Department's Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, France, and Britain, 1950-70* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008).



*Figure 8. Secretary of State Dean Rusk (l) and Samuel P. Hayes, Jr., at a Waldorf Astoria luncheon on November 21, 1962, at which Rusk was the guest speaker. FPA, Part II, Box 285.*

buying a ticket to see a touring orchestra — by acting as a citizen soldier in the global war for hearts and minds, rather than by debating the fundamental nature of U.S. foreign policy itself.<sup>102</sup>

While the Kennedy administration offered the American people innovative ways to get involved with world affairs, not least the Peace Corps, it also tried to recover lost ground.<sup>103</sup> Dean Rusk's State Department increased the budget of the now-Bureau of Public Affairs to \$1.75

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<sup>102</sup> Andrew Berding, *Foreign Affairs And You! How American Foreign Policy Is Made and What It Means to You* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 229-248.

<sup>103</sup> Molly Geidel, *Peace Corps Fantasies: How Development Shaped the Global Sixties* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); David Allen, "The Peace Corps in US Foreign Relations and Church-State Politics," *Historical Journal* 58 (2015), pp. 245-273.

million in 1964. It started to doubt trickle-down theory, and questioned its reliance on the mass media. It expanded its regional conferences, sending officials from the secretary down to meet with community leaders, embedding junior officers in cities for several days, and partnering with the few Councils now capable of mounting such endeavors.<sup>104</sup> Rusk had refused to fund the Association as president of the Rockefeller Foundation, but as secretary of state he endorsed it frequently, vouching for it when its Ford grants came up for renewal, and supported funding that helped World Affairs Councils to pay the expenses of traveling foreign service officers, who otherwise had to pay their own way in order to address the public.<sup>105</sup>

But it was too late. By then, the citizen education movement was in trouble, as the State Department, the foundations, and the citizen education institutions steadily drifted apart. One reason for this was the failure of policymakers to maintain their commitments to a “two-way” democracy in foreign policy. But a lack of attention from policymakers only worsened the developing situation on the ground. As a prescient citizen educator in Cleveland had written as early as 1953, “unless we find ways to relate the educational groups to the actual processes of policy formulation and implementation, their growth will be stopped and perhaps they will even wither away.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Chittick, “The domestic information activities of the Department of State,” pp. 74-78, 156-170; E. S. Staples, “Discussion at State Department concerning citizens’ education in world affairs, December 3, 1964,” December 9, 1964, FF, FA 582, Box 8.

<sup>105</sup> Text of statement recorded by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, December 26, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 50; Rusk to Hayes, January 3, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 17; Rusk to McGeorge Bundy, November 16, 1966, FF, FA617, Box 37.

<sup>106</sup> SLN, “The Status of Citizen Education in World Affairs,” December 1954 [1953], CCWA, Box 2.

As white middle- and upper-class Clevelanders left the city limits for the suburbs and recast the rhythms in which they lived their lives, and as urban renewal projects failed to stem the tide, the Cleveland Council on World Affairs drifted into trouble.<sup>107</sup> After Brooks Emeny departed for New York in 1947, the Council had gathered momentum under the leadership of the adult education specialist Shepherd Witman. Witman had retained his progressive spirit while others lost theirs, insisting that “no problem of world affairs is too difficult for any citizen to see,” and that community education simply required “confidence and faith in man, and the patience which this requires.”<sup>108</sup> By 1950, the Council was reaching an estimated 125,000 people with 1,215 events, a total that underestimated its reach in the city, given its radio programs and its speakers’ training clinics.<sup>109</sup>

Patience wore thin, however. Budget deficits piled up. Witman spent more time away, coming up with projects separate from his Ohio work. As staff members were plucked from Cleveland to replicate their work elsewhere, those who remained in Ohio revolted early in 1954, complaining of a refusal to face the limitations of Witman’s community approach.<sup>110</sup>

“Sometimes,” one of their memos said, “I wonder whether we are not simply creating in the

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<sup>107</sup> On postwar Cleveland, see Daniel R. Kerr, *Derelict Paradise: Homelessness and Urban Development in Cleveland, Ohio* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011); Todd M. Michney, *Surrogate Suburbs: Black Upward Mobility and Neighborhood Change in Cleveland, 1900-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Jonathan M. Souther, *Believing in Cleveland: Managing Decline in “The Best Location in the Nation”* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017).

<sup>108</sup> Shepherd L. Witman to Edward S. Morris, November 3, 1952, CCWA, Box 2.

<sup>109</sup> “Back World Affairs Council as an Instrument of Peace,” *Cleveland Press* (March 30, 1951), p. 22; “Cleveland World Affairs Council Benefits Lives of Thousands,” *Cleveland Press* (April 5, 1951), CCWA, Box 4.

<sup>110</sup> “Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program,” April 2-3, 1954, Emeny Papers, Box 44.



name of mass citizen education an elaborate system of filling stations from which the local consumer chooses his brand of gas and oil and then has absolutely no clear idea of where to drive the contraption.”<sup>111</sup> When the Council surveyed its members for the first time, in January 1955, it discovered that 89.8% of them earned more than the national median wage, and 22% earned more than \$25,000, five times that average.<sup>112</sup>

When Witman offered his resignation at the end of that month, the Council came under the control of the chairman of its board, Kenyon C. Bolton. Son of the local congresswoman, Frances P. Bolton, Bolton quickly added titans of local industry to the board, and set about turning the Council from what he said was a “wishy-washy” group, easily dubbed “cream-puff” and “pink,” into a “virile, masculine” forum for business elites.<sup>113</sup> Bolton ploughed tens of thousands of dollars of his own money into growing the membership, and board members publicly accused him of running a “one-man” show to the benefit of his own political career.<sup>114</sup> Association officials quietly discussed the matter in December 1955, worrying that the Cleveland Council was “tending to depart from the community education idea to work more with the elite,” and the Association’s regional staff feared the threat to the Council movement as a whole if its model “turns into a façade.” Bolton held out, though, and hired as his paid director Benjamin

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<sup>111</sup> Katherine C. Bang, Bette Daneman, Helen Kavan, Rita Woodard to Ralph Beese, March 17, 1954, CCWA, Box 2; SLN, “The Status of Citizen Education in World Affairs,” December 1954 [1953], CCWA, Box 2.

<sup>112</sup> “Analysis of 422 Questionnaire Replies From Members,” January 31, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 48.

<sup>113</sup> “World Affairs Body’s Trustees Increased to 51,” *Cleveland Press* (June 30, 1955), p. 22; “Excerpts from Letter from the President to the Chairman of the Survey Committee,” June 6, 1955, FPA, Part I, Box 27; Kenyon C. Bolton, “Basic Statement on the Cleveland Council on World Affairs,” September 9, 1955, Kenyon C. Bolton Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Box 8, pp. 1-2.

<sup>114</sup> “Bolton Charged With ‘One-Man’ Rule of World Affairs Unit,” *Cleveland Press* (July 15, 1955), p. 2; Rowson and Cowan to Nason and Allport, July 13, 1955, Emeny Papers, Box 45.

Brown, a former official at the U.S. mission to the UN who ended community discussion groups and focused on big-ticket events.<sup>115</sup>

Brown's successor, Donald J. Pryor, likewise overturned Witman's faith, writing in 1959 that "to expect universal and detailed familiarity with world problems would be foolish." But even as Brown and Pryor increased the budget in a failed search for the interested and involved elite, Bolton could not adequately broaden the financial base or meet fundraising targets. That left the Council with a considerably less ambitious program.<sup>116</sup> The membership shrank, bank debts rose troublingly to cover costs, and the Association looked sadly at a Council in "serious ill-health."<sup>117</sup> In 1961, Pryor told the Adult Education Association that "we do not pretend that we are successful; we know that we are not."<sup>118</sup>

Pryor remained hopeful, but the pattern played out elsewhere. World Affairs Councils faced what seemed to be insurmountable problems almost as soon as the movement hit its stride, and neither mass nor elite approaches proved satisfying. Take San Francisco. Since the arrival of Calvin J. Nichols as director in 1955, the World Affairs Council of Northern California had renewed its traditional emphasis on study and discussion groups for its members, explicitly intending to impact policy debates. With a membership of 3-4,000 served by a staff of ten, Nichols drew praise for trying to turn his group into a Council on Foreign Relations for the

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<sup>115</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the FPA Committee on National Program," December 6, 1955, Emeny Papers, Box 45; Bill Cowan, "Field Report: Cleveland, Ohio," February 28, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 27.

<sup>116</sup> *Plans for the Future, Including Annual Report 1958-1959* (Cleveland: Cleveland Council on World Affairs, 1959), p. 5, CCWA, Box 2; Brown, "Financial Position of the Council," April 21, 1958, Bolton Papers, Box 9.

<sup>117</sup> Jarvis Freymann to Nason and Mastrude, May 15, 1958, FPA, Part I, Box 11; Freymann to Mastrude, April 1, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 26.

<sup>118</sup> Donald J. Pryor, "Must Athens Fall Again?" November 7, 1961, CCWA, Box 2.

West, albeit one slightly more rooted in public debate.<sup>119</sup> Despite the restrained vision and the largest budget in the nation, one that doubled in real terms from \$91,500 in 1955 to almost \$200,000 by 1962, the Council still confronted persistent financial difficulties and lived in fear of cutbacks. Even successful Councils remained chronically unstable, sustained by the energies, and the cash, of a committed few.<sup>120</sup>

Pressures on the ground put immense strain on the unity of the movement. An already tense relationship between the Association and the Councils it had birthed devolved into animosity after 1955, as the Association sought a mass public through Great Decisions at the same time as the Councils sought an elite base to right their finances — sometimes in the same city. As the weak cooperative structures that had maintained comity during the Fund for Adult Education grants were set aside, the Association saw no point in spending scant resources on Councils. Roger Mastrude, the Association's vice-president, came to believe that the Council model was applicable only in a few mid-sized cities, and that there were perhaps "five good councils doing a fairly effective job of community-wide education" by 1958.<sup>121</sup> A viable Council required significant private wealth behind it, help from the local business community, knowledge

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<sup>119</sup> Record of Interview, William Marvel and Cal Nichols, October 23, 1957, CC, Box 374; Record of Interview, Marvel and Nichols, May 27, 1958, CC, Box 374; Melvin Conant to Alan Pifer and William Marvel, June 3, 1958, CC, Box 374; "Program Policy, Objectives and Requirements, World Affairs Council of Northern California, 1963-1970," April 7, 1961, Charles Easton Rothwell Papers, Library and Archives, Hoover Institution, Box 60.

<sup>120</sup> "Proposed Budget, 1955-56," July 11, 1955, McLaughlin Papers, Carton 6; Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr., to Board, "Treasurer's Report," September 10, 1957, J. B. Condliffe Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, Carton 22; "Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting," September 10, 1958, Condliffe Papers, Carton 22; "Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting," November 12, 1958, McLaughlin Papers, Carton 7; "Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting," December 12, 1958, McLaughlin Papers, Carton 7; "Notes on Council Financial Problems," [May 1959], McLaughlin Papers, Carton 7.

<sup>121</sup> Richard C. Rowson to Nason, "Policy on FPA and Center relations with world affairs councils," October 15, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 224; Roger Mastrude to Nason, "Outline on World Affairs Councils," October 27, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 26.

and enthusiasm amongst activists, an interested public to build on, and competent leadership as expert in community affairs as in world affairs. In few places had this proven possible.<sup>122</sup>

As the network frayed, the most vocal dissent came not from the weaker Councils, but the strongest. Rejected for grants by Ford and Carnegie, and facing a problem of “great urgency,” Calvin Nichols turned to New York for assistance.<sup>123</sup> At a meeting of six Council directors hosted by the Association in May 1959, the representatives reported common difficulties finding sufficient local support for any kind of satisfactory program.<sup>124</sup> Spurned by the Association, the Councils formed an ad hoc committee to approach the foundations, but their inquiries went nowhere precisely because, as local community groups, they had divergent needs and outlooks.<sup>125</sup> Lacking the funds even to travel on their own dime, the directors stopped meeting. While the Association tried to improve its relationship with the Councils, chiefly by holding conferences on subjects of mutual interest in 1961, the tension only grew.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Rowson, “World Affairs Councils, Analysis and Recommendations,” March 2, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 232.

<sup>123</sup> Nichols to Nason, January 22, 1958 FPA, Part I, Box 2; Nichols to Marvel, September 2, 1958, CC, Box 374; Nason, “Memorandum on Conversation with Stanley T. Gordon, September 5, 1958,” FPA, Part II, Box 88; Rowson to Nason, “Brief meeting with Stan Gordon at Center’s General Assembly dinner meeting,” October 3, 1958, FPA, Part II, Box 44; Marvel to Nichols, November 12, 1958, CC, Box 374; Nichols to Nason, February 2, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 26; Nason to Policy Planning Group, “First Reflections on Calvin Nichols’ Letter,” February 19, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 26; “Executive Committee,” March 17, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 16; Nason to Nichols, March 26, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 26.

<sup>124</sup> “Conference of World Affairs Councils,” May 17-18, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 79; Nichols to World Affairs Councils, “Report of Exploratory Meeting on Financial Problems of World Affairs,” May 20, 1959, Bolton Papers, Box 9.

<sup>125</sup> Donald Pryor to Ad Hoc Committee on Support of World Affairs Organizations, July 10, 1959, Bolton Papers, Box 9; Lionel Landry to Nason, July 20, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 26; Record of Interview, SHS and Calvin Nichols, July 13, 1959, CC, Box 374.

<sup>126</sup> Hero, “World Affairs Education and American Elites,” March 1961, FPA, Part II, Box 52; Louise Leonard Wright, “World Affairs Programming for ‘Elites,’” March 15-16, 1961, FPA, Part II, Box 52; Eugene Johnson *et al*, “Mass Media in Community Education,” April 26-27, 1961, FPA, Part II, Box 232.

Amid the gathering crisis all eyes turned to Ford. Subject to the same forces of state doubts, philosophical attacks, and grass-roots frustration, however, Ford's staff itself became increasingly ambivalent about what it privately called a "difficult and baffling field."<sup>127</sup> The foundation renewed its grants to the Association in December 1960, continuing one of the International Affairs division's largest ongoing programs and stretching philanthropic support of citizen education in world affairs into its fourth decade.<sup>128</sup> Although that grant was reduced from the 1956 sums to \$1.5 million over four years — a cut that, among other things, forced the Association to end its central speakers bureau, further unraveling the movement — Ford remained committed to citizen education in the abstract.<sup>129</sup> Led by John J. McCloy, the scion of the foreign policy establishment, the trustees recommitted the foundation in a statement of July 1962 to "efforts to increase American understanding of and participation in world affairs."<sup>130</sup>

Nichols and the other Council directors tried again that year, pitching a request for \$1.5-2 million that would be spent turning the major Councils into regional rather than merely urban centers.<sup>131</sup> Such a sum was fantastical, so Nichols instead asked Ford for a small grant to make a study of the Councils and their needs.<sup>132</sup> Stanley Gordon, the grant officer who had grudging

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<sup>127</sup> Docket Excerpt, International Affairs, "Foreign Policy Association–World Affairs Center," October 25, 1960, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>128</sup> Ford Foundation, *Annual Report 1962* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1962), p. 137.

<sup>129</sup> Ad Hoc Committee on Program and Reduction of Budget to Board of Directors, "Recommendations for 1961-62," March 24, 1961, FPA, Part II, Box 242.

<sup>130</sup> Ford Foundation, *The Ford Foundation in the 1960s: Statement of the Board of Trustees on Policies, Programs, and Operations* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1962), p. 11.

<sup>131</sup> Nichols, "Proposal for Strengthening World Affairs Education at the Community Level," March 24, 1962, FF, FA732I, Grant 63-157, Reel 680.

<sup>132</sup> Cullen to Stone and Slater, "Meeting with Calvin Nichols, World Affairs Council of Northern California," August 22, 1962, FF, FA 732I, Grant 63-157, Reel 680; Nichols, "Proposal for Study of the Problems and Needs of

responsibility for the foundation's citizen education programs, was not keen on the idea. "My guess is that the survey will *not* reveal a new promising opportunity," he wrote; "I hope I'm wrong."<sup>133</sup> But Gordon had been unhappy with the Association's relationship with the Councils for years, and approved the study.<sup>134</sup> Shortly thereafter, Ford started its own internal evaluation, led by a political scientist and Democratic party operative, Matthew Cullen.<sup>135</sup>

For the six years between 1962 and 1968, the citizen education movement became in effect the plaything of the Ford Foundation, subject to shifting balances of power within its New York offices, to the will of its major policymakers, to the specific choices it made in how to evaluate the movement, and to whom it chose to do the evaluating. All eyes were on the secretive, opaque processes of its decisions, and the prospect that the foundation might bail citizen educators out; programs were reshaped according to its perceived whims. Ford's relationship with the movement, and with the Association in particular, became proprietary in a way and on a scale that not even the Rockefeller Foundation's had been twenty years earlier. Repeatedly invoking the line that "if the FPA did not exist, it would have to be invented," Ford's grant officers and trustees understood that their money was a matter of life and death to the Association. What it chose to do when faced with this crisis had enormous ramifications not just on budgets and programs, but on the very idea and pursuit of a democratic foreign policy.<sup>136</sup>

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World Affairs Education at the Community Level with Special Reference to the Role of World Affairs Councils," December 19, 1962, FF, FA 732I, Grant 63-157, Reel 680.

<sup>133</sup> Handwritten note on Cullen to Slater and Gordon, January 2, 1963, FF, FA 732I, Grant 63-157, Reel 680.

<sup>134</sup> "Grant Request – International Affairs," February 4, 1963, FF, FA 732I, Grant 63-157, Reel 680.

<sup>135</sup> "Memo of Conversation," February 11, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 41.

<sup>136</sup> Hayes, "Memo of Conversation," October 3, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 44; Hayes, "Memo of Discussion with Shep Stone and Joe Slater of the Ford Foundation," September 19, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 242.

Despite Ford's investment of \$3.4 million since 1952, in the decade since it had never really interrogated its interest and instruments in the field. Much as the International Affairs staff with responsibility for citizen education were often frustrated by the Association, they still took citizen education for granted as worthy of their money. At least one of the foundation's trustees was also a board member of a World Affairs Council, and McCloy, as chairman of the board, tended to be a rubber stamp for projects proposed by his protégé and chief of the International Affairs division, Shepard Stone.<sup>137</sup> Subjecting the citizen education movement to outside assessment and challenge was a new development, and a risky one.

So, it mattered who Ford asked to look into the matter. And it mattered that its first proper consultant on citizen education was Nichols. He was a prospective grantee. He had a personal vendetta against the Association.<sup>138</sup> And he had one of the most elitist outlooks that existed within the citizen education movement itself. As he told Hayes, he saw mass-participation programs like Great Decisions as unfair to their participants, who were being deluded into thinking, wrongly, that they were receiving an education and that they were playing a constructive role in national life.<sup>139</sup> But while Mastrude believed that "the council field has no future," that it was not even "a national 'movement' or genus but a few local individuals," Nichols still believed it was the way forward. Ford's choice between these views had stark implications.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> On Stone see Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>138</sup> John L. Simpson to Nason, March 20, 1959, FPA, Part II, Box 16; William C. Messner to Nichols, August 17, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 237; Simpson to Hayes, March 30, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

<sup>139</sup> Hayes, "Memo of Conversation with Cal Nichols," November 28, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

<sup>140</sup> Mastrude, "Background comments for consideration re a policy for relations with World Affairs Councils," October 17, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

When Nichols reported back on the state of the Council movement, he if anything painted too dire a picture. Just four Councils, he found, had a membership of over 4,000, 3 over 2,000, and only 8 more over 500. No more than forty people were professionally employed in the movement, supported by 300 frequent volunteers and perhaps 2,000 occasional helpers. Ten Councils accounted for four-fifths of the total expenditures of about \$700,000. “No council appears to be satisfied with the quality or adequacy of its program and operations in the light of the community and national needs,” Nichols wrote. “Almost without exception,” he continued, “the councils are in a precarious financial position, without sufficient funds to conduct existing operations at the level or standard of quality that the programs deserve, to say nothing of providing funds for growth or improvement in operations.” And yet citizen education was in the “national interest,” to foster “a climate in which leaders may lead and followers may follow intelligently in public criticism or support of foreign policy.” As a remedy, Nichols sought support for his own National Committee of Community World Affairs Organizations, asking for \$1.6 million to rebuild the movement from the ground up.<sup>141</sup>

Nor were Ford’s other evaluations brighter. One came from Theodore Kaghan, who, like Stone, was a psychological warfare specialist and journalist who had worked for McCloy in the military occupation of Germany. Kaghan attacked the citizen education movement’s “misconceptions about the democratic process,” in line with the assumptions of his colleagues. The idea that widespread participation was possible was folly, Kaghan wrote, and “encouraging the belief that knowledge about foreign affairs makes one a more ‘effective citizen’ is likewise

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<sup>141</sup> Nichols, “Summary Report of the National Study of the Problems of and Needs for World Affairs Education at the Community Level with Special Reference to the Role of World Affairs Councils or Similar Community Organizations,” March 16, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 232.



misleading.” Like Stone, Kaghan thought that a better quality of consent could be acquired through mass media spectacles.<sup>142</sup> “We don’t have to descend to using Zsa Zsa Gabor as a bosomy interrogator of Dean Rusk on the Hungarian question,” he wrote, “but other combinations of glamor and statecraft should not be ruled out.”<sup>143</sup>

To alleviate this pessimism, the Association mostly offered more of the same, albeit aimed at a more limited number of adults “significant in the democratic processes that shape foreign policy.” In the summer of 1964, Hayes asked for \$3.9 million for new projects over five years, plus \$1 million in general support, for a “big push.”<sup>144</sup> Stone described this as a “horrible figure,” given growing doubts about citizen education as a whole, and Nichols argued that \$1.25 million over five years might be a more reasonable sum.<sup>145</sup> “My personal feeling is that the record doesn’t justify even this much assistance,” Nichols wrote to Cullen, “but I realize that for practical purposes and reasons it may be necessary to do more now than could be justified otherwise.”<sup>146</sup>

Still another consultant from within the movement, the former State Department official and serving World Affairs Council of Northern California trustee Charles E. Allen, similarly

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<sup>142</sup> Stone told Hayes that the new Pacific coast edition of the *New York Times* “might do more for world affairs education of adults than anything FPA could do in a long time.” Hayes, “Memo of Discussion with Shep Stone and Joe Slater,” September 19, 1962, FPA, Part II, Box 242; Hayes, “Memo of Conversation,” February 11, 1963, FPA, Part II, Box 44.

<sup>143</sup> Theodore Kaghan, “Foreign Affairs and Mass Media: U.S. Public Understanding of World Affairs,” January 4, 1963, FF, FA582, Box 8.

<sup>144</sup> “Response to Questions from the Ford Foundation,” June 1, 1964, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>145</sup> Hayes, “Memo of conversation at the Ford Foundation,” June 3, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 44.

<sup>146</sup> Nichols to Slater and Cullen, “Comments and questions concerning the FPA replies to questions by the IA Staff,” June 23, 1964, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257; Nichols to Cullen, June 24, 1964, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

advised stopping all funding and clearing away “the existing debris.”<sup>147</sup> And Cullen agreed. “FPA is doing the kind of job that nobody else really wants to do,” he told Stone, “and as a result there is little enthusiasm for what it is doing.” While he thought it best to end funding entirely, he acceded to a terminal, decade-long grant of \$1 million.<sup>148</sup>

The Ford Foundation’s staff had not reckoned with their own president, however. Henry T. Heald, who despised adult education and sought vast investment in educational television as an alternative, forced Stone to halve the Association’s potential grant, to throw out Nichols’ plan for the Councils, and to note the historically “large amounts of money invested with only occasionally favorable results and limited improvement in world affairs education.”<sup>149</sup> And when that plan was taken to the trustees, it turned out that Heald was not done. At a board meeting in September 1964, he undermined his own staff and asked the trustees to turn the plan down. Cullen resigned in protest, and the trustees, noting the Foundation’s “obligation,” angrily forced Heald to commission a fuller study.<sup>150</sup> Heald duly appointed a committee chaired by Stone but otherwise separate from the International Affairs staff. Comprising four divisional chiefs from other sides of Ford’s domestic programs, its secretary was Malcolm Moos. Moos, the director of policy and planning, was a political scientist and former White House speechwriter who had

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<sup>147</sup> Charles E. Allen to Slater, July 17, 1964, FF, FA617, Box 37.

<sup>148</sup> Cullen to Stone, “Briefing memo for Trustees Meeting – FPA,” June 17, 1964, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4159.

<sup>149</sup> “Citizen Education in World Affairs: 1) The Foreign Policy Association, 2) The World Affairs Councils,” September 1964, FF, Catalogued Reports, FA739A, Box 123, #2804. For Heald’s tenure, see Waldemar A. Nielsen, *The Big Foundations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 89-93.

<sup>150</sup> The minutes of the meetings of the Foundation’s trustees remain secret, but Cullen was so angry that he leaked the details to Hayes. See Hayes, “Memo of conversation, October 1, 1964 with Matt Cullen,” FPA, Part II, Box 41; Hayes, “Memo of luncheon conversation on November 10th with Matt Cullen,” FPA, Part II, Box 41.

drafted Eisenhower's farewell address, with its plea for an "alert and knowledgeable citizenry."<sup>151</sup> His committee was given four months.<sup>152</sup>

Citizen education was no longer to be automatically funded at the Foundation, and into the study poured all kinds of ideas, old and new, about democracy and diplomacy. "Not the least of the concerns I have," wrote James Armsey, "is whether we shoot for the 'leaders' or the 'masses,' whether, in short, we espouse the elitist approach or the democratic approach to ultimate decision making in this society in the area of world affairs."<sup>153</sup> "Who is trying to find out what we want citizens to know other than 'everything'?" asked Marshall Robinson.<sup>154</sup> Moos' deputy, E. S. Staples, thought the whole task impossible. "You simply cannot inculcate the idea of being interested in foreign policy matters," he wrote.<sup>155</sup> Moos, for his part, knew that no answer would be easy. "The difficulty with any evaluation," he sighed, "is that FPA is a sacred cow.

All of us have a nostalgic recall when we think of FPA's valiant work in the days Mussolini's armies were chasing Haile Selassie's warriors in Ethiopia or Hitler was reoccupying the Rhineland. But the educational landscape has changed mightily.

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<sup>151</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People," January 17, 1961, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/farewell-radio-and-television-address-the-american-people](http://presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/farewell-radio-and-television-address-the-american-people).

<sup>152</sup> H. T. Heald, "Citizen Education in World Affairs," October 6, 1964, FF, FA633, Box 28.

<sup>153</sup> James W. Armsey to Stone, December 28, 1964, FF, FA582, Box 8.

<sup>154</sup> Marshall A. Robinson to Stone, December 23, 1964, FF, FA 633, Box 28.

<sup>155</sup> E. S. Staples, "Foreign Policy Association and Citizens Education in World Affairs," October 16, 1964, FF, FA582, Box 8.

If the Association were to survive, Moos thought, it would only be because the trustees were scared to admit defeat, to kill off an organization they had funded even more liberally than the Council on Foreign Relations.<sup>156</sup>

Moos dived deeper than anyone at Ford before him, much more so than Stone wanted.<sup>157</sup> Only silence had passed between the State Department and Ford on the citizen education issue for several years, but Moos went to Washington and talked for hours to the public affairs staff.<sup>158</sup> He talked to Alfred Hero.<sup>159</sup> He dined with Angus Campbell, whose Survey Research Center scholars put together a necessarily downbeat summary of the pertinent research, even as they tried to be as positive as they could for their old friend Hayes.<sup>160</sup> And Moos hired a young Johns Hopkins professor, Robert W. Tucker, to look over the field. Operating within the dominant paradigms of a postwar political scientist, and an international-relations realist to boot, Tucker was especially troubled by the populism of Great Decisions. “I see little to be gained and a great deal to be lost,” he wrote, “by cultivating the idea that a few minutes of background material prepares one for making sound and responsible judgments on foreign affairs.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Malcolm Moos, “Toward Greater Public Understanding of Foreign Policy and the Achievement of World Affairs Education at the Community Level,” October 16, 1964, FF, FA582, Box 8.

<sup>157</sup> Moos to W. McNeil Lowry, November 12, 1964, FF, FA582, Box 8.

<sup>158</sup> E. S. Staples to Moos, “Discussion at State Department concerning citizens’ education in world affairs, December 3, 1964,” December 9, 1964, FF, FA582, Box 8.

<sup>159</sup> Robert Schmid to Special Programs Files, “Citizen Education in World Affairs committee meeting,” January 19, 1965, FF, FA633, Box 28; Fuller to Hayes, “Al Hero’s meeting with Ford Foundation,” January 14, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 52.

<sup>160</sup> Survey Research Center, “World Affairs Information, Exposure, And Interest — And Some Of Their Determinants,” March 1965, FF, FA582, Box 8; Martin Patchen to Hayes, June 25, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 47; John P. Robinson, *Public Information About World Affairs* (Ann Arbor: Survey Research Center, 1967).

<sup>161</sup> Robert W. Tucker, “Memorandum on FPA’s ‘Great Decisions’ Program,” undated, FF, FA582, Box 9.

What Moos came up with by February 1965 was the Ford Foundation's — in fact, any foundation's — most serious and sustained analysis of a movement on which it had already spent nearly \$5 million. Little impressed the Committee on Citizen Education in World Affairs. Its report showed no trace of the reformist zeal of earlier years, no imperative that the peace of the world demanded an informed citizenry at home. Instead, the report betrayed a profound weariness that such a task might still be necessary.

“Every day Americans are made conscious of an uncomfortable world beyond our borders and that somehow we cannot disengage from it,” the report stated, but “no one with whom the Committee has spoken believes that there is any likelihood of a dramatic breakthrough in citizen education in world affairs.” The field had not “aroused leading social scientists to bestir themselves,” and it remained “spongy and complex,” evading “scientific proof.” No one could agree how even a small breakthrough might come about. Through the mass media? Through “trickle down”? Through a “soap opera program with a foreign policy theme”? Through abandoning the idea of adult education entirely and “reaching the citizen as he goes through high school”? “All in all,” the report concluded, “no one knows very much about the subject.”

Such uncertainty inevitably colored the committee's views of the Association. On the one hand, Ford found no evidence that the Association aroused enthusiasm. On the other, Ford found no evidence that the Association should be left to die. The upshot was a recommendation that the foundation provide a grant to the Association, to be considered terminal unless Hayes showed capacity to innovate, and that it consider an appropriation to cover small grants to

selected Councils.<sup>162</sup> Unsurprisingly, the trustees agreed, clearing a grant of \$1 million to the Association and a small fund of \$300,000 to support the Councils. The Association was told to fix its relationship with the Councils if it wanted further funds.<sup>163</sup>

What is striking about even this evaluation was that certain questions were kept off the agenda. It did not dwell on how discussion could be connected to policymaking, nor on what a public ought to know, or why. It did not ask whether citizen education was any more or less pressing because of developments in international politics, whether decolonization, or a calming of the cold war, or the escalation in Southeast Asia. Indeed, reference to actual foreign policy was scant in almost every assessment of the citizen education movement. And the committee still assumed, as many did, that education was the primary link between American leadership and American democracy.

Whose education? The citizen the Committee had in mind was probably a “sophisticated American who is concerned and informed about world affairs,” the report noted, or a “responsible citizen who may or may not be concerned and who needs to be informed,” rather than a member of the “broad mass which is basically unconcerned and uninformed.” The underlying assumptions were unmentioned but stark. “Sophisticated” and “responsible” Americans were now the target, as if foreign policy were the province of some higher calling, of a 1%, perhaps. Nobody asked whether white institutions ought to respond to black political activism, even in the year of the Voting Rights Act. Nobody asked whether urban voluntary

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<sup>162</sup> “Report of Committee on Citizen Education in World Affairs,” February 15, 1965, FF, Catalogued Reports, FA739A, Box 112, #2581, pp. 3-4, 33, 44-45.

<sup>163</sup> Docket Excerpt, “Citizen Education in World Affairs,” March 25-26, 1965, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257; Fuller, “Conversation with Ford Foundation 4/20/65,” April 22, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 44.

associations like World Affairs Councils could survive they saw, if dimly, white flight recast politics and geography alike.<sup>164</sup>

But what Ford's planners did do was take steps towards abandoning not just the citizen education movement, but the underlying conviction that adults could be educated at all. They looked at the commercial mass media, educational television, voluntary association work, university extension services, undergraduate education, public schools, and the federal government, much of which had received considerable Ford funding. The boom in college education, the committee thought, "should lead to some increased interest in world affairs," but its overall impression was that the totality of all these efforts had failed to do very much.<sup>165</sup>

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What to do? If psychologists said that attitudes formed early in life tended to be hard to break down, then it was early in life that worldliness would have to be taught. As such, the report stated, "the already heavily burdened formal educational process is being looked to from all sides for help."<sup>166</sup> Only a few days before Ford completed its report, and probably not coincidentally, Dean Rusk had written to Hayes that he felt that "it is especially important that younger

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<sup>164</sup> "Report of Committee on Citizen Education in World Affairs," p. 4.

<sup>165</sup> On the broad conviction that *all* the educational efforts of the early cold war had failed to prepare citizens for their world role, see Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 121-164.

<sup>166</sup> "Report of Committee on Citizen Education in World Affairs," pp. 6, 25.

Americans, particularly those at the secondary school level, study and discuss the basic subjects which lay the foundation for a mature understanding of foreign policy issues in depth.”<sup>167</sup>

This was defeat. As we have seen, for half a century and more internationalists had tried to rewrite school curricula, train teachers, and reach students. Internationalist activists had always been even more eager than citizen educators to build support from the youth up. But the concession by adult educators that it was not through adults but children that a foreign policy public might *best* be built was a surrender of everything they stood for. It just did not seem like it at the time.

Defeat came wrapped in opportunity. Adult education had been a defining feature of the New Deal, but the defining feature of the Great Society was childhood education. And for Lyndon Johnson as for Franklin Roosevelt, a fresh commitment to education owed something to global challenges to democracy. “Education lies at the heart of every nation’s hopes and purposes,” Lyndon Johnson told Congress in February 1966; “the conduct of our foreign policy will advance no faster than the curriculum of our classrooms.”<sup>168</sup> Schools had been defined as a national security resource since at least the Sputnik scare of 1957 and the National Defense Education Act of 1958, but Johnson turned on the spigot of federal funding like never before. The eighty-ninth Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in April 1965,

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<sup>167</sup> Rusk to Hayes, January 3, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>168</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, “Special Message to the Congress Proposing International Education and Health Programs,” February 2, 1966, *American Presidency Project*, [presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-proposing-international-education-and-health-programs](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-proposing-international-education-and-health-programs).



the Higher Education Act in November 1965, and the International Education Act in October 1966, albeit leaving the latter unfunded.<sup>169</sup>

And the dollars flowed, once the Association's board voted to move ahead with a dedicated program in January 1965 — and to accept federal grants for the first time.<sup>170</sup> Attracted by the appointment as director of school services of James M. Becker, a Ford-backed pioneer, the St. Louis-based Danforth Foundation, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), and Ford piled almost \$1 million into the Association's new schools programs, driving its budget over \$2 million by 1967.<sup>171</sup> Most of the \$750,000 Danforth grant went into conferences and workshops, and into a publication, *New Directions*, that appealed to social studies teachers.<sup>172</sup> Those teachers were also served by a dedicated staff working out of the regional offices. Mastrude developed decision-making modules that took multimedia approaches into the classroom, and wrote a series of simulations, including one, "Dangerous Parallel," that was modeled on the outbreak of the Korean War and split a class of 24 into teams of fictional cabinet ministers.<sup>173</sup> Meanwhile, the U.S. Office of Education funded Becker to the tune of \$137,500, resulting in a landmark study of the nascent movement for "global education."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Julian E. Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society* (New York: Penguin, 2015), pp. 174-184.

<sup>170</sup> "Meeting of Board of Directors," January 12, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>171</sup> "Draft Budget for 1967-68," FPA, Part II, Box 17; Nielsen, *The Big Foundations*, pp. 100-107.

<sup>172</sup> "Proposal for a Program of World Affairs Education Services to Schools and Teachers," March 31, 1966, Emeny Papers, Box 53; Mastrude to Gene Schwilck, March 15, 1968, Emeny Papers, Box 53; James M. Becker to Hayes, "School Services Annual Report, July 1, 1969-June 30, 1970," July 23, 1970, FPA, Part II, Box 50

<sup>173</sup> "Dangerous Parallel," January 16, 1968, attached to Hayes to Board Members, "Strategic Briefing for 'Dangerous Parallel,'" January 2, 1969, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>174</sup> James M. Becker, *An Examination of Objectives, Needs and Priorities in International Education in U.S. Secondary and Elementary Schools* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1969), [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED031612.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED031612.pdf). For Becker's influence, see Kenneth A. Tye, "A History of the Global Education Movement in the United States," in

HEW gave funds directly to World Affairs Councils, including a large grant to Cincinnati that sent teachers overseas over their summer breaks.<sup>175</sup>

Part of the attraction of schools was that they offered citizen educators a way to overcome the failure of their historic methods to cope with the new geography of the United States. Schools were to be found in every community, with a captive audience, a communications infrastructure, and a more representative social base. Already responsive to shifts in demography, they were tempting points of safety on a map that citizen educators struggled to read.<sup>176</sup> “Our greatest problem,” Hayes wrote in November 1964, “confronts us in the great metropolitan areas where the population of the country is rapidly coming to be concentrated.”<sup>177</sup> When volunteers at the Oregon Council went on a Ford-funded junket to other Councils in 1966, they were struck not only by how “core cities” were “becoming huge Negro or Puerto Rican ghettos, or are semi-deserted in the evening,” but also by how rural areas were being “denuded not only of population but, even more rapidly, of institutions that cater to the cultural needs of the remaining population.” Councils had to find ways to attract such audiences, perhaps by following their “actual and potential customers” to the suburbs. As of yet, they had not.<sup>178</sup>

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Toni Fuss Kirkwood-Tucker, *Visions in Global Education: The Globalization of Curriculum and Pedagogy in Teacher Education and Schools* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 3-24.

<sup>175</sup> Zygmunt Nagorski, Jr., to Administrative Staff, March 24, 1967, FPA, Part II, Box 224.

<sup>176</sup> “Meeting of the Program Methods Committee,” April 1, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 17; “Meeting of Program Methods Committee (joined by Program Content Committee),” June 1, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>177</sup> Hayes, “Outline of the proposed FPA multi-media project,” attached to “Meeting of Program Methods Committee,” November 4, 1964, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>178</sup> “Survey of Other Councils’ Activities and Organization and Suggestions for the Improvement of the Oregon Council,” attached to James R. Huntley to Stone et al, September 20, 1966, FF, FA748, Box 1.

Councils felt this reality harshly, and evidence continued to stack up that the situation among adults was beyond repair. At Ford's prompting, in July 1966 the Association tried to shore up its relationship with the Councils by hiring Zygmunt Nagorski, a former journalist who had spent a decade as a USIA officer in Egypt, South Korea, and France.<sup>179</sup> Nagorski crossed the country, making a hundred visits to Councils large and small, attending their board meetings, consulting on their programs, and assessing what kind of role could be played by an Association welcomed and distrusted in equal measure. Nagorski even shepherded the creation of a new Council in Detroit, learning the lessons of earlier experiences by involving union and black leaders and acquiring buy-in from congressional representatives.<sup>180</sup>

If anything, though, Nagorski became more and more convinced of the bankruptcy of the movement. He found bewildering complexity and unevenness, ranging from decrepit Councils in small-town backwaters to the booming Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, which had saved itself from financial ruin by offering charter air tours of foreign hotspots.<sup>181</sup> Nagorski estimated that the 43 functioning Councils had a budget of \$1.3 million, a quarter of which was spent in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, and that they claimed about 50,000 members. Perhaps

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<sup>179</sup> "Meeting of Board of Directors," January 13, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 17; Hayes to Regional Offices, January 25, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 52; "Zygmunt Nagorski, Founder of Leadership Center, Is Dead at 98," *New York Times* (July 21, 2011), p. B 10.

<sup>180</sup> Detroit had had a weak Association branch from the end of the 1930s to about 1952, but the regional office failed to found a Council there. See "Summary of Foreign Policy Association Activities in Detroit, Michigan," February 17, 1956, FPA, Part I, Box 12. It took Nagorski ten visits to Detroit, and three to Washington, to set up the Council by 1968. See "Proposal for the Establishment of a World Affairs Council in the Detroit-Windsor Area," October 1967, Emeny Papers, Box 54; Nagorski, "World Affairs Council Activities: Bi-Annual Report, July 1, 1967 to December 31, 1967," January 24, 1968, FPA, Part II, Box 79; Nagorski to Administrative Staff, "Trip to Detroit," February 15, 1968, FPA, Part II, Box 224.

<sup>181</sup> Nagorski to Hayes, "World Affairs Council of Portland, Oregon," August 29, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 47; Nagorski to Staff, "Chicago Council on Foreign Relations," November 18, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 47.

180,000 people nationwide attended citizen education programs, Nagorski thought. This was not a diplomatic 1%, as Hero had contemplated, but a diplomatic 0.1%. And what was striking was that, by this point, such numbers were a welcome surprise. “It does not sound enormous,” Nagorski wrote early in 1968, “but it is bigger than most of us, at this end of the operation, expected.”<sup>182</sup>

As hopes were dashed numerically, the spiritual vitality of the movement dimmed. Some of the members of this “small national fraternity” did not “even know that they belong to such a body of people,” Nagorski wrote, while others were “discouraged by the meagre results of their local efforts and the passive attitudes of their fellows.”<sup>183</sup> “It takes a lot of stamina and courage to conduct a minority mission within a hostile or semi-hostile climate,” he said early in January 1967, and “it is often even more difficult to make inroads in a climate of indifference.”<sup>184</sup>

Perhaps it was no surprise, then, that the diplomatic 0.1% seemed to have set aside their broader educational aims, even their *self*-educational aims, and found community among themselves. “Here we are, baffled and confused,” Nagorski wrote of them in March 1968, “frustrated and closed off from the main current of decision-making groups.

We want to be more active, to be alert without too much intellectual effort; most of us want to go through the motion of being closer to understanding foreign policy issues. The motion itself gives us a sense of participation... We need substitutes, palliatives to make us feel better. Somewhere along the line we may also acquire better knowledge.’

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<sup>182</sup> Nagorski, “WACs and What They Are: A Study Summary,” *Society for Citizen Education in World Affairs Newsletter*, January 1968, pp. 10-12, CFR, Series 7, Box 592.

<sup>183</sup> Nagorski to Hayes, “My Job, II,” December 29, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

<sup>184</sup> Nagorski, “World Affairs Council Activities: Bi-Annual Report, July 1-December 31, 1966,” undated, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

As such, Nagorski wrote, “an average world affairs council as it exists today is not an educational entity; in most cases it is an attempt to provide a mixture of entertainment and a feeling of participation in the national debate, to create an atmosphere of belonging to the elite.” It was by no means a way of reconciling democracy and foreign policy. And although surprisingly few citizen educators dwelled on how foreign policy itself was affecting how they went about their business, Nagorski noted that younger leaders had “their ambitions trimmed and their goals clouded by riots at home and a war overseas,” that “a sense of futility settles among many who object, e.g., to Vietnam and see how little their objections count.”<sup>185</sup>

All this was true even of the most elitist institutions that sought a public for world affairs, the institutions we might expect even a wary policymaking elite to have cared for. With the support of the Carnegie Corporation, the Council on Foreign Relations’ Committees on Foreign Relations had slowly proliferated, with 2,170 members in 34 cities by 1966, up from 1,419 members in 25 cities fourteen years earlier.<sup>186</sup> During the annual conferences of the local Committee secretaries at Council House, however, New York officials repeatedly voiced worries that the Committees had reached “a plateau of activity, beyond which it would be increasingly difficult to advance,” that they were little more than social gatherings for an aging, bored, but “faithful core of regulars.”<sup>187</sup> They were dominated by academics and lawyers, and neither

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<sup>185</sup> Nagorski, “Program Planning and Evaluation: WAC Unit,” March 12, 1968, FPA, Part II, Box 79.

<sup>186</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, “Committees on Foreign Relations: Fourteenth Annual Conference, June 6th and 7th, 1952,” p. 33, CFR, Series 7, Box 596; Council on Foreign Relations, “Committees on Foreign Relations: Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference, June 10th and 11th, 1966,” p. 32, CFR, Series 7, Box 598.

<sup>187</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, “Committees on Foreign Relations: Twenty-Second Annual Conference, June 3rd and 4th, 1960,” p. 22, CFR, Series 7, Box 597; Council on Foreign Relations, “Committees on Foreign Relations: Eighteenth Annual Conference, June 8th and 9th, 1956,” p. 48, CFR, Series 7, Box 597.

corporate managers nor labor leaders proved interested. Wholly white until 1969, the Committees shut out women until 1970, even though most of them had had ladies' nights for years. As one representative from St. Louis noted, "some of the wives have proved to be more intelligent than their husbands."<sup>188</sup>

Like the World Affairs Councils, the Committees' educational and political import rapidly diminished. The Committees had been founded to contribute to policymaking, but policymakers saw less of a need for private discussions with community leaders after 1945, and, as attendance flatlined, the Council office in New York used the Committee members as a sounding board less frequently. Between 1954 and 1959 the Council had ceased publishing annual reports based on surveys of Committee members; when the surveys restarted in 1960, far fewer members than before said that they felt qualified to submit answers to questions on U.S. foreign policy.<sup>189</sup>

As the upward function of the Committees collapsed, their pretensions to downward influence evaporated. In the immediate postwar years, the Committee secretaries talked at length about discussion theory and public opinion with Francis H. Russell, with the adult educator Lyman Bryson, and with Rensis Likert, the director of the Survey Research Center. But these reminders of how democracy was supposed to work, of the duties of elites in trickle-down

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<sup>188</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Committees on Foreign Relations: Twentieth Annual Conference, June 6th and 7th, 1958," p. 29, CFR, Series 7, Box 597.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, p. 26; Council on Foreign Relations, "Committees on Foreign Relations: Twenty-First Annual Conference, June 5th and 6th, 1959," pp. 30-31, CFR, Series 7, Box 597.

diplomacy, were not repeated.<sup>190</sup> And when New York asked the secretaries for evidence as to whether diplomacy was indeed trickling down, the answer was dismaying.<sup>191</sup> “There is a defect in the theory,” wrote the secretary in Los Angeles in 1952, “that changing the attitudes of a few people in alleged positions of leadership is going to filter down and change the attitudes of the entire community.”<sup>192</sup> “I have racked my brain and tried to find, if anyone was interested enough to do something about world problems as a direct result of a Committee meeting,” wrote the Indianapolis secretary William L. Lieber in 1963. “The answer is negative.”<sup>193</sup>

As more and more of those Americans who had been most committed to world affairs in their communities gave up, so did those who funded them. The Carnegie Corporation ended its 28-year subsidy of the Committees in 1965. The Ford Foundation would not be far behind.

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Zygmunt Nagorski was not the only former USIA officer roaming the boardrooms of the World Affairs Councils. In New York, the Ford Foundation’s embrace of the Councils included the appointment in June 1965 of James Huntley, who admitted to “very little direct experience in

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<sup>190</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, “Committees on Foreign Relations: Record of Eighth Annual Conference, June 7th and 8th, 1946,” CFR, Series 7, Box 596; Council on Foreign Relations, “Committees on Foreign Relations: Ninth Annual Conference, June 6th and 7th, 1947,” CFR, Series 7, Box 596.

<sup>191</sup> See, e.g, Rolland Bushner to All Committee Secretaries, July 25, 1963, CFR, Series 7, Box 636.

<sup>192</sup> William B. Miller to Joseph Barber, February 29, 1952, CFR, Series 7, Box 614.

<sup>193</sup> William L. Lieber to Bushner, August 14, 1963, CFR, Series 7, Box 613.

this field,” but had been a prospective hire for the Association a decade earlier.<sup>194</sup> Huntley’s task was to spend the \$300,000 of grants that the trustees had allotted to the Councils. Nichols left him fulsome assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of every Council and every Council’s director, as well as a relatively equitable plan for granting two-thirds of the total to the six largest Councils (Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) and the remaining third to ten more.<sup>195</sup>

Huntley preferred to make large grants to the largest Councils, disappointing others.<sup>196</sup> He gave \$97,000 to the World Affairs Council of Northern California, “one of the best in the country,” as Huntley put it, yet “nevertheless a weak organization.”<sup>197</sup> San Francisco sought to appoint a director of studies to run its discussion groups and to restore its speakers bureau, and Ford also forced it to fund tours by State Department officials.<sup>198</sup> Philadelphia asked for \$42,000 in September, and while Huntley dismissed its highly effective female director, Ruth Weir Miller, as running a “matriarchy” out of its offices in the famous Wanamaker department store, he was sufficiently impressed to double that sum to \$80,000, on the condition that the Council

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<sup>194</sup> Huntley to Slater, “World Affairs Councils, and Especially World Affairs Council of Northern California,” June 15, 1965, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1439; Don Dennis to Hayes, “Contact with Jim Huntley of Ford Foundation,” June 16, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 44.

<sup>195</sup> Nichols, “Notes Concerning Individual World Affairs Councils,” April 26, 1965, FF, FA739D, Box 434, #10777; Nichols, “Summary Notes Concerning World Affairs Council Directors,” September 1965, FF, FA739A, Box 115, #2668; Nichols, “Administration of the Appropriation for Grants to World Affairs Councils for Support of Community World Affairs Programs,” April 1965, FF, FA739D, Box 434, #10776.

<sup>196</sup> William C. Rogers to Willard L. Thompson, October 15, 1965, Minnesota World Affairs Center Records, Box 32.

<sup>197</sup> Huntley to Stone, “Proposed Grant to the World Affairs Council of Northern California,” August 10, 1965, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1439.

<sup>198</sup> Merritt K. Ruddock to Slater, May 18, 1965, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1439; Joseph M. McDaniel to Ruddock, November 2, 1965, McLaughlin Papers, Carton 8.



pay costs for foreign service officers to lead seminars.<sup>199</sup> Cleveland, by now run by a longstanding member of its women's discussion group, Dorothy Binyon, submitted a proposal at the same time, as did Cincinnati, despite Huntley's lack of faith in the "pompous little man" who ran that Council, William Messner.<sup>200</sup> In March 1966, Huntley asked for them to receive \$63,000 and \$40,000 respectively, including \$3,000 apiece to pay the expenses of foreign service officers.<sup>201</sup>

By December 1965, Huntley had become far more ambitious, planning out a total of \$525,000 for Boston, Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, sundry smaller groups, and community organizations in Los Angeles, where he felt the Council founded by the former CIA director John McCone was incurably cautious.<sup>202</sup> Huntley also gave considerable thought to the decline in the professional quality of the Councils' directors, and asked the Carnegie Endowment to create a career track that would involve graduate degrees, sabbaticals in NGOs or USIA, and a pipeline for former foreign service officers to return home and serve their communities.<sup>203</sup> All told, Huntley's work represented a degree of involvement unmatched by any foundation official

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<sup>199</sup> Huntley, "Visit to Philadelphia World Affairs Council – August 19, 1965," FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1478; A. A. Stambaugh, Jr., to Huntley, September 27, 1965, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1478; F. F. Hill to Heald, "Grant Request – International Affairs," October 1, 1965, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1439; McDaniel to Ruth Weir Miller, January 19, 1966, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1439.

<sup>200</sup> Chester A. Thompson to Huntley, November 24, 1965, FF, FA732B, Grant 66-184, Reel 1454; Huntley, "Visit of William C. Messner, Jr.," September 28, 1965, FF, FA732B, Grant 66-185, Reel 1846.

<sup>201</sup> F. Champion Ward to McGeorge Bundy, "Grant Request – International Affairs," March 4, 1966, FF, FA732B, Grant 66-184, Reel 1454.

<sup>202</sup> Huntley to Stone, "Situation on World Affairs Councils Grants," December 8, 1965, FF, FA617, Box 37; Huntley to Stone, "Summary of Findings, World Affairs Councils and Related Bodies in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Hawaii," December 1, 1965, FF, FA739D, Box 434, #10772.

<sup>203</sup> Huntley, "Preliminary Thoughts on a World Affairs Education Career Service," January 11, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 79; Huntley to Stone, "Personnel for World Affairs Education," March 17, 1966, FF, FA739D, Box 434, #10774.

in the history of the movement, so much so that the Association sensed a “new mood.”<sup>204</sup>

Dominant financially for a decade and more, the foundation’s new energy made it dominant intellectually and operationally by the end of February 1966.

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Enter McGeorge Bundy.

Descending to the presidency of the Ford Foundation from the White House that March, the architect of the Vietnam War took a few months to sketch his vision for the richest philanthropy in the world. As it turned out, the former national security advisor’s tenure would be defined by a striking racial liberalism and a surprising aversion to international affairs.<sup>205</sup> But even before that course was set, Bundy started to clear away the responsibilities that he had inherited. And one of the first thickets he tackled was citizen education in world affairs.

It would be easy enough to think that it was inevitable that McGeorge Bundy would look on such programs with disdain. Was he not the son of an eastern Establishment that had ruled from gentleman’s clubs in the name of public service?<sup>206</sup> Was he not the product of Groton, Yale, and Skull and Bones, a dean of the Harvard faculty whose formidable success was as much social

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<sup>204</sup> CHB to Hayes, “FPA Work with WACs,” December 10, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 79; McDonald to Hayes, “Your Conversation with Ford Foundation,” December 10, 1965, FPA, Part II, Box 79; Mastrude to Hayes, “Invigorating Citizen Education,” FPA, Part II, Box 226.

<sup>205</sup> On Bundy’s tenure at Ford, see Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

<sup>206</sup> See, esp., Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

as intellectual? Was he not the architect of a war so cavalier in its disregard for popular consent that its failure caused a crisis in American life?

Indeed, he was. And yet the history of the citizen education movement has shown us that even people such as Bundy were typically concerned in one way or another with educating and involving the public in American foreign policy.

Think of Bundy's father. Brahmin he may have been, but Harvey Hollister Bundy knit himself into the public-facing side of the foreign policy elite. He succeeded Christian Herter as the chairman of the Association's Boston branch in 1936, retaining that position until war called in 1941. This Bundy thought that the branches did not go far enough, which is why he was an avowed supporter of Brooks Emeny. This confidant of insiders and a former assistant secretary of state was president of the World Peace Foundation after the war, and succeeded John Foster Dulles as chairman of the board of the Carnegie Endowment.

Think of Bundy's sponsors. John McCloy kept his distance from the rabble, but the man who brought Bundy to Ford funded the Association all the same, and had even been offered its presidency in 1946. Henry Stimson was no populist crusader, but the man who let Bundy draft his memoirs was the direct successor of Elihu Root, and took care to place the Association in the safe hands of Frank McCoy during World War II.<sup>207</sup> Walter Lippmann may have doubted the power of education in theory, but the realist who told Kennedy that Bundy would be an ideal secretary of state had always supported the work of his old friend Newton Baker in Cleveland.

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<sup>207</sup> Henry L. Stimson to Raymond Leslie Buell, December 20, 1938, FPA, Part II, Box 9. Stimson also unsuccessfully advised the board on appointing McCoy's successor. See Stimson to William Lancaster, December 28, 1945, Jessup Papers, Box I.211.

And Dean Acheson, who let Bundy edit his speeches and gave the young man a post at State, took no lectures on the importance of public engagement from anyone.<sup>208</sup>

That Bundy had no use for such things ought, therefore, to be a surprise. And he was perfectly aware of the salience of public opinion. Teaching Government 135 at Harvard, he lectured on Tocqueville, Bryce, and the new political science literature; in Government 180, “Principles of International Politics,” the textbooks were by Hans Morgenthau; in Government 185, he had students read Kennan, with all the diplomat’s bitterness about the public’s part in U.S. foreign policy.<sup>209</sup> But even if Bundy was more of an idealist than his reading lists implied, he still had no use for citizen education institutions. Unlike Harvey Bundy, he was never a member of his local Committee on Foreign Relations. Unlike Dean Rusk, he was never a member of the Foreign Policy Association. Unlike even Henry Kissinger and Walt Rostow, he had no links to the World Affairs Council across the River Charles. He was unwilling to play along.<sup>210</sup>

Just four weeks after Bundy arrived in New York, he put Stone on the defensive. In a briefing memo for Bundy written at the end of March, Stone had to paint the citizen education program in an unusually positive light, situating it as one of Ford’s historic responsibilities and

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<sup>208</sup> On Bundy’s mentors, see Andrew Preston, *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 11-35.

<sup>209</sup> Handwritten notes in McGeorge Bundy Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Box 30, Folder “Government 135: X, XI, XII, Public Opinion”; “Government 180 – Principles of International Politics – Spring 1953 – Reading List I,” Bundy Papers, Box 30, which sets Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations* and *Principles and Problems of International Politics* as the texts; “Government 185 – Reading List I – Fall Term 1955,” Bundy Papers, Box 31, which set the realists George F. Kennan and Robert Osgood; “Government 185 – Reading List I – Fall Term 1956,” Bundy Papers, Box 31, which set Max Beloff *Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955).

<sup>210</sup> Kissinger was quite active in the Council’s media programming, including during Great Decisions season; Rostow’s wife served on the Council’s board. For Bundy at Harvard, see Kai Bird, *The Color of Truth: McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy, Brothers in Arms* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), pp. 117-153.

even praising Great Decisions. The grants to Cincinnati and Cleveland still awaited approval, as did a considerable further appropriation that would have funded more Councils. "IA believes that the attitudes and opinions of the American people concerning international affairs," Stone wrote, "are a significant element in either inhibiting or in forming and sustaining enlightened public policies." Indeed, Bundy's arrival caused Stone to strengthen his commitment to citizen education, rather than to take the chance finally to kill it off.<sup>211</sup>

Bundy disagreed. He could not do much about the Ohio grants, which Dorothy Binyon of Cleveland saw, rather unfortunately, as "especially significant because you have so recently come from the active political arena."<sup>212</sup> But Bundy stripped the \$3,000 that each grant devoted to paying the expenses of foreign service officers, which his former colleague Rusk had pushed so hard for. "I remain *very* skeptical on this," Bundy scrawled on one of Stone's memos.<sup>213</sup> Bundy went further, too, although without enough clarity to end the matter. "Didn't he indicate," one officer asked forgetfully in September 1966, that "that would be the end of Foundation activity in this area?"<sup>214</sup>

Stone feared so, but his International Affairs division mounted a rearguard action. In talking points for Stone to use with Bundy, Huntley noted that the trustees had "consistently backed" efforts to increase public understanding of world affairs, that Councils had been a

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<sup>211</sup> Stone to Bundy, "Background Concerning IA Program in World Affairs Education," March 30, 1966, FF, FA617, Box 7.

<sup>212</sup> Dorothy Binyon to Bundy, May 3, 1966, FF, FA732B, Grant 66-184, Reel 1454.

<sup>213</sup> Bundy handwritten note on Stone to Bundy, "IA Grants Out of Approved Appropriation to: World Affairs Council of Cleveland (\$63,000) and Cincinnati World Affairs Council (\$40,000)," April 1, 1966, FF, FA732B, Grant 66-184, Reel 1454.

<sup>214</sup> William Watts to W. McNeil Lowry, "Latest List of Consultants," September 14, 1966, FF, FA582, Box 8.

training ground for policymakers, and that “the very existence of local WACs inhibits extremist elements, strengthens the vital center, and — in many cases — makes world affairs a respectable topic for community discussion.”<sup>215</sup> And Ford bore responsibility for the mess it faced. It had supported the Association “usually half-heartedly but nevertheless copiously,” and the “consequences of FAE’s failure still badly warp the field.” Huntley asked for another quarter of a million dollars, to be directed towards Portland, Minneapolis, Boston, Los Angeles, and a number of small councils.<sup>216</sup> And nobody in International Affairs doubted that the work was still necessary, even after Stone was replaced that summer with David E. Bell, President Kennedy’s budget director and USAID chief. As Slater told Council leaders, “we are so far short of a desirable state of affairs with respect to public knowledge, that we do not have to argue that.”<sup>217</sup>

When Bell sent that \$250,000 grant to Bundy’s office in October 1966, it was little more than a trial balloon, to see if his mood had changed.<sup>218</sup> It had not. Huntley tried once more. To reject such grants would be to commit another error in a process that the Foundation had “botched” for years. “The rapport which we have painstakingly built up with the world affairs education movement,” he lamented, “will be destroyed by our apparent fickleness.” Morale would

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<sup>215</sup> The invocation of the “vital center,” that concept of muscular postwar liberalism coined by Bundy’s friend, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., was surely no coincidence. Huntley to Stone, “Talking Points – World Affairs Councils (WACs),” April 29, 1966, FF, FA748, Box 1.

<sup>216</sup> Huntley to Stone, “World Affairs Education: Where do we go from here?” May 24, 1966, FF, FA739D, Box 434, #10775.

<sup>217</sup> “Summary: Meeting on World Affairs Education,” May 24, 1966, FF, FA739A, Box 115, #2667.

<sup>218</sup> David E. Bell to Bundy, “Board of Trustees Docket Item – International Affairs,” October 26, 1966, FF, FA748, Box 1.

plummet. Extremists would have an easier time.<sup>219</sup> And the International Affairs staff proved that they still had some of their old clout, even as they found their position at Ford diminished.<sup>220</sup> “Dear Mac,” wrote the Secretary of State; “I have for some time observed with great appreciation the Ford Foundation’s imaginative support of efforts to strengthen world affairs education.”<sup>221</sup> It was no use. Bundy killed the program in November. “All are now dead,” Huntley wrote.<sup>222</sup>

Ending appropriations to the World Affairs Councils was one thing, a novel experiment that could be terminated without tears. Ending appropriations for the Foreign Policy Association was another. Convinced that Ford’s offer of \$1 million in 1965 to prove its worth was made in good faith, the board decided to spend quickly. Hayes radically increased his office’s tempo, raising more money from corporate sponsors and ploughing it into schools and Councils.<sup>223</sup> Before Huntley left the Foundation in disgust, as Cullen had before him, he wrote that the Association was “headed in the right direction and moving fast,” and recommended strong further support to the “essential core of any effective national effort in this field.”<sup>224</sup> Yet now, for the first time in its history, Ford initiated significant financial cutbacks. With inflation rising, the trustees curtailed Heald’s lavish capital spending and cut Bundy’s budget to \$200 million that the

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<sup>219</sup> Huntley to Slater, October 10, 1966, FF, FA748, Box 1; Huntley to Slater, “The Right Extremists and Public Understanding of Foreign Affairs,” November 16, 1966, FF, FA748, Box 1.

<sup>220</sup> IA’s budget was halved from 1966 to 1969 from its historic peak under Stone. See Berghahn, *American and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*, pp. 186-187; Nielsen, *The Big Foundations*, pp. 95-97.

<sup>221</sup> Rusk to Bundy, November 16, 1966, FF, FA617, Box 37.

<sup>222</sup> Huntley, “Transfer of Responsibility,” January 27, 1967, FF, FA748, Box 1.

<sup>223</sup> “Meeting of Board of Directors,” May 25, 1966, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>224</sup> Huntley to Slater, “Foreign Policy Association,” January 23, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-117, Reel 4158.

Foundation earned each year.<sup>225</sup> In this context, Slater told Hayes to lower his expectations when they started discussing a new grant in March 1967.<sup>226</sup> Leading a booming organization if only in financial terms, Hayes did not do so, and sought \$4 million over three years.<sup>227</sup> “I fail to find this close to reality,” commented Stanley Gordon.<sup>228</sup> Another Ford officer called it “sophomoric.”<sup>229</sup>

As Bundy turned Ford inward, focusing it on race and the urban crisis, Ford cut away a program that had long defined not just its own outlook, but that of big philanthropy for nearly half a century. Bell used the progress that the Association seemed to have made against it, much as his predecessors at the Rockefeller Foundation had twenty years earlier. “The increased support that FPA has found in recent years gives us assurance that its continued existence is not critically dependent on the Foundation’s general support,” Bell told Bundy in December 1967, a few weeks after Rusk had addressed the Association during the battle of Madison Avenue. Ending Ford support might even have “salutary effects.”<sup>230</sup> Although Bell and Slater worried that Bundy would not approve the \$250,000 that they sought to give the Association as a parting gift, Bundy did.<sup>231</sup> “My colleagues and I regret,” Bell’s assistant told Hayes just after Christmas, that

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<sup>225</sup> Nielsen, *The Big Foundations*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>226</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Joseph Slater,” March 29, 1967, FPA, Part II, Box 44.

<sup>227</sup> “The Foreign Policy Association and Its Program: A Proposal to the Ford Foundation,” May 16, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257; Hayes to Slater, June 2, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

<sup>228</sup> Gordon to Slater, “FPA’s New Proposal,” May 31, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

<sup>229</sup> Howard Swearer to Francis Sutton, “Foreign Policy Association Proposal,” August 8, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

<sup>230</sup> Note that the same argument had been made by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1945. See Bell to Bundy, Grant out of Appropriation, December 18, 1967, August 8, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

<sup>231</sup> “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Joe Slater,” December 19, 1967, FPA, Part II, Box 44.



the problems caused “do not appear to be easy ones, but we have confidence that they will be manageable without grievous damage to the good work of FPA.”<sup>232</sup>

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Four weeks later, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces unleashed the Tet Offensive, prompting a downward spiral in American public opinion that made an already unpopular war so divisive that it dethroned a president. In a year in which the United States seemed to be coming apart at the seams, in a time when Americans lost faith in authority and power, the Association’s belief in civility and reasoned debate seemed curiously antiquated. So too did its confidence in American power.

This time the citizen education movement did not profit from a great debate about America’s place in the world. And to citizen educators, “neo-isolationism,” as it came to be called, was not just a vague mood, something for columnist to pontificate on, but a financial reality. For if even the Ford Foundation was turning away from world affairs in favor of the crisis at home, it was no surprise that others within the network did likewise. “The U.S. is turning inward,” wrote Fuller to Gordon shortly after the presidential election of 1968. “The staggering perplexities of the inner city, the struggle of minorities to find a suitable place in society, the disaffection of youth are the dominant concerns of many American community leaders,” and the Association’s “allies over the years are increasingly directing their program efforts toward the

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<sup>232</sup> Francis X. Sutton to Hayes, December 28, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

smoldering sections of their localities and away from those explosive situations abroad which could engulf us all.”<sup>233</sup>

Money and manpower were simply not available in the way they had been in decades past. Nor was the general financial situation so stable, as the global economy began to transform, taking with it the basis of American leadership. Corporations and even individuals had started giving to the Association as never before, with corporate contributions up 35% from 1964 to 1967, and individual donations up 38%.<sup>234</sup> The Association raised \$1.24 million in its anniversary campaign of 1967-68.<sup>235</sup> But this in no way made up for the relative certainty and generosity lost with the withdrawal of Ford, the Carnegie Endowment, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund from regular support.<sup>236</sup> Nor could the Association resist basic inflationary pressures. As early as March 1968, Hayes faced a financial cliff of half a million dollars. He closed Nagorski’s department, curtailed the Association’s publications, and asked the board to draw on anniversary funds it had hoped to set aside.<sup>237</sup>

But even as new trustees including Dean Rusk, Cyrus Vance, and Hans Morgenthau came aboard, the giant Danforth grant for the schools program was not renewed. Faced with

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<sup>233</sup> Fuller to Gordon, November 27, 1968, FPA, Part II, Box 87.

<sup>234</sup> Hayes to Slater, “The Foreign Policy Association: Its Rationale, Role, and Current Development,” November 3, 1967, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

<sup>235</sup> “Board of Directors,” March 10, 1969, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>236</sup> The Association did receive \$103,600 from Ford in 1969 for its curriculum development programs, but this was a one-time grant that, explicitly, could not be used for other purposes. “Meeting of the Executive Committee,” March 19, 1969, FPA, Part II, Box 17; Howard R. Dressner to Hayes, March 26, 1969, FPA, Part II, Box 44.

<sup>237</sup> “Joint Meeting of the Executive Committee and the Program Methods Committee,” March 14, 1968, FPA, Part II, Box 17; “Joint Meeting of the Executive Committee and the Program Methods Committee,” May 15, 1968, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

further cuts, in April 1970 the board once again seriously considered closing the Association down.<sup>238</sup> By August the situation was disastrous. Hayes did not even have the \$200,000 he needed to fire people with their severance pay intact. All but one regional office closed; the schools program had to go. Whereas in 1967-68 the Association had had a budget of over \$2 million and a staff of 104, Hayes thought he would have barely \$900,000 and a staff of 36 by the end of 1971.<sup>239</sup> And despite Ford's decision to prop up its investment with a small revolving fund, by 1976 the Association's budget was just \$600,000, less than a fifth of its income eight years earlier, in real terms.<sup>240</sup> Much as Ford still believed by 1972 that a national organization concerned "with the enlightenment of the citizenry on foreign affairs is a necessary condition for fulfilling the democratic and participatory ideals of the nation," the Association became little more than a World Affairs Council, Great Decisions aside, and a small one at that.<sup>241</sup>

Nor did the Councils prosper. At first, the turmoil appeared to offer an opportunity. There was hope in the "malaise of disquiet about foreign policy," wrote William Messner in July 1968. There was a new challenge to be met, one which could not be dealt with by that "old banal slogan, 'World Affairs Are Your Affairs'."<sup>242</sup> Yet the newsletter of the Society for Citizen

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<sup>238</sup> "Special Meeting of Budget Committee of the FPA Board," April 8, 1970, FPA, Part II, Box 17; "Minutes of the Executive Committee," May 6, 1970, FPA, Part II, Box 17.

<sup>239</sup> "Emergency Minutes of the Executive Committee," August 24, 1970, FPA, Part II, Box 17; "Board of Directors," September 24, 1970, FPA, Part II, Box 17; Sutton, "The Troubles of the Foreign Policy Association," October 2, 1970, FF, FA732C, Grant 56-298, Reel 2257.

<sup>240</sup> Sutton to John Doran, "Proposal from Carter Burgess on FPA Revolving Fund Grant," March 23, 1976, FF, FA732, Grant 72-134, Reel 2362.

<sup>241</sup> Bell to Bundy, February 7, 1972, FF, FA732C, Grant 72-134, Reel 2362.

<sup>242</sup> William C. Messner, Jr., "This Pivotal Period in Public Opinion," *Society for Citizen Education in World Affairs Newsletter* (July 1968), pp. 14-15, CCWA, Box 2.

Education in World Affairs, founded earlier in the decade, took on an ever darker tone. Norman Pilgrim, the Association's one remaining regional director, wrote in May 1970 that "world affairs education is in its own 'midi-recession'," and that the best that could be hoped for was that it was "a time to regain the moral strength in our profession of an idealism reborn through the temporizing hardness of cynicism, realism, and defeat known."<sup>243</sup>

Most of the World Affairs Councils survived, and only one of the four Councils granted Ford funds hit serious trouble. In San Francisco the situation grew so bad that there was nobody available to write a grant report, and an acting director told a caller from Ford that "the Council had gone through deep waters and that the administrative affairs had been left largely in the hands of the 'girls in the office'."<sup>244</sup> In Cleveland, Binyon used her grant to keep the Council afloat, although its programs remained unambitious. By 1974 it had a budget two thirds what it had been in 1968, and by 1976 it had failed to balance its budget in eight out of the previous nine years.<sup>245</sup> The trustees attributed their steady decline in membership, down to about 1,500 in 1975, to both "increasing isolationism" and a realization that "the Council's type of activity is appealing only to a narrow segment of the population." They contemplated liquidation.<sup>246</sup>

A few Councils thrived. Philadelphia made good use of its Ford money, strengthening its traditional programs, founding smaller, regional Councils, and starting a pioneering program at

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<sup>243</sup> "Programming Trends in World Affairs," summary of a speech by Norman W. Pilgrim to National University Extension Association Conference's World Affairs Section, May 6, 1970, *Society for Citizen Education in World Affairs Newsletter* (July 1970), p. 1, CCWA, Box 2.

<sup>244</sup> Moselle Kimbler, "Evaluation of grant to the World Affairs Council of Northern California," October 17, 1972, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-11, Reel 1439.

<sup>245</sup> "Income and Expense Statement," undated [1974], Bolton Papers, Box 9.

<sup>246</sup> "Annual Meeting," May 27, 1968, CCWA, Box 2; "Minutes," December 17, 1975, Bolton Papers, Box 9; "Board of Trustees," March 8, 1976, CCWA, Box 3.

the request of black students and teachers.<sup>247</sup> The record was less innovative in Cincinnati, but Ford was still pleased, the Council having grown its membership and increased its budget by 50%.<sup>248</sup> Despite its failure to win Ford funding in the goldrush of 1965, the most dramatic success story by far was the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, which took off after its pioneering use of air tours as a fundraising tool. By 1975 it had 25,000 members, had converted that income back into educational programs, and had launched the first of the public opinion reports that it has run annually since.<sup>249</sup> There were tantalizing signs that success was still possible.

Yet the breakdown of the movement continued, so much so that there was now nobody and no way to keep track of the whole. When even the Council on Foreign Relations was forced to plead for help from Ford in 1973, the foundation was as unsparing in its criticisms as any of the Council's public critics, who attacked it for its subservience to power, for its devious means, and for the ruinous ends that it had promoted. "In these ten years there has clearly been an erosion in the Council's influence on the foreign policy thinking of both the American people and the government," one consultant wrote.<sup>250</sup> At the same time, the Council, which Ford like Rockefeller had supported as a way of educating elites, no questions asked, had become too

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<sup>247</sup> World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, "Ford Foundation Grant, 1966-69," May 13, 1970, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-13, Reel 1478; Kimber, "Evaluation of grant to World Affairs Council of Philadelphia," May 13, 1970, FF, FA732I, Grant 66-13, Reel 1478; Ruth Weir Miller, *A Philadelphia Story* (Philadelphia: World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, 1970).

<sup>248</sup> Kimbler, "Evaluation of grant to Cincinnati Council on World Affairs," August 5, 1970, FF, FA732B, Grant 66-185, Reel 1846.

<sup>249</sup> *The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1973-1975*, FPA, Part II, Box 64.

<sup>250</sup> Anthony Solomon, "An Evaluation of the Council on Foreign Relations," November 14, 1973, FF, FA732B, Grant 54-27, Reel 1344.

controversial for Ford's taste. It was the Establishment's heir, McGeorge Bundy, who granted support of just \$500,000 in 1974, for the last time.<sup>251</sup> A few years later, the staffer tasked with evaluating the \$3.5 million Ford had spent on the Council noted the end of an era. "The objectives of these major grants were tied up with the main purposes of the Ford Foundation during its first quarter century," he wrote. "We would probably do it rather differently today."<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Ivo Lederer and Arthur Cyr to Bell and Sutton, "Council on Foreign Relations," January 17, 1974, FF, FA732B, Grant 54-27, Reel 1344.

<sup>252</sup> Craufurd D. Goodwin, "Evaluation of Council on Foreign Relations Grants," May 25, 1977, FF, FA732B, Grant 54-27, Reel 1344.

## Epilogue

McGeorge Bundy did not often talk about the war in Vietnam. When he did, he talked about it indirectly, speaking not about his own role, but about what the war meant for how the United States ought to conduct its foreign policy.<sup>1</sup>

One of those rare speeches came in October 1973, during the Yom Kippur War. Bundy gave it, funnily enough, at an anniversary dinner of the St. Louis Council on World Affairs, and if the location was unusual, so was the content. Bundy had not often talked about the relationship between diplomacy and democracy, at least not in public, but here he did. The speech itself, “Toward an Open Foreign Policy,” was perfectly generic except in two ways.<sup>2</sup>

For one thing, unlike his friend Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Bundy did not attack Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger for making an imperial presidency even more powerful. Bundy had no problem with that, indeed he encouraged it. Rather, Bundy feared that Nixon and Kissinger were making an error that he, too, had made. “There is one element in the styles of the last 10 years,” he said in Missouri, which “will be profoundly out of place in the next 25 years — the apparent belief that there is an indispensable need for secrecy and loneliness in the conduct of our major international affairs.”

For another, while the palliative that Bundy prescribed was routine, the way he described it was telling. He sought openness, like so many other commentators: openness between the

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Preston, *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, The NSC, and Vietnam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 237-244; Kai Bird, *The Color of Truth: McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy, Brothers in Arms* (New York: Simon & Schuster), pp. 396-409.

<sup>2</sup> “Bundy Unscarred Despite Role As Target Of Left And Right,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (October 16, 1973), p. 7A.

White House and other parts of the executive branch; between the executive and the legislature; between the government and the press; and between the government and the “interested” and even the “general” public. What did Bundy call this? He asked for “two-way communication based on trust.”<sup>3</sup>

Coincidence or no, these were the fighting words of Dean Acheson, words spoken by the men present at the creation of American primacy, by the men whose mantle and friendship the former national security advisor could once have claimed. By invoking them, Bundy dreamed again the dream of a democratic foreign policy. By invoking them, Bundy showed, too, that the dream of a democratic foreign policy had not become a reality.

Nor was McGeorge Bundy the only chieftain of a ruined foreign policy establishment who turned to the past as a way to move forward. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, whom Bundy had approved for tenure at Harvard, did the same.<sup>4</sup> Committed to a style of diplomacy that prized quietude, secrecy, and freedom of maneuver, Kissinger nevertheless had always understood the importance of public support for a successful foreign policy.<sup>5</sup> He had adeptly used citizen education and other networks to speed his own rise to influence, appearing on the television programs of the World Affairs Council in Boston, even when they were related to Great Decisions.<sup>6</sup> As secretary, Kissinger supported efforts to rebuild those networks, speaking to

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<sup>3</sup> McGeorge Bundy, “Toward an Open Foreign Policy,” *Washington Post* (October 22, 1973), p. A28.

<sup>4</sup> What follows extends David Allen, “Realism and Malarkey: Henry Kissinger’s State Department, Détente, and Domestic Consensus,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17 (2015), pp. 184-219.

<sup>5</sup> See, esp., Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger: 1923-1968: The Idealist* (New York: Penguin, 2015). Kissinger appeared at numerous World Affairs Councils and equivalents, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but for his involvement in Boston see, e.g., Huffman to Mastrude, April 4, 1960, FPA, Part II, Box 44 (reporting Kissinger’s participation in Boston’s



the Foreign Policy Association, whose board he joined in 1977, and to World Affairs Councils. “I attach the highest importance to developing a broad public consensus,” he told the National Council of Community World Affairs Organizations in an October 1974 message, a “consensus” that would require and even be defined by “the broadest possible public discussion.”<sup>7</sup> That same month, he told the National Council on Philanthropy that “these organizations are suffering from inadequate resources, financial and human. They need help.” It was not forthcoming.<sup>8</sup>

A year later, with détente under such severe bipartisan pressure that State Department officials feared for their diplomatic posture, Kissinger stepped up his efforts to create a new foreign policy consensus. Since early 1975 he had traveled the country on his “heartland” tour, stumping with speeches that were part political philosophy, part partisan fightback. But the message was not getting through, a fact made clear by Kissinger’s firing as national security advisor in November. In a policy review launched immediately after that debacle, State’s Policy Planning Staff concluded that an “activist public affairs effort” was necessary to create public consent for détente, despite the perils of a presidential election.<sup>9</sup>

What the State Department put together was familiar from its programs over the years, even if its institutional knowledge of its own history was so thin that it did not quite know it.

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Peabody Award-winning Great Decisions television program) and *World Affairs Councilor* (February 1961), FPA, Part I, Box 10 (previewing Kissinger’s participation in a panel on nuclear arms with Thomas Schelling and others).

<sup>7</sup> Kissinger, “Message to: The National Council of Community World Affairs Organizations,” October 8, 1974, CCWA, Box 3; “Notes on SPH Conversation with Carol Laise and Charlie Bray, Department of State, June 4, 1974,” FPA, Part II, Box 51.

<sup>8</sup> Kissinger, “Message to the National Council on Philanthropy,” October 21, 1974, FPA, Part II, Box 18.

<sup>9</sup> Policy Planning Staff, “1976 – Foreign Policy Problems and Opportunities,” undated, RG 59, Policy Planning Staff Director’s Files (Winston Lord), 1969–77, Box 358.

Building on its history of regional conferences, it arranged five “town meetings,” mostly in cities that Kissinger had already visited. Based on adult education templates, indeed on the language of interwar adult education, the “town meetings” comprised public lectures, roundtables, forums, call-in radio and television shows, and even small opinion polls. They were intended, as Kissinger’s assistant Lawrence Eagleburger told one audience, to solve the department’s “communications problem,” to prove at the most basic level that it “gives a damn about what individuals think about our foreign policy.”<sup>10</sup> With that in mind, the sessions were rather more inquisitive than the department’s earlier, more proscriptive conferences, with study guides prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, with the agenda fairly flexible and locally-minded, and with lists of possible questions circulated in advance. A press release mentioned one that was remarkably open: “what *do* Americans want their diplomacy to achieve?”<sup>11</sup>

As important as the message, and more so as détente crumbled, was the medium. The State Department sought partners and, as it often had, it found them. Each of the five “town meetings” was held at a World Affairs Council or similar institution, first in Pittsburgh, then Portland, San Francisco, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. Kissinger’s State Department assumed that World Affairs Councils had been the backbone of a supposed internationalist consensus, and hoped that their publics would therefore be predisposed to understand where it was coming

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<sup>10</sup> “District Residents’ Views Vary on Foreign Policy,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (February 19, 1976), p. 9; “Pittsburgh and State Department,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (February 20, 1976), p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> “Department Announces Experimental Program of Foreign Policy ‘Town Meetings,’” November 12, 1975, Lord Files, Box 359, emphasis in original.

from, and lend support.<sup>12</sup> It sent leading officials with that idea in mind, including assistant secretaries of state, undersecretaries of state, and the director of policy planning Winston Lord, who ran the “town meeting” program and became the president of the Council on Foreign Relations in 1977. And the intention here was grand. As Bray put it early in 1976, the aim was “the recreation of a national foreign policy ‘establishment’ and the invigoration of the private organizational infrastructure.”<sup>13</sup>

It did not work, at least not in the way that the State Department intended. It certainly found out what the foreign affairs public, or what was left of it, wanted from its foreign policy. The Americans that the State Department officers heard from wanted to recover a sense of morality, to “stand for the right thing” in a way that the pragmatism and opportunism of détente did not seem to allow. They did not necessarily know what the “right thing” was, but they wanted to stand for it all the same. Eagleburger therefore told Kissinger that he needed to embrace the “Kennedyesque moralism which Americans so like and which gives us a sense of purpose and uniqueness.”<sup>14</sup> This was never likely to happen, so much so that Lord thought Kissinger should try mostly to secure a “personal legacy for the history books.”<sup>15</sup> The secretary listened to that advice, but ignored the feedback that his subordinates gave him from the grass roots. In that, Kissinger was merely extending a long tradition.

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<sup>12</sup> Winston Lord and John Reinhardt to Kissinger, “Addition to Your Pittsburgh Program – Town Meetings re US Foreign Policy,” November 8, 1975, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1973-76, Document Number P800158-1570, [aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43](http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR43) [hereafter cited in the form AAD/ P800158-1570].

<sup>13</sup> Charles W. Bray, untitled memorandum, undated [early 1976], Lord Files, Box 358.

<sup>14</sup> “Memorandum from the Secretary of State’s Executive Assistant (Eagleburger) to Secretary of State Kissinger,” February 24, 1976, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Vol. XXXVIII, Part 1, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1973-1976* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2012), p. 379.

<sup>15</sup> Lord to Kissinger, “Your Speeches in 1976,” February 26, 1976, Lord Files, Box 358.

What troubled the State Department officers more, however, was a fundamental rupture in American political culture that they felt with personal force during their meetings with vocal, often angry citizens. That Pittsburghers “do not understand many of the bedrock premises on which our foreign policy is based,” Lord, Eagleburger and two other officials wrote, was one thing. The more important problem was that “the Department as a whole has not come to grips with a fairly serious communications problem.” And it was not just the State Department. In Milwaukee, views on foreign policy were “colored — perhaps we should say discolored — by the cumulative impact of the news about malfeasance in government.” In Portland, the discussions suggested a “generalized disenchantment with government institutions from which the Department also suffers.” The foreign policy elite of the Steel City even expressed a “fair amount of pleased surprised” that the government officials had showed up at all.<sup>16</sup>

Even so, the State Department’s initiatives were pale imitations of their forerunners, an attempt to create a public from the state outwards. The movement for citizen education in world affairs had always had its statist side, of course, but what was striking about the efforts of Lord, Eagleburger, Bray, and others, was how weak they were. They now had no help from the foundations that had once been practically at the command of secretaries of state. They now had no help from voluntary associations that had turned their attentions elsewhere. They now had no

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<sup>16</sup> “Verbatim Text: Principal Findings from Pittsburgh “Town Meeting” on Foreign Policy,” September 16, 1976 (reprinting memo of March 11, 1976), AAD/1976STATE229191; William E. Schaufele, Samuel W. Lewis, John A. Armitage, and William H. Luer to Henry Kissinger, “Principal Findings from Portland ‘Town Meeting’ on Foreign Policy,” April 30, 1976, RG 59, Records of Henry Kissinger, 1973-77, Lot 91D414, Box 1; Alfred L. Atherton, John E. Reinhardt, Jack F. Matlock, Jr., and James A. Placke to Kissinger, “Principal Findings from Milwaukee “Town Meeting” on Foreign Policy,” June 4, 1976, AAD/P760092-1668. See also Schaufele, Lewis, Armitage, and Luer to Kissinger, “Principal Findings from San Francisco “Town Meeting” on Foreign Policy,” April 30, 1976, AAD/P760068-2466; Atherton, Reinhardt, Matlock, and Placke to Kissinger, “Principal Findings from Minneapolis “Town Meeting” on Foreign Policy,” June 24, 1976, AAD/P760104-1427.

help even from the people on whom they had once hoped to rely, from a foreign policy public their predecessors had tended. As one anonymous official told Bernard Cohen in 1966, “there is a considerable sort of feeling of unhappiness here that elements in the population that used to be thought of as our ‘natural constituency’ are not doing yeoman service for the Department now.”<sup>17</sup>

Ironically enough, one of the most important causal arrows in the crumbling of the citizen education movement was turning. As we have seen, intellectual doubts about the viability and desirability of widespread citizen education spread slowly through the network and beyond after World War II, in a complicated yet devastating interaction of theory and practice. But if anything, the postwar scholarly consensus was fraying in a way that would have been helpful for citizen educators, had they possessed the ability and money to do anything about it.<sup>18</sup> As the imperatives of the cold war weakened, as protests and defeats made the catastrophe of Vietnam and the desire for a new diplomacy ever clearer, and as Congress both asserted itself in foreign policy and added more transparency to government, thinkers who had once counseled skepticism about public opinion rethought their positions.

Hans Morgenthau, that prophet of academic realism whose work McGeorge Bundy had read with profit, was perhaps the most famous convert. A model to student radicals, the Chicago professor fused his opposition to the war in Vietnam to a much broader critique of American life, including the sorry state of the public sphere, of the decline of democratic institutions, and of the

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<sup>17</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 41-99.

abandonment of the moral ideals of participation.<sup>19</sup> Morgenthau became a board member of the Foreign Policy Association in 1969. In his intellectual wake came intellectuals who rethought American power and the place of the public within it. Noam Chomsky slashed at “twenty years of intensive cold-war indoctrination and seventy years of myth regarding our international role,” and a foreign policy that had been “supported by an apathetic, obedient majority, its mind and conscience dulled by a surfeit of commodities and by some new version of the old system of beliefs and ideas.”<sup>20</sup>

Building on the work of William Appleman Williams and others, leftist historians picked up ideas that had floated around the foreign policy elite and turned them against it, arguing that the mass public had been hoodwinked into a foreign policy that served business and class interests. Apathy and ignorance in a class-riven society, wrote Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, had allowed business elites to create a foreign policy that serve their own needs. “It was out of the question that American foreign policy could have reflected domestically oriented mass priorities,” the Kolkos wrote. “The question for controllers of modern American power,” they continued, “is not how to reflect the desires of the masses, but to manipulate them so that they endorse the needs and goals of men who might otherwise have to resort to sterner forms of repression to

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<sup>19</sup> Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 237-255; Louis B. Zimmer, *The Vietnam War Debate: Hans J. Morgenthau and the Attempt to Halt the Drift Into Disaster* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1969), pp. 4-5.

attain their ends.” These were practically the words of Harold Lasswell, now turned against him.<sup>21</sup>

Gabriel Almond went to work for the Eugene McCarthy campaign in 1968, but in his academic work he moved away from an explicit focus on foreign policy towards comparative studies of political culture.<sup>22</sup> In his absence, *The American People and Foreign Policy* finally came under attack. Its assumptions and even its evidence were dismantled statistically at the end of the 1960s by William Caspary, a doctoral student who appreciated “the injustice of the U.S. globalist — or, if you will, imperialist — foreign policy.” Caspary argued that survey data in fact showed that the public was neither moody nor inattentive, but had rather maintained remarkably stable and permissive opinions on world affairs. Even if the American people had regrettably offered a “blank check for foreign policy adventures,” their views might still therefore be worth taking more seriously than Almond and his generation had allowed.<sup>23</sup>

Since Caspary, many international relations theorists have come to more “optimistic” ideas about the public, as two political scientists have written, and have shown that “foreign policy attitudes indeed have structure, and that the public reacts predictably and prudently to world events.”<sup>24</sup> Core ideas in certain strands of international relations theory now rely on more

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<sup>21</sup> Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945–1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 332–334. For a fuller account of this view, albeit less class-conscious, see Michael Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937–1947* (Westport: Greenwood, 1976).

<sup>22</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

<sup>23</sup> William R. Caspary, “The ‘Mood Theory’: A Study of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy,” *American Political Science Review* 64 (1970), pp. 536, 546.

<sup>24</sup> Joshua D. Kertzer and Thomas Zeitzoff, “A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion about Foreign Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (2017), p. 544. The classic statement of this new “optimism” is Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans’ Policy Preferences* (Chicago:

positive ideas about democracy than postwar scholars countenanced, including the democratic peace and “audience costs.”<sup>25</sup> More skeptical scholars point out that such ideas are difficult to reconcile with models of public opinion found elsewhere in political science, particularly top-down, “elite-cue” models that derive from the work of Converse and, ultimately, Lasswell.<sup>26</sup> But recent attempts to bridge these two schools by building theories that include both top-down cueing and some measure of bottom-up intellectual structure still have far more faith in the people than cold war research, even ascribing to them a “folk realism” that, to say the least, would have surprised Almond, Kennan, and Morgenthau.<sup>27</sup>

Unlike either progressive or elitist conceptions of democracy, however, such new ideas have not really translated into world affairs activism on the ground. Indeed, it is striking how disconnected this scholarship on democracy and diplomacy is from practice. Its force comes from opaque statistical reasoning, from complex analysis of poll results, from survey experiments

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University of Chicago Press, 1992). Even Robert A. Dahl came around, see, e.g., Robert A. Dahl, “Democracy deficits and foreign policy,” *Dissent* 46 (1999), pp. 110-113.

<sup>25</sup> Even structural neorealism can be seen as an attempt to take on the anti-democratic commitments of classical, postwar realism, although contemporary realists hold views of democracy closer to those of Hans Morgenthau than Kenneth Waltz. See Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot, “How Realism Waltzed Off: Liberalism and Decisionmaking in Kenneth Waltz’s Neorealism,” *International Security* 40 (2015), pp. 87-118.

<sup>26</sup> The major statement of the “elite-cue” model, explicitly following Converse but ultimately deriving from much of the Survey Research Center work in the immediate postwar period, is John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Applying Zaller to foreign policy, see Elizabeth N. Saunders, “War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force,” *Security Studies* 24 (2015), pp. 466-501 (in which Saunders, importantly, notes that “elite-cue” models seriously complicate and even contradict liberal theories in IR that assume a more positive, active picture of democracy); Alexandra Guisinger and Elizabeth N. Saunders, “Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion across International Issues,” *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (2017), pp. 425-441.

<sup>27</sup> Kertzer and Zeitzoff, “Bottom-Up Theory”; Daniel W. Drezner, “The Realist Tradition in American Public Opinion,” *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (2008), pp. 51-70; Joshua D. Kertzer and Kathleen M. McGraw, “Folk Realism: Testing the Microfoundations of Realism in Ordinary Citizens,” *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (2012), pp. 245-258.



contracted to the online denizens of Amazon Mechanical Turk, a controlled environment not all that unlike the wartime propaganda laboratories of Samuel Stouffer. The days when the proving grounds for theories of public opinion were in educational campaigns, or in community-leader interviews, or World Affairs Council membership surveys, are long gone. And at the same time, the normative quality that had been a feature even of the scholarship of Bernard Cohen or Ithiel de Sola Pool, that desire to make democracy work better through research, has been lost.

Meanwhile, other areas of political science and theory have come alive with the prospects of reform. In part as a result of Vietnam-era social movements, in particular student radicalism and the “community control” movement, theories of participatory and even deliberative democracy took off in the 1980s.<sup>28</sup> Premising their work on the power of discussion in rather similar ways to the adult educators of the interwar period, theorists of deliberative democracy have tried out their explicitly normative work at the grass roots, albeit usually on a small, “mini-public” scale looking at local or urban politics.<sup>29</sup> And although scholars of world affairs have taken, again, to seeing international politics as a (partly) deliberative space, serious efforts at deliberative democracy in policy questions in U.S. foreign policy have been few.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Useful summaries of the state of deliberative democracy research are John S. Dryzek *et al.*, “The crisis of democracy and the science of deliberation,” *Science* 363 (2019), pp. 1144-1146; Nicole Curato, John S. Dryzek, Selen A. Ercan, Carolyn M. Hendriks, and Simon Niemeyer, “Twelve Key Findings in Deliberative Democracy Research,” *Daedalus* 146 (2017), pp. 28-38; Andre Bächtiger, John S. Dryzek, Jane Mansbridge, and Mark Warren (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., James S. Fishkin, *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Archon Fung, *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); James S. Fishkin, *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); James S. Fishkin, *Democracy When the People Are Thinking: Revitalizing Our Politics Through Public Deliberation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Henry E. Brady, James S. Fishkin, and Robert C. Luskin, “Informed Public Opinion About Foreign Policy: The Uses of Deliberative Polling” (June 1, 2003), [brookings.edu/articles/informed-public-opinion-about-foreign-policy-the-uses-of-deliberative-polling/](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/informed-public-opinion-about-foreign-policy-the-uses-of-deliberative-polling/).

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Early in 2019, the Center for American Progress (CAP) published a study called *America Adrift*. Through an online poll, CAP talked to 2,000 registered voters; through focus groups in Atlanta and Detroit, it talked to members of the public who “indicated that they closely follow foreign policy news.” None of these citizens, or at least not many, felt like statesmen. It was not only that these citizens took issue with specific policy choices. It was not only that they believed that their priorities were not the priorities of their government. It was not only even that they felt left out of policymaking. No, CAP found a breach between elites and the public that was much more fundamental. “Traditional language from foreign policy experts about ‘fighting authoritarianism and dictatorship,’ ‘promoting democracy,’ or ‘working with allies and the international community,’” the study found, made no sense to those who were not experts. “Voters across educational lines simply did not understand what any of these phrases and ideas meant or implied,” CAP went on, so people simply deferred “to known mental models and shorthands based on their own personal values and experiences.” The gulf between policymakers and the public has become so wide, in other words, that language itself cannot bridge it.<sup>31</sup>

If it ever had, that is. Recall the words of Angus Campbell and George Belknap in 1951. Even with years of wars still raging, even with years of consensus censored by McCarthyism,

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<sup>31</sup> John Halpin, Brian Katulis, Peter Juul, Karl Agne, Jim Gerstein, and Nisha Jain, *America Adrift: How the U.S. Foreign Policy Debate Misses What Voters Really Want* (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2019), pp. 1-8. For more on this theme, and specifically on the conflicting goals of policymakers and the public, see, e.g., Benjamin I. Page and Marshall M. Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

even with years of being bombarded in every conceivable medium with information that simplified international relations to the fighting words of the foreign policy elite, *still* “relatively few people have a logic of foreign affairs so well organized and so inclusive as to predict any specific attitude, given a knowledge of some other.” Even if most people had a bit of structure to their foreign-policy thinking, especially partisan structure, they could not be classified as either “internationalist” or “isolationists,” Campbell and Belknap wrote. This was not a matter of those terms being too crude to fit popular views, the Survey Research Center scholars implied. It was a matter of them not being crude enough.<sup>32</sup>

What might be surprising is that so many leading American policymakers tried to avoid this outcome, and for so long. Every secretary of state from Charles Evans Hughes to Henry Kissinger lent his name, and often more, to the movement to make a citizenry educated to elite standards on foreign policy. Presidents of the United States did the same. For the most part, policymakers sought a public that would support their policies; the activists and scholars that they enlisted sought a public that would reason itself into internationalist world leadership. In the process, citizen educators hoped that they would bring American democracy closer to what they saw as its ideal, an ideal in which people would be informed and engaged, in which people would participate in policymaking, in which elites would subject themselves to popular control.

Citizen educators, of course, hardly delved deep into American society. Their attempts to break out of a predominately wealthy, white, and above all college-educated elite were the exception, not the norm; those exceptions, such as the Great Decisions program, only proved the

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<sup>32</sup> Belknap and Campbell, “Political Party Identification and Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy,” p. 603.

rule. This public appeared to many within the predominantly wealthy, white, and above all college-educated foreign policy elite to be the natural and possibly the only public for foreign policy; the political forms and political outlooks of that public, indeed of that elite, set the standard for everyone else. Black Americans, for instance, were never cultivated. They appear with extraordinary scarcity in the records of citizen education institutions, and then as a surprise. Their most mainstream leaders were never mentioned as potential collaborators by even the most progressive citizen educators, despite the State Department and other agencies of government using those same leaders to win hearts and minds abroad.<sup>33</sup> Labor even of the AFL-CIO variety was not a serious, sustained target public until well into the cold war, when educators tellingly aimed at union officials, not at the rank and file. Where citizen educators *did* manage to reach a public beyond the kinds of people approved of by the members of the Council on Foreign Relations, they reached women. And the gendered nature of the organized foreign policy public — the very alliance with the League of Women Voters and similar groups that gave it much of whatever vitality it had in towns and cities across the nation — made it all the easier, in the end, for male policymakers to set aside.

Nevertheless, it is more than worth remembering that citizen educators did not close foreign policy off for the few. There were structural impediments to mass participation, to be sure, from the need to appeal to donors to the complexity of the subject matter. But in 1929, anyone in any of fourteen northeastern cities who could afford to buy a luncheon ticket *could* hear some of the leading intellectuals of the day debate a topic of pressing importance. In 1939, anyone

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<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*; Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

with a cheap radio receiver *could* hear Vera Micheles Dean, or William T. Stone, or another member of the Association's research staff accurately, calmly, and briefly summarize the world's descent into war, week by difficult week. In 1949, anyone with 25 cents *could* buy a Headline Book. In 1959, anyone *could* go to a public library in hundreds, thousands of towns in every state in the union, and take part in a Great Decisions discussion group.

This dissertation has shown that much of the foreign policy elite left the door open to democracy. The Foreign Policy Association distributed millions of pieces of literature; it reached untold numbers of people over the radio; it made sure that most major cities in the United States had an institution, however weak, that was dedicated to the idea that diplomacy was subject to democracy control. Even if all that these institutions helped to create by 1960 was a diplomatic 1%, hundreds of thousands of Americans, and perhaps many more, involved themselves in discussions about foreign policy.

Start from the assumption that foreign policy will interest next to nobody, and such statistics might look impressive, but what this dissertation has also shown is that that assumption was historically contingent — and historically quite rare. At the dawn of American leadership, much of the foreign policy elite looked forward to the day when as many Americans could intelligently debate their diplomacy as could chat about their baseball team. Very few American policymakers were content to conduct diplomacy as their British predecessors had; very few doubted that there had to be a serious effort to reconcile democracy and diplomacy, one unparalleled elsewhere, if America was to lead the world. The myth of an exceptional American democracy impelled the foreign policy elite to make the effort. “No people has ever yet been

sufficiently well-informed to make the test,” said Donald Pryor of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs in 1961,

and ours is the first democratic society ever to possess the technique, the means of communication, and the wealth to conduct it. If we should try and fail, so be it; we shall have failed honorably. If we should fail without trying, who will grant us even the solace of self-respect?<sup>34</sup>

It was for the same reason that both the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation found it so difficult to cut the Foreign Policy Association loose. For all its faults, it was always a symbol of the kind of world power that the United States wanted to be.

And yet if symbols matter, they remain symbolic. The citizen education movement was the most participatory vision of democracy that the foreign policy elite as a whole was prepared to countenance. As this dissertation has shown, however, that movement was shot through with limitations. The inheritors of progressivism, adult educators wrapped themselves in the language of participatory democracy, but they sought a society in which policymaking elites were subjected to slightly more control, not subverted entirely. A banker like Thomas W. Lamont had no problem paying that price if it would help to secure a more internationalist future; the Ford Foundation was hardly trying to undercut expert rule. Even so, the Association and the Councils were never given anything close to financial security, even though they counted Rockefellers and Warburgs among their donors. They and their members were never given anything close to policy input, even though the State Department built institutions that could have made it so. Instead, policymakers chose faster, harsher methods for acquiring popular consent, when they bothered at all. They inflated threats; they unleashed paranoia; they militarized their foreign

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<sup>34</sup> Donald J. Pryor, “Must Athens Fall Again?” November 7, 1961, CCWA, Box 2.

policy and their culture at home. Their response to the pressures of power made even a more participatory democracy less and less likely. If they never quite abandoned the Association, they did not make its work easy.

The question for American foreign policy now is whether that work can be made easier. Since the presidential election of 2016, the clamor for a more democratic foreign policy has grown louder, particularly on the left.<sup>35</sup> But that no coherent attempt to rekindle anything along the lines of the citizen education movement has really been forthcoming from the foreign policy elite is a telling reminder the nature of the problem has still not been grasped. The foreign policy elite is still using models for citizen engagement that were developed in the first half of the twentieth century; indeed, it is still using the same institutions, and still not at all well.

There are now ninety or so affiliates of World Affairs Council of America (WACA), a convening group that emerged in 1986 from the National Council of Community World Affairs Organizations, including the Foreign Policy Association, which, Great Decisions aside, today functions mostly as a Council for Manhattan.<sup>36</sup> Growth in areas where populations have boomed has offset a collapse in the old internationalist heartland of the Northeast, and the list of the ten largest Councils by budget reflects that shift: San Francisco, New York, Dallas/Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Houston, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, and Jacksonville. About half of WACA affiliates earn less than the \$50,000 in non-profit revenue that requires the filing

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<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., Daniel Bessner and Stephen Wertheim, "Democratizing U.S. Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* (April 5, 2017), [foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-04-05/democratizing-us-foreign-policy](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-04-05/democratizing-us-foreign-policy).

<sup>36</sup> One notable institution not affiliated to WACA is the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, formerly the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. It is now much more of a think tank than a community institution, and arguably could be thought of as the real successor to the Foreign Policy Association of old. And on that front, it has been very successful, with a budget of \$18 million in FY 2016-17. See Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2017*, [digital.thechicagocouncil.org/Global/FileLib/PDFs/CCGA\\_Annual\\_v5.2\\_singles.pdf](https://digital.thechicagocouncil.org/Global/FileLib/PDFs/CCGA_Annual_v5.2_singles.pdf), p. 19.

of an IRS 990 form. In 2016, the affiliates that met the threshold collectively brought in nearly \$30 million, a bit more than double the total budgets, in real terms, of the Association and the Councils as Calvin Nichols calculated them in 1964. Much of that growth has come in corporate sponsorship.<sup>37</sup>

Scan the websites of the Councils, drained of their imperative to build a more perfect democracy and a more peaceful world, and they have a certain familiarity to them. They do what they always did, a mix of adult education programs-cum-big-ticket lectures, of media programs, of filling in where the education system fails. The World Affairs Council of Northern California now hosts a Global Philanthropy Forum to cater to the well-heeled givers of the Bay Area, but beyond that maintains a speakers series downtown and at satellite Councils in the area, a student program for high schools and community colleges, simulations for students, networking events, podcasts and videos, and a weekly broadcast on public radio, “World Affairs,” as it has since at least 1956.<sup>38</sup> In Philadelphia, where the slogan insists that “Democracy Demands Discourse,” there is still the traditional focus on schools programs, a concentration on tours abroad, and a television show, *The Whole Truth With David Eisenhower*.<sup>39</sup> In Dallas there are Junior World Affairs Councils in fifty high schools, one of which, Plano West, is a frequent winner of WACA’s flagship youth education program, WorldQuest, a team quiz sponsored in part by the Qatari foreign ministry. Otherwise, much of the work in northeast Texas is to do with State

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<sup>37</sup> Calculations derived from list of World Affairs Councils ([worldaffairscouncils.org/About/index.cfm?PageID=5](http://worldaffairscouncils.org/About/index.cfm?PageID=5)) and IRS 990 forms taken from ProPublica’s Nonprofit Explorer ([projects.propublica.org/nonprofits](http://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits)). The total includes the World Affairs Council of Washington, D.C., which ceased operations in 2018.

<sup>38</sup> World Affairs Council of Northern California, “What We Do,” [worldaffairs.org/what-we-do](http://worldaffairs.org/what-we-do).

<sup>39</sup> World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, “About the Council,” [wacphila.org/about](http://wacphila.org/about).



Department visitor programs, tourism, and networking. Members join, the Council's website says, "to pursue lifelong learning, to network and grow professionally, to support international awareness and diplomacy, and to socialize with other globally minded individuals."<sup>40</sup>

What is missing today is the fervor that once had been brought to this task. Newton Baker thought that a World Affairs Council could save the world. Capturing at least some of that spirit again might be one step on the path toward a more democratic foreign policy today.

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<sup>40</sup> World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth, "Membership Options," [dfworld.org/membership](http://dfworld.org/membership).

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